

NOTTINGHAM TRENT STUDENTS' UNION

Sustainability Report

2024 - 2025

NTSU and Our Commitment

As a students' union we recognise our responsibility to lead, support and co-create solutions with our students, as we navigate the very real challenges we face with our changing environment.

We are proud to be able to help shape our students futures in line with sustainable progress and develop our organisation in a way that is conscious and environmentally responsible.

Our ambition is to create a culture where sustainability plays an integral role in guiding our development, as well as our involvement and interaction with our students.

We have prioritised sustainability within our strategies and policies, embedded the UN's Sustainable Development Goals into our practice and are working in line with globally recognised standards such as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the Paris Agreement, and ISO14001.

This years progress looks a little different. Due to there being a gap in the Sustainability Officer role between October 2024 and June 2025, there was limited capacity to continue our work towards our sustainability strategy and its aim and objectives.

Some of our processes and procedures have continues as normal, but for those areas that were limited we have still made the effort to contribute to our sustainability journey as much as possible.

This report highlights the areas we have seen progress in, as well as doing a deeper dive into the behind the scenes work that would not normally be recognised.

Our operational work and changes to our performance and methodology have seen some great improvements this year which should be celebrated.



Our Successes

Volunteering activities at the Clifton Campus allotment

More staff and students trained through the induction process

Gold EcoCampus achieved, with one stage left before ISO14001 accreditation

Course Rep inductions delivered



Continued work with the NUS Purchasing Consortium's Sustainable SU's Charter

Free bike lessons offered to staff alongside the ride to work scheme and subsidised bike hire

Improved methodological approaches to our carbon footprint to increase accuracy

Volunteer opportunities provided with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Friends of Colwick Woods

Improved our sustainability webpage to include regular updates and practical information and advice

Our Successes



Aside from the certifications and awards that we continue to work hard towards and the progress within our sustainability strategy, this year has seen a lot of improvements and changes to the back-of-house work that would not normally be put on display.

This year we wanted to demonstrate all the changes we have made that have helped lay stronger foundations for our sustainability work going forward.

Carbon

SUSTAINABLE CITIES | INNOVATION | PARTNERSHIPS

This year is our fourth year reporting on our carbon footprint, progressing towards our net-zero carbon target of 2040.

We are consciously supporting global targets such as those set in the Paris Agreement, as well as considering our stakeholders and the environment in which we are situated.

2024 - 25 is another 'business as usual' year of operations; previous years were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

This year has not seen any carbon reduction pathways put in place due to staff capacity as mentioned, but has seen improvement to methodological approaches and reporting methods which have massively improved the accuracy and reliability of our reporting.



Our Footprint

Our total emissions for the 2024 - 25 academic year are 2201.92 tonnes CO2 equivalent (tCO2e).

NTSU report on all 3 emission scopes:

Scope 1 - Direct Emissions
This includes emissions from an organisations vehicle fleet and fuel burnt on site

Scope 2 - Indirect Emissions
Emissions of 'purchased' energy such as electricity and district hear

Scope 3 - Indirect Other Emissions
Emissions from sources outside of an organisations control, but that are associated with their activities

*Unlike many other organisations, NTSU does not have a 'Scope 2'. Our buildings are leased from our partner organisations (NTU & UPP), so although we use energy and heat on a daily basis, we don't have direct control over the emission sources, to these fall into our Scope 3

Carbon

As we continue our journey to net-zero, we compare our current emissions to our baseline year (2021 - 22) to track our progress.

