



Utrecht and the Global Goals

Voluntary Local Review 2023



Gemeente Utrecht

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

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Utrecht is a vibrant city full of opportunities and possibilities. It is a city where many people live and work, and where a significant number of young people grow up and want to study. Moreover, it is a city that is experiencing continuing growth, which will certainly carry into the foreseeable future. We have the responsibility to keep this beautiful city liveable for all those inhabitants in the coming years. However, this task presents a challenge, especially during times of uncertainty and unpredictability. We have seen global social developments and crises have profound effects on the way we live. From the coronavirus pandemic and the climate crisis to the refugee shelter and the war in Ukraine, local and global issues are increasingly intertwined.

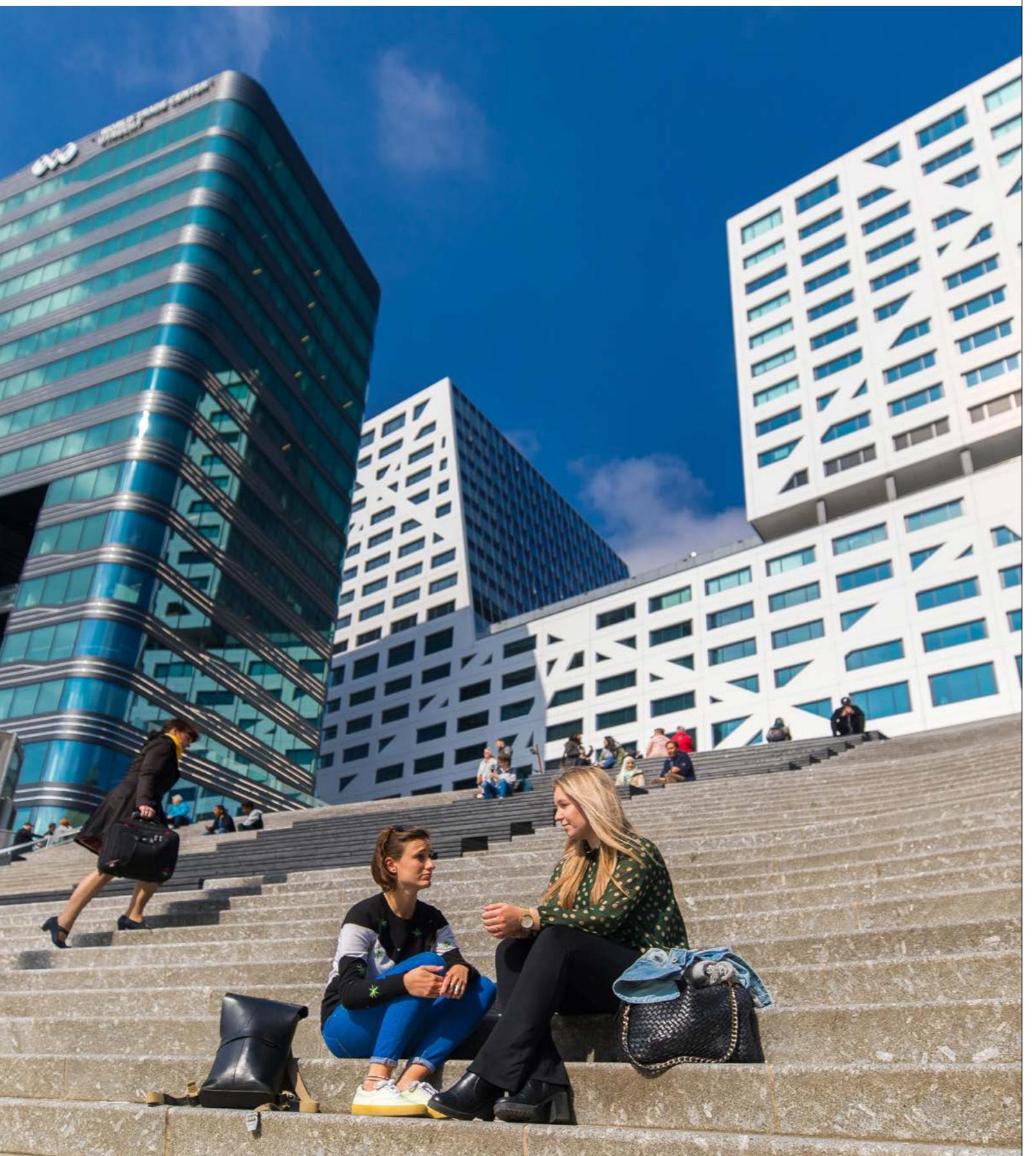
Utrecht is an international city that embraces its responsibility and contribute to the global objectives that the international community has set for 2030 known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As such, it is with great pride that we present this Voluntary Local Review. This report provides an overview of our progress and challenges in areas ranging from education to economic growth and from equity to the energy transition. It also highlights the diverse range of organisations dedicated to shaping the future of Utrecht and creating a sustainable world. It reflects our unwavering commitment to addressing global challenges through collaboration and partnership here in Utrecht.

The strength of the SDGs lies in their ability to connect all levels of government and all sectors. They create a common language for institutions, companies and governments. This report positions Utrecht as an active participant in that global conversation and illustrates how we can achieve these goals together. Moving forward, we will continue to engage in discussions with other cities and institutions around the world to further improve the implementation of the SDGs.

Sharon Dijksma
Mayor

Introduction





Utrecht holds the distinction of being the second oldest city in the Netherlands. In 2022, we celebrated the 900th anniversary of our city rights. But old doesn't mean static. In Europe, Utrecht is one of the most competitive regions. The city's many knowledge institutes, study programmes and companies exert a great attraction on young and old. As a result, Utrecht is a lively, rapidly growing city with a thriving economy and a great diversity of inhabitants (representing 172 nationalities). Furthermore, Utrecht serves as a crucial hub within the national and international network of expressways, railways and waterways.

As early as 1713, Utrecht played a connecting role. The signing of the 'Treaty of Utrecht' marked the end of a century and a half of war and contention around the Spanish succession wars. For a year and a half, Utrecht received delegations from many European nations to bring this treaty to a successful conclusion. The Treaty of Utrecht or 'Paix d'Utrecht' was a turning point in global history. It finally established a balance of power and ushered in the longest period of peace that Europe has known. In this way, our city stood at the cradle of modern Europe.

Between 1970 and 1990, the population of Utrecht experienced a significant decline of almost 50,000 people. This period saw vacancy and decay, with parts of the Lombok district even facing the prospect of demolition. The city's design shifted focus to accommodating machines rather than people, evident in the parking of cars on Neude square and the filling in of the canal to make way for a motorway. Little attention was paid to greenery, health, quality of life and a vibrant living environment. However, the situation has changed drastically: Utrecht residents now overwhelmingly desire to continue living in the city, leading to rapid growth from 340,000 inhabitants to a projected 400,000 by 2030. Healthy urban living for all is at the heart of the policy.

Utrecht often ranks high on various lists. For instance, it holds the second position on the housing attractiveness index and socio-economic index in the 'Atlas for municipalities'. And yet, based on broad prosperity scores, the city also has metropolitan problems such as above-average income inequality, unemployment and a relatively high crime rate. This also translates into major differences between neighbourhoods and social groups, affecting, for example, income, livelihood security, health, development and opportunities for prosperity. The COVID pandemic and energy crisis have only further increased these differences in the city.

To prevent the further increase of these disparities, Utrecht will invest more heavily in vulnerable groups, aligning directly with the Leave No-One Behind principle that underpins the SDG agenda. In 2016, Utrecht declared itself a 'Global Goals City', using the SDGs as a common framework to facilitate broad involvement and participation of stakeholders in the city. The city creates and supports coalitions with local parties, including companies, NGOs and knowledge institutions, to tackle international challenges in the field of sustainable development. This VLR serves as a testament to how Utrecht operates within an international context, leveraging its local strategy to make a positive contribution. As we reach the halfway point in the SDGs timeline, it is an opportune moment to assess the progress achieved thus far.

2

Overview by goal



1 NO POVERTY



2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Around 14.4% of households have an income at or below the Utrecht poverty line, and 5.9% of children live in poverty. However, the number of households with problematic debts has been decreasing. To tackle poverty, Utrecht implements initiatives such as the U-pass, household book, and a debt action plan.

About 8% of adults are severely overweight. The food bank distributes more than 600 food parcels each week to families struggling to make ends meet. The municipality is working on a healthy food environment and is investigating the possibilities for controlling healthy food supply.

The average life expectancy at birth in Utrecht is 81.3 years, but there are clear differences in health between Utrecht residents. Residents who have difficulties making ends meet and Utrecht residents who have only completed primary or a secondary vocational education are increasingly disadvantaged in terms of health. The municipality employs targeted measures in lifestyle and living environment to address these disparities.

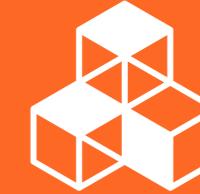
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Since 2015, CO₂ emissions have decreased, despite the growth of the city. Each inhabitant emitted 2,948 kg of CO₂ per year in 2021. The municipality is working to ensure that all homes and businesses are free of natural gas by 2050. Relatively speaking, Utrecht has the most electric passenger cars in the Netherlands.

In 2022, the Utrecht metropolitan area experienced a 4% growth in its economy, despite existing uncertainties. Utrecht has a very tight labour market for most professional groups. However, the general unemployment rate did fall to 3.5% of the labour force in 2022.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



There are significant differences between neighbourhoods in Utrecht regarding advice in primary education, with some neighbourhoods with a lower socio-economic status generally receiving a lower recommendation. In recent years, the share of young people in Utrecht with a basic qualification or current school enrolment has fallen slightly. Here, too there are large

differences in neighbourhoods. The employment rate of women is still 10% lower than that of men. More than half of the members of the city board and the city council are women and half of the managers in the municipal organisation are women. Violence against women and street harassment continue to show an increasing trend.

All residents of Utrecht have access to clean water and sanitation. At 120 litres per person per day, water consumption in the city is higher than the national average. In the coming years, a lot of sewerage will be replaced, aligning with measures in the field of climate adaptation.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



There are major differences between the districts in the city. The Gini coefficient for Utrecht is 0.29, meaning income inequality is similar to the national average in the Netherlands. Due to such disparities in wealth, health and happiness throughout the city, the municipality is committed to investing unequally to ensure equal opportunities in the coming years.

The housing stock grew by 1.7% in 2022. However, the demand for housing is many times greater than the supply. Due to long waiting times in the social rental sector, high rents on the free market and expensive owner-occupied homes, living in Utrecht is becoming less and less accessible to households with a low or average income.

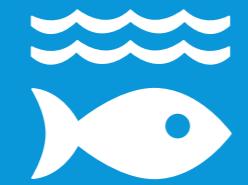
In 2022, the amount of household residual waste, including separately collected streams such as glass, paper, plastic, and organic waste, was 375 kg per inhabitant. This marks a decrease of 38 kg compared to 2021. However, it remains significantly lower than the national average of 502 kg per inhabitant. Around 46% of all household waste collected is separated for recycling.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Utrecht is prone to rainfall and heat stress and to a lesser extent to drought and flooding. The municipality implements greening measures to reduce vulnerabilities. Additionally, residents contribute through initiatives such as green roofs, facade gardens, and the removal of tiles.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Utrecht makes its contribution to the improvement of marine life by means of the fish doorbell. This innovative system enables migratory fish to reach the Kromme Rijn via the Weerdschluis.

15 LIFE ON LAND



In total, the municipality manages 3,347 hectares of public space. Of this public space, 37% is green and 21% is water. The municipality monitors the 'Big 30'; a list of species that live in Utrecht and that are decisive for nature in the city.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



The safety perception of Utrecht residents has been stable for years. In 2021, 30% of Utrecht residents felt unsafe in their own neighbourhood. The overall crime rates in the municipality of Utrecht and in the central Netherlands region is falling faster than the national average. However, there are about 50 criminal partnerships active in the city.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Through the Heel Utrecht U campaign, Utrecht fosters partnerships within the city to contribute to the SDGs. The city also works with other cities at national and international level to achieve its ambitions in the field of healthy urban living for all.



Enabling environment

3





The municipality has adopted various strategies for a sustainable future for the city. These strategies cover different themes such as mobility, circular economy, and greening, as well as integrated approaches like the Spatial Strategy Utrecht 2040 (RSU). The RSU outlines the municipality's ambitions for addressing the major challenges faced by the city, both now and in the future. The overarching goal of all policies is to achieve 'Healthy urban living for all'.

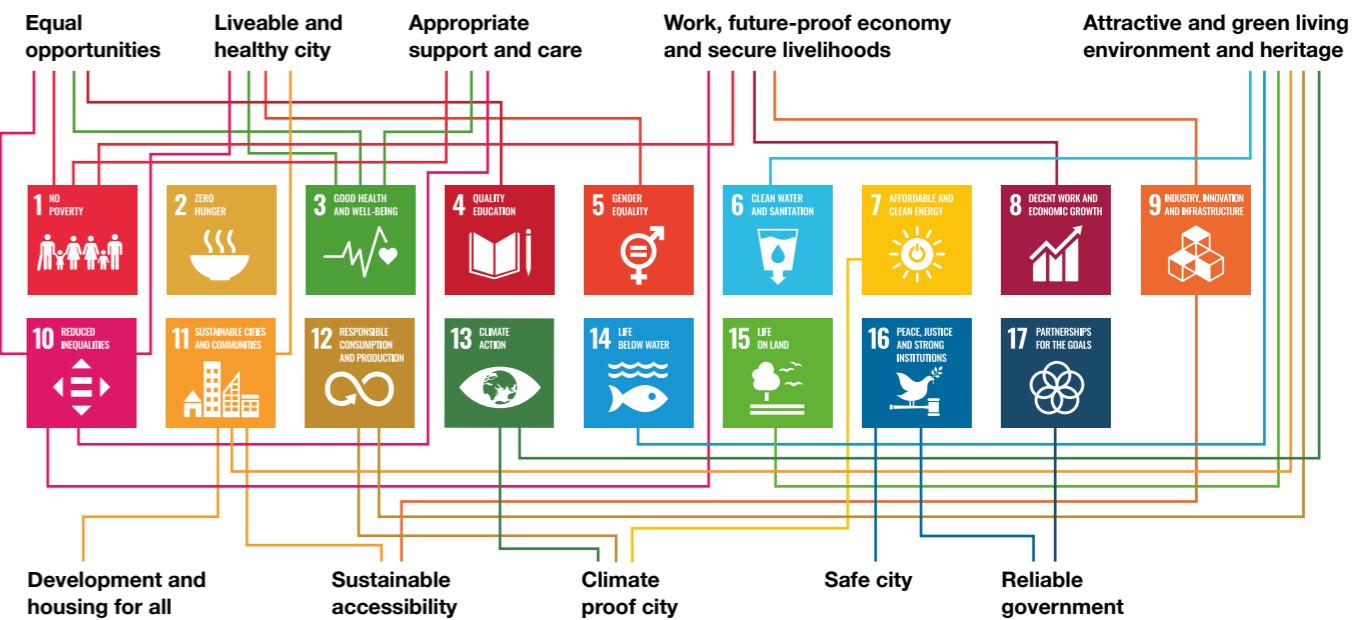


Visit the dashboard

Global Goals city

In 2016, Utrecht declared itself a 'Global Goals City' with a strong involvement of civil society as an important starting point. Utrecht uses the SDGs as a common framework to facilitate broad involvement and participation of stakeholders in the city. The city creates and supports coalitions with local parties, including companies, NGOs and knowledge institutions, to tackle international challenges in the field of sustainable development. Several council members have 'adopted' a particular SDG that they are actively committed to. In addition, Utrecht supports local partners and citizen initiatives, aiming to raise awareness and inspire action at local level. With the HeelUtrechtU campaign, the municipality wants to encourage as many residents as possible to contribute to achieving the SDGs. The campaign is carried out by the Utrecht 4 Global Goals foundation, which is committed to bringing the SDGs to local attention and inspiring residents, social organisations and the business community to be actively involved. To track progress on the SDGs, Utrecht uses the 'Healthy living for everyone in perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals' dashboard. This dashboard monitors Utrecht's advancements in line with the 17 sustainable development goals and the city's

Figure 3.1 | Municipal programs in relation to the SDGs



most important tasks. This VLR is a snapshot and an interpretation of the facts and figures in the Utrecht Monitor and the SDG dashboard.

Healthy urban living for all

Utrecht is committed to fostering a 'healthy urban living environment' for all its residents by working together with various stakeholders and focusing on areas such as sustainable energy, accessible healthcare, housing, accessibility, equal opportunities, greenery, work and digitisation (figure above). Healthy urban living for all is also about creating an environment in which sustainable and innovative entrepreneurship can flourish and projects can emerge. By pursuing these objectives, Utrecht contributes to the SDGs on an international scale. Similar to the SDGs, building a healthy city for all requires an integrated, interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach. This approach aligns with existing policies in Utrecht, making it easier to incorporate these goals into ongoing initiatives. The SDGs provide an international language and an opportunity to share knowledge and contribute to a shared global agenda. For example, Utrecht actively collaborates with other cities worldwide to develop innovative solutions that promote greener, more liveable and healthier urban environments for everyone.

Unequal investment for equal opportunities

Utrecht wants to be a city that promotes Healthy Urban Living for Everyone. But to truly be a city for all, something has to be done about the growing inequality of opportunity. To tackle this issue, the city has partnered with the Equal Opportunities Alliance and made equal opportunities a pillar in the Utrecht Education Agenda. Furthermore, the Promising Start programme is aimed at providing children an equal chance for a positive beginning during their first 1000 days of life. Additionally, efforts are being made to implement the Participation Act, combat poverty, address debt and fight discrimination on the housing market. But because of the persistence of this issue, the city is opting for a firmer commitment by investing unequally for equal opportunities.

Unequal Investment for Equal Opportunities is one of the key objectives outlined in the coalition agreement for 2022-2026. This approach ensures that resources are directed towards the people who need them most, mainly those in a vulnerable position and especially young people, as a good start in life can have lifelong benefits. Social and spatial issues are intertwined in this endeavour, with emphasis on creating a pleasant

and secure living environment, providing adequate facilities, ensuring quality education, facilitating internships and job opportunities, and addressing mental and overall health. This principle is intended to be applied across all policies, ensuring that funds allocated to education, security, and livelihood predominantly focus on reducing inequality. In addition, it also means that there is specific attention for neighbourhoods and communities where things are not going well.

Utrecht is actively working on improving conditions in six neighbourhoods to give residents better opportunities. Neighbourhood agendas are being developed to prioritise the unique needs of these areas. These neighbourhoods often face greater than average hardships, including higher poverty rates. With the neighbourhood agendas, Utrecht has dedicated itself to paying extra attention to these neighbourhoods for several years. Together with residents, entrepreneurs, and local organisations, the city creates a neighbourhood agenda that consists of clear, actionable ideas generated by the residents themselves. These initiatives benefit a larger group, the entire neighbourhood, or the community as a whole. Anyone who wishes to participate is encouraged to do so.



SDGs in detail

4



This chapter provides an overview of all SDGs, from SDG1 to SDG17. However, it's important to note that not all SDGs receive equal treatment in this report, mainly because some SDGs contain many sub-targets and indicators, while others include only a few. The purpose of this VLR is to report on local indicators that are relevant to local policy. Consequently, some goals, sub-goals, and indicators may have a less direct local connection – particularly SDGs 2, 5 and 14. The report will assess the progress of each target based on the indicators set out in Annex 3. Additionally, a selection of initiatives in the city that contribute to the SDGs will be highlighted to provide concrete examples.



1 No poverty



SDG 1 aims to reduce poverty in all its forms. This concerns both financial aspects and the impact poverty has on people's lives. While the poverty problem in the Netherlands is of a different order compared to the poorest countries, here too people run the risk of (relative) poverty. The latest income and debt data from Statistics Netherlands (CBS) are from 2020, while more recent research comes from the Residents Survey conducted at the end of 2021. However, there are annual figures available for 2022 regarding benefits, social assistance and various schemes.

Poverty reduction (1.2)

Households with a minimum income

Utrecht has had its own poverty line for years, which is 125% of the statutory social minimum (WSM). The percentage of households in Utrecht living at or below this threshold has increased slightly in recent years, to 14.4% in 2021. The share of low-income households in Utrecht (15%) is close to the national share (14%), with other major cities having a higher share of low-income households.

The proportion of Utrecht children growing up in poverty is declining slightly. In 2015, 7.2% of Utrecht children still lived in households with an income of up to 101% of the WSM. In 2021, this fell to 5.6%, compared to 4.9% in the Netherlands as a whole. Approximately 2.3% of children in Utrecht (1,500 children) grow up in a household that rely on long-term income support, and this figure has remained relatively stable in recent years.

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Online dashboard



Poverty and health

Approximately 5% of Utrecht residents indicate that they struggle to meet their household expenses. This is a decrease compared to 7% in 2019. Certain groups, such as residents with a disability (13%), residents with a basic or prevocational (VMBO) education (13%) and single-parent families (9%) are more likely to have trouble making ends meet than other groups. Individuals who express difficulties in managing their income are less likely to participate in society, score lower on personal and social well-being and experience more health problems. Adults who have difficulty making ends meet are two to three times more likely to have mental health problems and are more prone to chronic physical conditions. Children who grow up in a family with a lower level of prosperity are also more likely to have poorer health.

Debts

Overall, 6.3% of all households had registered debt in 2021 (compared to 7% in 2019) (Figure 1.1). This percentage is lower than the national

average in the Netherlands and that of the other major cities. However, the decline in the share of households with problematic debts in Utrecht has been slower than the national average between 2015 and 2022. The share of residents who have to deal with problematic debts (6%) is considerably higher among people on benefits, those with an education at primary or prevocational (VMBO) level and those with a senior general secondary education (HAVO), pre-university (VWO) or vocational (MBO) education and with an income below €1,700 per month. If we look at the figures, it is also striking that households with children are more likely to have problematic debts. It also appears that debt burdens tend to increase with residents' age (Figure 1.2).

Financial problems are concentrated in the Overvecht and Kanaleneiland areas, where an accumulation of problems can be seen (Figure 1.3). These areas also have the highest share of households relying on income support as their main source of income. Overvecht stands out with the highest proportion of households with



debts (14%). The share of households with debt is also higher than average in Southwest (8.7%) and Northwest (8.1%).

Support for the vulnerable (1.3 & 1.4)

In 2021, the number of residents receiving benefits fell by almost a fifth, from 38,220 to 31,110. This number further decreased to 27,160 in 2022, representing a 13% decline compared to 2021 ([Figure 1.4](#)). The decline was particularly significant for unemployment benefits, which dropped by 25%. The number of households receiving income support is also declining. The number of people receiving disability benefits has remained stable at around 13,250 for several years, with a slight increase to 13,670 in 2022. The proportion of residents relying on national benefits, such as unemployment or disability benefits, is 76.5 per 1000 inhabitants, which is lower than the national average of 91.7 per 1000 inhabitants. Compared to other cities in the Netherlands, this number is very low.

Energy poverty (1.5)

Rising energy prices are a major problem in

Utrecht, as they are throughout the Netherlands. According to TNO, there were over 9,000 households experiencing energy poverty in Utrecht in 2019, accounting for approximately 5.2% of all households. This figure was projected to increase to 5.7% in 2022. Energy poverty mainly occurs in households with poorly insulated homes including tenants who depend on landlords for energy-saving measures and homeowners with limited financial resources to implement such measures. About 75% of energy-poor households live in homes owned by housing corporations, while roughly 12% own their home and a similar percentage rent privately. Households affected by energy poverty are more likely to live in Overvecht, Northwest and Southwest.

Policy (1.b)

The city aims to reduce the number of residents with low income and problematic debts to provide them with better opportunities. The Participation Act gives municipalities the opportunity to implement local poverty policies. Through a poverty monitor the city keeps track



of and maps the different resident groups living in poverty. The main goals are to develop a just city with equal opportunities for all citizens and provide a better standard of living for residents in low-income households by reducing poverty and debt.

In 2019, Utrecht launched a comprehensive plan to address resident debts as much as possible. Under the motto 'Intervene much earlier, provide tailored help and stay out of debt', some 40 initiatives have been taken up during the 2019-2022 period. For example, early detection measures were implemented to reach individuals before their debts become unmanageable and provide them with professional assistance. The municipality extends an offer of help to all people that are flagged for potential debt issues. In 2021, 12,100 households were approached for early detection, increasing to 14,579 in 2022 (compared to about 1,200 in 2020). In addition, the eligibility criteria for debt assistance have been lowered, while the process has also been streamlined and debt assistance registration is now removed shortly after completion. In 2022,

about 1,100 households had initial conversations about debt assistance, and debt settlement procedures were initiated for 654 residents.

Poverty is alleviated by various schemes that residents can apply for. Low-income residents can claim special assistance and are eligible for the individual income supplement in the event of long-term poverty. In addition, they can also benefit from the U-pass and the U-policy. In 2022, a total of 39,914 Utrecht residents had a U-pass. The U-pass is a free pass for people with low incomes. It enables families to participate in sports and cultural activities and offers discounts at museums, cinemas and tourist attractions. Each U-pass includes a personal credit that you can spend on all kinds of activities. Additionally, the U-pass regularly grants discounts on designated activities, such as library subscriptions or visits to the theatre or cinema.

Good practices

De Geldzaak

Everyone in the city of Utrecht can visit De Geldzaak free of charge. There are walk-in consultation hours at four locations throughout the city where residents can discuss their questions or concerns about money with an expert employee. Together, they can review income accuracy, for example, and check whether people are making use of provisions to which they are entitled. The employee provides tailored information and support. No personal data is collected, and all contact with the employee is confidential.

Ubuntuhuis

Ubuntuhuis is a welcoming, small-scale facility in Utrecht that serves and employs individuals who have experienced or are currently facing homelessness, poverty and social isolation. Together they organise various activities both indoors and outdoors, ranging from cooking and an included lunch, theatre workshops, music, gardening, sports, and discussion groups centred around Dutch culture, reflection, and sharing experiences. Utrecht boasts a vibrant network of assistance and day care services for people in poverty, and Ubuntuhuis aims to offer additional value through its cultural-social approach. Established in 2010 as a small-scale citizens' initiative, Ubuntuhuis collaborates closely with individuals who have personal experience with homelessness, poverty, and social exclusion.

Poverty Coalition Utrecht

Founded in 2009, the Poverty Coalition Utrecht has seen an increasing number of partners joining its cause. Together they are committed to reducing poverty and combating social exclusion. The Poverty Coalition Utrecht unites large organizations, grassroots initiatives, aid providers, advocates, and individuals with relevant practical experience. The aim is to improve the position of those with limited financial means and address social exclusion.





Figure 1.1 | Registered problematic debts

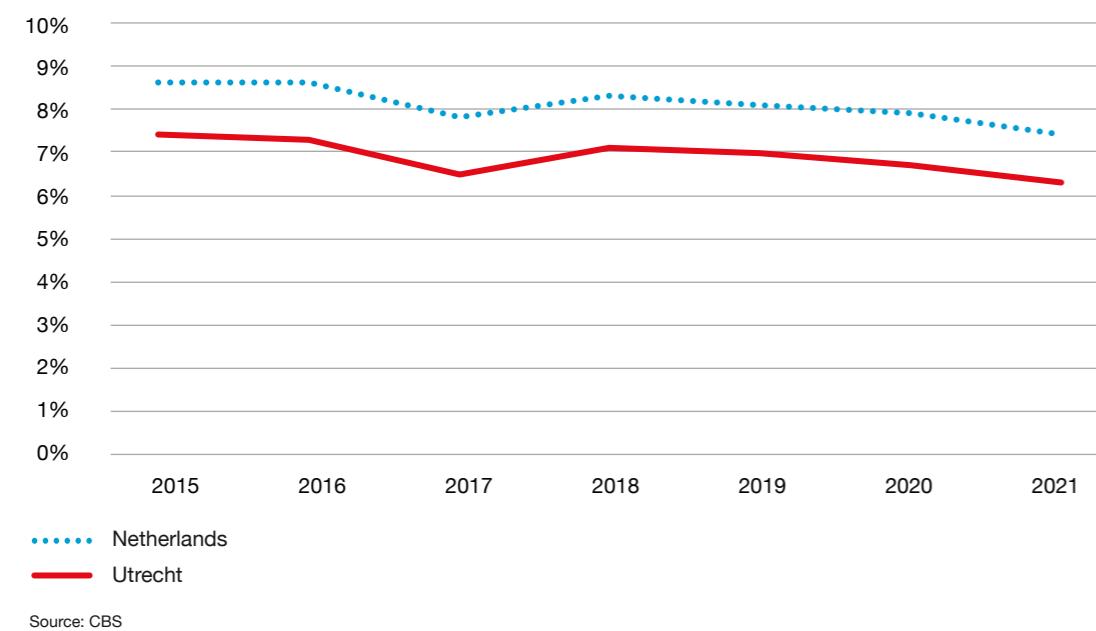


Figure 1.3 | Share of household with income < 125% WSM

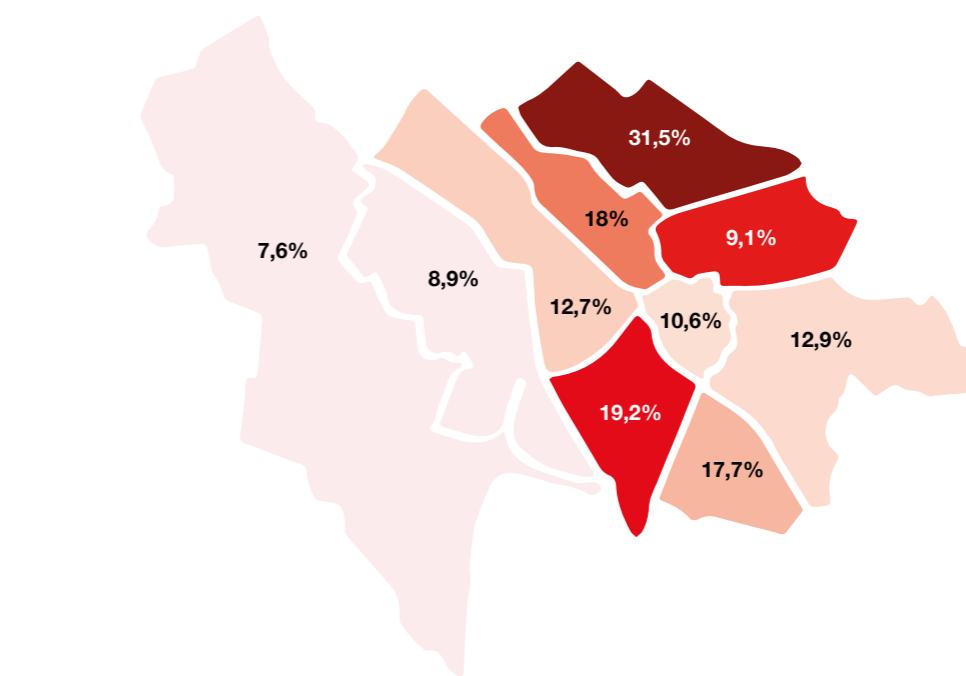


Figure 1.2 | Share of inhabitants with debts per characteristic

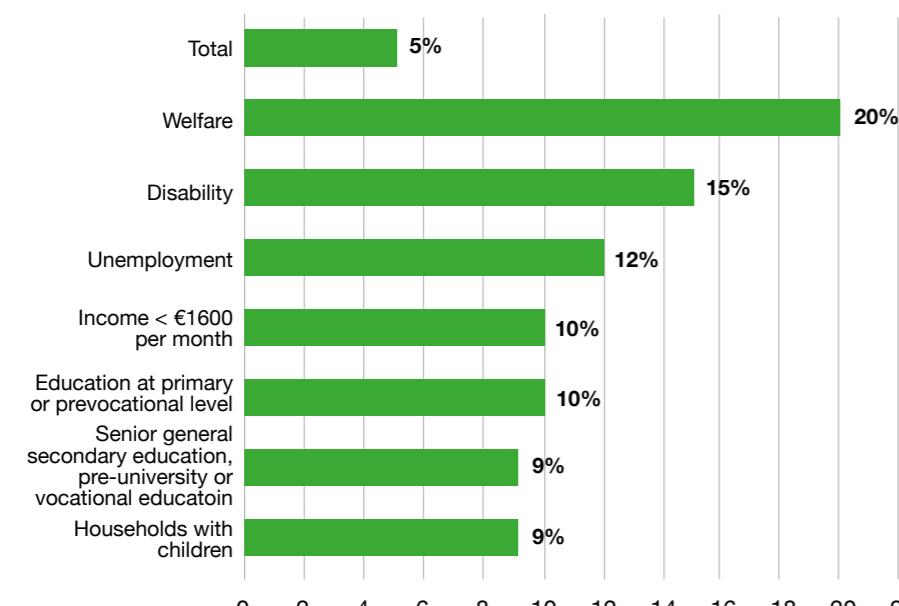
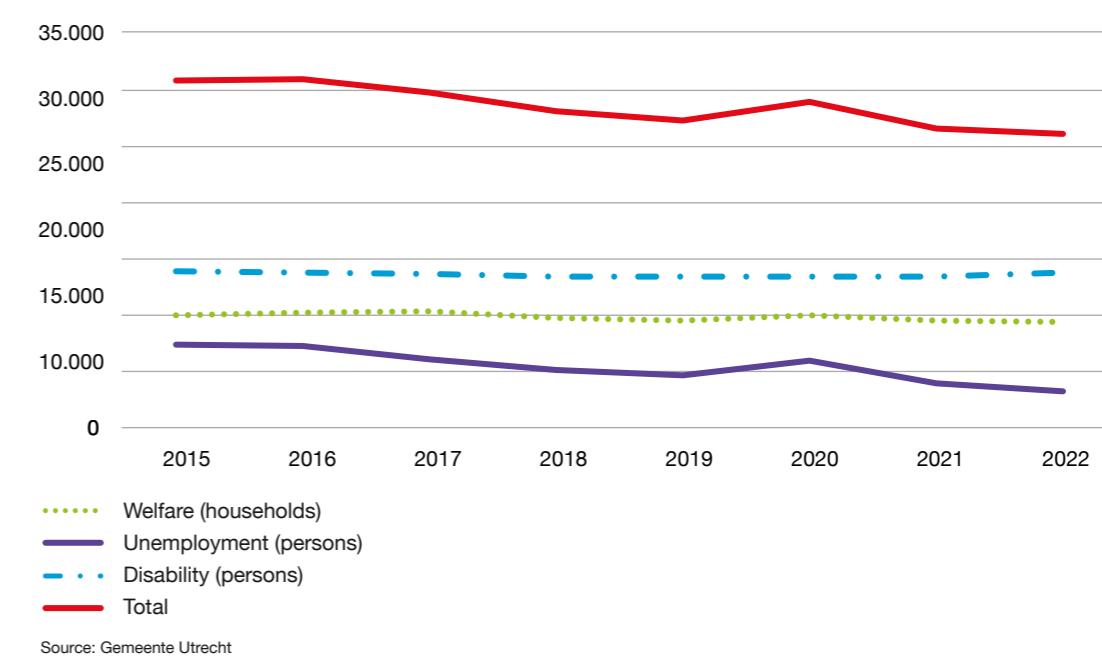


Figure 1.4 | Benefits provided





2 Zero hunger



This goal is related to the different aspects of food production and food security. The Utrecht region is home to companies that produce, process, package, store and transport food. However, the majority of the food consumed by residents in the Utrecht region is sourced from outside the area, including the Netherlands, Europe, and other global regions. Only a small portion, up to 5%, of the food consumed by Utrecht residents is locally sourced within the region.

Food insecurity (2.1 & 2.2)

Food insecurity is an important issue in Utrecht. The share of residents who eat breakfast five days a week has decreased to 84%. In total, 2% of Utrecht residents are underweight – weighing less than is considered healthy – while more than a third of adults in Utrecht are overweight, with 8% being classified as obese. Across different age groups, variations in overweight rates can be observed based on level of education, type of education and migration background. Among 5/6-year-olds, 20% of children in special education are overweight compared to 9% in regular education.

At the food bank, more and more food packages are distributed every year – currently more than 600 per week. The food bank focuses specifically on people who live at or around the social minimum and are in financial distress (SDG1). The city provides housing support to the food bank.

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Online dashboard



Sustainable food systems (2.4)

The figures show a shift in the type of food providers in Utrecht. The number of lunchrooms and restaurants is showing a significant increase, while the number of fresh food shops is falling sharply. This development is also reflected around schools and aligns with a general trend towards more convenience food and eating out.

In the Utrecht Food Agenda, the municipality has formulated six principles for the future vision of food:

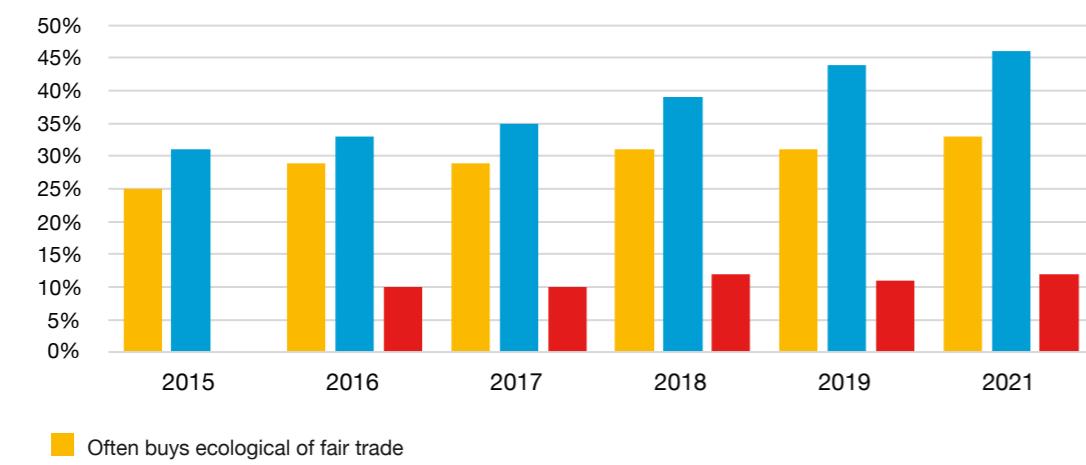
- enhancing awareness of healthy, sustainable, and affordable food for everyone
- providing a healthy, sustainable, and affordable food supply
- implementing smart grids for successful food systems
- developing the concept of an edible city
- promoting connections between farmers and citizens
- fostering a circular food chain

Through the City Deal Healthy and Sustainable Food Environment, Utrecht collaborates with other cities and the central government to create a healthy food environment. Furthermore, the city is exploring municipal regulatory options for ensuring a healthy food supply (SDG3). In this context, Utrecht encourages the creation of food forests and food gardens. A pilot project in Cartesius aims to introduce various food-related facilities, including a food hall and supermarket, as well as food offerings in public spaces. Engaging in sessions with potential supermarket entrepreneurs, experts, and stakeholders from schools and sports halls, the municipality learns how to guide area developments towards a healthier food environment. The experiences gained in Utrecht and other cities will be valuable for potential new legislation that may restrict the availability of unhealthy food near schools, for example.



Eight out of ten Utrecht residents sometimes buy fair trade or organic products to contribute to environmental conservation and energy-saving efforts (figure 2.1). This share is higher than in all previous years. Additionally, 42% sometimes buy fruit and vegetables from urban agriculture or grow them in their own (vegetable) garden. The share of Utrecht residents trying to save energy and contribute to environmental conservation through these means was higher in 2021 than in previous years. More than eight in ten (84%) Utrecht residents indicate that they choose to either eat no meat or less meat to reduce their environmental impact and conserve energy with some regularity, ranging from ‘sometimes’ to ‘often’. This share is higher than it has ever been, rising from 67% in 2014.

Figure 2.1 | Fair trade, ecological and urban agriculture



Source: Inwonersenquête

Good practices

Edible district Rijnvliet

Residents of the Rijksstraatweg and the Metaalkathedraal came up with the idea of creating a food forest in the new Rijnvliet district. To this end, they collaborated with the municipality to develop a concept for the public space called the ‘edible residential area’. All plants in the area are carefully selected to provide benefits to nature, with a focus on planting edible plants and trees. New residents in Rijnvliet are also encouraged to plant edible plants in public spaces and in their own gardens. The developer of the first houses in this area has incorporated edible hedges in gardens bordering the public space. Rijnvliet will also have a central food forest spanning 15,000 m².



Food garden Overvecht

Since 2016, a communal vegetable garden of 1,200 m² has been located in the heart of Overvecht. Local residents, students, entrepreneurs and clients of social organisations come together to grow organic fruit and vegetables. The garden serves as a social gathering place, and everyone involved in the garden shares in the harvest. Furthermore, the food garden is also working to build a local sustainable and fair brand known as ProefLOKAAL Overvecht, which encompasses the entire chain from food production to consumption. Vegetables grown in the garden are sold to caterers, restaurants and cooking groups in the district.



3 Good health and well-being



Good health is vital for people. SDG 3 includes a number of sub-goals aimed at making specific contributions to overall good health. The Public Health Monitor Utrecht permanently monitors the health of all Utrecht residents – from young to old and those in vulnerable situations. It also maps out the factors that influence health.

Health inequalities in Utrecht remain significant (Figure 3.1). The healthy life expectancy at birth is fifteen years shorter for residents of Overvecht than it is for residents of Northeast Utrecht. Similarly, it is twelve years shorter than the expectancy in Northwest and eleven years shorter than the expectancy for Southwest. This pattern is also evident in the perceived health across districts. Health inequalities are

hardly reduced. Mortality around birth from 24 weeks of pregnancy in Utrecht is slightly higher than the national average but lower than that of Rotterdam and The Hague. In Overvecht and Zuidwest, the number of infants who die around birth is 1.5 to 2 times higher than the Utrecht average.

The segmentation of districts is related to the average income of individuals and households. Overvecht, in particular, has a higher concentration of households living at or below the social minimum. Due to limited affordable housing options, vulnerable groups tend to be concentrated in Overvecht, whereas they are less prevalent in the Inner City or East districts. More than 80% of Utrecht's youth and adults feel healthy which aligns with the city's demographics of a large population in their twenties and thirties, and a significant percentage of residents with a college or university education. However, nearly 20% (46,000) of adults in Utrecht feel unhealthy, often encompassing multiple health issues.

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Online dashboard



In Utrecht, certain groups are more prone to health problems or an unhealthy lifestyle. These include people with primary education, junior or senior secondary vocational education (LBO or VMBO), and those facing financial difficulties (SDG1). Over the past ten to fifteen years, health disparities between these groups and others have grown. What's more, they also face additional challenges related to underlying factors contributing to poor health, such as unfavourable living conditions or limited (health) skills. The health gap is also widening for children in single-parent families. While these groups are distributed throughout the city, they are overrepresented in neighbourhoods like Northwest, Overvecht, South and Southwest. Through the Public Health policy 2019-2023 'Health for everyone', the municipality aims to ensure that a healthy urban life is accessible to everyone. This policy approach revolves around the concept of 'positive health', which focuses on how well residents can cope with their circumstances. In doing so, the municipality acknowledges the impact of factors like financial concerns on people's ability to maintain their health.

Mental health (3.4)

The figures on mental health and sleep highlight the need for a firm commitment. The mental well-being of children, young people and young adults is particularly concerning. Between 2019 and 2021, there was a decline in mental health among some children and young people. In 2022, 22% of young adults experienced moderate to severe mental health problems. They faced various health issues that can be indicative of compromised mental well-being, such as difficulty concentrating and symptoms of depression. More than half of all young adults frequently feel stressed, while 46% of young people often experience stress. Sleep problems and fatigue occur across all age groups. Children are increasingly experiencing poor sleep and feeling tired more frequently. Among young people, 39% suffer from fatigue. Among adults, 43% have difficulty sleeping, and the figure rises to 46% among the elderly.

Drug use (3.5)

Furthermore, drug use seems to be normalised among young adults, with one in three



considering drug use at home as normal. In the survey 19% of young adults indicated that they had used hard drugs in the past four weeks. Other substance use also demands attention. 30% of fourth-grade youth have consumed alcohol in the past four weeks, an increase from 25% in 2019. Among young adults, 29% are heavy drinkers, which is defined as drinking four (for women) or six (for men) glasses of alcohol in a day at least once a week. While the percentage of smokers in Utrecht is falling, 18% of adults still smoke. This percentage is higher among Utrecht residents with only primary or prevocational education.

Spatial policy (3.9)

Healthy air is crucial for the well-being of residents. That is why Utrecht is implementing measures to make the air in the city healthier. New facilities for vulnerable groups that are particularly sensitive to air pollution are not being constructed near busy roads. Our Public Health department's experts play a role in city planning to guarantee appropriate considerations. For example, they ensure that there is sufficient distance between busy roads and homes, schools, childcare locations, retirement homes, nursing homes and hospitals. They look at whether cyclists and pedestrians are given enough space. They also emphasise the importance of green spaces and play areas in neighbourhoods and the preservation of peaceful areas. These health considerations are integrated into initial planning notes, urban development programmes, and zoning plans.

GeluksCafés

GeluksBV is a social entrepreneur with the mission: 'Working on Gross National Happiness', which entails promoting balanced growth that serves people's health and well-being. Their approach is guided by insights from positive psychology (happiness research) and positive health. 'GeluksCafés' have been established in collaboration with local young people, aiming to equip them with insights and skills to enhance their resilience and happiness and thus their overall well-being. The goal is to empower young people in Utrecht, enabling them to make choices that support their health and experience greater freedom in their behaviours.

Good practices

Utrecht Health pact

The Utrecht Health Pact is a collaborative network of parties dedicated to the well-being of Utrecht residents. It serves as the local prevention agreement for Utrecht. The network welcomes all organisations and individuals who want to contribute to city's health initiatives, providing an opportunity to inspire, collaborate and learn from each other in the field of health. There is a lot of knowledge available in the city, and by connecting this knowledge, a large team is created that works towards a pleasant and healthy life for every Utrecht resident. The Health Pact encourages and supports activities and cooperations in the field of health, resulting in great initiatives that reach many people in the city. This empowers people to take control of their own well-being.

Indekerngezond

Indekerngezond is a neighbourhood platform and community hub in the heart of Leidsche Rijn. It was created by residents, for residents, and operates based on the principles of Positive Health. The core values of resilience, self-direction, participation and a meaningful life are at the heart of all activities. At Indekerngezond, residents take the lead. Instead of receiving advice, they explore what works best for them and determine the steps they want to take. By fostering intrinsic motivation, the initiatives undertaken are more likely to be effective and suitable for the individuals involved. Indekerngezond draws inspiration from Blue Zones, which are areas around the world where people live longer and healthier lives, often without chronic diseases, medicines or mental decline.

Lunch together to break loneliness

The 'lunch together to break loneliness' initiative aims to address social isolation and provide opportunities for everyone who feels lonely to connect with others. These lunches are open to everyone, offering lonely Utrecht residents the chance to come together and alleviate their sense of loneliness. Through the voluntary efforts of the companies, social partners and volunteers, Utrecht residents can enjoy a healthy meal accompanied by meaningful social interaction, connecting them with others in a place where they would normally never go. Additionally, these gatherings provide an opportunity to inform attendees about other initiatives in the district and city.



Figure 3.1 | Life expectancy in good health in Utrecht (years) (2017-2020)

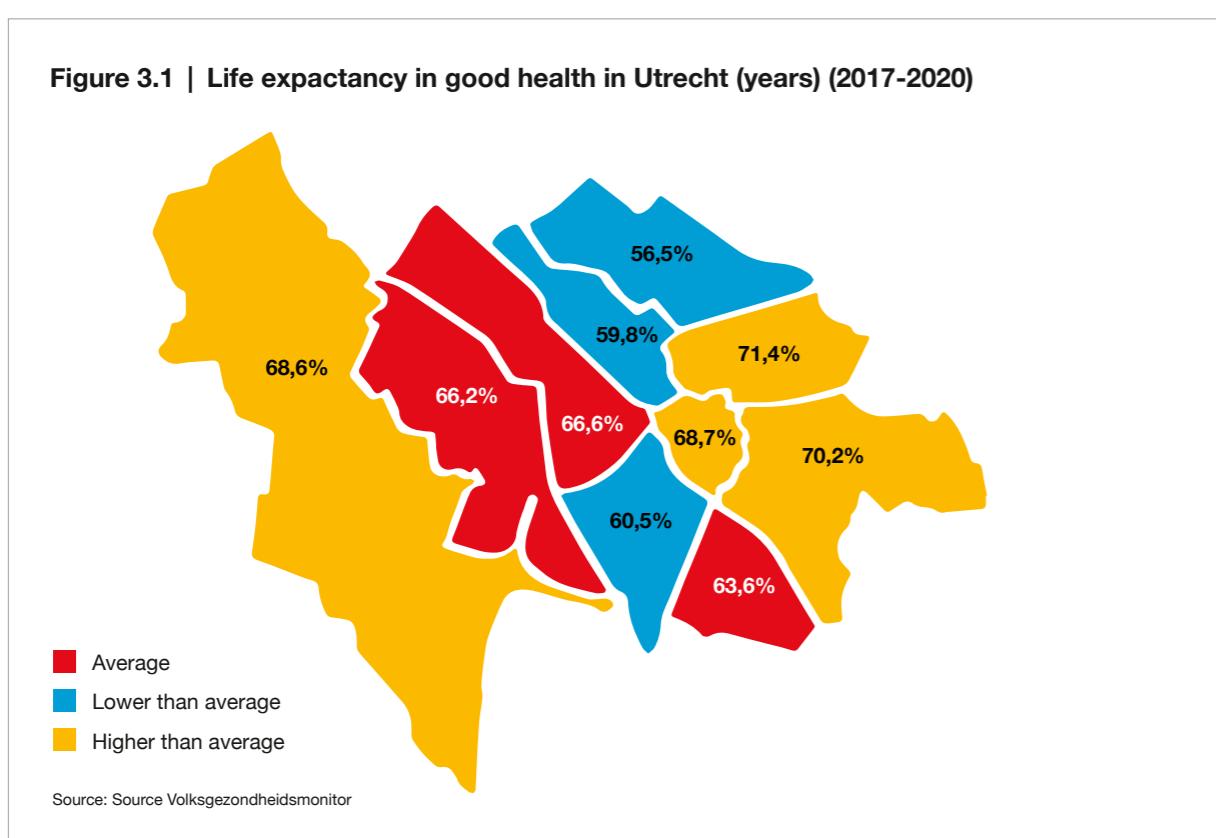
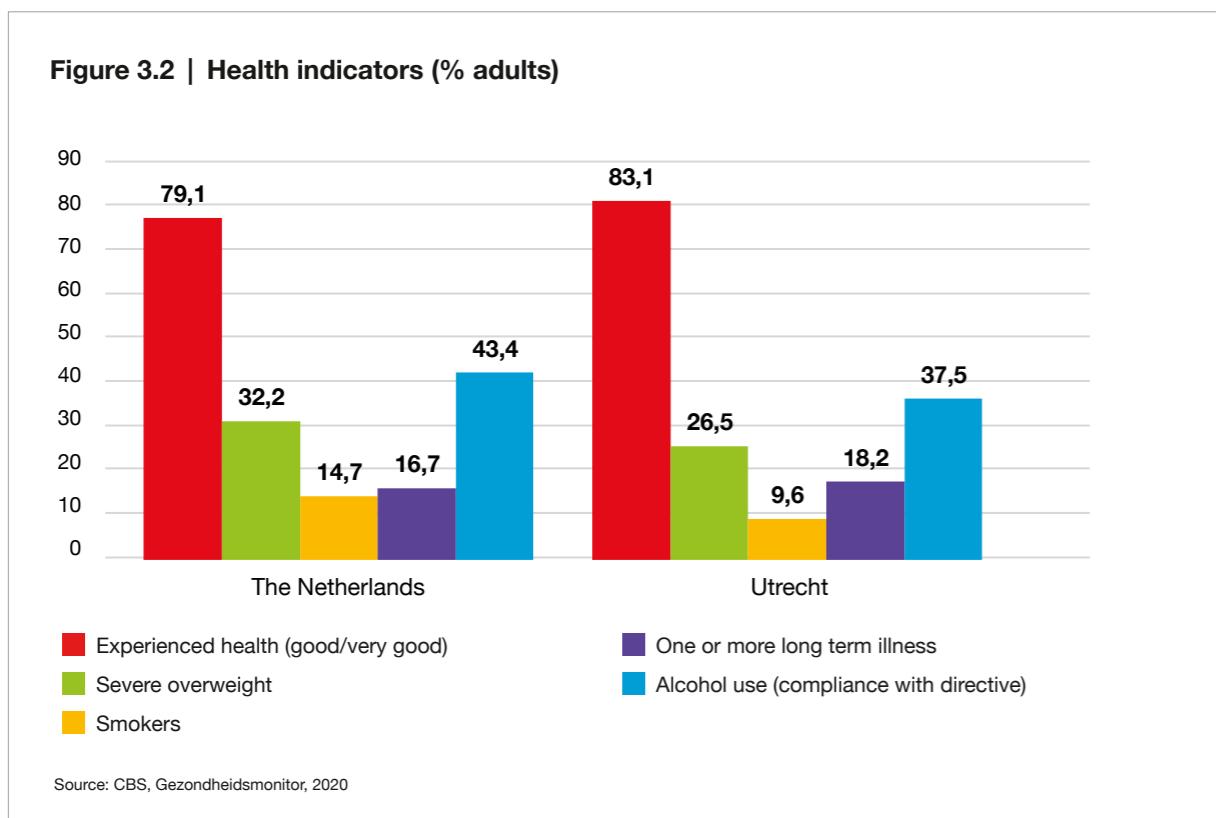


Figure 3.2 | Health indicators (% adults)





4 Quality education



SDG 4 strives for inclusive, equal and quality education for all. This also includes lifelong learning, from early childhood. Education is essential in creating equal opportunities and reducing social exclusion. In the Netherlands, education is mainly financed by the central government. Utrecht has a relatively large number of inhabitants with a higher professional education (HBO) or university (WO) degree (53%).

Early childhood education participation (4.2)

Pre-school education is an important factor in creating equal opportunities for children who do not speak Dutch as a first language.

In 2022, nearly three-quarters of toddlers at risk of language and/or developmental delay were expected to enrol in preschool (preschool reach of 74%). There was a temporary decrease in preschool enrolment in 2020 due to the COVID-19 measures and the consolidation of playgroups and preschools. However, preschool enrolment were projected to increase again after 2020, although it has not reached pre-2020 levels. Starting from 2023, preschool in Utrecht will be free for children with a VE recommendation whose parents have a low income (U-pass).

School advice and initial qualification (4.4)

There are clear differences between neighbourhood with regards to educational recommendations giving to children in primary education. Additionally, under-recommendation has been observed in neighbourhoods with lower socio-economic status. In recent years, the share of young people in Utrecht (17 to 22 years old) with a basic qualification or current enrolment at school has fallen slightly. In the

2022/2023 school year, 93.4% of young people have a basic qualification, compared to 94.2% in the 2019/2020 school year. A basic qualification refers to a higher professional education (HAVO) or pre-university (VWO) diploma, or a vocational education (MBO) diploma at level two or higher. Significant differences exist between neighbourhoods, ranging from 3.5% in the Northeast to 16.3% in Overvecht (Figure 4.1).

Equal access to education (4.5)

In 2021, Utrecht implemented a central urban registration policy for primary school pupils to ensure that every child in Utrecht has equal opportunities when registering for a primary school. The figures show that after this change, just over 95% of children are placed in their preferred first-choice school and over 99% are placed in one of their top three choices.

Literacy (4.6)

Lagging skills in language, numeracy and digital skills pose a problem for people's self-reliance and participation in society. The number of illiterate people in Utrecht is difficult to visualise.