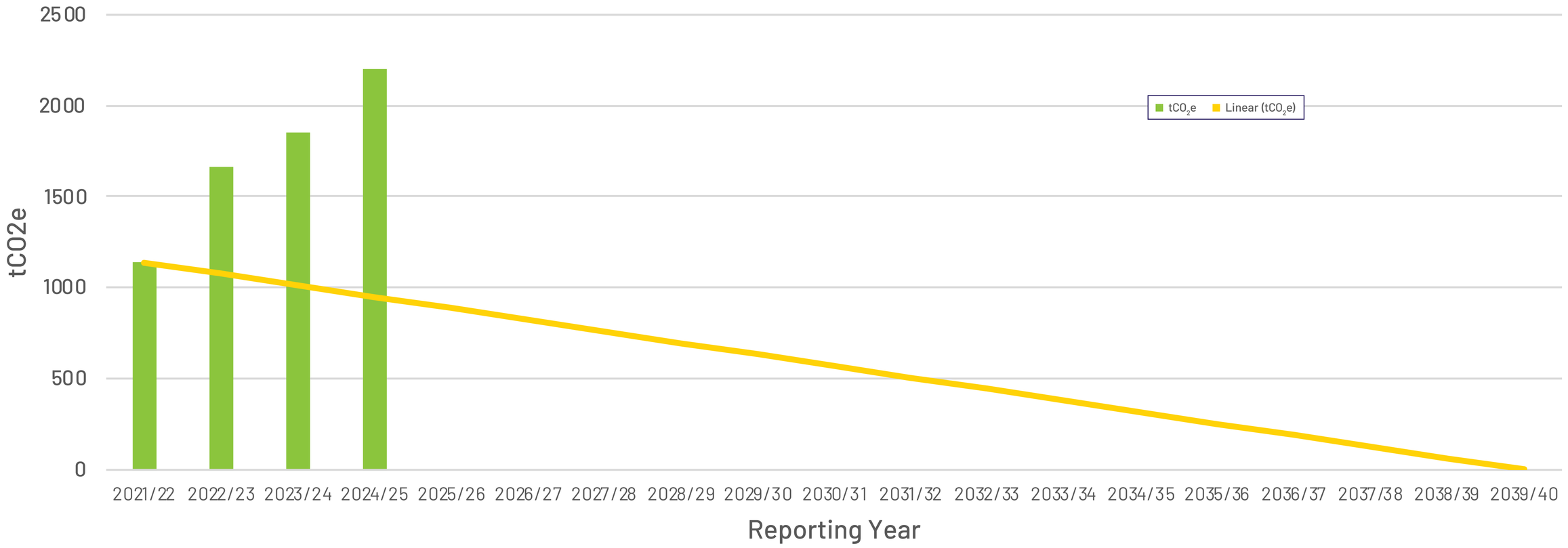


Figure 1. NTSUs pathway to net-zero, assuming a linear progression from our baseline year in 2021 / 22 to net-zero by 2040