29% of Utrecht residents have difficulty with tasks such as completing applications or making appointments with organisations. DigiTaalhuis Utrecht in the library offers various activities aimed at improving language, numeracy and digital skills. With its 13 branches, the Utrecht Library has a central location in each of the various districts of Utrecht. Over the past four years, the library has seen an increase in the number of members and visitors, including physical visits.

Teacher shortage (4.c)

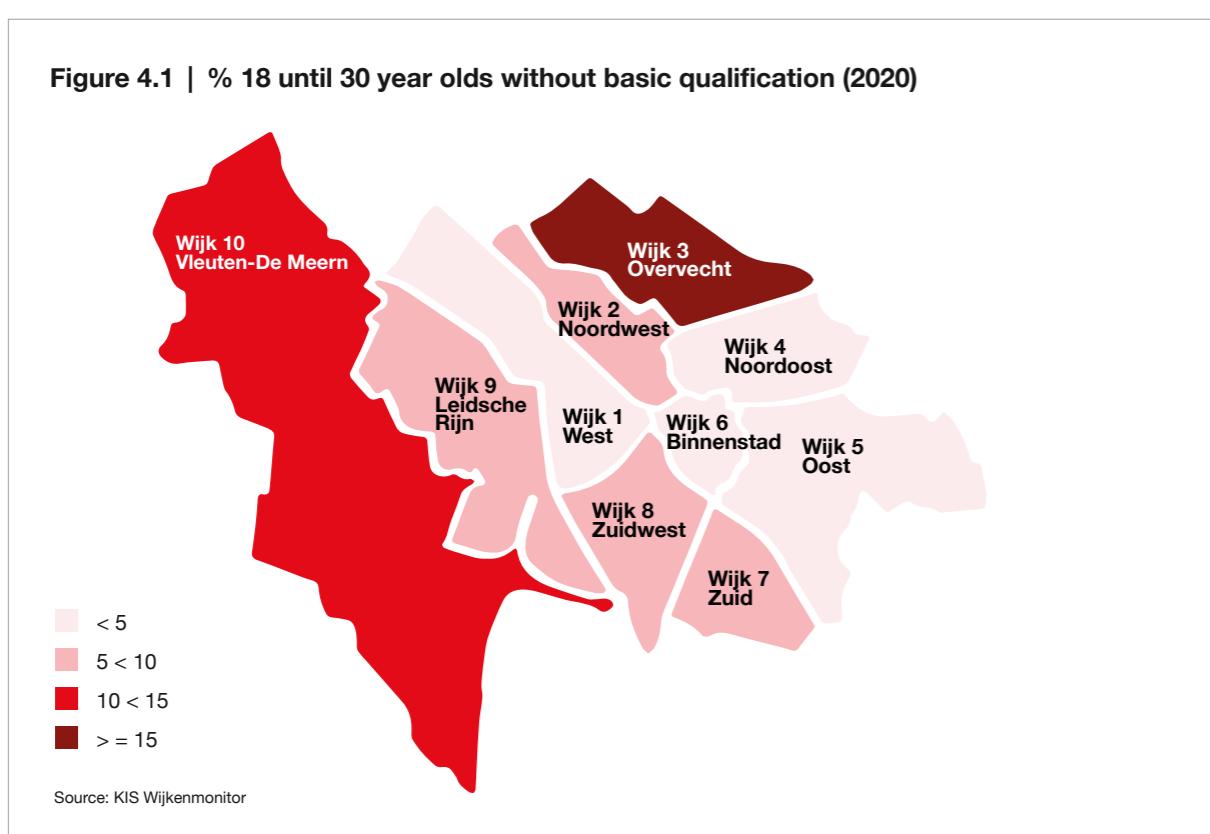
Together with schools and trainers from the city, Utrecht has drawn up an action plan to address the teacher shortage in primary education. In Utrecht, the deficit in primary education stands at 4.1%, compared to the national average of 2%. The city's rapid growth has led to an increase in the number of children attending education, while it is difficult to attract new teachers. Additionally, many teachers retire or transition to other subjects. Simultaneously, the city is working on a plan to address the teacher shortage in secondary and vocational education.

Online dashboard





Figure 4.1 | % 18 until 30 year olds without basic qualification (2020)



Good practices

Leergeld Utrecht

An increasing number of children are unable to participate in various activities for financial reasons. Leergeld Utrecht is a foundation that offers financial support to children, allowing them to participate in school, sports and cultural activities. Stichting Leergeld's mission is to prevent the social exclusion of children. They offer opportunities to children between the ages of 0 and 18 to participate in indoor and extracurricular activities that fall outside the U-pass. Through Leergeld's support, children can go on school trips, obtain swimming certificates or take music lessons.



Taal Doet Meer

Taal Doet Meer is a professionally-led volunteer organisation that facilitates meaningful connections between Dutch Utrecht residents and those who originally spoke other languages. Through Language Cafés organised by Taal Doet Meer, volunteers engage in weekly conversations with small groups of participants to help improve their language proficiency. Many different topics are discussed, ranging from family, sports, crazy proverbs or special hobbies. Taal Doet Meer has over 1,000 volunteers actively involved each year, serving as language coaches for adults, mentors for first-graders, or readers in families.

SchoolWorks

The SchoolWorks project brings together schools, vocational education institutions and municipalities from the Utrecht region to combat early school dropout. Their aim is to guide as many young people as possible towards promising participation in society. The project also involves parties from (youth) care and the labour market. The idea is to empower young people to shape their own future and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to stand on their own two feet. For those who need it, the project provides additional support and guidance across various aspects of life. The goal is to enable as many young people as possible to develop their talents, make their own choices, find sustainable positions in the job market, and achieve economic self-reliance.

Klimaatjes

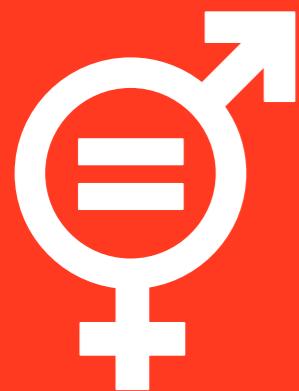
Klimaatjes is an engaging game that teaches children about sustainability and environmental awareness through interactive discussions. In the game, five students from years 7 and 8 in primary school serve as the city council of Groentrecht. They work together to make their world more sustainable by tackling various questions and dilemmas. The game was developed by five young entrepreneurs with different academic backgrounds, affiliated with Enactus Utrecht. Enactus Utrecht is an organisation that supports social startups founded by students through training, networking and a certain amount of financial support.

Vocal Statements

Vocal Statements aims to amplify the voices of young people who are growing up in today's world. The foundation believes it is important to take students from prevocational education, practical education, special education and vocational education seriously, encouraging them to express themselves and ensuring their voices are heard. Vocal Statements employs singing and storytelling as primary tools, complemented by other art disciplines such as theatre, multimedia, and visual arts.



5 Gender equality



SDG 5 is about achieving a fair distribution of power, influence and resources between women and men. The Netherlands, too, has its fair share of issues with regards to gender equality in the economy and on the labour market. Discrimination against women is discussed in SDG10.

Masculinity and femininity are still often seen as two separate boxes in our society. When we talk about men and women and how they are treated differently, we are talking about the traditional ideas that are associated with the category of man or woman and the consequences this has in practice. Rather than reinforcing this dichotomy, we aim to highlight the harm caused by traditional gender norms and the inequality between different expressions of masculinity and femininity.

Violence against women (5.2)

A third of Utrecht residents indicate that they are sometimes intimidated on the street. Among these individuals, 65% are women and 46% are between 18 and 30 years old. In most cases, women are stared at or subjected to whistling and offensive or sexual comments. Combating street harassment requires sustained attention and a multi-faceted approach encompassing prevention, intervention and support. To address this, Utrecht has developed an action plan that includes raising awareness

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Online dashboard



among men and boys about street harassment and transgressive behaviour against women. The focus on this group is due to the fact that the vast majority of perpetrators are men. The municipality aims to raise awareness through information campaigns to challenge the normalisation of such behaviour.

When it comes to sexual violence, women between the ages of 16 and 25 are three times more likely to have an unwanted sexual experience than men. The number of reported rapes is also growing every year, likely with significant underreporting. Women are also more likely to experience violence from current or former partners compared to men, and structural violence is more prevalent among men than women.

Participation of women (5.5)

The net employment rate of women is an important indicator of gender equality. In 2022, the proportion of employed men in Utrecht is higher than that of women (81% versus 74%). However, Utrecht has the highest net

employment rate of women among the 50 largest municipalities in the Netherlands. Additionally, women are more likely to provide unpaid care, with 19% of women compared to 13% of men. In Utrecht, however, the economic independence of women is higher than the national average (74% versus 66% nationally). This is related to the average high number of theoretically educated people in cities.

Utrecht has had a female mayor since 2020. Sharon Dijksma is the third woman in the city's history to hold this position. As of 2022, three-quarters of the municipal executive have been women. Women also constitute a majority (55%) in the city council, and nearly half of the managerial positions in the organisation are held by women.



Good practices

Fanga Musow

The Fanga Musow shelter provides a safe haven for women and children who would otherwise end up on the streets. Many of the residents do not have valid residence papers and have often already lived at many other addresses in the Netherlands. These women and children have often gone through challenging experiences in their country of origin, during their journeys as refugees or as undocumented individuals or asylum seekers in the Netherlands. These experiences can lead to significant psychological and emotional difficulties, making it challenging for them to seek and receive help in the right way. Fanga Musow offers shelter and housing, (legal) guidance and parenting support to these women and children.

SPOD

Spod is a team of students from Utrecht who design and sell sustainable T-shirts. Their designs aim to shed light on the absurdity of stereotypes in a light-hearted manner. By challenging stereotypes and putting them in their 'SPODlight', they seek to raise awareness about how these stereotypes restrict individuals from being their authentic selves and hinder progress towards gender equality, racial equality, and equality for all sexual orientations. SPOD started as a project of Enactus Utrecht, a student organisation that supports social entrepreneurship. The project teams within Enactus work independently and receive guidance from the organisation's board, alumni and partners from the business community. This provides students with opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills.



6

Clean water and sanitation

SDG 6 focuses on ensuring residents' access to high-quality drinking water and sanitation. In Utrecht, the water quality is mainly regulated by the Hoogheemraadschap Stichtse Rijnlanden. In its vision on water and sewerage and municipal water task plan, Utrecht indicates how it deals with the four water systems in the city: rainwater, waste water from households and businesses, groundwater and surface water.

Drinking water (6.1, 6.4 & 6.a)

In Utrecht, tap water is provided by Vitens. Vitens sells the water for 0.001 euros per litre. Utrecht residents use an average of 120 litres of water every day, which is below the national average of 130 litres.

Sewerage (6.2)

Utrecht collects 18 billion litres of wastewater from households and businesses every year through the sewerage system. By 2050, the city plans to replace nearly 500 kilometres of sewerage, which will include all the sewage infrastructure that is over 70 years old. Currently, Utrecht is currently replacing 5 km of sewerage per year, but that will be increased to 18 km per year in 2035. The city aims to separate rainwater and sewage as much as possible, aligning with SDG 13 (climate action).

An indicator of the affordability of clean water and sanitation is the amount of 'sewerage charges'. In Utrecht, these costs are considerably higher than the national average

Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Online dashboard



Good practices

Join the pipe

In the city, access to drinking water is expanding with the installation of taps by Join the Pipe. This organisation aims to promote the fair distribution of drinking water worldwide. By creating a social network of tap water users, they are building the longest water pipe in the world. Join the Pipe raises funds for water and sanitation projects in developing countries through the sale of specially designed bottles, decanters and drinking water taps shaped like sections of water pipe, as well as through donations from restaurants and festivals that sell Join the Pipe tap water.



Figure 6.1 | Average sewerage charge per resident (in euros)

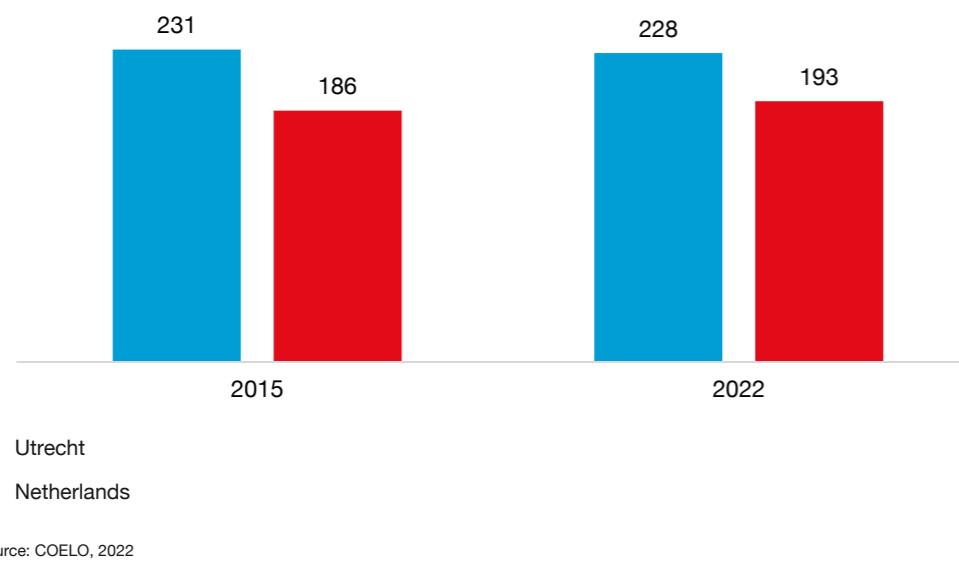
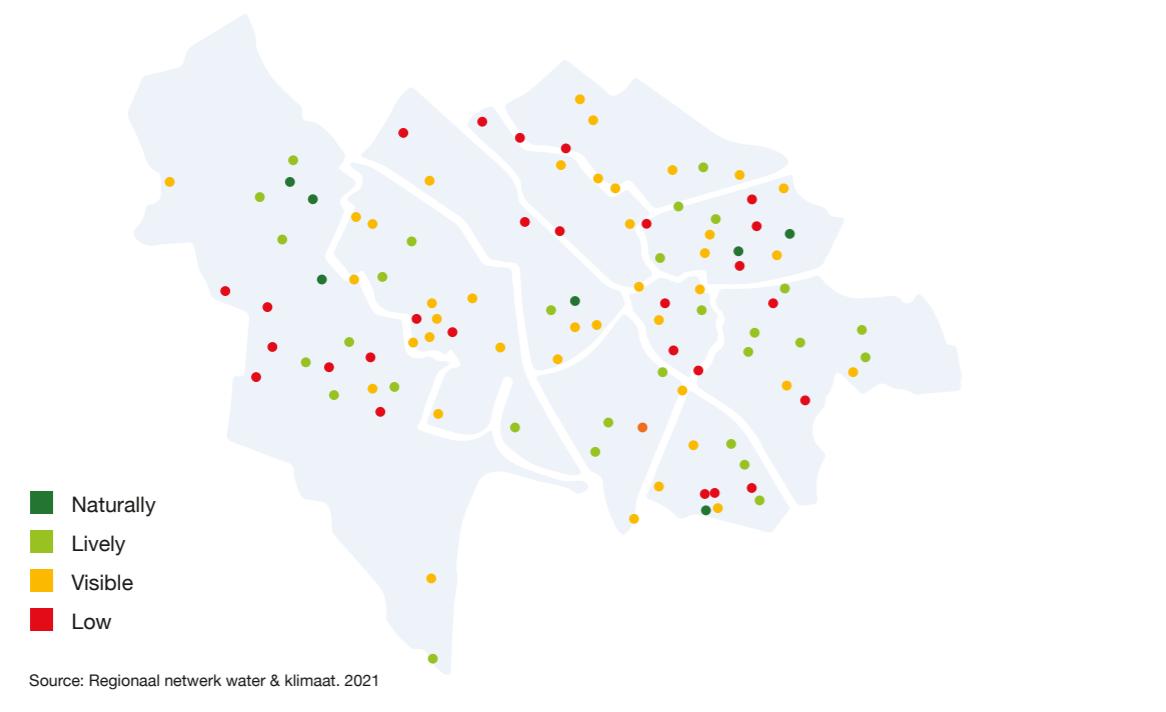
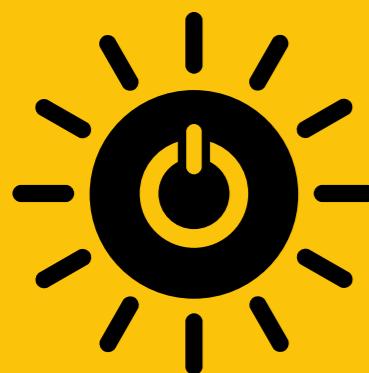


Figure 6.2 | Water quality





7 Affordable and clean energy



SDG 7 focuses on ensuring energy security, sustainability and energy efficiency. The Netherlands has a highly reliable energy supply, and Utrecht is actively increasing its generation of renewable energy. In line with the Paris Climate Agreement and EU policy, Utrecht aims to reduce the city's CO₂ emissions by 5% by 2025 and 55% by 2030. The city is committed to transitioning to 100% sustainably generated energy, and the goal is to have emission-free traffic in the city centre by 2025.

To achieve this, Utrecht is undertaking the following three actions:

1. Helping residents and entrepreneurs to insulate homes and buildings in order to save energy.
2. Maximising the production of sustainable energy within the municipal boundaries through initiatives such as solar panels, windmills and geothermal energy.
3. Gradually transitioning to sustainable heating and cooking methods in each neighbourhood by implementing heat networks and reinforcing the electricity grid.

Between 2015 and 2021, Utrecht successfully reduced CO₂ emissions by 26%, despite the city's growth. In 2021, CO₂ emissions in the municipality were estimated to be approximately 1.1 million tonnes. This reduction is partly attributed to the 40% decrease in national CO₂ emission factor for electricity through greening electricity production, resulting in lower CO₂ emissions from electricity consumption. The heat supply also became 45% cleaner during

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Online dashboard



this period, while the emission factor of gas remained the same. However, between 2020 and 2021, there was a 3% increase in CO₂ emissions due to a slight rise in energy consumption (gas/electricity) and a shift in the national energy mix towards more coal and less natural gas.

Overall, total energy consumption decreased by 0.8% from 2015 to 2021. However, between 2020 and 2021, usage increased by 0.3%. This increase was driven by a rise in business gas use of 5.4%, private gas use of 1.5% and private electricity use of 5.2%. On the other hand, this was offset by decreases in business (-11.8%) and private (-4.7%) heat consumption. The increase in business gas use followed a 13% decline from 2019 to 2020. The built environment and mobility account for the lion's share of emissions (Figure 7.1).

Affordability (7.1)

Utrecht offers a sustainability loan programme that enables residents to finance energy-saving measures for their homes. Since its launch in

2012, more than 800 loans have been granted. The number of loans applied for almost doubled in 2022 compared to 2021. To ensure that more Utrecht residents can make use of the sustainability loan, the municipality will allocate additional budget in the coming years. It is expected that around 300 to 350 households in Utrecht will benefit from the loan over the next two years. Tenants and families participating in a debt assistance programme can also request free energy advice and receive an energy box. The energy box contains energy-saving products that can quickly help tenants save more than 100 euros per year.

Renewable energy (7.2)

The use of renewable energy has significantly increased, resulting in a reduction of approximately 163,602 tonnes of CO₂ emissions (Figure 7.2). The share of renewable energy has shown substantial growth since 2018, although there was a decrease in 2021 due to a decline in the percentage of renewable heat (Figure 7.3). Since 2018, all new homes in Utrecht have been



built to be gas-free. Starting from January 2021, all new permit applications for new construction must meet the requirements for 'Nearly Energy Neutral Buildings' (the so-called NZEB standard). These building regulations establish requirements for maximum energy consumption, fossil energy usage and the generation of renewable energy. In addition to emphasising insulation and energy efficiency, the regulations also promote the incorporation of renewable energy sources.

Warmth

A significant portion of CO₂ emissions in the built environment stems from gas-based heating systems in homes. The goal is to become 'gas-free' by making more use of heat networks, residual heat or fully electric heat systems with heat pumps. By 2050 at the latest, all homes and businesses must be free of natural gas, although currently, over half of them still rely on gas. Good insulation is the first step toward eliminating gas usage. In 2021, the most popular energy-saving measures in homes were double glazing or secondary windows. About half of the homes already have wall insulation, roof insulation and/or floor insulation.

In the Warmth Transition Vision, Utrecht has determined the intended heat solution has been determined for each neighbourhood and established three time slots indicating the order in which neighbourhoods will transition. A Neighbourhood Implementation Plan is currently being implemented for the first neighbourhoods. Overvecht-Noord is the first district in Utrecht to switch to more sustainable heating.

Collaborating with the housing corporation and energy companies, Utrecht is planning to make Overvecht-Noord free of natural gas by 2030. Currently, 3,104 homes are cut off from natural gas, signifying the initial steps in the transition. After the first implementation plans for natural gas-free neighbourhoods are implemented, we are only expecting the transition to accelerate further.

To develop a strategy for natural gas-free business parks, the municipality has started mapping the (type of) energy consumption at companies on nine business parks and exploring the associated CO₂-free sustainability options. In addition, a roadmap has been drawn up to help companies, the municipality and other

stakeholders in developing plans for a CO₂-free business park.

Electricity

Electricity is the key in the transition to a fossil-free city. More electricity is needed and electricity can be generated sustainably. In 2022, solar panels were installed on 29% of all roofs (Figure 7.4). The solar power capacity of these panels grew by more than a quarter (26%) between 2020 and 2021, reaching a total capacity of 123 kW peak, equivalent to the power consumption of some 44,000 homes in Utrecht. In the coming years, solar fields are also expected to contribute to the overall installed capacity. However, the energy transition is hampered by restrictions on access to the electricity grid. If the space on the grid remains limited, there is a risk of impeding the ambitious goals.

Municipal organisation

In 2022, the total energy consumption of the municipal organisation amounted to 285,526 GJ. This energy is utilised for various purposes, including:

- heating and lighting municipal facilities;
- operating the sewerage system;
- illuminating public spaces;
- managing traffic.

Compared to 2021, energy consumption in 2022 decreased by approximately 8%. This decrease in consumption can be attributed to several factors, including:

- the widespread implementation of LED lighting in public areas;
- sustainability initiatives in real estate;
- mild winters;
- energy saving measures implemented due to the energy crisis.

The municipality owns about 900 buildings in the city. In 2018, the municipality initiated the Acceleration Task Energy Neutral Core Real Estate to drive the sustainability of 344 municipal buildings. The goal is for all municipal buildings to be energy neutral by 2040. The municipal offices have an energy label A+ and feature almost 700 square meters of solar panels. Through recent renovations, the historic city hall has been made more sustainable and secure, now achieving an energy label B. However, the Court of Auditors concluded in 2021 that the sustainability efforts for municipal



real estate have been sluggish. To date, only two buildings have been made sustainable out of the target of 57 buildings by 2023 even with the funds provided by the Acceleration Task. Achieving the objective of making municipal core real estate more sustainable by 2040 is currently unattainable. Consequently, an action plan has been drawn up to achieve a feasible, affordable and realistically ambitious approach.

The municipality purchases sustainable electricity for its own use from energy supplier Greenchoice, sourced from new Dutch wind turbines and solar parks. Utrecht actively supports new projects related to wind and solar energy. The municipality uses 46 million kilowatt-hours per year for street lighting and municipal buildings, among other things,

equivalent to the energy consumption of nearly 19,000 households. By 2025, Utrecht aims to replace all outdoor lighting in public spaces with LED lighting, resulting in energy savings of 40 to 50%. LED lighting also boasts a much longer lifespan and provides a more pleasant environment for people and animals. Starting from 2023, outdoor lighting will also be switched on half an hour later and off half an hour earlier as an additional measure to conserve energy.



Good practices

Rijne Energie

Rijne Energie is collaborating with the municipality to develop a plan for the installation of wind turbines in the Rijnenburg and Reijerscop polder area. These wind turbines will stand up to 270 metres tall and will provide electricity for 27,000 households. This will generate twice as much green electricity as the current production from solar panels on rooftops in Utrecht. By undertaking this initiative, the city is actively combating climate change. Furthermore, the municipality aims to ensure that local residents benefit from the sustainable energy generated by the wind turbines. To achieve this, the local energy cooperative Rijne Energie will have a 50% ownership stake in the wind farm. With 750 current members, Rijne Energie offers opportunities for investment and profit sharing from the wind farm. What's more, the organisation's members want a portion of the profit to go to individuals experiencing energy poverty.

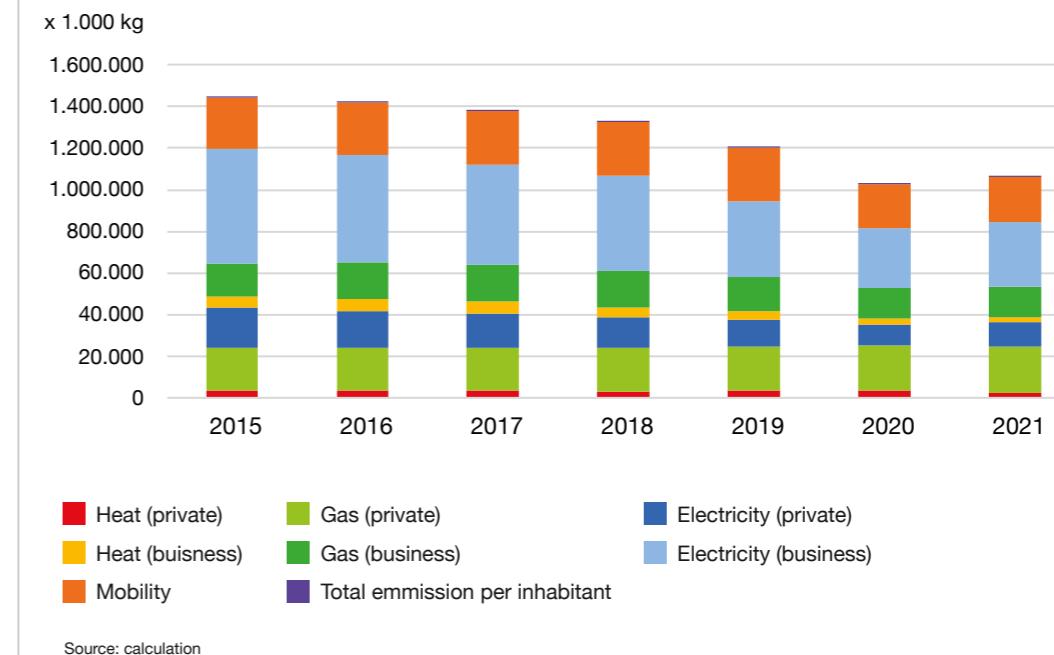
IRIS-project

In the IRIS project, seven European cities are collaborating to create the sustainable urban district of the future. In Kanaleneiland, the first steps have been taken towards building smart energy networks through partnerships with Stedin, housing corporations and knowledge parties. Together with residents, the project aims to make social housing, energy supply and mobility more sustainable. The IRIS partners are implementing various measures, including:

1. renovating 12 apartment buildings (644 public-sector accommodations) owned by Bo-Ex in Kanaleneiland-Zuid to achieve near-zero energy consumption;
2. introducing electric shared cars and electric buses in Kanaleneiland-Zuid, powered by locally generated energy.
3. installing smart electricity meters in homes to minimise energy loss;
4. developing an ICT platform with open data for efficient data exchange in support of the project;
5. facilitating co-creation sessions with residents, involving schools and students in making the neighbourhood more sustainable.