Carbon

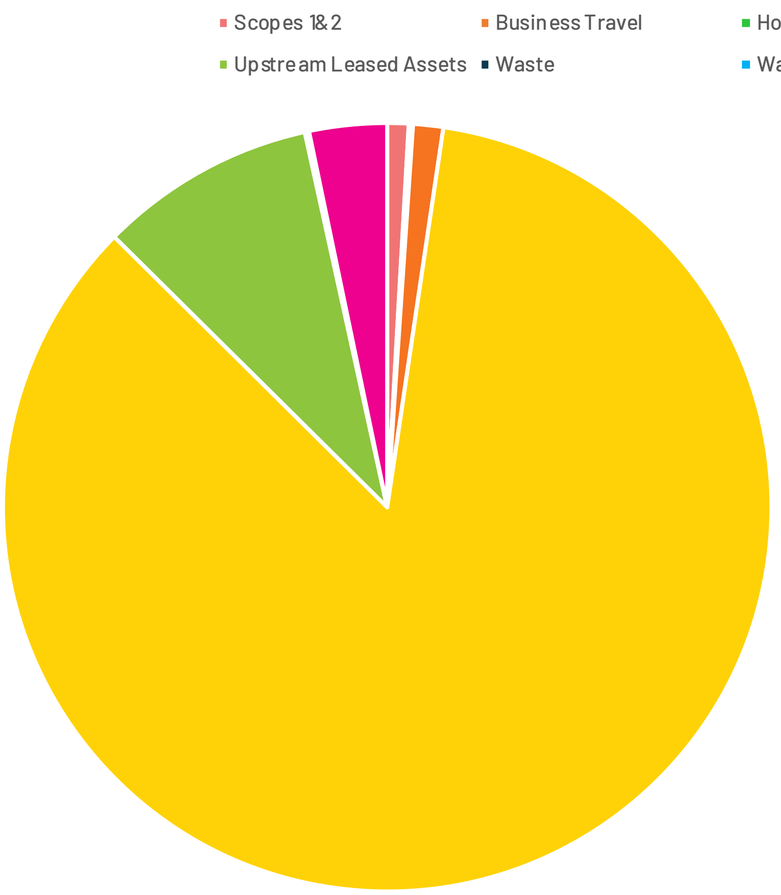


Figure 2. NTSUs Carbon Footprint (tCO2e) Baseline Year 2021-22

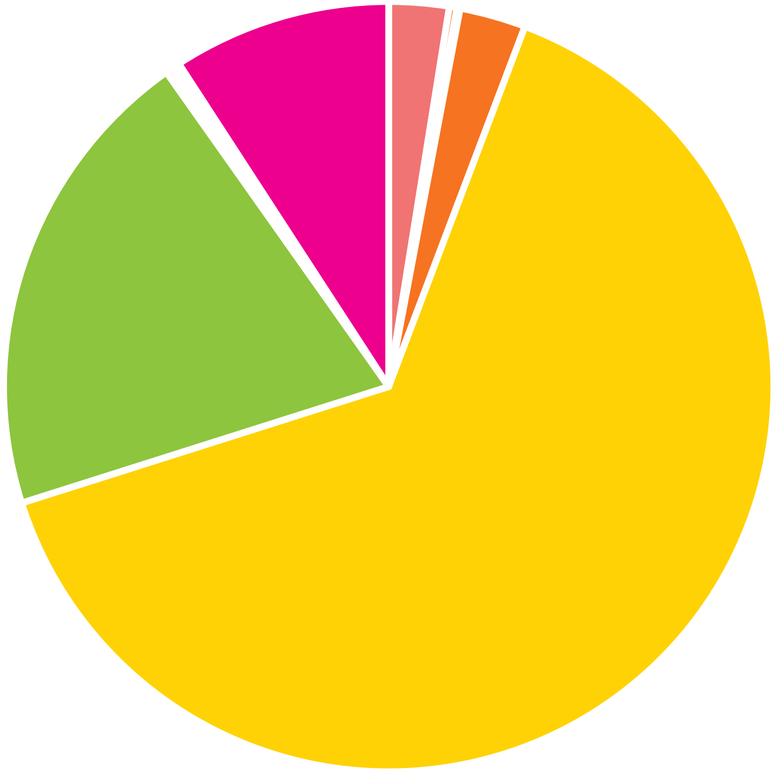


Figure 3. NTSUs Carbon Footprint (tCO2e) 2024-25

In Review

Our overall carbon footprint has increased by 93.3% from our baseline year, which is predominantly attributed to the following reasons:

- Our baseline year was not a 'business as usual' working year as the effects of Covid 19 Pandemic were still being seen. Activity was much lower, and working from home was much higher
- As an organisation our business activity has increased due to higher demands from students, i.e. more events, more on campus activity, and therefore areas such as purchasing within our supply chain have seen large increases
- There has been in total a 13-month gap in the employment of the Sustainability Officer over the previous 2 years, therefore the capacity and resource for implementing reduction strategies has been limited

Carbon

Scopes 1 & 3

Scope 1
Our Scope 1 emissions are formed of emissions from our fleet vehicles and refrigerated usage

Absolute emissions: 19.71 tCO2e

Scope 3
Our Scope 3 emissions are formed of emissions from our business travel, hotel stays, staff commuting, supply chain, upstream leased assets, waste, water, working 'elsewhere', and well-to-tank and distribution.

Absolute emissions: 2182.21 tCO2e

It is evident that our supply chain is our largest emissions area and has increased significantly since our baseline year; due to increased activity requiring more purchasing of goods and services.

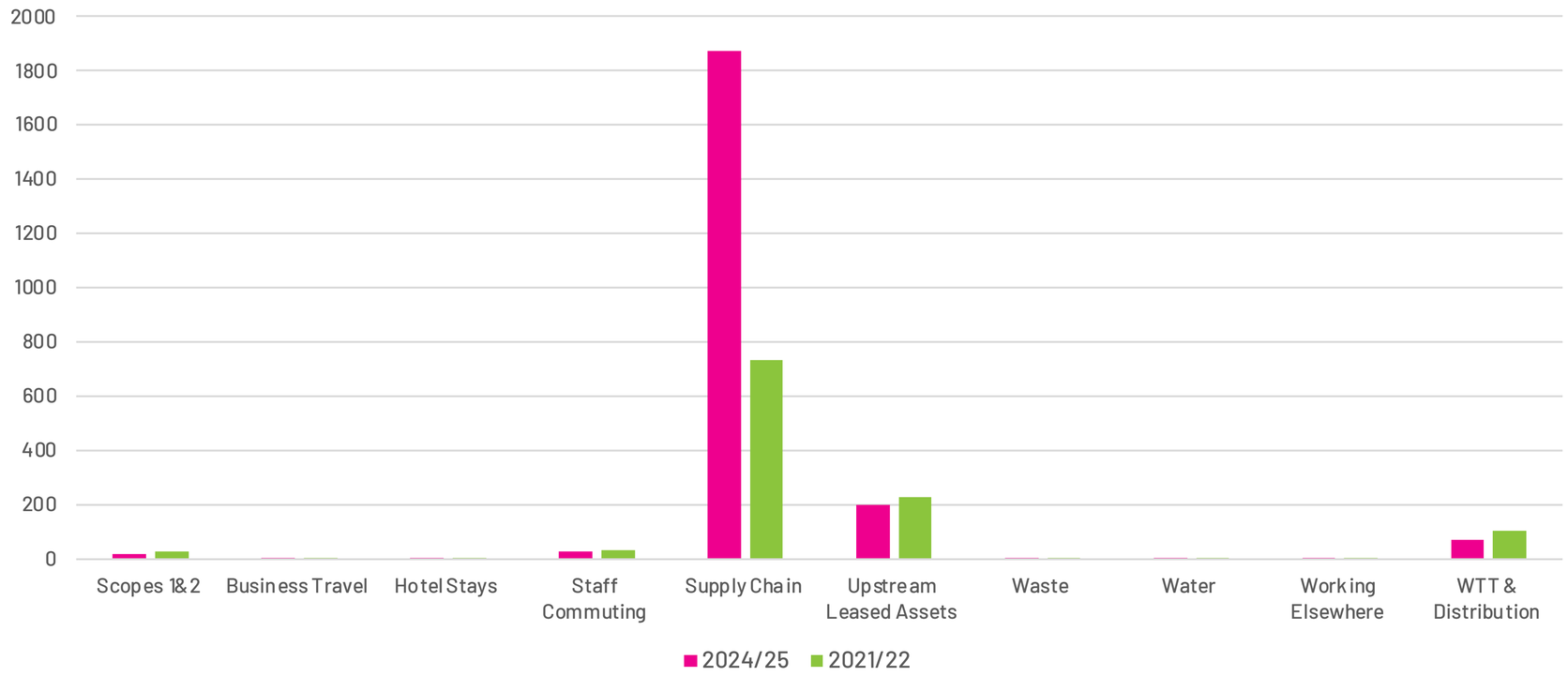


Figure 4. Carbon emissions per activity area for the baseline year (2021 / 22) and this year (2024 / 25)