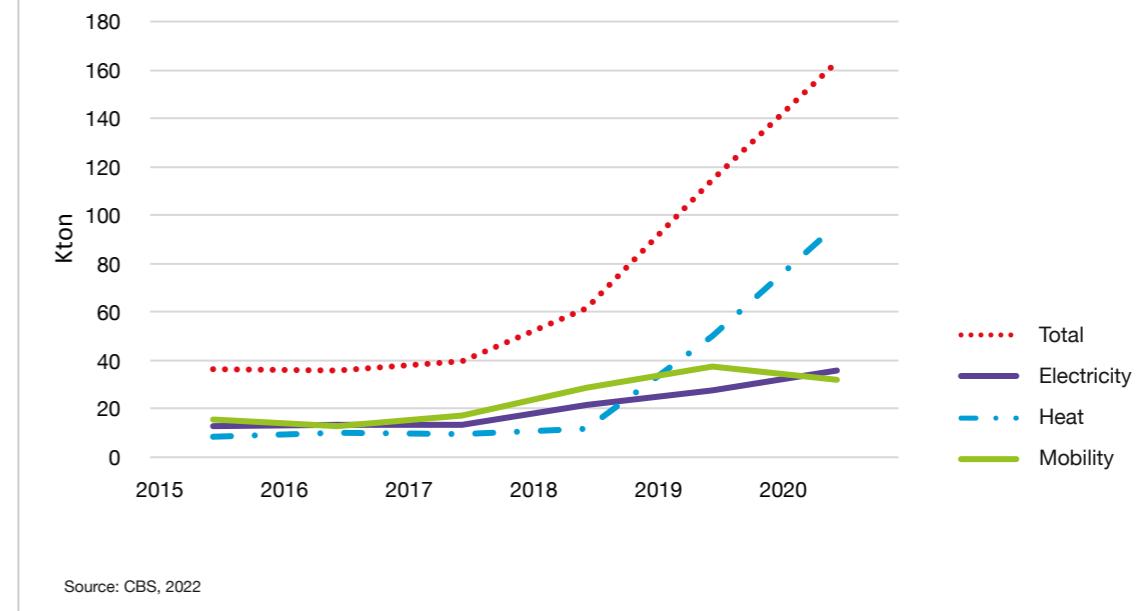
Some of the above solutions have already proven useful elsewhere in Utrecht. In the IRIS project, these solutions are being replicated in Kanaleneiland-Zuid to benefit the residents of this district as well.

Figure 7.1 | CO₂-emissions (footprint)



Source: calculation

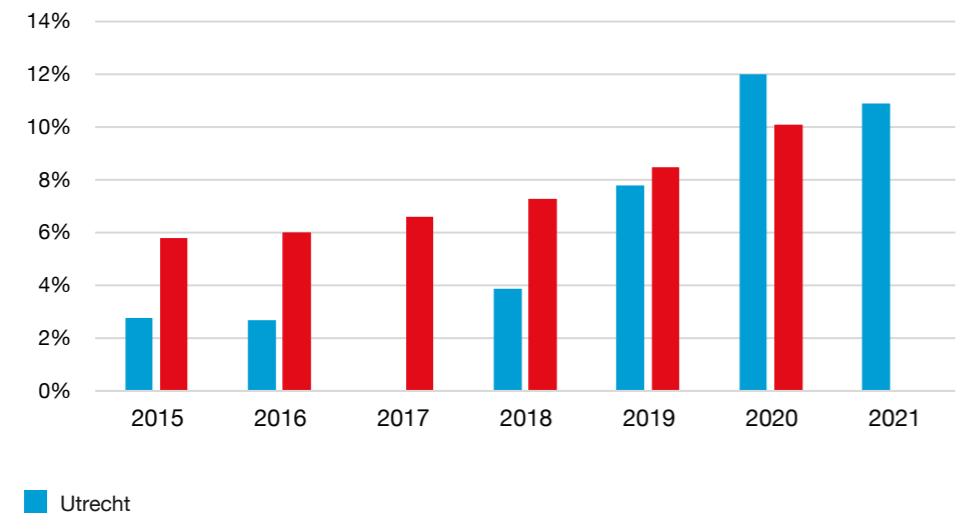
Figure 7.2 | Reduction of CO₂ emissions through renewable energy



Source: CBS, 2022



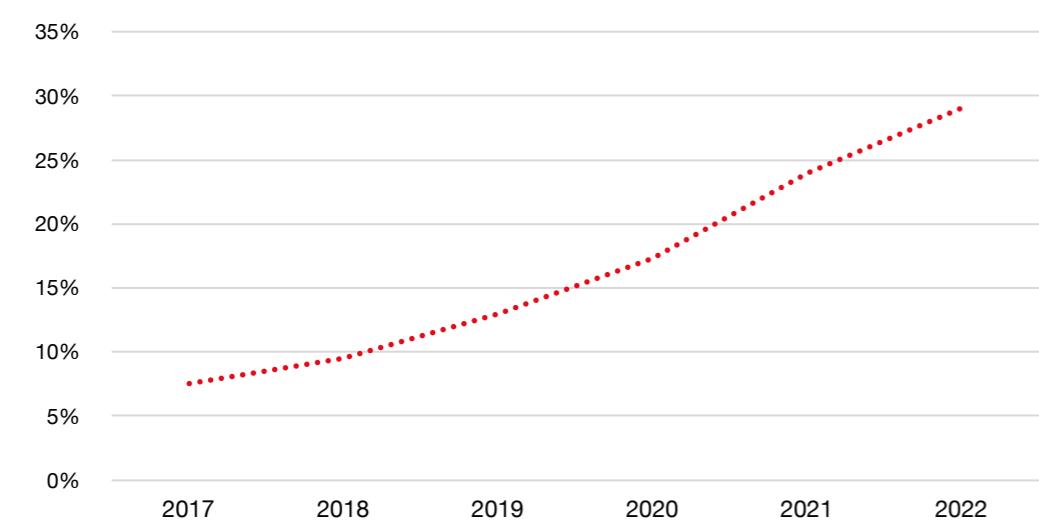
Figure 7.3 | Energy usage from renewable sources



Source: RVO: klimaatmonitor



Figure 7.4 | Share of roofs with solar panels



Source: SmartDodos



8 Decent work and economic growth



SDG 8 aims to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. Utrecht's population is projected to increase by approximately 100,000 inhabitants by 2040. Our goal is to ensure that they all have the opportunity to live and work in the city in the future. This will require creating about 70,000 additional jobs and providing sufficient space.

Economic growth (8.1)

The Dutch economy experienced an average growth of 4.5% in 2022. This was driven by a strong recovery in the first half of the year following the lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. The economy in the Utrecht metropolitan area increased by 4.4% (Figure 8.1). However, the expected growth is accompanied by uncertainties. High inflation, shortages of building materials and raw materials, a tight labour market and the uncertain effects of the war in Ukraine are factors to consider. Utrecht currently has 301,422 jobs, with an average growth rate of 3% since 2015 (Figure 8.2).

Economic diversity (8.2)

The Utrecht economy exhibits a high degree of diversity. Nearly one third of companies operate in the business services sector (Figure 8.3), which is also the largest sector in terms of employment and has almost doubled since 2010. The healthcare sector is also important for Utrecht, employing 43,940 people and ranking second in terms of employment. The Utrecht

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Online dashboard



Metropolitan Area (MRU) holds a strong starting position in this area, with over 2,000 companies and 700 startups active here. The region accounts for half of all national research and development in medical science and employs 20% of all Dutch researchers in the field of health and biotechnology.

Enterprise and employment policies (8.3)

Utrecht faces a very tight labour market and skills mismatch in many professional fields. There is a structural shortage of ICT employees, teachers, care workers and employees in the construction and technology sectors. Not enough people are being trained to meet this demand. Additionally, achieving the ambition to be climate neutral by 2050 will also require a significant number of professionals. To address these challenges, Utrecht is investing in future-proof employment and the necessary work locations. Through retraining programmes, Utrecht helps assists residents in transitioning to professions in growing sectors such as healthcare, education, ICT and construction, technology and energy.

Through collaboration with the Regional Development Agency, Utrecht is actively fostering an investment climate that encourages companies to contribute to a healthier world. This commitment involves creating a supportive ecosystem for startups and growing companies. The city, in partnership with regional partners through the Utrecht Talent Alliance, focuses on attracting and training an adequate workforce. To accommodate the physical growth of employment, Utrecht is also working on densifying work locations, allowing new jobs to be given a place within the existing city.

Social enterprises

The Utrecht region has an estimated count of around 200 impact entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs provide products and services as usual, of course, but they prioritise social impact above everything else and invest their profits accordingly. Utrecht's social enterprises mainly contribute to SDG8, SDG3 and SDG12. Approximately 52% of the impact entrepreneurs employ a maximum of 9 FTEs and generate a turnover of up to 1 million euros per year.



Another 22% have more than 10 FTEs and generate a turnover exceeding 1 million euros per year.

Equivalent work (8.5)

Employment

The potential labour force in Utrecht grew to 285,157 people in 2022, and 77% of them had a job. This employment rate surpasses the national average of 70% and is higher than in the other three major cities. Utrecht also maintains a relatively low unemployment rate compared to other large cities, which dropped to 3.8% of the labour force in 2022 (Figure 8.4). However, the employment rate differs among educational levels, with lower-educated people at 56%, while middle-educated and higher-educated people have higher rates at 75% and 89%, respectively.

People with an occupational disability
Residents with disabilities that prevent them from earning the minimum wage can get an indicative job appointment. The government and employers have set targets for creating more jobs for people with disabilities, aiming for 100,000 positions in the private sector and 25,000 in the public sector by 2026. However, as of the third quarter of 2022, employers in the Central Utrecht region are lagging behind the target, with only 2,592 jobs realised of the 5,999 jobs targeted for 2022. In response, the municipality of Utrecht has an action agenda called the Jobs Agreement, equipped with

appropriate measures to help more people with an occupational disability find work. Additionally, sheltered work also provides an opportunity for those with occupational disabilities to find employment in a supportive environment with necessary workplace adaptations and guidance.

Discrimination in the labour market

An inclusive organisation reflects Dutch society. However, discrimination remains an issue in many organisations. Job seekers still face discrimination based on factors such as age, disability or non-Dutch origins. In fact, reports of labour market discrimination in the Central Netherlands region have increased from 48 cases in 2019 to 57 cases in 2022, according to the national association against discrimination.

Labour market discrimination is also experienced by students in vocational education (MBO) looking for an internship, with 1 in 8 Utrecht MBO students encountering discriminatory practices during their search for an internship and their internships proper. To address this issue, MBO institutions and the municipality are working on a roadmap to give education professionals and students insight into what they can do if they suspect discrimination.

Youth unemployment (8.6)

Younger workers are more likely to lose their jobs than older workers. This is often due to the nature of their employment, which is often

flexible and subject to easy contract termination or discontinuation by employers and temporary employment agencies. An important indicator of youth unemployment is the percentage of young people out of work or education (NEET). Although the number of NEETs in Utrecht is higher than the national average, it has decreased from 997 in 2017 to 838 in 2021 (Figure 8.5). Utrecht provides support to young people between the ages of 18 and 23 without a basic qualification to help them transition to education or employment through counselling initiatives.

In order to keep up with the demand of employers and society, the concept of lifelong learning is important. As such, the municipality actively participates in projects that equip residents with the skills needed for future job opportunities. This collaborative effort involves employers and educational institutions, with a focus on four sectors that currently offer abundant job opportunities in Utrecht and are expected to keep doing so in future: ICT, healthcare, education and construction and technology.

Labour migration (8.8)

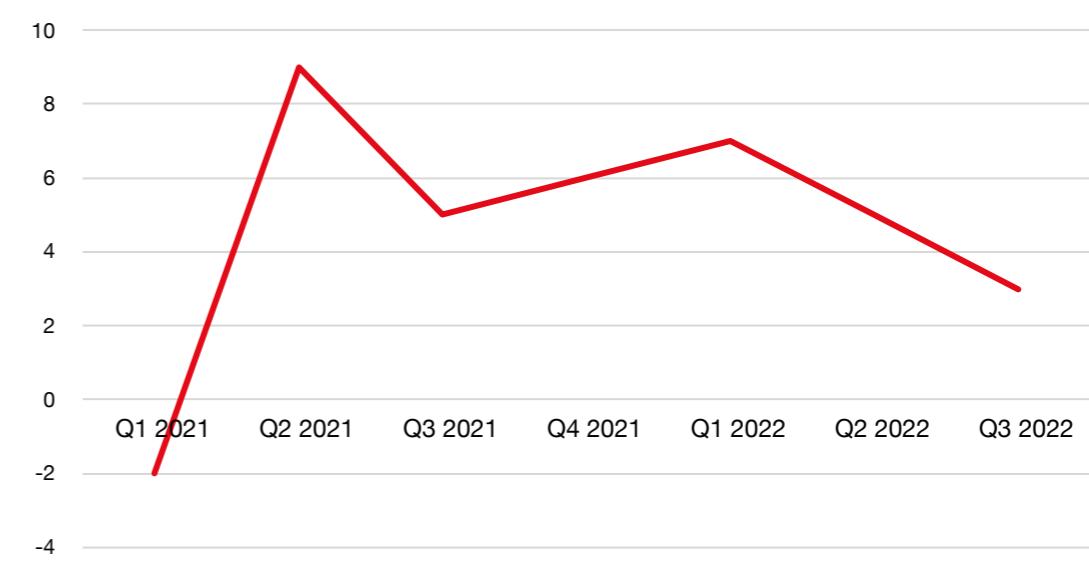
In 2020, Utrecht was home to 9,465 knowledge workers, a two-thirds increase compared to

2010. The ICT sector serves as the primary domain for knowledge workers, which is not surprising given the shortages in this sector. Germany (12%) and India (11%) were the main countries of origin for knowledge workers in 2020. Additionally, there are 8,340 migrant workers in Utrecht, representing a one-third growth compared to 2010. Within the province, 54% of migrant workers are employed in the temporary employment, hospitality or business services sectors. Poland accounts for the largest proportion (30%) of migrant workers in Utrecht. However, the share of migrant workers of Polish origin has decreased by 13% over the past decade due to increased migration from Mediterranean countries, Romania, Bulgaria, and China.

Sustainable tourism (8.9)

Utrecht experiences a level of tourism pressure similar to that of Rotterdam. In 2021, 12% of Utrecht residents occasionally face issues related to temporary home rentals for tourists, and this percentage has remained stable. Nuisance can also arise from other types of rentals. The Inner City area tends to be most affected by such disturbances, whereas Vleuten-De Meern, Zuid, and Leidsche Rijn report relatively fewer incidents.

Figure 8.1 | Regional economic growth



Source: CBS, 2022



Figure 8.2 | Jobs per sector

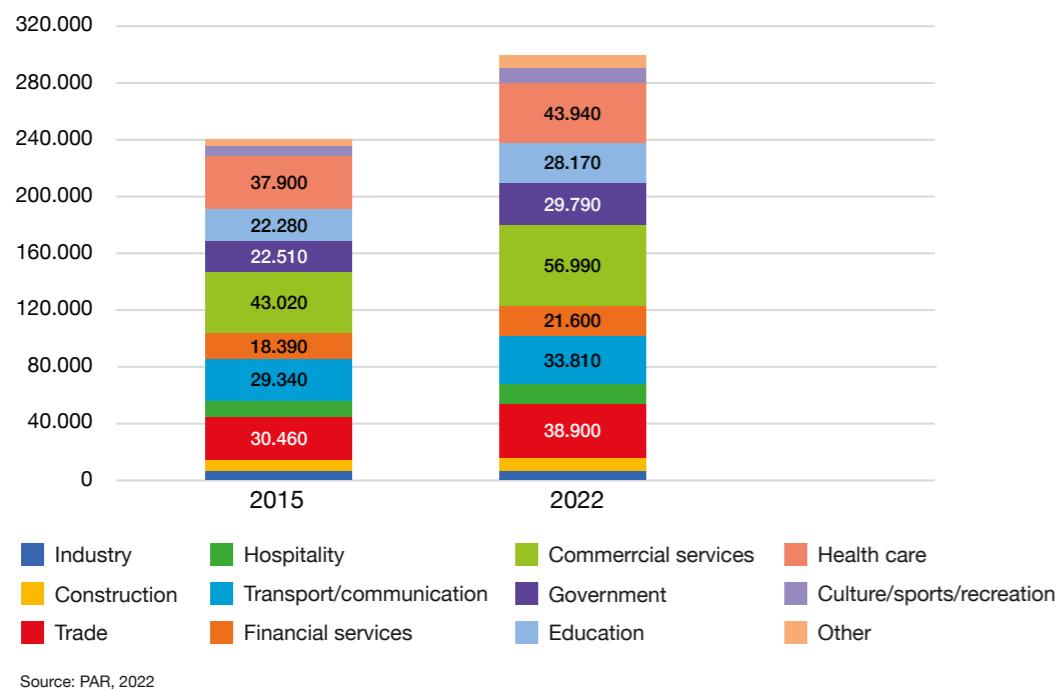


Figure 8.4 | Unemployment rate

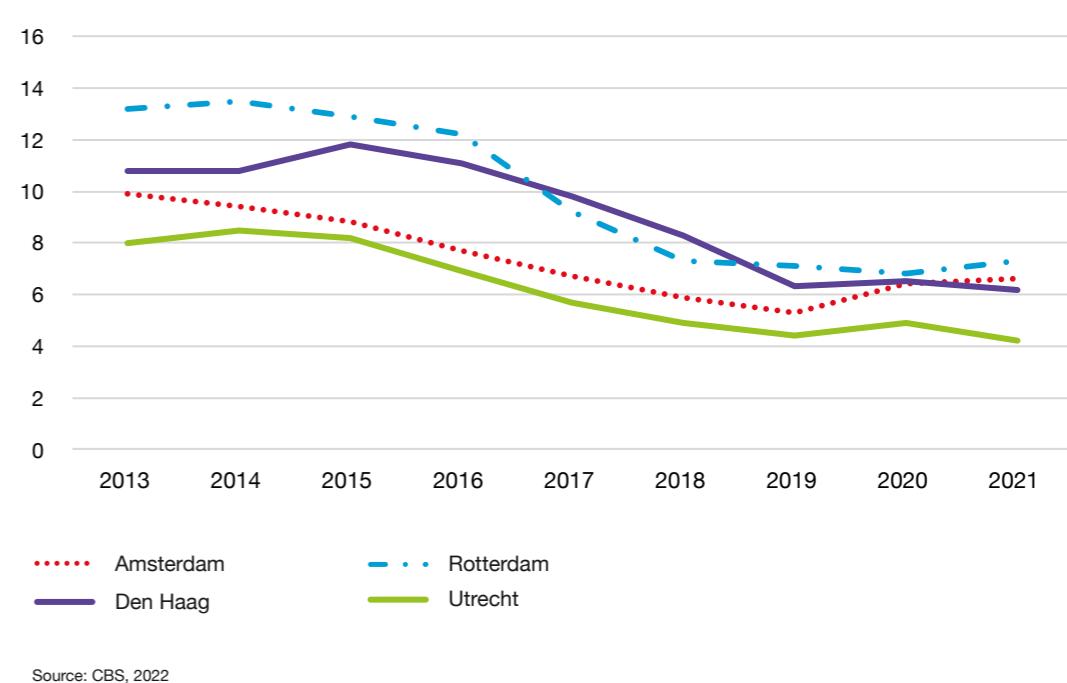


Figure 8.3 | Companies per sector

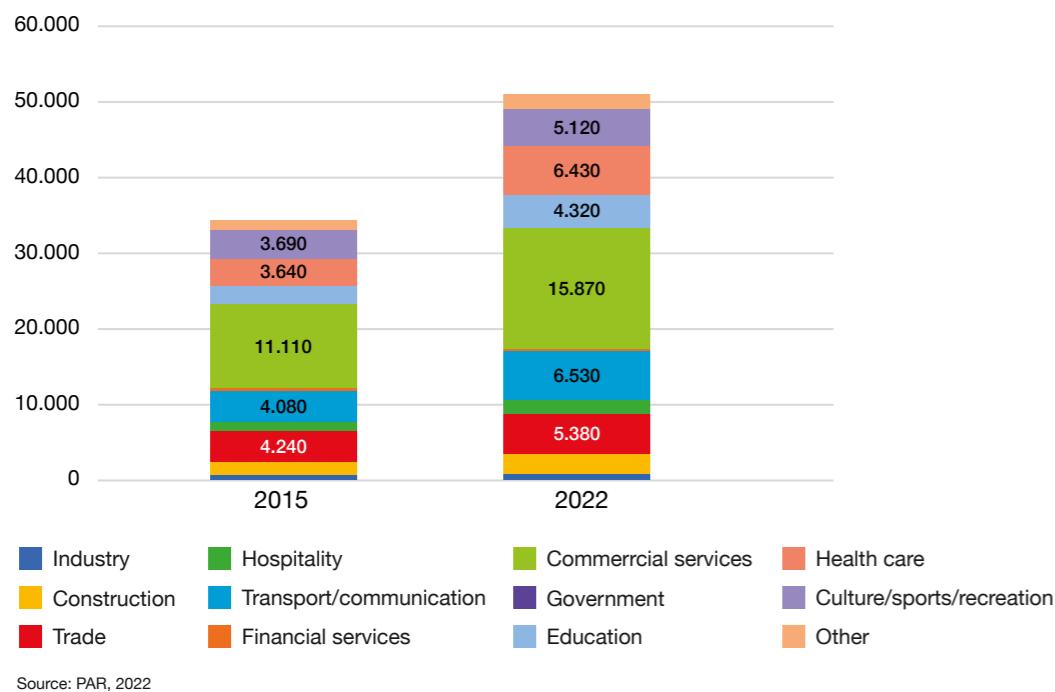
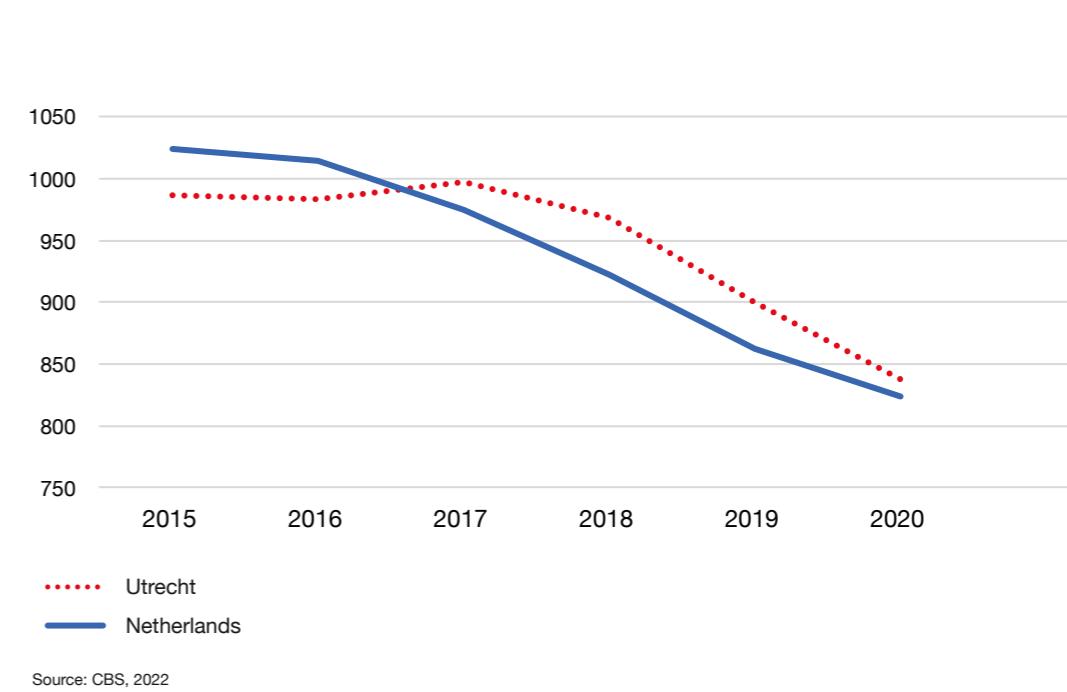


Figure 8.5 | Youth without work and education per 10,000 residents (15-27 years old)





Good practices

Utrecht Talent Alliance

The Utrecht Talent Alliance consists of regional representatives from employers in sectors facing workforce shortages, government bodies, educational institutions, the UWV, Economic Board Utrecht, and ROM Utrecht. Its goal is to help people transition smoothly into professions that are currently suffering from shortages and that offer excellent growth potential, aiming for 10,500 additional transitions annually. One of its initiatives is the Make Your Step platform, which provides guidance to individuals in exploring their possibilities, making career choices and switching to new jobs.

Eye4Web

Eye4Web is an apprenticeship company that offers digital talent the opportunity to learn a trade and gain work experience. At Eye4Web, people facing employment barriers such as autism, a psychological vulnerability or a disability can gain professional knowledge and skills in ICT and media, including creating and maintaining websites, web shops and (web) apps.

EchtWaar Foundation

EchtWaar is a workshop that produces ceramics, paper and textile products while prioritising the reuse of materials. The textile department reuses plastic bags, malt bags, leather samples, advertising banners and jeans. The products are made by people who face challenges in finding employment in the regular labour market due to intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, psychiatric issues, or physical disabilities. People with a Wmo or WLz indication can come and work here.

Jaarbeurs

Every year, the Jaarbeurs attracts approximately 2.5 million visitors. The Utrecht event venue has strong ambitions in the field of sustainability. By 2023, Jaarbeurs aims to reduce CO₂ emissions in the hospitality issues by 846 tonnes annually through its approach. To achieve this, it has started adjusting its range of food offerings to include mainly vegetarian options. In addition, through smarter planning and collaboration with Too Good To Go and the food banks, almost 178,000 meals are saved per year. Apart from greening their hospitality practices, Jaarbeurs is also working on increasing sustainability in its logistics, its own operation and the greening of the venue itself. By 2030, Jaarbeurs aims to be the most sustainable event venue in Europe.



Beroepentuin

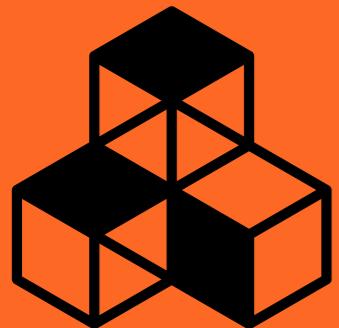
Beroepentuin, or the Professional Garden, provides a learning and working environment for individuals facing employment challenges. Job seekers undergo a two-month preparation program at the Utrecht Professional Garden to develop the skills required to work in the construction and technology sectors, which are in high demand for qualified and motivated employees. Furthermore, there are also companies that work with instructors to train the candidates, providing the necessary tools and materials. After approximately four months of training, the candidates may be offered employment contracts for one (half) year.

Social impact factory

The Social Impact Factory, situated in the city centre, serves as a hub for social entrepreneurship. It's home to Impact030, an organisation that strengthens the ecosystem for Utrecht impact entrepreneurs by ensuring better cooperation between all actors and increasing visibility. Through this initiative, they develop innovative solutions to social issues in a wide variety of ways. They put their primary focus on their mission, while making money is simply a means to work towards a better future. The social impact factory is one of the nine Dutch SDG houses.



9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure



SDG 9 covers several topics, including industry, innovation and infrastructure. While some of the goals defined by the UN are specifically relevant to developing countries, this particular SDG has significant overlap with other SDGs, in particular SDG 8 and 13. In this context, we will focus on innovation. Since 2010, the Utrecht region has consistently ranked among the top competing regions in Europe. In fact, the European Commission even declared Utrecht the most competitive region in Europe in 2013 and 2023.

The Regional Competitiveness Index, a triennial assessment of 268 European regions based on over 70 indicators, evaluates aspects such as innovation, accessibility, digital infrastructure, education, health and the labour market.

Research & development (9.1)

The Netherlands spends less on research and development than other European countries. However, the Utrecht metropolitan area exceeds the national average in terms of R&D investments. Utrecht Science Park makes an important contribution in this regard. In 2011, the joint residents of the university site De Uithof decided to further develop the area under the name Utrecht Science Park. Covering 300 hectares on the east side of Utrecht, this site is home to over 150 organisations and companies with a total workforce of 30,000. The knowledge and expertise available at Utrecht Science Park contribute to a healthy and sustainable society. It is the largest science park in the Netherlands with the highest density of knowledge institutions in a small area.

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation.

Online dashboard



Furthermore, nearly half of the national expenditure on research and development in the field of medical sciences and pharmacy flows through the Utrecht Metropolitan Area (MRU). In pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and foodstuffs, the MRU accounts for twice the average share of patent applications in the Netherlands. Additionally, the MRU accounts for more than 20% of Dutch public-private innovation projects in medical sciences and pharmacy.