Carbon

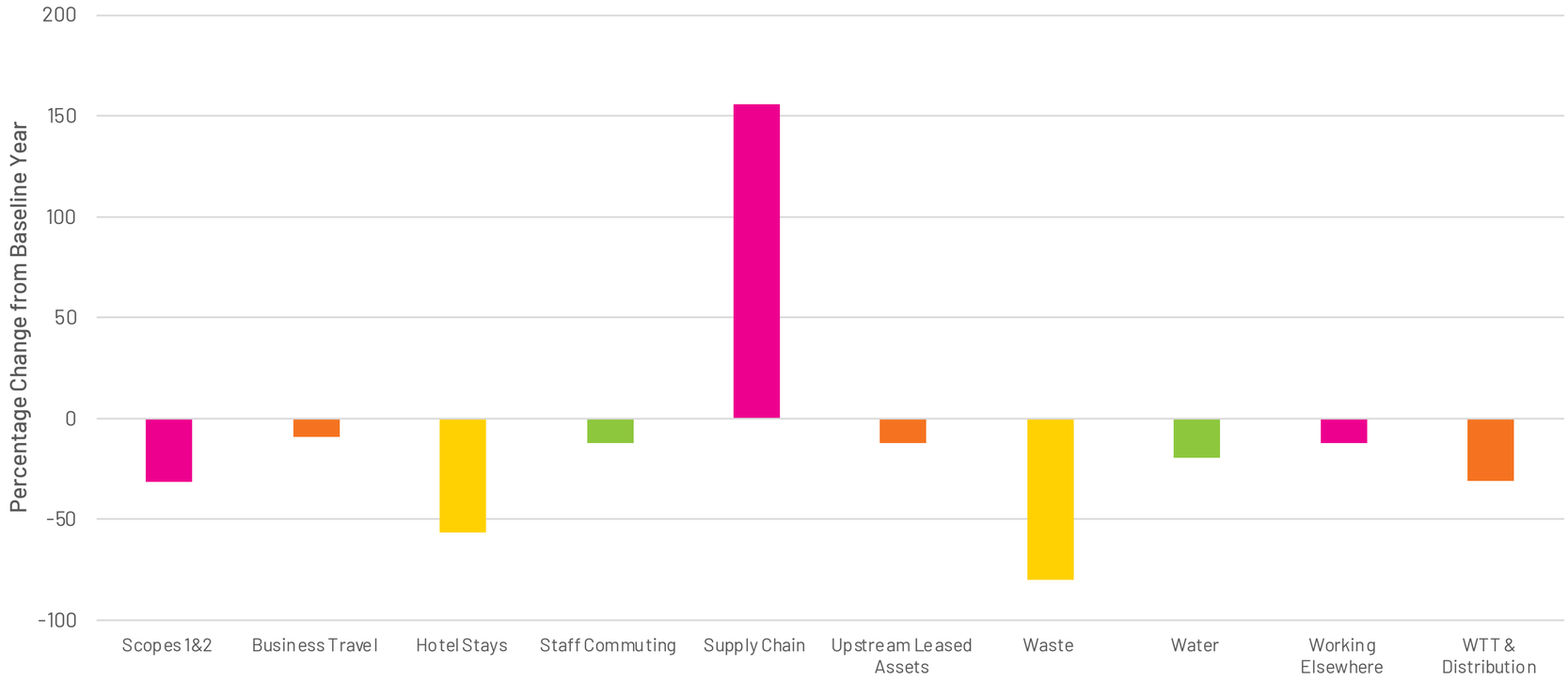


Figure 5. The percentage change for each emission area from our baseline year (2021 / 22) to this year (2024 / 25)

Although the above data shows we have increased our carbon footprint overall, compared to our baseline year, we have made reductions in all emission areas except for our supply chain. Through conscious decisions, we are making positive steps towards reducing our carbon footprint, through encouraging positive staff behaviour and working on our operational activity to reduce negative environmental impact as much as possible.

Next Steps

As we enter into our fifth year of carbon reporting, we are well-positioned to accelerate NTSU's net-zero journey and commit to implement de-carbonisation pathways.

This will begin with investigating ways of de-carbonising our supply chain, and working with our landlords and stakeholders to influence decisions to further reduce our Scope 3 emissions.

For the full report on our carbon footprint for 2024 - 25, please see our **carbon report**.

Behind the Scenes



The work that goes on behind the scenes is not often celebrated through reporting, however this year we have been successful in making large improvement to our operations and fundamental processes.

Through education, better resources, and strong relationships we have been able to implement some very beneficial systems to form a stronger basis for future development.

Waste

There have been two major factors in how we have made advancements in how we manage our waste and the people responsible for it. The first being a change in contractor for our waste collection provider, and the second being a large focus on educating staff about waste within the organisation.

This year saw a change to our waste contractor, from Enva to Veolia. This has resulted in some large changes in the collection and sorting of our waste. One of the benefits is the service Veolia offer in regards to data collection and numerical values of waste composition. We can no more accurately report on the different weights of our waste streams, highlighting which materials we produce more of, meaning clearer data for our carbon foot-printing and target-able areas for intervention.

The other major difference is how Veolia dispose of the waste. Enva had a 97% recycle rate due to reuse of materials, however Veolia have a 100% recycle rate as they use all waste left after reuse for incineration for energy production. This has made a real impact to our carbon footprint as the carbon factor related to incineration is much lower than that of landfill or reuse. This is also positive for the local community as the energy produced gets used within Nottinghamshire, reducing their reliance on fossil fuels.

enva — VEOLIA

Behind the Scenes

CLEAN ENERGY | SUSTAINABLE CITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION | QUALITY EDUCATION

Education

Ensuring our staff and students have sufficient knowledge and understanding to fully engage and contribute to our sustainability work is a key priority for us as an organisation.

This year provided us with the opportunity to invest more time into the training and up-skilling of our staff to help progress our sustainability work forwards.

This year saw the creation of a comprehensive set of training, videos, quizzes, and communication of information to ensure staff have the resources to drive compliance and induce a mindset shift within the organisation. These resources were surrounding waste disposal, handling of hazardous chemicals, and the emergency spill procedure, all helping towards the development of our Environmental Management System. This has allowed further staff involvement in the aims of the sustainability strategy and the requirements of the EMS.

Further to this, staff inductions have been developed to incorporate a sustainability induction to ensure staff are aware of how it relates to their working area, as well as the organisation wide objectives.

Through educating our staff we are able to progress in all areas of the organisation.



Behind the Scenes



NUS Purchasing Consortium

As one of the founding members of the NUS Purchasing Consortium's Sustainable SU's Charter, we are heavily involved in the work that has continued to provide a more sustainable supply chain.

The Sustainable SU's Charter is a group that aims to leverage their purchasing power to drive positive change within the supply chain.

It works off 7 key principles:

- Climate
- Animals
- Workers
- Tax Conduct
- Company Ethos
- Agriculture
- Packaging

These 7 principles are all considered when looking at existing and prospective members of the supply chain controlled by NUS.

Our work on procurement this year has been through the Sustainable SU's Charter as the group work towards their agreed goals. One of the main areas of progress has been focused on the ethical consumer work.

Screenings were completed to pick out key brands that were poor scoring against the credentials, a reporting template has been created for those brands to assess their activity to provide more assistance on how to improve.

The work with the Charter continues and is gradually building a stronger selection of suppliers to ensure our supply chain is working as sustainably as it can.

Influence

SUSTAINABLE CITIES | INNOVATION | PARTNERSHIPS



Our impact extends beyond our own operations. We have a unique opportunity to influence the behaviours, decisions, and priorities of our students, staff, landlords, and the university, helping to create a more sustainable campus and community.

Throughout the year, we have used our voice and partnerships to promote sustainable living, encourage responsible consumption and advocate for environmental action. We have done this through reinventing our website page to provide all visitors with information and advice not just on what we are doing as an organisation but what they can do on an individual level.

Due to being tenants in all of our buildings, we have limited control over our building operations and utilities. Therefore, we continue to work with NTU and UPP (our landlords across our campuses) to influence and encourage alternative processes to reduce our environmental impact.

Being situated in different areas across Nottinghamshire, we also have the power to interact with different communities and groups of people.

This year we have partnered with groups like Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Friends of Colwick Woods, and Nottingham City Council to deliver opportunities not just for our students but also for the local populations.

Volunteer projects have been a major part of this, as well as influential conversations to encourage sustainable behaviour.

We recognise that meaningful change requires collective action, so by continuing to converse, challenge and support key stakeholders, we will use our influence to accelerate progress towards a more sustainable future.

Friends of Colwick Woods

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Nottingham City Council



Influence



“Our biggest success in sustainability would be achieving ISO14001, but also seeing success in the small things, like a power down policy for our screens, managers taking more responsibility, and being more proactive with waste management, because if you don’t have the small things you’ll never get the big things.”