Startups & scale-ups (9.3)

Utrecht aims to attract companies that provide long-term job security and align with the city's vision. The municipality mainly focuses on innovative organisations and companies that contribute to the circular economy and the reuse of raw materials. Through various programs, subsidies and events, the municipality supports the Utrecht ecosystem for innovative startups and scale-ups. The emphasis is on those working on social challenges and the sustainable future of the city in sectors such as ICT & digital skills, health, education, construction, technology, energy and circular economy. The

municipality of Utrecht is home to more than 700 innovative startups, and 20 Utrecht scale-ups are listed among the top 250 fastest-growing companies in the country.

Sustainable infrastructure (9.4)

The number of electric motor vehicles registered in Utrecht has shown significant growth, with 14,837 vehicles in December 2022, compared to 1,445 in 2013 (Figure 9.1). Electric passenger cars have experienced the highest growth, now reaching 68 times the number of vehicles in December 2013. While the number of plug-in hybrid vehicles (with both an electric and an internal combustion engine) declined between 2016 and 2020, it has been increasing again in recent years, with 705 more vehicles in 2022 compared to 2021 (+29%). According to the 2021 Population Survey, 8% of respondents indicated that they have one or more electric cars in their household.

The number of (semi-)public charging points for electric cars in Utrecht has seen a sharp increase from 1,850 in 2019 to 5,016 charging



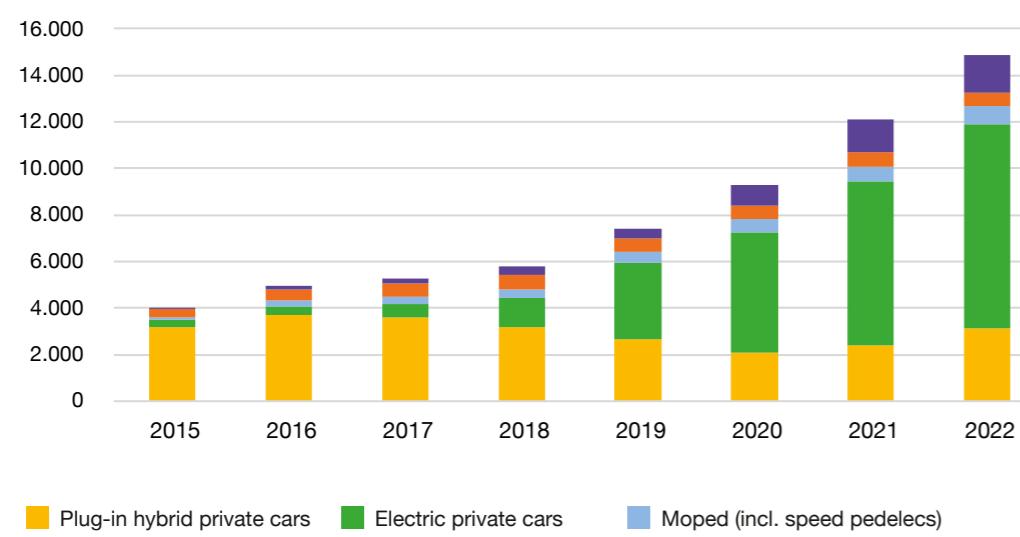
points in 2022. Although the number of (semi-)public charging points in Utrecht is lower than in other G4 cities, it is relatively higher. The municipality of Utrecht maintains a sufficient level of charging stations throughout the city and adds new locations to the plan when existing ones are occupied. The decision to install new public charging stations is based on usage data. Currently, there are 13.6 charging points per 1,000 residents in Utrecht.

ICT (9.c)

The municipality of Utrecht actively engages in innovative ICT projects, providing entrepreneurs with various opportunities to take innovation and ICT in their company to a higher level.

The municipality is also helping to create high-quality ICT infrastructure that further enhances Utrecht's appeal as a business and meeting destination. Special attention is given to attracting and training ICT talent, considering the significant shortage of qualified ICT professionals in Utrecht, as well as the rest of the Netherlands. To address this shortage, the U-TECH community brings together the business community, government and trainers to develop, retain and attract ICT talent. They do this by supporting initiatives focused on ICT (re) training, fostering better alignment between ICT education and the labour market, and promoting career opportunities within the sector.

Figure 9.1 | Electric vehicles



Source: RVO Klimaatmonitor (December 2022)

Good practices

Sustainable parcel points

The municipality is starting a trial with sustainable parcel points, where residents can pick up and return packages free of charge. This initiative aims to reduce the number of delivery personnel, resulting in lower CO₂ emissions and reduced traffic. The first parcel points have already been established in the Dichterswijk, specifically on the Jeremias de Deckerstraat and at Utrecht Vaartsche Rijn station. Packages are delivered to lockers that residents can access to collect their items themselves.



We drive solar

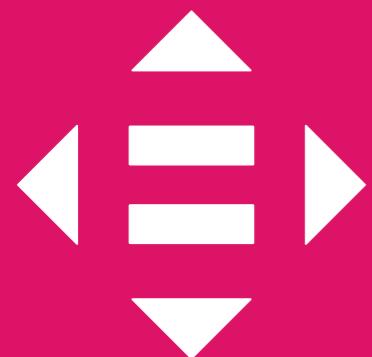
We Drive Solar supplies 100% electric shared cars that are charged with solar power. Some of these shared cars are available to users in the Lombok district. These cars have their batteries fully charged and any excess power is sent back to the grid through a specialised charging station. This concept is called vehicle-to-grid (V2G), or vehicle-to-home (V2H) when supplying energy to a home. Lombok became the first district in Europe to adopt this system in 2019. Shared cars charged by solar panels on nearby buildings are now also available in a residential complex in Leidsche Rijn. These cars have enough battery capacity to provide electricity to half of the apartments during periods of limited sunlight. The concept is now being implemented in the Cartesius district, which is currently under construction.

Cooperation with industry

The Economic Board Utrecht (EBU) serves as a leading network connecting influential leaders from the business community, knowledge institutions and governments in the MRU. The EBU's ambition is to transform the region into the healthiest in the world. As an independent facilitator, the Board plays a central role in connecting all parties involved. They are committed to the collective interest of the region, focusing on shaping the future perspectives of the area, leveraging their network, knowledge and expertise. The EBU supports initiatives and partners within the region that contribute to the overall healthy prosperity in the region.



10 Reduced inequality



Reduce income inequality within and among countries.

Online dashboard



SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequality within and between countries, addressing issues such as income inequality, social inclusion, discrimination and migration. It intersects with other goals related to equal opportunities, including poverty (SDG 1), education (SDG 4), housing (SDG 11) and work (SDG 8). The report 'Dividing lines in Utrecht; data and research on differences in the city' provides even more insight into this.

The rapid growth of cities has brought prosperity, but just like in other cities around the world, the four major cities in the Netherlands have seen that this growth has also increased the disparities in opportunities among their residents. Residents with a lower income, an education up to a vocational (MBO) level and non-western migration backgrounds face greater societal obstacles. They experience higher rates of discrimination, rely more on social safety nets and are more susceptible to poverty or poor health.

Overvecht and neighbourhoods exhibiting similar patterns show lower socioeconomic resilience. This is assessed based on factors such as the prosperity, education level and recent employment history within households in the neighbourhoods. Residents with a low Socio-Economic Status (SES) face disadvantages in various areas, including health, education, employment, income and housing, when compared to residents with a high SES. These disparities persist or, in some cases, worsen over time. Consequently, a dichotomy

emerges within the city, with a difference in life expectancy of 7, and a difference of 15 years spent in well-perceived health.

An analysis at neighbourhood level allows us to closely examine the challenges faced within the city. In the Netherlands, there are a number of research sources available that provide insights into the degree of vulnerability and quality of life at this level. The best known are the publication of socio-economic status and the Life Barometer. The Life Barometer encompasses additional factors such as security, social cohesion and housing. In early 2022, the municipality carried out a stacking analysis, which examined 10 indicators to identify the neighbourhoods most frequently found in the bottom quartile.

If we consider these sources collectively, we see that certain neighbourhoods consistently appear across multiple lists, forming a band that runs through Utrecht roughly from north to south. This band encompasses various neighbourhoods with the lowest socio-economic or liveability

score, which almost all neighbourhoods in the Overvecht and Zuidwest districts (Figure 10.1).

Income and wealth inequality (10.1)

Compared to the other large cities, Utrecht has more high-income households but fewer low-income households. All G4 cities show a lower concentration of middle-income households compared to the national distribution. Utrecht's income distribution has been fairly stable over the years. While the share of households in the lowest two income groups has decreased slightly in recent years, the highest two income groups have seen slight increases. In Amsterdam, the highest income group has a larger share than in Utrecht, but the lowest group is also much larger there. Rotterdam does not have an overrepresentation of high-income groups lower-income groups.

There is a notable concentration of residents with very low or very high incomes and relatively few residents with average income levels. In 2020, 12% of households had a very low income (falling within the lowest 10%), while 14% had



a very high income (falling within the highest 10%). Between 2015 and 2020, the share of households with very low incomes remained the same, while the share of households with a very high income increased.

Income inequality

Compared to other European countries, income inequality in the Netherlands is relatively low. Utrecht's income inequality has not experienced significant change in recent years, with a Gini coefficient of 0.29, which matches the national income inequality level. Across Utrecht's various districts, income inequality ranges from 0.25 in Overvecht to 0.34 in East. The Gini coefficient measures income inequality on a scale of 0 (completely equal distribution) to 1 (one household possesses all the income) (Figure 10.2). In the East and Inner City districts, there is a more noticeable disparity in income distribution. Since 2017, income inequality has remained stable both in Utrecht and nationwide.

Wealth inequality

Wealth inequality can also be expressed using a Gini coefficient. For the Netherlands, it stands at 0.79, indicating significantly higher wealth inequality compared to income inequality. The larger cities exhibit even greater wealth inequality than the national, with a Gini coefficient of 0.82 in Utrecht. This disparity can be attributed to a relatively larger population of young people, benefit recipients and people with a non-western migration background on one end of the spectrum, and a wealthier group on the other. The median wealth of private households was €21,100 in 2020, and there were notable differences between the districts (Figure 10.3). Median wealth is mainly related to home ownership and income, with homeowners, self-employed individuals and high-income residents possessing the highest wealth. Conversely, singles, single-parent families, young people and residents relying on benefits tend to have lower levels of wealth.

Social inclusion (10.2)

In discussing this objective, we focus on social inclusion, which encompasses well-being and social relationships. Political inclusion (SDG 11) and economic inclusion (SDG 8) are addressed elsewhere.

Well-being

According to the population survey, residents rate their personal well-being at 7.6. However,

during the pandemic, social well-being decreased from 7.8 (2019) to 7.6 (2021). There is a significant variation across the city. Utrecht residents with primary education or pre-vocational (VMBO) education, those struggling financially and individuals with physical or mental disabilities tend to have lower social well-being compared to the city's average. In the Overvecht district, social well-being is below average, while it is higher in the West, Northeast, East and Inner City areas. Interestingly, while we see negative developments at a broader societal level, there are actually positive developments at a more local level, closer to the individual respondent. The social cohesion score has increased from 5.8 in 2019 to 6.0 in 2021. The score for social cohesion varies across the city, ranging from 4.9 in Tuinwijk to 6.8 in Oog in Al.

Accessibility

All Utrecht residents, with and without a disability, must be able to use all buildings, public spaces and services. The municipality's ambitions in this regard are outlined in the 'Utrecht accessible to everyone' agenda. Currently, about 19% of municipal buildings are not yet fully accessible to wheelchair users and 29% are only partially accessible. The city also wants to improve 'social accessibility', including employment opportunities, daycare services and housing options.

Diversity

With 'The Utrecht Rainbow Agenda', Utrecht strives to increase the acceptance, visibility and safety of lesbian women, gay men, bisexual, intersex, non-binary, queer and transgender people. A well-known annual event in this regard is Utrecht Pride, where LGBTIQ+ organisations, both large and small, sail through the Utrecht canals. In 2021, three-quarters of young people in Utrecht regard homosexuality as normal. However, young people with a non-western migration background and pre-vocational (VMBO) pupils are less likely to see homosexuality as normal.

The municipal organisation also places emphasis on diversity. In 2022, CBS conducted a study on the cultural diversity within the organisation. The findings revealed that almost three-quarters (74%) of all employees of the municipality of Utrecht have the Netherlands as their country of origin (signifying both they and their parents were born in the Netherlands), while 5% have a European country as their country of origin and



21% have a non-European country of origin. As salary scales increases (from scale cluster 7-8), the share of employees with the Netherlands as their country of origin increases, while the share with a non-European country of origin decreases.

Discrimination (10.3)

In 2021, 17% of Utrecht residents reported experiencing discrimination in the past year. While this percentage remained the same compared to 2019, it has increased over the years (14% in 2018). (Figure 10. 4). Residents of Overvecht feel discriminated against more often than average in Utrecht, while residents of Northeast and East experience it less often. Certain demographic groups in Utrecht, such as younger age groups, residents with physical or mental disabilities, those facing financial challenges and residents with a senior general secondary education (HAVO), pre-university (VWO) or vocational (MBO) diploma experience discrimination more often than the average in Utrecht. The most commonly cited grounds for discrimination are skin colour, ethnicity or origin, and the most frequently mentioned locations are on the street and at work, internships or during job applications. Compared to 2019, slightly more Utrecht residents indicated experiencing discrimination on the housing market (from 1% to 3% in 2021). In 2022, Art. 1 Midden Nederland received 265 reports of discrimination in Utrecht, but only a fraction of

these were reported to the police (14 reports in 2022). The anti-discrimination agenda outlines Utrecht's collaborative efforts with various partners in the city to address discrimination, covering areas such as education, the housing market and the labour market (SDG8).

Migration (10.7)

After the introduction of COVID-19 measures in March 2020, immigration to the Netherlands decreased sharply. However, it picked up again in 2021, and in 2022, it reached its highest level ever. Nearly 11,000 people moved from abroad to Utrecht in 2022, surpassing the previous record of 8,300 immigrants in 2019. As in previous years, a significant number of migrants settling in Utrecht held the Indian nationality (approximately 1,000 people in 2022). Additionally, many people with Italian, Spanish or Turkish nationality also chose Utrecht as their new home (approximately 500 people each in 2022).

The sharp increase in immigration is largely due to the war in Ukraine, which began in late February 2022. In 2022, approximately 1,800 people with Ukrainian nationality settled in Utrecht, including 235 domestic settlers, who moved to Utrecht from elsewhere in the Netherlands. This group of 1,800 Ukrainians consists of 1,300 adults (970 women and 340 men) and almost 500 children (under 18 years of age). Furthermore, approximately 400 people



with Ukrainian nationality left Utrecht in 2022, of which 60% moved to another municipality in the Netherlands. As of 1 January 2023, the population of Utrecht included 1,665 individuals with Ukrainian nationality, compared to 274 the previous year.

People who come to the Netherlands to seek asylum are granted either a provisional residence permit or face rejection. An asylum seeker who receives a provisional residence permit is officially granted refugee status, also known as a status holder. As of 1 January 2023, Utrecht had 2,659 registered status holders in the Personal Records Database (BRP). This number does not include status holders who have since moved to other municipalities or become naturalised (naturalisation is possible after living in the Netherlands for five years and passing the integration exam). At the beginning of 2019 and 2020, the number of status holders exceeded 3,000, while it dropped below 2,300 at the beginning of 2021 and 2022. In 2022, the number increased by 400.

Utrecht is faced with a significant challenge in accommodating these status holders. In 2022, homes had to be found for 650 individuals with a status. To address this backlog, the city implemented an unorthodox measure by allocating about 90% of all vacant social housing to status holders for four weeks.

In addition to providing housing, the municipality wants to help migrants with a residence permit in achieving quick integration. The Utrecht approach focuses on three key points:

1. Immediate involvement in work and community activities alongside other (local) residents, such as courses in international entrepreneurship or (business) English through initiatives like Plan Einstein, or activities that volunteers and/or asylum seekers organise together. These accessible gatherings promote successful integration and personal and professional development.
2. Encouraging status holders to be accommodated within the (region) Utrecht, as this allows them to build knowledge of the city and establish a network, facilitating quicker integration.
3. Fostering a sense of community through shared activities and courses open not only to asylum seekers and status holders but also to other Utrecht residents who seek personal growth.

Among the group of status holders in Utrecht, 2,350 are aged 18–65. Of these, 55% receive social assistance benefits, 20% are in education and 33% are in paid employment as of 2021. Employment rates increase with longer lengths of stay in the Netherlands, with the 2014 cohort showing around 47% employment by mid-2021, compared to just 6% for the recent 2020 cohort (Figure 10.6).

National policies dictate that migrants who are refused must leave the country. An estimated 5,000 people in Utrecht currently live without residence papers, with 225 undocumented migrants in the Utrecht municipal shelter. This means that many of them rely on their own networks for support.

Good practices



City of Peace

The Stad van Vrede (City of Peace) foundation, in collaboration with residents of the Kanaleneiland district, strives to foster connection, mutual integration and a pleasant environment for the people in the district. To achieve these social goals, Huis van Vrede (House of Peace, a local community centre) has set up various initiatives, including a community hub for local residents, distribution of clothing and food, providing job opportunities to people facing employment challenges, offering homework guidance for children, organising consultation hours and providing Dutch language lessons.

Plan Einstein

Utrecht has implemented an innovative approach to the reception and integration of refugees in the asylum seekers' centre (azc) through the Plan Einstein project. Residents of the AZC and surrounding neighbourhoods have the opportunity to participate in courses, training, and collaborative activities. Even while their application for residency is pending, they continue to invest in their future, wherever that may lie. School-age children attend school, and when refugees receive residence status, they become eligible for housing in Utrecht or the surrounding region. This ensures a continuous pathway to integration for newcomers. Plan Einstein offers space for meeting and development.

Utrecht Human rights Coalition

Over the past ten years, the concept of Human Rights has become a shared foundation for collaboration among Utrecht organisations. Inclusion, equal rights and equal opportunities are also important concepts in the municipality's policy. Within this framework, an informal network of organisations and individuals committed to Human Rights, equality and progress has formed – the Utrecht Human Rights Coalition. Participating organisations are involved in different themes, allowing them to learn from each other and complement each other's efforts. In this way, they exchange knowledge and connect the activities and ambitions. In doing so, they aim to contribute to an inclusive society.



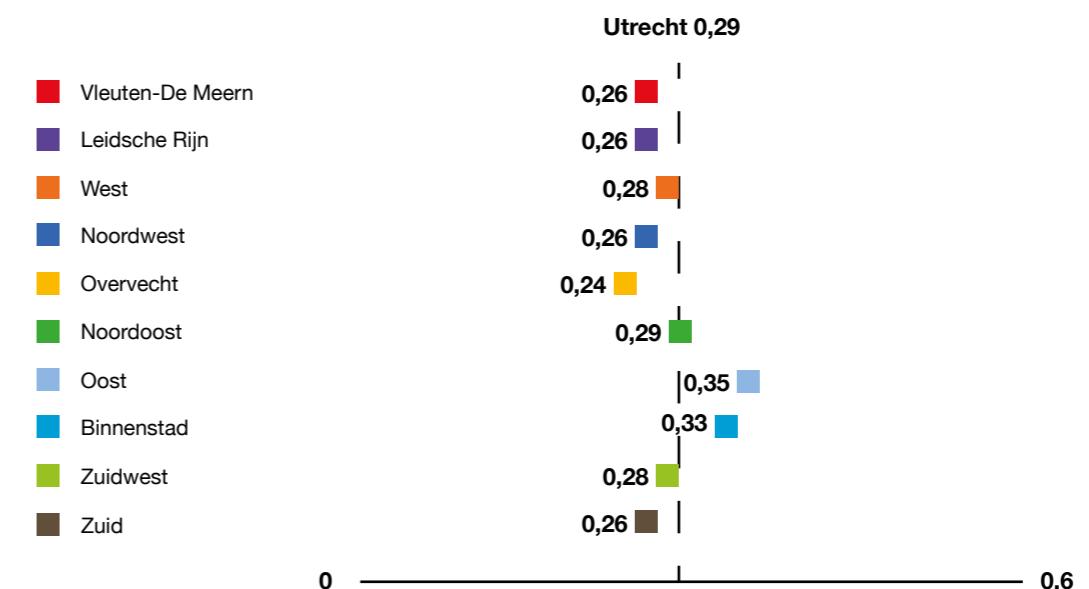
Traces of slavery

2023 will mark 160 years since the abolition of slavery by law in 1863, although enslaved individuals were still required to work for an additional 10 years. Therefore, many consider 1873 as the year that enslaved people were truly free. In 2023, the city will celebrate the 150th anniversary of this significant event. The traces of this past are still visible in culture, architecture and society. City walks such as 'Traces of Slavery' and the 'Bittersweet Route' unveil the history of slavery in the city. These walks explore not only the individuals after whom certain streets are named but also shed light on colonialism as a system. With these walks, the initiators hope to raise awareness among the inhabitants of Utrecht.

Buurtwerkamer TOP

BuurtWerkKamer TOP serves as the vibrant community centre of the Tweede Daalsebuurt, Ondiep & Pijlsweerd. It is a gathering place where local residents come together, offering a welcoming environment where everyone can enjoy a free cup of coffee or tea and engage in conviviality. It is also a place where they can ask for assistance, share ideas or just organise activities independently. Residents help each other to acquire greater self-reliance and increase the quality of life in the neighbourhood and community.

Figure 10.2 | Income inequality (Gini) per district, 2018



Source: CBS, Volksgezondheidsmonitor

Figure 10.1 | Neighbourhoods with the lowest socioeconomic or livability score

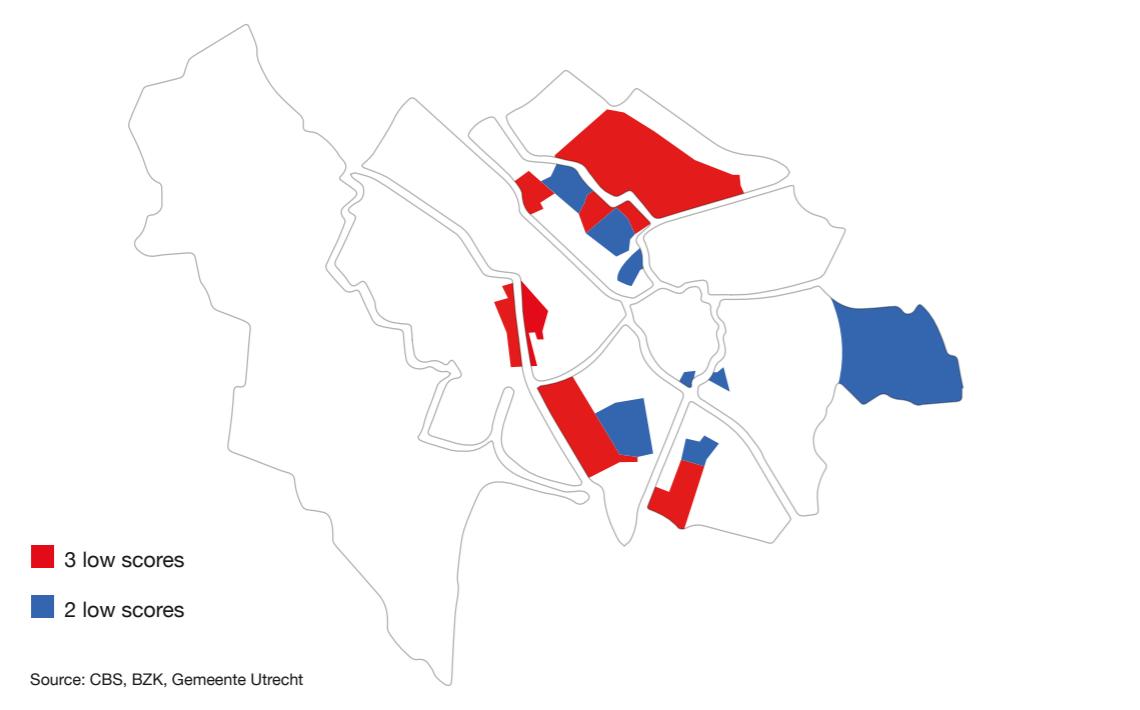


Figure 10.3 | Median capital (households) neighbourhoods x 1.000 euro

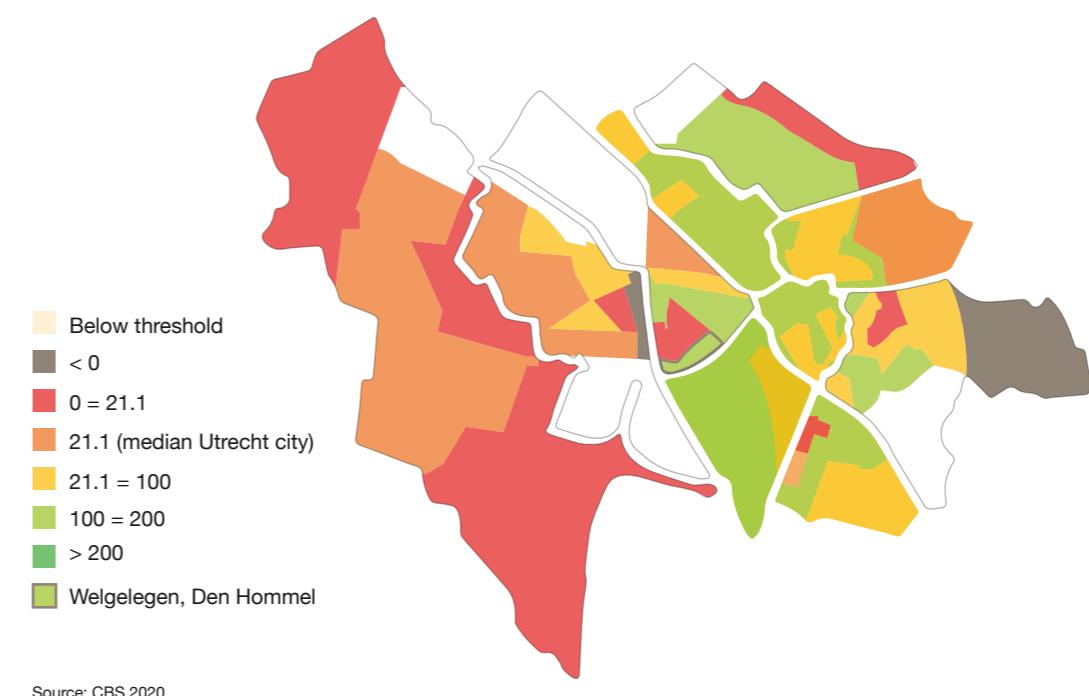




Figure 10.4 | Perceived grounds for discrimination

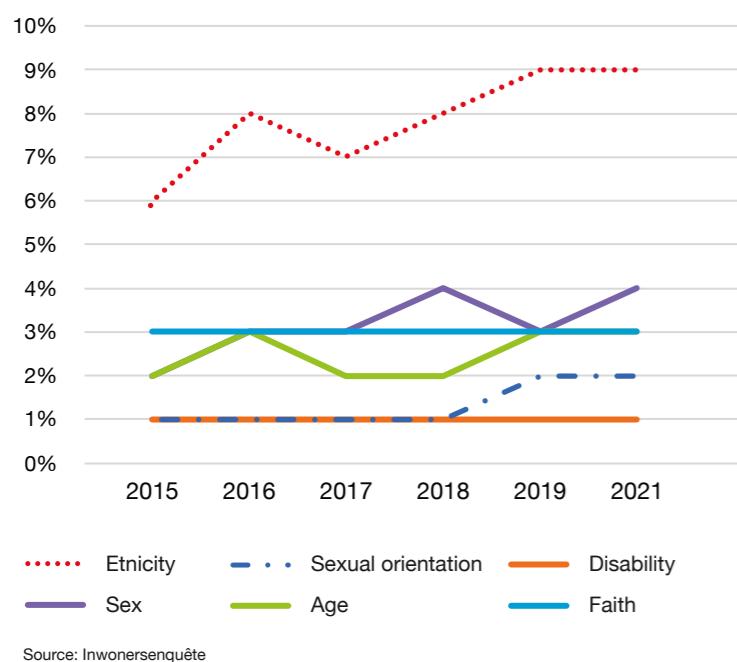


Figure 10.6 | Working status holders by cohort year per quarter

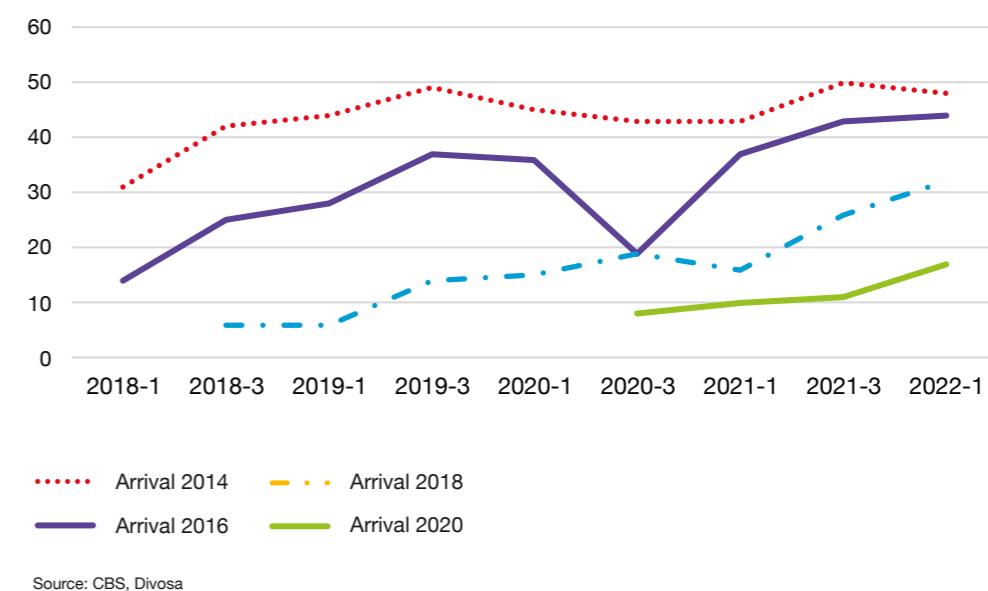
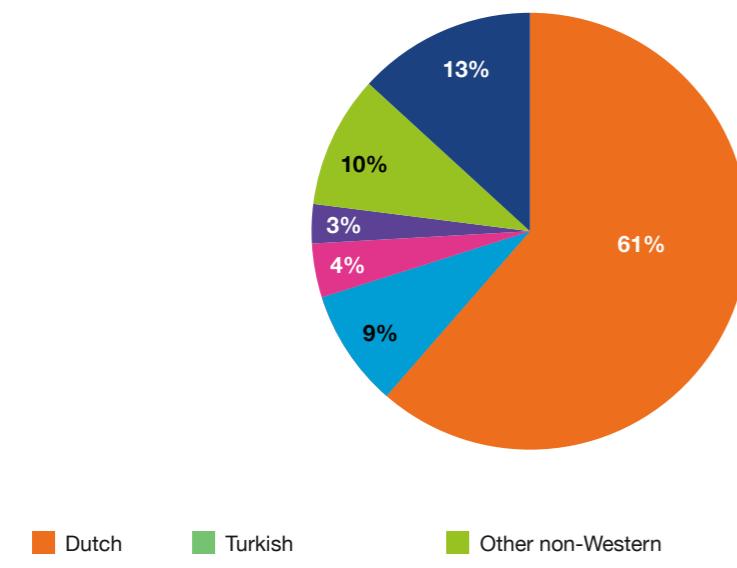


Figure 10.5 | Population by migration background





11 Sustainable cities and communities



This is a comprehensive objective that covers a wide range of topics, including housing, basic services, urbanisation, mobility, heritage, public space and air quality.