Colin Hutchinson
House Service and Compliance Manager

Staff Story: Colin Hutchinson

We want to provide insight into the staff that make all of this work possible. This staff story is about Colin Hutchinson, our House Service and Compliance Manager.

Day to day, Colin is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of our spaces, all health and safety for the organisation, our fleet of vehicles, and our compliance obligations, however his contribution and dedication to our sustainability work is invaluable.

Colin describe his role as being ‘reactive’, usually responding to the activity of the organisation, although the work he does towards our sustainability goals is very proactive. He has worked tirelessly this year to improve staff training within waste management, increase and improve the bin provisions at all of our campuses, and develop the operational work required to improve our environmental management systems.

Colin was one of the first in the organisation to engage with sustainability, starting with being part of the team to get the first Green Impact Students’ Union award.

Through planting bulbs, putting in bird boxes, and improving the bin provisions, an interest was sparked for Colin in wanting to make the environment we live in better.

Working with all areas of the organisation, Colin is perfectly placed to influence and encourage other members of staff, and has done so through the training and development activities he has created.

We want to celebrate the great work our staff do and looking at individuals like Colin, it makes it clear that our success in sustainability truly is a team effort and would not be possible without collaboration across the organisation.

External Recognition



In 2022 we started our journey towards gaining ISO14001 accreditation, working through the EcoCampus framework.

This year we achieved Gold status, with only Platinum left to become the first SU to be independently accredited with ISO14001.

What is ISO14001

ISO14001 is an internationally recognised Environmental Management System, it provides a framework for organisations to design and implement their EMS to continually improve their environmental performance. An EMS is a system which integrates policy, procedures, and processes that help to control the activities, products, and processes that cause, or could cause, harm to the environment.

By implementing an EMS, NTSU are able to assess and evaluate the impact we are having on the environment and put the appropriate measures and precautions in place to mitigate this as much as possible.

This year

This year we passed the next phase of the process, implementing operational control procedures for our areas of highest environmental impact, developing emergency response procedures to ensure if an event were to occur that could harm the environment we have a plan in place and are prepared.

Implementing an EMS requires a lot of attention to be placed on the operational work of the organisation, therefore the progress is not as obvious as student facing work. However this work builds the foundations for the organisation to progress and develop with as little environmental impact as possible.

Next Steps

The next stage of the process involves implementing continual improvement systems to ensure we are keeping up with compliance requirements, as our activity may change we alter our processes, and we continuously attempt to improve the functioning of the organisation and reduce its negative environmental impact.

As we enter the final phase of the EcoCampus framework, over the next academic year we will have an external audit to assess our EMS against the ISO14001 standard.

In line with our aimed timeframe, this next academic year we should achieve the accreditation and be the first students' union to be independently certified.

Conclusion

This year has seen some positive steps towards concreting the foundations for a sustainable future within the organisation.

Through focusing more on the operations work it allows for our systems and processes to be trusted to have as little negative impact on the environment as possible.

The changes mentioned in this year's report ensure that even the basics of the organisation are looked at through a sustainable lens and propel upwards to allow for staff to ensure a focus is also placed on their day-to-day work.

Our year ahead looks to place more emphasis on the sustainability strategy as it enters its final year for this cycle. With the Sustainability Officer position now filled this should be more attainable.

As we move into a new strategic cycle, both organisation-wide and for sustainability, the following year (2025-26) will see the aims and objectives of the current strategies scrutinised, to assess what has so far been successful and what needs further consideration.

This will help in the following year to design a new sustainability strategy that will be an extension of the organisational strategy to demonstrate the management level commitment and responsibility.

We will be leading more on student and staff engagement to improve all working areas of the organisation.

This will include more focus on of student participation and staff involvement in the sustainability aims of the organisation.

Along with these activities, the following year should see regular reporting return to its aimed time-lines. This has been difficult with the lower capacity, however should be able to become a priority for the year ahead.



NOTTINGHAM TRENT STUDENTS' UNION

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