Housing (11.1)

This goal primarily focuses on the availability and affordability of housing. The housing stock in Utrecht consists of 45% owner-occupied homes and 53% rental homes. The share of social housing has decreased to 32% in 2022 (Figure 11.1). The housing stock grew by 1.7% in 2022. Across various segments of the housing market, including social rent, medium-priced rent and owner-occupied homes, the demand is many times greater than the supply. Over the past 3 years, the average waiting time for social housing has fluctuated between 11 and 12 years. Every year, Utrecht adds around 3,000 completed homes. Compared to other G4 cities and the national average, Utrecht has a relatively high rate of home construction in relation to the existing housing stock.

Affordability

The prices of owner-occupied homes have risen sharply in recent years. At the beginning of 2018, the average selling price of an existing owner-occupied home in Utrecht was approximately 330,000 euros. By mid-2022, at the peak in

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Online dashboard



terms of the average selling price, the average transaction price of an owner-occupied home was approximately 517,000 euros. In a span of around four years, from the beginning of 2018, the average transaction price rose by 57% (approximately 187,000 euros) (Figure 11.2).

Social housing is relatively affordable. As of early of 2021, 36% of the total housing stock consists of rental properties with a monthly rent below €752. Most homes in this social segment are owned by housing corporations (81%). National legislation stipulates that social housing is only accessible to households with an income below €40,024 per year.

In terms of average monthly net housing costs, housing corporations (€600 per month), while private rentals are the most expensive (more than €1,000). It is striking that the costs per square metre for private rentals have also risen considerably in recent years (by 42%), while the costs in the housing association sector have remained constant and even decreased in the owner-occupied sector. Tenants in private

rentals allocate a larger portion of their income to housing costs compared to those in owner-occupied homes and housing corporations. For people under the age of 35, this amounts to nearly half of their income.

Due to long waiting times for social rentals, high rents on the free market and expensive owner-occupied homes, living in Utrecht is becoming less and less accessible to households with a low or average income. However, despite concerns about affordability and housing availability, residents are generally satisfied with their homes, with 91% giving their home a positive rating (average score of 7.5).

Homelessness

In 2020, a total of 2,275 people in Utrecht are experiencing actual homelessness. This included people utilising homeless shelters, support services and people registered as homeless with the Work and Income Department. Three in ten homeless people are under the age of 27.



Housing vision

By 2040, the city's population is projected to reach 450,000, with an increasing share of single-person households. To accommodate the growth of the city, approximately 60,000 extra homes are needed in Utrecht, equating to around 3,000 new homes annually. Construction of 2,667 homes commenced in 2021, the municipality expects another 1,000 homes to begin construction in 2022. In order to provide equal opportunities for all those wanting to live in Utrecht, the city will allocate resources in the coming years to social and medium-rent housing, affordable owner-occupied homes and

a better flow. To enhance the quality of life in neighbourhoods, Utrecht aims to distribute new owner-occupied and rental homes more evenly throughout the city, fostering neighbourhoods with diverse populations. At the moment, the total planning capacity is 63,500 to 71,000 homes. Among the hard planned capacity (according to municipal definition) of 43,000 - 45,000 homes, 34% consists of independent social rental housing and 4% consists of non-self-contained student units. 24% of the hard planned capacity falls in the middle segment (buy/rent).

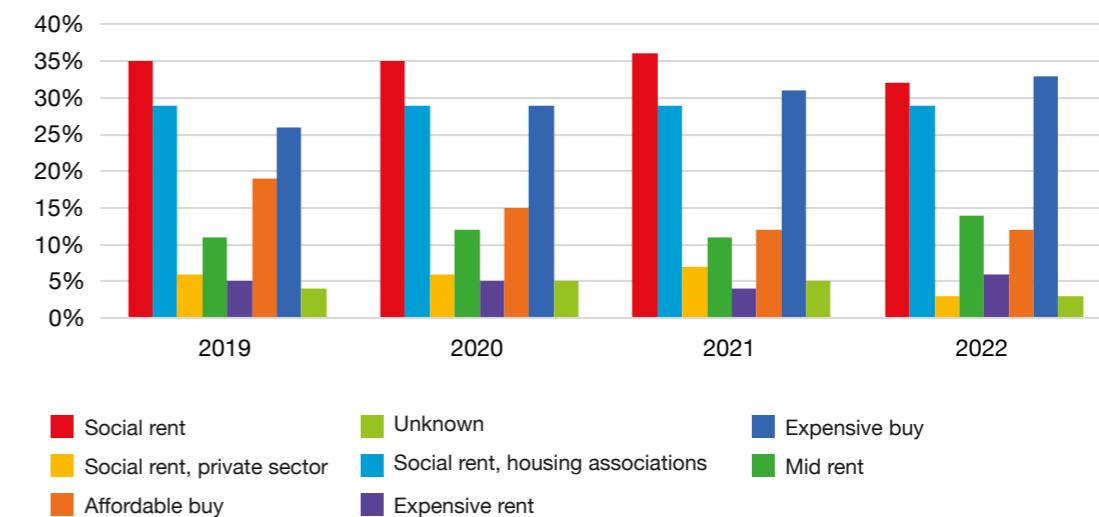
Good practices



Merwedekanaalzone

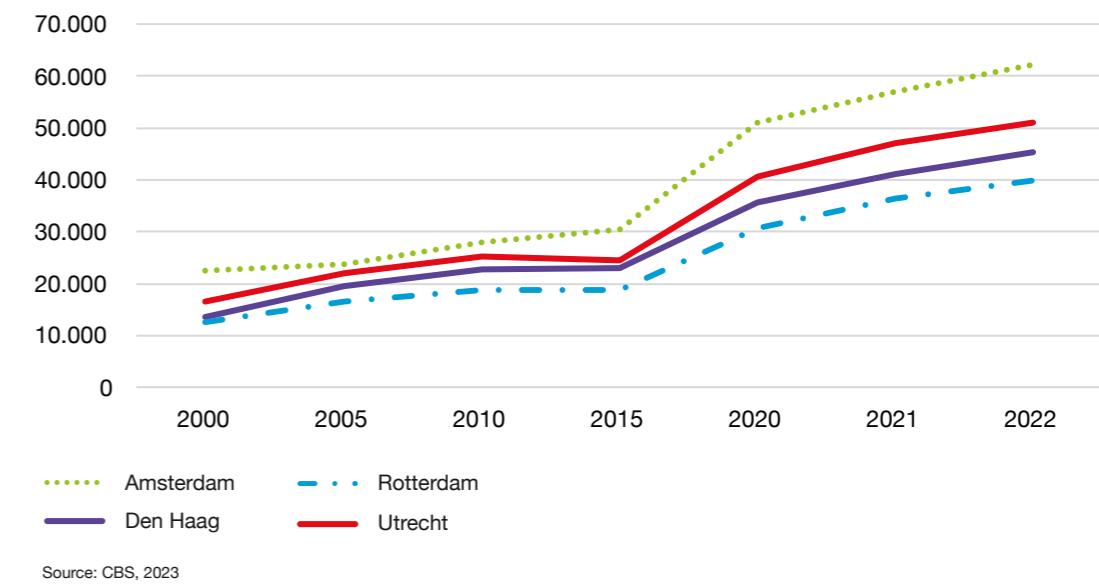
The largest development area until 2040 is Merwede, which will accommodate 6,000 homes. Utrecht is building a future-oriented city district for 12,000 residents between the Merwede canal and Park Transwijk. This Merwede district will be a green neighbourhood with a wide mix of housing options for everyone. What is currently a business park, will instead become a neighbourhood with homes and many different facilities. Buildings will be more closely spaced than they are in other Utrecht districts, making careful design of public spaces crucial. As part of this design, the district will be car-free, encouraging residents to use cycling, walking, shared cars, and public transportation instead.

Figure 11.1 | Homes by ownership and price



Source: BAG, BghU, WU, WoOn 2021

Figure 11.2 | Existing owner-occupied homes; average selling prices (in euros)



Source: CBS, 2023



Mobility (11.2)

Utrecht has to deal with an increasing number of residents and visitors, resulting in greater mobility demands. Projections indicate a 35% increase in trips by 2040 compared to 2015. To keep the growing city healthy and accessible, Utrecht prioritises clean and space-efficient modes of transportation: walking, cycling, and public transport. This approach is set out in the 2040 mobility plan. Utrecht has the ambition to become a 10-minute city, where all daily activities can be reached within 10 minutes on foot or by bike. This fosters inclusivity and opportunities for social interactions within the local environment. In recent years, the city's commitment to active and clean mobility has shown success, with bicycle and public transport usage surpassing car usage in growth.

As of 1 January 2022, the average number of private passenger cars registered in Utrecht per 1,000 inhabitants was 300, representing a 0.7% increase from 2021. Other G4 cities have also witnessed an increase in the number of private cars per 1,000 inhabitants. However, Utrecht's number of passenger cars per household is below the Dutch average (444).

The city promotes car-sharing initiatives. The availability of commercial shared cars has grown from over 500 shared cars in 2020, to about 700 shared cars in 2021, to 850 shared cars in 2022. The 2021 Population Survey shows that 11% of Utrecht residents had used a shared car over the preceding 12 months. Amsterdam has the highest share of shared cars per 100,000 inhabitants (270), followed by Utrecht (233). Additionally, other forms of shared transport have also been expanded, including the placement of 150 shared cargo bikes by Cargoroo. On average, one trip per cargo bike is made daily.

Bicycle usage has seen the most significant increase among all modes of transport since the beginning of the century and has remained relatively stable in recent years. The bicycle is the most commonly used mode of transport for travel in, from and to Utrecht (Figure 11.3). Utrecht is transforming several busy streets in the city into bicycle streets, providing more space for cyclists and pedestrians. Investments are also being made in storage facilities. With 12,500 spaces, Utrecht boasts the largest bicycle parking facility in the world. The Fietsersbond (Dutch cyclists' union) gave Utrecht as a cycling city a score of 3.4 (out

of 5) in 2020, which corresponds to the national average.

Public transport

Eight out of ten Utrecht residents are satisfied with the accessibility of their own neighbourhood by public transport. Utrecht wants public transport to become an attractive alternative to the car by addressing congestion points. Efforts are underway to improve the flow of public transport, especially on busy bus lines. Initiatives include constructing dedicated bus and tram lanes and reducing waiting times at intersections. These measures makes travelling by public transport faster, more reliable and more pleasant.

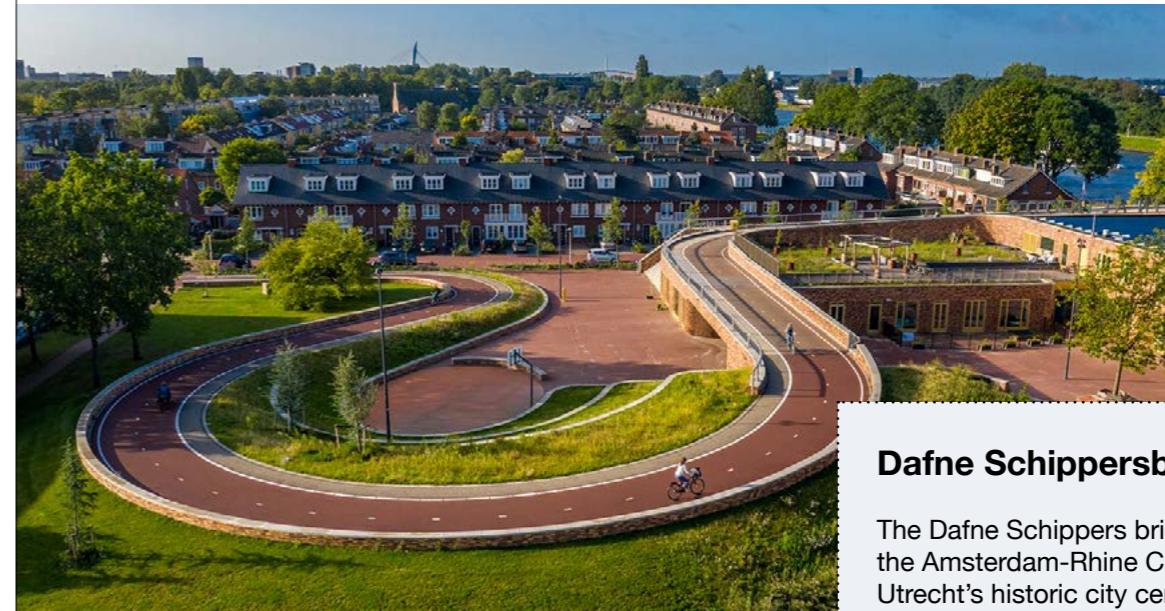
Inclusive public transport

In 2022, 78% of the 578 bus stops in the municipality of Utrecht were wheelchair accessible and equipped with features for visually impaired individuals, such as corrugated strips. This represents an improvement compared to the 56% accessibility rate at the end of 2015. Ongoing projects and road maintenance work will include accessibility improvements wherever possible, and inaccessible stops are targeted for necessary improvements.

Mobility is an important condition for people to be able to participate fully in society. Since 2021, U-Pass holders have the opportunity to purchase a second-hand bicycle for 30 euros at the bicycle hub in Overvecht. They can also have them repaired free of charge up to a year after purchase. Additionally, cycling lessons are also available from the Bicycle Masters there. Furthermore, U-Pass holders can receive a 75% discount on the use of shared (electric) bicycles from TIER in Utrecht. Low-income residents aged 66 or over are eligible for a free one-year public transport season ticket. These initiatives ensure that suitable mobility solutions are accessible to all Utrecht residents, minimising transport poverty.

Road safety

The number of road accidents and injuries in Utrecht has shown a downward trend in recent years. In 2021, there were four road fatalities, one fewer than in 2020. Nearly two-thirds of Utrecht residents express satisfaction with road safety in their respective neighbourhoods. Dissatisfaction primarily stems from concerns about speeding and the condition of particular intersections, pavements or bike paths that compromise road safety.



Dafne Schippersbridge

The Dafne Schippers bridge spanning the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal connects Utrecht's historic city centre with the new Leidsche Rijn district. This remarkable bridge seamlessly integrates a bicycle and pedestrian pathway with a primary school and a park into one cohesive and innovative structure. By maximising land utilisation and harmonising different components, the Dafne Schippers bridge has become an iconic symbol of sustainable cycling infrastructure in both the city and the Netherlands.

Good practices

Croeselaan

In 2018, the municipality redesigned the Croeselaan, a frequently used thoroughfare near Central Station, and transformed it into a green zone with ample space for cyclists and pedestrians. The main road was converted into two one-way lanes for car traffic, and a park area was established in between. To preserve trees that had to be removed elsewhere, they were relocated to the Croeselaan. The project also emphasised sustainability, by reusing as many materials and elements as possible from the 'old' Croeselaan. Furthermore, the bike path is made of an innovative cement-free concrete that reduces CO₂ emissions during production. Solar panels power the lampposts, bamboo is used for the road signs and relocated artwork adds to the aesthetic appeal.

Dutch Cycling Embassy

Utrecht is home to the Dutch Cycling Embassy, which serves as an intermediary between the demand for Dutch cycling expertise and relevant parties. This public-private network is dedicated to promoting sustainable, bicycle-inclusive mobility. It brings together the wealth of knowledge, experience and experts from private companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutions, and national and local governments, showcasing the best of Dutch cycling.

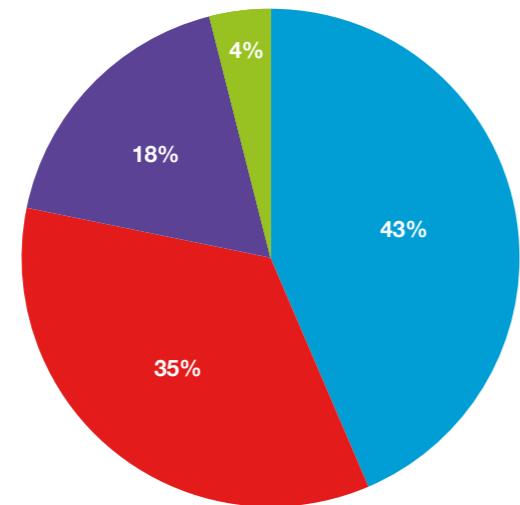


Inclusive and sustainable urban development (11.3)

Participation means that the municipality shapes the city together with residents, entrepreneurs, social organisations and other stakeholders. The aim is to ensure more Utrecht residents feel involved and have the opportunity to influence developments in the city. To facilitate this, an action programme entitled 'Making a city together in the Utrecht way' was drawn up. In 2021, a Participation Guideline was adopted in order to improve citizen participation in city planning and policies. These guidelines are intended for civil servants and professionals in the city, including project developers, housing corporations, interest groups, social brokers and other relevant parties. However, further steps are needed to make resident participation more inclusive, increase involvement in the city and improve the quality of plans. The municipal 'Rekenkamer' concluded that diversity among participants is not yet increasing and that the involvement of Utrecht residents in resident participation has not shown improvement.

A neighbourhood platform is either active or being developed in all districts, which is actively encouraged by the municipality. These neighbourhood platforms serve as a bridge between neighbourhood groups, residents' committees, business associations, organisations and the municipality. They ensure a broader representation of voices from the neighbourhood. Additionally, an initiative fund is available to support various projects such as square renovations, community centre activities, façade gardens and meeting places for young people. Anyone with an idea can apply for funding from the initiative fund. In 2021, a total of 908 initiatives were awarded funding, maintaining a similar level to the previous year, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of initiatives awarded funding increased from 1,146 in 2017 to 1,271 in 2019.

Figure 11.3 | Modal split



Source: CBS and Gemeente Utrecht, 2020

Good practices

Oosterspoorbaan

The Oosterspoorbaan is a railway section that runs through a residential area between Utrecht Maliebaan and Utrecht. Although it no longer functions as an active railway line, the local neighbourhood was given the opportunity to determine the future of this 750-meter long route spanning 22,000 m². It has now been transformed into a new cycling and walking park, providing a vital connection between the Utrecht city centre and the Kromme Rijn area. As a reminder of its railway past, the old catenary portals have been preserved.

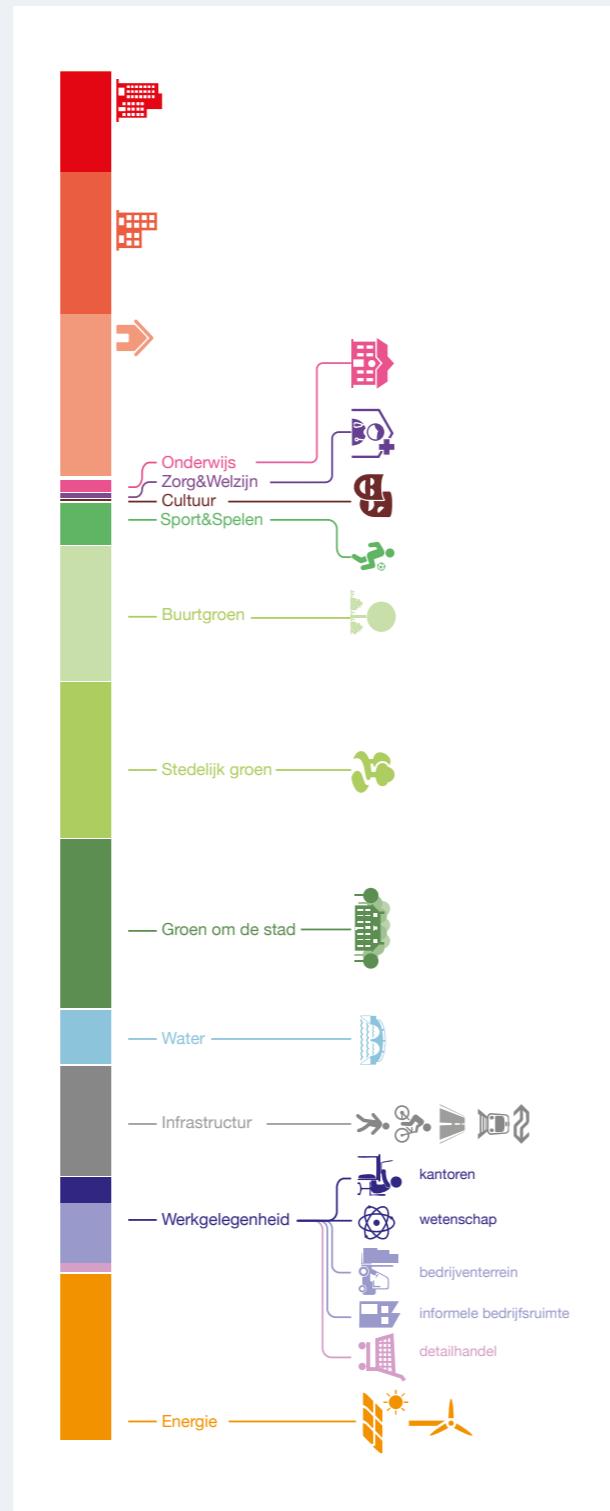




Good practices

The barcode

In the coming years, Utrecht will transform into the first healthy ‘ten-minute city’. Never before has a city opted for such a radical and innovative approach. To achieve this vision, a unique barcode has been developed to ensure that the growth of facilities keeps pace with the construction of homes. This barcode concept illustrates how the municipality intends to organise urban space. For every 10,000 homes, the Utrecht barcode specifies the necessary developments and space requirements within the city. Accommodating 10,000 homes requires approximately 540 football fields of additional space within the city, encompassing not only housing but also greenery, workplaces, infrastructure and energy. The barcode framework considers the distribution of facilities per 10,000 homes, ensuring proximity for all residents. Examples include the provision of green areas such as parks or forests, as well as the density of schools, supermarkets and businesses. The municipality continuously assesses its development plans against this barcode, ensuring the balance between housing and the availability of various facilities.



De Kracht van Zuilen

Foundation ‘De Kracht van Zuilen’ is dedicated to fostering a helpful and interconnected community in Zuilen. Their motto ‘a neighbourhood where everyone stands out and no one drops out’ drives their efforts to strengthen community ties and promote inclusion. Through the Burennetwerk Zuilen website, residents can create profiles to request or offer neighbourly assistance and social contact. This network serves as a platform for all organisations and residents active in the neighbourhood, supporting various resident groups in organising events, activities and initiatives. By fostering these resident-led initiatives, the community promotes connectedness, moments of happiness, neighbourly help and social networks. In addition, the foundation serves as a ‘district information point’, offering a quarterly magazine and a neighbourhood website.

Kanaleneiland neighbourhood cooperative

Wijkcoöperatie Kanaleneiland brings together diverse groups of people while promoting entrepreneurship within the district. Through various projects, the neighbourhood cooperative aims to create employment opportunities and stimulate economic activities within the community. The cooperative believes that the neighbourhood can generate significant social and economic benefits for its residents and entrepreneurs by increasing turnover and job opportunities within the neighbourhood itself. Examples of projects include a district information point and a district broadcasting office.





Cultural heritage (11.4)

Utrecht is home to 1,669 municipal monuments and 1,596 national monuments. The municipality places great value on preserving the city's historical green spaces and spatial structures, such as the Zocherpark and the Wilhelminapark, the As van Berlage in Zuijen, the stamp structure of Hoograven and the historic water routes such as De Vaartsche Rijn and the Leidsche Rijn. In recognition of their significance, the Roman Limes and the New Dutch WaterLine were designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2021. The Rietveld-Schröder House has held this status since the year 2000.

Good practices

The Singel

The Utrechtse Singel is a monumental feature that spans nearly 900 years of history. Along with its bridges, adjacent greenery, monuments and historical remains that are located on both sides of the banks, it holds significant cultural value. In the 1970s, the Catharijnesingel was filled in to accommodate car traffic, but this past 'mistake' was rectified in 2017. Twelve lanes of motorway have made way for the returning water and greenery, restoring the now once again complete canal to its former glory. The revitalised canal now offers an attractive environment, enhanced by nature-friendly banks that provide space for flora and fauna. The restoration efforts also reintroduced abundant greenery into the city. The nearby Zocherpark near Willemsplantsoen has also been restored in accordance with the original designer's vision.

The history of Utrecht, both within the city and its surrounding areas, plays a crucial role in shaping its spatial quality and identity. The municipality takes care to ensure that the growth of the city does not pose a threat to its valuable heritage. This involves not only preservation but also active utilization. Utrecht wants the municipality's past to remain visible in the ever-developing city. With the Utrecht Restoration Fund, the city supports a sustainable approach to preserving municipal monuments and the professional knowledge about their restoration.

Sint Maarten Parade

The Sint Maarten Parade takes place annually in November in Utrecht's city centre, commemorating the legend of the Roman soldier Martinus. According to the legend, Martinus cut his cloak in half with his sword to help a bespectacled beggar. Since 2015, the Sint Maarten celebration has been a collaborative effort between three initiators: the Sharing Arts Society (SAS), Sint Maartensberaad Utrecht and Museum Catharijneconvent. Over the years, the Parade has grown into one of the largest participatory and inclusive cultural events in the city of Utrecht. About 100 organisations participate in the parade, and preparation now involves public workshops held in various accessible locations throughout the city, including playgrounds, community centres, refugee shelters (AZCs), homeless shelters, care homes and schools for children with intellectual or physical disabilities. Every year, the legend of Martinus is connected to a current theme and linked to one of the 17 Global Goals.

Air quality and noise (11.6)

Many inhabitants are still exposed to concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (Figure 11.4). While Utrecht more than meets the annual average limit values for PM10 and PM2.5 everywhere, this does not yet guarantee healthy air quality for its residents. The municipality aims to surpass these air quality requirements and achieve the even stricter standards recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The aim is to achieve a clear reduction in health risks associated with air pollution. The 2022 coalition agreement outlined the ambition to strive for the new, more stringent WHO advisory values. To this end, Utrecht is developing a new policy vision and accompanying set of measures.

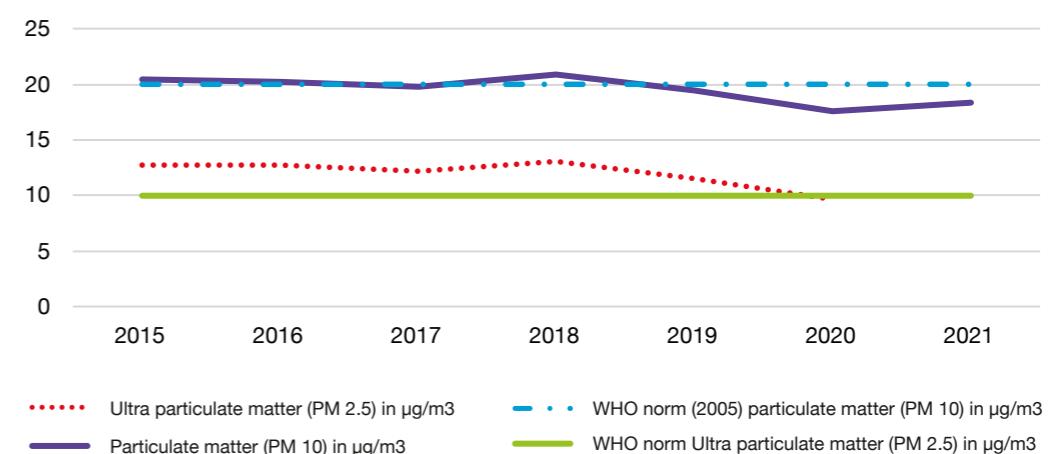
To achieve the desired health benefits, Utrecht is committed to promoting and facilitating clean modes of transport such as cycling and walking, electric (public) transport and car sharing. This includes initiatives such as bicycle parking garages, fast cycle paths, electric buses and charging infrastructure. The environmental zone also contributes to this goal, with tighter restrictions implemented in 2021 for passenger cars and vans, and in 2022 for trucks and buses. Further tightening of the environmental zone will follow in 2025, with the establishment of a zero-emission zone for urban distribution. In addition, Utrecht is working to reduce wood burning among residents by providing information and

subsidies for the removal or disabling of flues. Additionally, efforts are underway to explore ways to prevent the use of highly polluting construction equipment.

Noise

Utrecht conducts noise level assessments in the city every 5 years, with the most recent calculation performed in 2022 for the year 2021. The analysis examines areas where car traffic, trains and industry generate noise levels exceeding 55 decibels (dB). Among these sources, traffic is the primary contributor to noise pollution. More than half (55%) of all homes experience noise levels of 55 dB or higher due to road traffic, with highways often creating a pervasive 'blanket of noise' in many areas. On the other hand, railways produce significantly less noise than ordinary roads, with only 3% of homes experiencing noise levels of 55 dB or higher due to train traffic. This can be attributed to the presence of many noise barriers in inhabited areas. The number of homes affected by industrial noise exceeding 55 dB is relatively low, primarily found on the north side of Amsterdamsestraatweg and in the Scheveningsebuurt. The 2022 coalition agreement emphasises Utrecht's commitment to exceeding legal requirements in new developments and prioritising improvements to the existing noise situation in the city. In line with this, Utrecht is currently developing a new policy vision to address these issues.

Figure 11.4 | Air quality (PM10 and PM2,5)



Source: RIVM



Accessible green spaces and public areas (11.7)

Utrecht residents are generally satisfied with their living environment. Nine out of ten Utrecht residents indicate that they find their own neighbourhood (very) pleasant. In recent years, the overall neighbourhood rating has gradually increased to 7.3 in 2021. However, 35% of Utrecht residents expect their neighbourhood to deteriorate in the future, while 16% hold a negative view of the neighbourhood's future.

Nuisance remains a factor in neighbourhood assessments. Although total police-reported nuisance decreased by 11% in 2021, it is still significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. Most districts have experienced a decrease in total nuisance, with Overvecht standing out positively due to the largest reduction in overall nuisance and youth-related issues. However, even in this district, nuisance related to alcohol and drugs, as well as confused individuals is increasing.

Green spaces are an essential component of a pleasant living environment. The average distance from homes to usable greenery is 122 metres, compared to the national average of 500 metres. When considering public green space per household, the City Centre is the least green district in Utrecht, with 11 m² of public green space per household. Vleuten-De Meern is the greenest district, with 180 m² of greenery per household. The city-wide average is 67 m² of green space per household (SDG 15).

Regional cooperation (11.a)

The Utrecht Metropolitan Area (MRU) is a partnership between the province of Utrecht and 25 municipalities with a total population of approximately 1.4 million. The MRU faces major challenges in terms of physical infrastructure and housing. National and regional mobility networks are already overburdened, and there is a pressing need to accommodate urbanisation. The region aims to provide housing for 125,000 additional residents by 2040, along with creating 80,000 new jobs in the same period. The MRU is committed to collaboratively creating healthy, sustainable and future-proof living environment.

Good practices

Samenspeeltuinen

The municipality aims to ensure that all children can participate and play together in their own neighbourhoods. This is why Utrecht has established inclusive playgrounds called 'Samenspeeltuinen', which are accessible to everyone. These playgrounds provide a diverse and engaging environment, with suitable equipment, facilities, activities and other relevant adjustments, to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities, can enjoy playing together. In 2021, five playgrounds were adapted. The development of Samenspeeltuinen involves collaboration with families of children with disabilities, playground organisations and various partners in the city.





12 Responsible production and consumption



This SDG aims to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, mainly through the efficient use of natural resources and reduction of food waste. SDG 12 is closely aligned with the goals formulated in the Utrecht Circular 2020-2023 plan, with the ultimate of achieving a 100% circular city by 2050.

Policy (12.1)

Utrecht is taking gradual steps to becoming a circular city, with a goal of reaching 50% circularity by 2030 and full circularity by 2050. A key objective is to reduce the use of primary raw materials by 50% by 2030. The Utrecht Circular 2020-2023 plan has established five key ambitions:

- Strengthening the business climate for circular companies in Utrecht

- Enhancing the investment climate and adopting circular procurement practices
- Promoting circular area development and construction
- Working towards a waste-free Utrecht by transforming waste into raw materials
- Encouraging training and knowledge development in circular construction and entrepreneurship.

In the 2020 raw materials policy, Utrecht outlined its strategy for waste collection and processing. The city is committed to waste prevention and efficient raw material collection in order to process them to the highest possible standard. By 2025, Utrecht aims to reduce residual waste to 30 kilos per inhabitant or 178 kilos per inhabitant annually, with an expected recycling rate of 54%.

Circular entrepreneurship zone

The Strijkviertel business park, the adjacent Lage Weide industrial estate, and the Werkspoorkwartier are envisioned as the epicentre of circular entrepreneurship in the Netherlands.

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Online dashboard



- Strijkviertel is the circular business park of Utrecht with space for labour-intensive circular companies.
- Business park Lage Weide is the 'Engine Room of Utrecht', housing companies focused on the circular economy and city logistics. It also provides space for water-related activities and vocational education (MBO).
- In 2022, entrepreneurs presented their own vision for Lage Weide which the municipality will incorporate into its overall area vision. The planning process considers the potential of the port and rail connections, the preservation of significant environmental contours, intensification measures and compatible circular activities.
- Werkspoorkwartier is emerging as the leading hub for the creative and circular manufacturing industry. Efforts have been made to professionalise the park management association, Bedrijvenkring Cartesius (BKC).

Food waste (12.3)

Food waste refers to food intended for human consumption, but not used for this purpose, both in households and in retail and hospitality. The Nutrition Centre estimates that households in Utrecht waste approximately 34.3 kg of food per person per year, which accounts for 23-32% of the overall food system waste. Retail contributes 10% to the total food waste in the Netherlands.

Reducing food waste has gained attention in the city, and many Utrecht entrepreneurs are actively involved in addressing this issue. Through initiatives like 'Too good to go', consumers can prevent food waste by purchasing surplus food from affiliated businesses that would otherwise be discarded, thereby saving meals. In 2022, a total of 169,000 meals were saved (including in other cities), with 27 locations in Utrecht participating in this initiative.

Waste and reuse (12.5)

On average, residents of Utrecht generate 375 kg of waste per year (Figure 12.1). Of all



household waste collected, 46% is separated (Figure 12.2). This includes the results from the post-separation of bulky waste and plastic, cans and drink cartons from the small household waste. With the use of wheelie bins and underground containers for recyclables, 29% of small household waste is separated. Plastic, cans and drink cartons were previously included in the 'source separation', but from 2022, they will be included in the overall waste separation results, including post-separation. Among the G4 cities, Utrecht has the second-lowest waste production per inhabitant, following Amsterdam. In terms of separate waste collection, Utrecht's rate in 2021 was higher than the other three major cities: Utrecht 44%, The Hague 19%, Amsterdam 17%, Rotterdam 24%.

The municipality is working together with thrift stores, circular DIY stores and repair cafés to develop Upcycle centres where reusable goods are taken and given a new purpose. These centres are linked to the municipality's waste separation stations and aim to prevent reusable raw materials from ending up in the waste streams. The goods are repaired and sold through recycling processes, providing employment opportunities for local makers.

New collection
'The New Collection' has been implemented throughout almost the entire city placing emphasis on waste separation. The municipality collects vegetable, fruit and garden waste and paper and cardboard separately. By separating waste, more raw materials are recovered for new products and less residual waste is incinerated. A waste sorting analysis in 2019 showed that the waste contains the following raw materials per inhabitant per year:

- Vegetable, fruit and garden waste: 68 kg
- Waste paper and cardboard: 27 kg
- Plastic, cans and drink cartons: 21 kg
- Glass: 6 kg
- Textile: 7 kg

Circular construction
Utrecht is actively promoting closed cycles, extending the lifespan of materials, and encouraging reuse in civil engineering tenders. The Regional Development Agency (ROM) has drawn up a roadmap that prioritised digitisation and advancements in circular logistics, construction and housing. Regarding circular construction, Utrecht is focusing on twenty area developments and projects, aiming to construct

around 20,000 new homes. The environmental impact from the materials and installations in new buildings, as measured in the Environmental Performance Buildings (MPG) rating, is 0.63 in Utrecht. The lower the MPG value, the lower the environmental impact. Utrecht's MPG value is below the maximum requirement of 0.8 set by building regulations. Environmental impact can be further reduced by selecting more environmentally friendly materials, such as wood or recycled materials, and by designing buildings to use fewer materials.

Green register (12.6)

The municipality has a Green Register, which includes companies with a certified quality mark demonstrating their commitment to sustainability. The number of companies listed in the green register rose from 98 in 2018 to 151 in 2020.

Sustainable procurement (12.7)

Utrecht has an annual budget of €600 million for procurement. The city wants aims to leverage this purchasing power to encourage (market) parties to offer smart, fair and innovative solutions that contribute to a sustainable city. As a participant in the Green Deal circular procurement, Utrecht is on its way to achieving the objective of purchasing products and services in a circular way. By 2022, the percentage of circular tenders within the organization will reach 35% of all tenders, compared to 13% in 2017. Utrecht set a minimum target of at least 33%. Furthermore, Utrecht is also recognised as a fair trade municipality, which is reflected in the purchasing policy, such as sourcing wood with the FSC quality mark.

Awareness (12.8)

According to a recent survey, a significant portion of residents (71%) state that they separate waste to contribute to environmental preservation. The city has implemented various programmes and campaigns to raise awareness about sustainable development, including nature and environmental education in schools. In addition, a Utrecht Clean City teaching package for primary and secondary schools has been developed, emphasising the prevention, separation and recycling of waste.

Good practices

BuurtBuik

BuurtBuik operates at four locations, preparing healthy and free meals using food saved from supermarkets, retailers and restaurants. Local volunteers pick up the food from local vendors and cook a meal from it. Beyond providing meals, BuurtBuik also wants to raise awareness about food waste by finding creative ways to utilise surplus food, for example by sharing it with other institutions or donating remains (such as peels) to the petting zoo. BuurtBuik brings together local residents from different population groups, fostering community connections and preventing social isolation. The meals serve as a means to bring people together on a structural basis.

Wastebar

The WasteBar is an initiative aimed at allowing the public to experience and understand the value of waste, with the ultimate goal of changing people's behaviour regarding consumption and waste. The WasteBar can be found at events in the city, offering drinks or snacks that can be purchased using litter like cans and cigarette butts. WasteBar then transforms this waste into new raw materials for products.

Fairtrade municipality

Utrecht has held the title of Fairtrade Municipality since 2010, signifying the city's commitment to fair trade. This designation extends not only to the municipality, but also to shops, restaurants, companies and residents in Utrecht who prioritise fair trade. The Utrecht4GlobalGoals Foundation introduces residents and entrepreneurs to fair trade products, and the Fair Shopping app helps people locate places to buy fair trade products in Utrecht. The conditions fair trade are included in municipal tenders, and the city's procurement and client policies are well-aligned with international fair trade standards.

Buurman Utrecht

Buurman Utrecht serves as both a hardware store for professionals and consumers and a waste processor for construction companies, museums/art institutions, festivals, and other organisations. Usable residual materials are made available for sale on the shelves of Buurman's DIY store instead of being discarded in landfills or incinerated. By giving these materials a new life, Buurman Utrecht contributes to sustainable waste management. In addition to building materials, Buurman Utrecht also has a public workshop where the materials can be immediately processed.



LOOS

LOOS is a packaging-free store where consumers can get groceries without having to take packaging with them. At LOOS, customers have the flexibility to choose how they want to carry their products, whether it's in an empty jar, container, or bag. This approach minimises unnecessary packaging waste that would otherwise be discarded. Besides aiming to reduce plastic packaging, LOOS also emphasises sustainable business practices, such as using compostable business cards and incorporating second-hand materials and clothing in its operations.

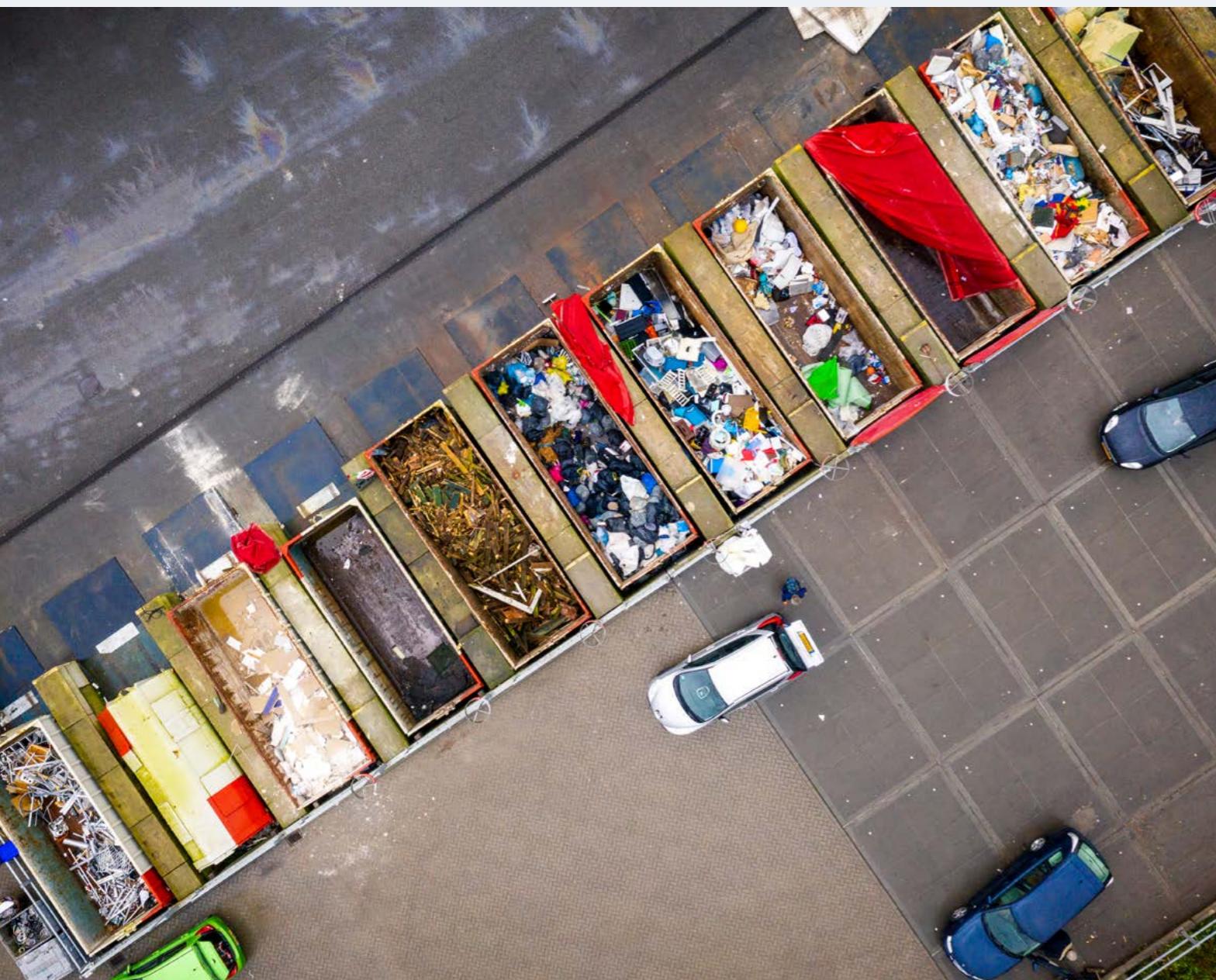
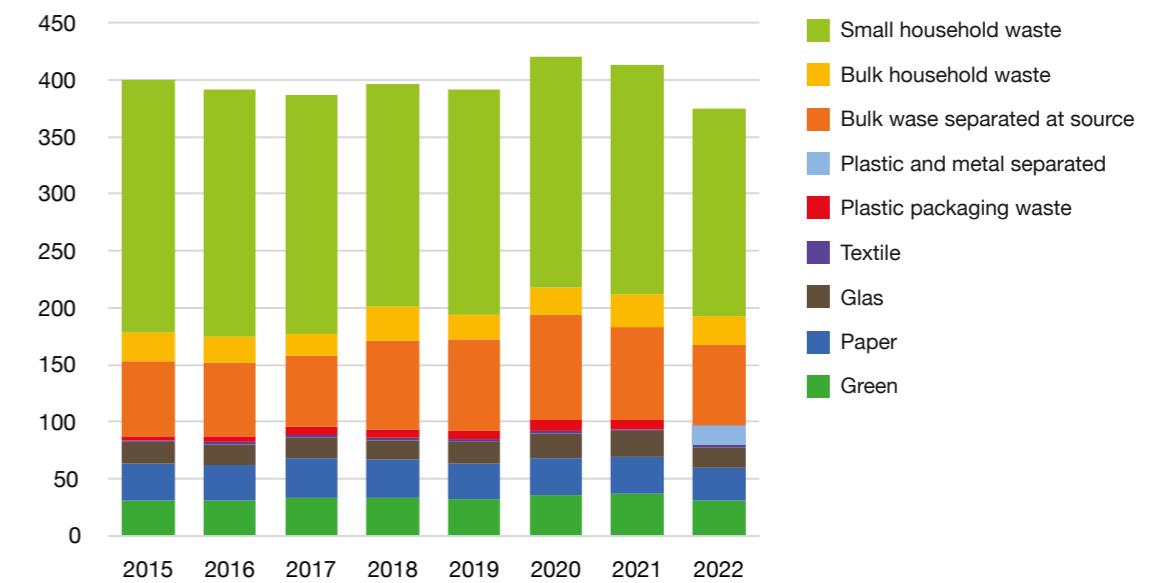
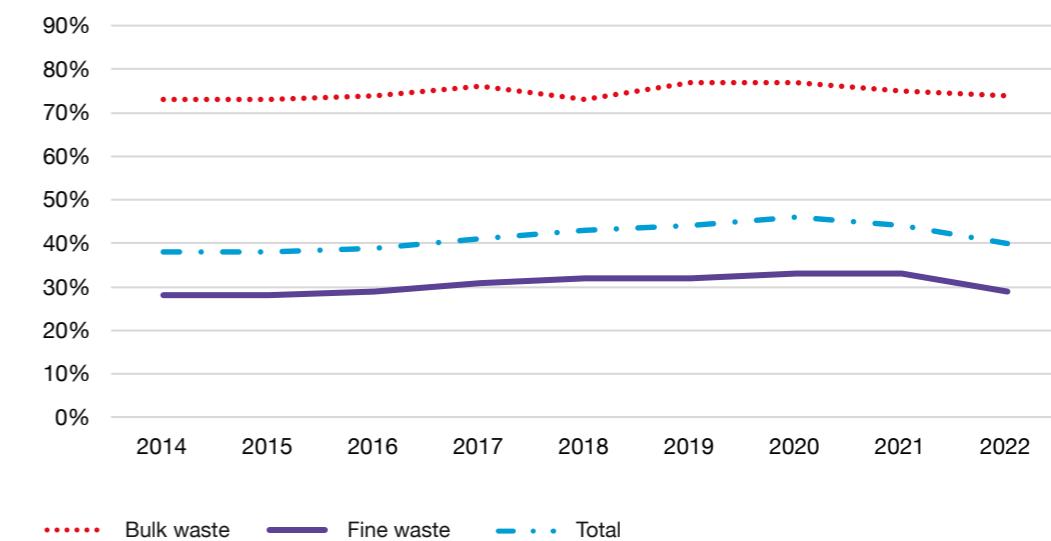


Figure 12.1 | Waste production per inhabitants (kg)



Source: Gemeente Utrecht

Figure 12.2 | Waste separation at source



Source: Gemeente Utrecht



13 Climate action



On the one hand, the further warming of the climate must be prevented as much as possible. This can be achieved by promoting the closure of cycles for water, material and energy. Climate policy is therefore closely intertwined with the objectives of renewable energy (SDG 7), circularity (SDG 12), urban development (SDG 11) and water (SDG 6). In this chapter, we will explore how to address the warming climate, including the challenges posed by more frequent extreme weather events such as heavy precipitation and prolonged drought.

The Climate Adaptation Vision outlines how Utrecht deals with the changing climate, characterised by more frequent periods of heat, drought and extreme rainfall. To assess the city's vulnerability, stress tests are being conducted. Utrecht aims to become 'climate-proof' and address all vulnerabilities by 2050.

Climate adaptation (13.1)

Heavy rainfall and heat

During extreme rainfall in Utrecht, excessive water tends to accumulate on the streets, especially in urban areas. Areas such as Overvecht, Zuilen and Tuindorp, as well as older districts such as Vleuten and de Meern, face flooding in the low-lying areas in the districts. This is particularly evident in places with extensive pavement in streets and gardens, such as asphalt and tiles. Many tunnels also experience flooding, and there is no separate system for rainwater and wastewater in these areas.

Utrecht is also vulnerable to heat, because a large part of the city is urbanised, characterised

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy.

Online dashboard



by a lot of pavement and little greenery. In these areas, the night-time temperature remains high during warm summer days as the lack of trees and shading inhibits evaporation. Streets and sidewalks, with their extensive pavement, absorb and retain heat. The City Centre and the surrounding old neighbourhoods such as Rivierenwijk, Ondiep and Zuilen face considerable heat stress during hot periods. The heat stress map shows that in many places in the city, seniors over the age of 75 who suffer from loneliness are particularly at risk of health consequences due to heat stress.

To combat flooding and heat stress, Utrecht has set a target of having 40% green space in the city's horizontal plane. Greenery provides cooling and helps collect rainwater. Another objective is to have a cool green space available within 200 meters of any location. This is achieved in almost all areas, except Lombok, Parkwijk Zuid, Hoge Weide and the Oudenrijn and Overvecht business parks.

Implementing measures to disconnect rainwater

from the sewer system is an effective strategy for climate adaptation. In 2022, a total of 10.9 hectares were disconnected (Figure 13.2), which is 2.8 hectares more than in 2021. Of the 10.9 ha, 2.6 ha was transformed into green spaces. This largely concerned roof surfaces that were converted by private individuals. As part of the Waterproof030 initiative, 46,419 tiles were also collected from residents in 2022, resulting in approximately 2,028 m² of green space. This is almost 1.5 times the number of tiles that was collected in 2021. Moreover, the construction of new façade gardens also resulted in approximately 1,291 m² of green public space.

Flooding and drought

While the likelihood of a flood in Utrecht resulting from a dike breach on the north side of the Lekdijk is small, the potential consequences are significant. The entire area, with the exception of the city centre and the core of Vleuten, could be submerged in up to half a metre of water, with Rijnenburg experiencing over 1.5 metres. On the other hand, drought and a shortage of rainwater pose different risks. Insufficient water availability



can lead to the withering of trees and plants, deterioration in the quality of (swimming) water, and even drinking water shortages.

Policy (13.2)

To enhance the city's resilience to climate change, the municipality leverages green spaces and the water and sewerage system. Utrecht prioritised natural measures, such as reducing pavement and increasing the presence of trees and other greenery. Another key objective is the complete separation of wastewater and rainwater collection (disconnection) to retain the rainwater for beneficial use. Opportunities to achieve this will arise during the upcoming sewerage system replacement (see SDG 6).

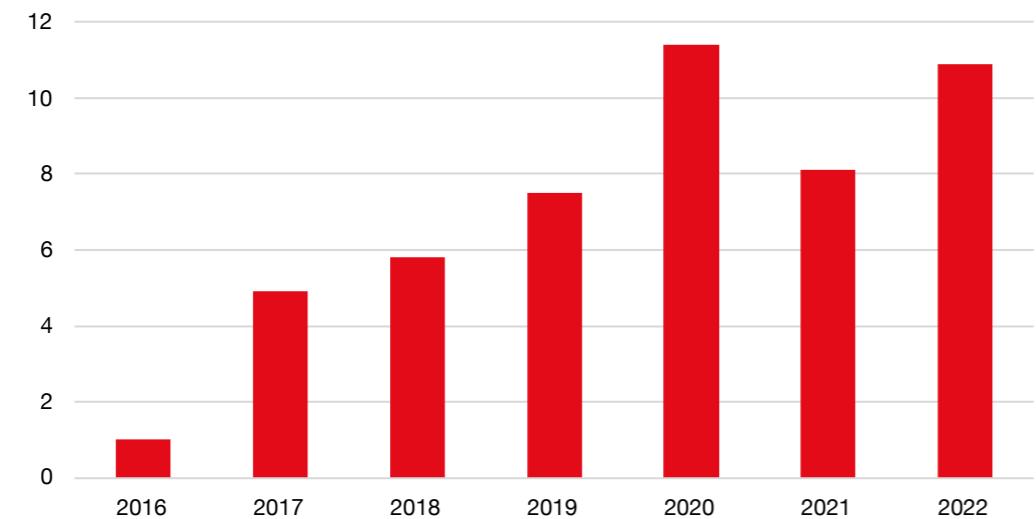
The specific goals are as follows:

1. Limit the temperature difference between the city and its surroundings to a maximum of 5 degrees Celsius.
2. Ensure that at least 40% of neighbourhood surfaces consist of green spaces
3. Provide every resident with a cool, green public space within a maximum distance of 200 meters from their home or building. This space should encompass at least 200 m².
4. Establish a minimum of 30% shade on streets during peak heat times, with important pedestrian and cycling routes offering at least 40% shade.

5. Ensure an adequate supply of healthy (swimming) water for people, animals, and plants within the city.
6. Retain at least 90% of rainwater in the soil and the city for as long as possible, while also ensuring sufficient water availability during dry periods. This necessitates the soil functioning as a sponge.
7. Prevent damage to buildings and ensure passable roads during showers with precipitation rates of up to 80 mm per hour.

Utrecht aims to integrate climate adaptation measures with other activities in public spaces as much as possible, among other things in order to limit costs. Key focus areas include sewer replacement (SDG6), the Scale Leap Green initiative (SDG15), mobility initiatives (SDG11) and the management of public spaces. These efforts primarily target the existing city. For new construction and renovation projects, policies are being established to ensure that they are immediately climate-proof.

Figure 13.1 | Disconnected surface (ha)



Source: Gemeente Utrecht

Good practices

NK Tegelwippen

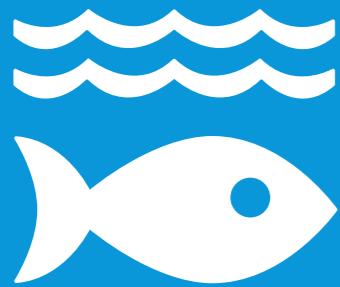
In 2022, Utrecht actively participated in the Dutch Championship Tegelwippen, a nationwide initiative aimed at removing pavement tiles and promoting greening. Utrecht made a significant contribution by removing a total of 131,222 tiles and creating 630 façade gardens. These efforts have resulted in substantial greening of the city. The municipality encourages residents and businesses to incorporate greenery in redesigns and replacements of public spaces. Collaborations between the municipality and residents also foster greening initiatives in both public and private areas.

One notable collaborative project is the impressive transformation of the Maaspleinschool's schoolyard. This joint effort resulted in the addition of 1,400 square meters of greenery, which is equivalent to the area covered by 11 average-sized family homes.





14 Life below water



SDG 14 mainly focuses on preserving marine life. It is difficult to find relevant indicators related to this goal at the local level. However, Utrecht does contribute to marine conservation, in addition to its efforts toward SDG 6.

Every spring, numerous fish, such as the perch, bindweed and bream, migrate through Utrecht, swimming from the Vecht via the Weerdsluis and the Oudegracht to the Kromme Rijn. However, sometimes these fish have to wait for extended periods at the lock gates because they are not frequently opened during the spring season.

To address this issue, an innovative solution has been implemented: the fish doorbell. A camera installed underwater at the Weerdsluis allows live viewing of fish activity between March and May. If anyone spots any fish waiting for the lock, they can press the digital doorbell. This sends a signal to the lock keeper, who then assesses the situation and determines whether it is necessary to open the lock for the fish.

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Online dashboard





15 Life on land



SDG 15 focuses on the protection, restoration and sustainable management of all life forms on land. At the local level, it is relevant to consider the proportion of 'nature' and forest in the overall area. Compared to other countries, the Netherlands has a relatively low percentage of forested land (just over 11%). In Utrecht, only 2% of the total area qualifies as forest and woodland.

In total, the municipality of Utrecht manages 3,347 hectares of public space, excluding the Amelisweerd and Rhijnauwen estates, which are owned by the municipality of Utrecht but located within the neighbouring municipality of Bunnik. Of this public space, 42% is paved, 37% is green and 21% is water (Figure 15.1).

With the 'developing management' approach, the city aims for an integrated strategy that considers challenges related to climate adaptation, greening, mobility, housing, the energy transition and digitisation whenever possible.

As of 2022, the municipality of Utrecht is responsible for maintaining almost 137,000 municipal park, avenue and street trees. In addition the municipality has registered the larger trees in forests and woodlands, totalling around 26,000 trees. The number of hectares is calculated based on the respective areas, amounting to approximately 190 hectares of forest and woodland.

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Online dashboard



has positively influenced decision-making and design considerations for underground developments in the city.

Biodiversity (15.5)

In urban development projects, the city places additional emphasis on protecting endangered species. The Utrecht species list identifies the specific species considered, although it is not feasible to monitor all thousands of species in Utrecht. To provide an overview, a list of thirty species, known as the 'Big 30', has been compiled. These species are indicative of the nature in and around the city. Utrecht also incorporates animal-friendly features in municipal buildings and social real estate. Since 2020, new construction projects are required to include accommodations for house sparrows, swifts and common pipistrelle bats. This can be done by installing nest boxes or bat boxes, or by keeping gaps in the walls to provide shelter for bats.

Invasive exotics (15.8)

Controlling invasive plant species is an integral



part of regular work in Utrecht. Utrecht is fighting a number of invasive exotic species. The city is actively combating several invasive exotic species, such as Asian knotweed, which outcompetes native plants, and Giant Hogweed, which can pose health risks to humans. In 2022, there will be 145 growth locations where the Giant Hogweed is present, seven fewer than in 2021. Similarly, there will be 135 locations with Asian knotweed, also seven fewer than in 2021. The number of growth locations has remained stable in recent years.

Utrecht employs various methods to remove weeds in public green spaces, including the use of hoes and in some cases, even manual removal. This approach ensures no harmful pesticides end up in the soil. Utrecht has not used chemical pesticides since 1992.

Green scale jump (15.9)

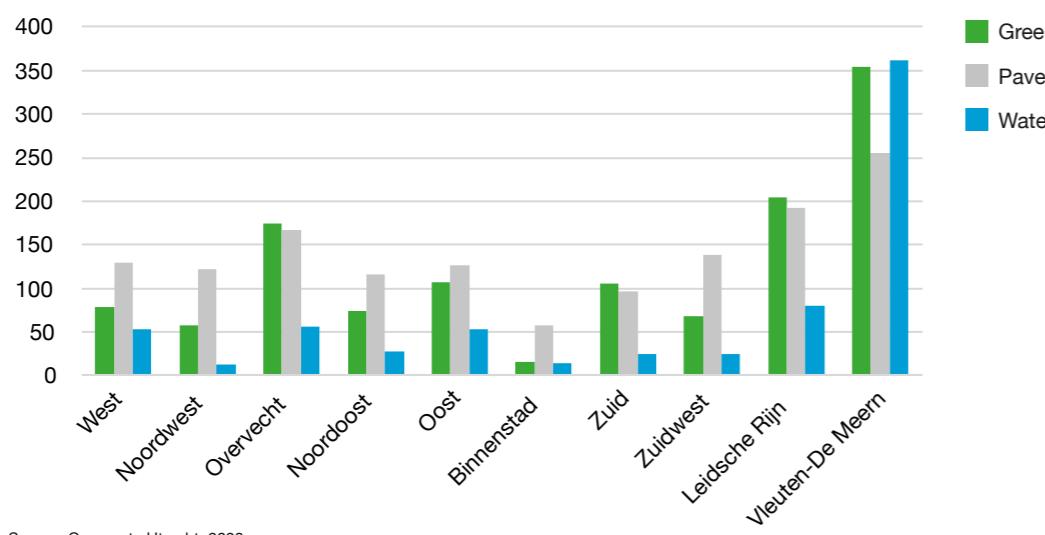
Utrecht wants to keep the greenery in the city accessible to everyone and improve its quality. The municipality wants to further develop, improve and protect large green spaces and

important green connections (figure 15.2). These goals are articulated in the Green Structure Plan Utrecht, which encompasses five ambitions:

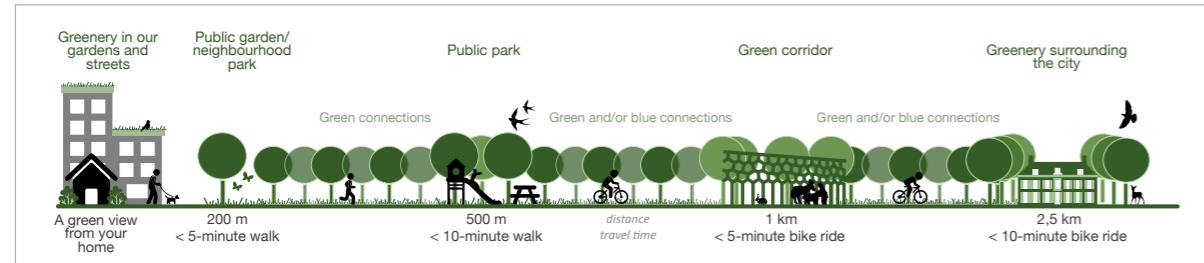
1. Increase greenery around the city.
2. Enhance accessibility to green spaces.
3. Improve the quality of green spaces within the city.
4. Utilise green spaces to promote a healthy city.
5. Harness the potential of green spaces to address the impacts of climate change.

Utrecht aims to strike a balance between greening efforts and urban densification, while maintaining a well-managed public space. To make this possible, the 'Green Scale Leap' concept is incorporated into the Spatial Strategy Utrecht, focusing on building green infrastructure in neighbourhoods with limited greenery and areas experiencing health disparities. Within the inner city, approximately 440 hectares of green spaces will be developed, while an additional 250 hectares will be added in the surrounding areas.

Figure 15.1 | Public space (hectare per district)



Source: Gemeente Utrecht, 2023



Good practices

Weeds Do Not Exist

Weeds Do Not Exist is an organisation that aims to raise awareness about nature in and around the city. They organise events in public spaces, highlighting raw materials from nature that are often seen as weeds or surplus. These events encourage conversations with passers-by and explore various uses for these materials, ranging from food to new materials. Through their activities, sharing of recipes and exchange of ideas, they forge a unique connection between nature and urban environment.

Hof van Cartesius

The Hof van Cartesius is a green circular workplace that fosters experimentation in outdoor spaces to contribute to a healthier city. The communal garden serves as a testing ground for rainwater storage, food cultivation, biodiversity preservation, and community engagement. Garden days are organised where volunteers and members of the neighbourhood come together to collectively design, landscape, and maintain the gardens. These events not only promote gardening knowledge but also foster social connections among participants, creating a vibrant and healthy community.

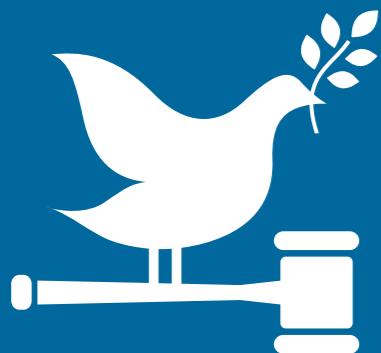
Green bus shelters

The municipality has installed 316 bus shelters with sedum roofs. These shelters are equipped with LED lighting and bamboo seats. The base plate of the shelters is made of recycled concrete. By incorporating these green roofs, over 2,000 square meters of additional green space have been created in the city. These roofs effectively capture particulate matter, provide cooling during hot weather, retain water and support biodiversity. The choice of sedum is particularly beneficial for bees and other insects.





16 Peace, justice and strong institutions



SDG 16 focuses on promoting a peaceful and secure society with effective and reliable institutions. One of its key objectives is to reduce all forms of violence and organised crime.

Safety (16.1)

The perception of safety among Utrecht residents has remained stable and comparable to that of the other three major cities for several years. In 2021, 30% of Utrecht residents reported feeling unsafe in their own neighbourhoods at times. Safety issues in the city have changed drastically in recent years. While traditional crimes like home burglary, bicycle theft, and car theft have decreased over the past two decades, total crime have started to rise again in 2022. Many crimes today are less visible, more complex, and information about victims and numbers is often limited. This applies in particular to issues that have become more frequent in recent years, such as social unrest, polarisation, cybercrime and organised crime. These hidden and subversive issues have major consequences for society and the overall quality of life in the city.

Domestic violence (16.2)

The number of reported cases of intimate partner violence in Utrecht rose from 319 to 337 per 100,000 residents between 2019 and 2022.

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Online dashboard



This figure exceeds the national average of 272 in 2022. Women are more frequently victimised by (former) partners than men, and incidents of violence committed by men are more often structural. Additionally, the number of registered cases of rape has been growing each year, and there is likely substantial underreporting of such incidents.

Regarding child abuse, the figures for reported cases to Veilig Thuis show a slight increase from 1,245 in 2019 to 1,485 in 2021. However, it's important to note that these figures only indicate that a report was made, not that child abuse was actually detected by Veilig Thuis. Nevertheless, they do indicate an upward trend in reported child abuse cases.

Access to justice (16.3)

To ensure that all residents have access to justice, a total of 28 social counsellors are active in the 18 neighbourhood teams. These counsellors help citizens make use of the schemes and facilities to which they are entitled. They can also support citizens in investigating

objection options, as well as drafting and submitting objections when necessary.

Organised crime (16.4)

Utrecht plays a central role in the national and international drug trade, which is highly lucrative but also inextricably linked to excessive violence (such as liquidations and shootings) and other forms of criminal activity. The impact of this criminal activity in the city is significant, and its visibility in everyday life is increasing. There are approximately 50 criminal organisations active in the city, with many suspects linked to a gang active in Germany. Particularly alarming is the high involvement of young Utrecht residents, aged 18-25, in drug trafficking. Vulnerable young individuals, especially those lacking basic qualifications (SDG4), facing labour market discrimination (SDG8), burdened by debt (SDG1) or having mild intellectual disabilities, are particularly susceptible to the allure of quick money from drug trade.

Based on the policy 'setting boundaries, offering perspective', Utrecht is working on



increasing the safety and quality of life in the city. Our efforts primarily focus on combating the troubling effects of drug-related crime in Utrecht neighbourhoods, disrupting criminal careers with a focus on young individuals involved in criminal activities and criminal families. Additionally, Utrecht aims to understand criminal revenue models and pay special attention to vulnerable areas in the city to combat criminal financial flows. Ultimately, the goal is to create a positive future for the city's young population, free from violence and drug-related crime. Residents must be able to live in safe and pleasant neighbourhoods, and entrepreneurs must be resilient and strong.

Trust in government (16.6)

Over the years, there has been a slight upward trend in the institutional trust of Utrecht residents in the local government. The level of trust is relatively consistent across different local government bodies. In Utrecht people have more trust in the local government (57%) than in the national government (43%). There are no major differences in trust between the different local government bodies.

However, society also faces divisions, including those between online and offline domains, as well as between lower and higher income groups (SDG 10). A growing number of people express concern about climate, health, housing, economy and refugees. They feel unheard and are losing confidence in the government and

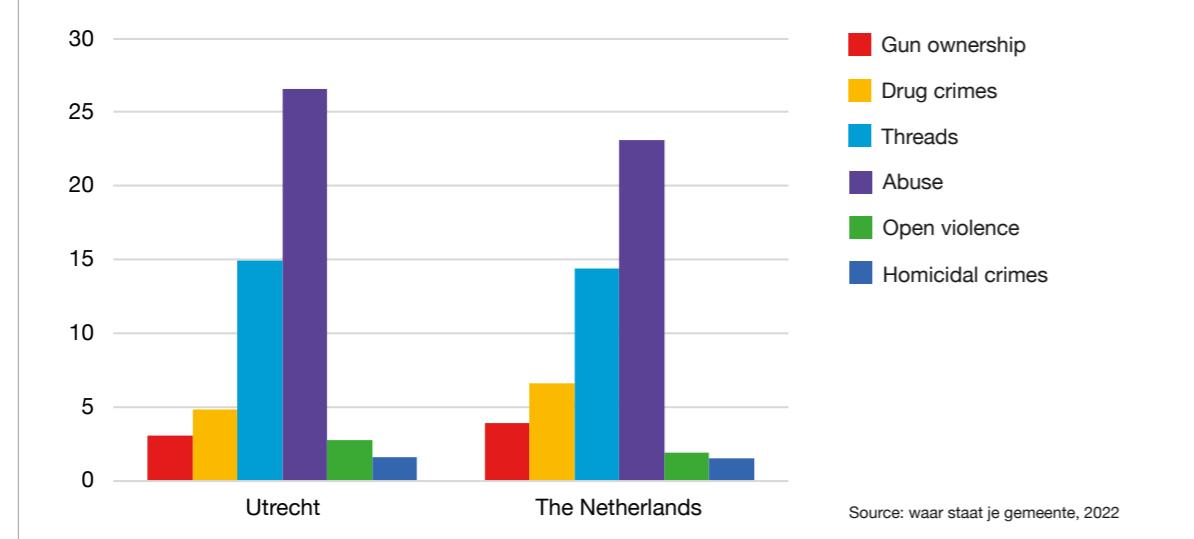
institutions to address these issues effectively. This social unrest manifests in opposing groups, heightened social debates and demonstrations that escalate into disturbances. While trust in politics could help counterbalance this social unrest, trust levels have actually declined in recent years.

In Utrecht, we see that crises such as the energy crisis, inflation and the increasing refugee problem have repercussions on social relations. There is a visible connection between the crises and growing polarisation, tensions and, in some cases, radicalisation – especially when it comes to anti-institutional sentiments. Instances of radicalisation can be witnessed in case consultations, as well as an increase in harassment and threats by individuals towards employees of institutions or government. Over the past two years, Utrecht has seen an average of 45 people discussed in the person-centred approach to radicalisation.

Service provision (16.7)

Satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality remains stable. The number of appeals did increase from 3,169 in 2021 to 3,203 in 2022. The fluctuation in the number of appeals is closely tied to the number of decisions made, the increase may partly be attributed to a higher volume of decisions. On average, about 500 appeals are initiated every year. From 2021 to 2022, the number has remained more or less stable, with 544 and 542 respectively.

Figure 16.1 | Crime per 10.000 inhabitants



Good practices

Shelter city

In 2012, Utrecht was recognised as the first human rights city in the Netherlands by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Through Shelter City Utrecht and its partners, the city provides a haven for three human rights defenders every year. In Shelter City Utrecht, human rights defenders can catch their breath while taking a break from the threats and hardships that come with their work. During their stay, they are offered physical and physiological support from trained professionals, enabling them to strengthen their efforts and work more effectively and sustainably. The organisation also supports human rights defenders who wish to raise awareness for their cause by organising events such as lectures, film screenings or human rights cafés. These activities allow defenders to share their experiences with a broader international audience and increase awareness of the human rights situation in their home countries.

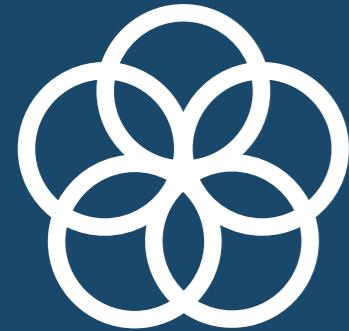


Vital'nya ANNE

Vital'nya ANNE is a citizens' initiative founded by a number of Ukrainian refugees and residents of Utrecht. Soon after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, they jointly set up a gathering space dubbed a living room ('Vital'nya' in Ukrainian) where Ukrainian refugees can connect with each other in a safe and relaxed environment outside of shelters. Vital'nya ANNE is entirely run by dedicated volunteers. The remarkable self-sufficiency, organisational strength and resilience of the Ukrainian refugees are truly inspiring. The people of Utrecht provide the necessary facilities and the Ukrainians take care of the day-to-day management and programming.



17 Partnership for the goals



The last SDG focuses on fostering partnerships to achieve the other 16 SDGs, with a particular emphasis on achieving goals at the local level.

Local cooperation (17.17)

In 2016, Utrecht declared itself a 'Global Goals City' and adopted a unique approach to encourage broad stakeholder engagement and participation. Rather than implementing a top-down policy, the municipality aimed to establish a shared framework by forming coalitions with local actors, including companies, entrepreneurs, NGOs and knowledge institutions to tackle international challenges in the field of sustainable development. At the regional level, Utrecht cooperates in the MRU and U10 and Amersfoort Region municipal network organisations dedicated to addressing shared spatial and economic challenges. Close collaboration is maintained with other relevant

organisations such as the EBU (a network of companies, knowledge institutions and governments) and neighbouring regions such as Foodvalley and Gooi- en Vechtstreek.

Utrecht4GlobalGoals is a foundation that is actively committed to achieving the 17 SDGs in Utrecht. Together with its partners, referred to as 'cornerstones', it strives to build a green, healthy, inclusive, sustainable and fair city for all residents. The foundation organises events to promote the Global Goals and provides information about them in Utrecht. Acting as a driver, connector and platform, the foundation collaborates with residents' associations, schools, volunteers, universities, cultural institutions, entrepreneurs and social organisations. Every year, the foundation presents the U-award to a project that demonstrates a strong commitment to the SDGs.

International partnerships (17.16)

At the European level, Utrecht collaborates with cities like Ghent, Malmö, Stuttgart and

Strengthen implementation resources and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Online dashboard



Conclusion

6



Utrecht's work on Healthy Urban Living for Everyone and the Whole Utrecht U approach provide great opportunities to work on the SDGs in the city. In this VLR, we have provided an overview of the many organisations and partnerships in Utrecht that contribute to the Global Goals. We have also presented a wide range of indicators that can help track progress in the city and identify areas that require further action. Our hope is that this VLR will support local partners in their endeavours, inspire other cities to continue working on the SDGs and highlight the important role of local authorities in tackling potential challenges.

The VLR shows that Utrecht is performing relatively well in many aspects. This is evident through high scores in perceived health and healthy lifestyles, a relatively high and stable level of trust in institutions, declining public nuisance figures, a decreasing amount of waste per resident, an increasing number of roofs with solar panels and a stable concentration of nitrogen dioxide. The economy is growing, and unemployment remains low. Furthermore, thanks to national and local support measures, the decrease in purchasing power for low-income households has so far been limited in 2023.

However, behind Utrecht's positive rankings as a city, there lies a city that is divided. In fact, the disparities between neighbourhoods and groups are hardly diminishing and, in some cases, even growing. We see the greatest vulnerability among Utrecht residents who struggle financially, grow up in low-income families and have only completed primary or lower secondary education. This vulnerability also applies to single-parent families, one-person households, residents over 65 with a non-western migration background and residents with multiple serious problems. This vulnerability is concentrated

in a band across Utrecht, running roughly from north to south, encompassing almost all neighbourhoods in Overvecht and Zuidwest, as well as some in other parts of the city.

People

The vast majority of Utrecht residents feel healthy. However, health inequalities in the city are significant and start at an early age, closely related to issues with finances, employment and housing. Mental health is particularly under pressure among children, adolescents and young adults.

Most Utrecht residents actively participate in various aspects of life, such as education, work, cultural activities, sports and community involvement. However, participation is not equally accessible to everyone. Residents with physical or mental disabilities, as well as the elderly, tend to participate less frequently. Education and financial stability also play a role.

Almost three-quarters of toddlers with language or developmental delays attend preschool, but the learning deficits caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have not yet been fully overcome. Additionally, there is a nationwide downward trend in school ratings.

While visitor numbers to cultural institutions are increasing post-COVID-19, they have yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. Access to cultural facilities varies across neighbourhoods, and satisfaction with these facilities also differs among neighbourhood residents and population groups. Utrecht's sports facilities are feeling the impact of increased energy prices to a greater or lesser extent. 64% of Utrecht residents engage in sports activities every week, although there are significant disparities based on education levels. Utrecht residents participate in sports more frequently than residents of the other G4 cities.

Although the perception of safety among Utrecht residents remains stable, there are concerns regarding subversive crime. Addressing underlying causes that contribute to (organised) crime, such as poverty, unequal opportunities, debt and declining trust in the government requires attention.

Planet

Starting from the summer of 2022, there has been some relief in the pressure on the owner-occupied housing market due to rising interest rates rose and falling purchase prices. However, challenges in the broader housing market still persist. Selling prices have increased by 57% in four years. Rental prices in Utrecht are rising at a faster rate compared to the national average, and the waiting time for social rental housing remains exceptionally high (over 11 years), despite an annual increase in housing supply. Utrecht remains the fastest-growing city in the Netherlands. Social rentals account for 29% of the total housing supply.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted traffic intensity and transportation patterns in the city. The use of urban public transport (bus, tram) increased but remains 25% lower than before the pandemic. The number of cyclists in the city, meanwhile, is back to the same level. Post-pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of passenger cars per 1,000 residents, with the number of electric and hybrid cars increasing the most by far. Consequently, the number of charging points has also increased by 29%.

The city is making progress in renewable energy. In 2022, 7.1% of the electricity generated in Utrecht came from renewable sources. The number of roofs with solar panels has further increased to 29%. However, CO₂ emissions were 3.2% higher in 2021 than they were than in 2020. In contrast, the previous five years saw a 29% decrease in emissions. Nitrogen dioxide concentrations remain at the lower levels observed during the pandemic years.

In 2022, Utrecht residents produced 9% less waste per person. Waste separation is facilitated through the 'Het Nieuwe Inzamelen' (The New Collecting) method, which has been introduced in most neighbourhoods, and through post-separation (household waste is separated by machine). The number of reports of public nuisance in parks and green spaces decreased, while reports of waste and pollution in public spaces have increased.

Prosperity

On a macroeconomic level, the city and region are doing well. Utrecht has a low (3.8%) and declining unemployment rate. Many sectors, including culture and tourism, are showing a

strong recovery after the challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, three out of ten entrepreneurs are grappling with high energy prices, and there is a significant labour shortage in all sectors.

While the percentage of Utrecht residents receiving benefits is dropping, there is also a decrease in purchasing power for many residents. Low-income households are particularly affected by inflation, potentially exacerbating inequality in the city. Poverty figures indicate a declining trend, but they do not reflect current events accurately. The number of households experiencing long-term poverty is not declining. Although there is no observable increase in problematic debts in the city, more people in debt are seeking assistance.

Peace and partnerships

Recent events such as the war in Ukraine highlight the importance of peace and partnerships. Although this topic is only briefly addressed in this VLR, Utrecht places significant emphasis on fostering partnerships at the local, regional, national, and international levels. This commitment is demonstrated within the city, the Utrecht Metropolitan Region and other cities worldwide.

The acute refugee crisis stemming from conflicts like the war in Ukraine, has now developed into a complex and ongoing issue. This entails additional responsibilities related to refugee reception, education, care, integration and housing. The burden of accommodating status holders in Utrecht is considerably higher than it was in previous years.

In the Netherlands, trust in institutions such as the Dutch parliament, police and judiciary has been under pressure for several years. However, institutional trust in Utrecht is high when compared to other municipalities. Both locally and nationally, there is greater trust in local politics than national politics. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of complaints filed with the municipality, with more of them being deemed valid.

Methodology

Below we outline the different stages of the process and explain the steps taken. It is worth noting that some of the phases overlapped over time.

Phase 1. Development of the dashboard

This VLR builds upon the municipality's Global Goals dashboard, which was established in 2016. This dashboard displays municipal statistics for each SDG, providing insight into the extent to which Utrecht's policies contributes to the realisation of the Global Goals. These indicators are in line with the Global Goals and can also be linked to existing municipal policy programmes. To ensure applicability to the local context, the UN's goals and indicators were assessed and examined in relation to the municipality's policy programmes. Additionally, indicators from the programme budget, (national) reports and information from planning agencies and international databases were also considered. This information was used as the basis for a table with local indicators for each sub-target. The data that have been made accessible here form the basis for this VLR.

Phase 2. Research design

The preparation of this VLR followed the guidelines set out in the handbook of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The manual made by the Association of Dutch Municipalities, which describes the relevant indicators for Dutch municipalities when compiling a VLR, was also instrumental. Furthermore, the VLRs of other cities, specifically Amsterdam and Bristol, served as sources of inspiration. Based on these references, an initial table of contents was created for this VLR.

Phase 3. Data collection

The primary local data sources for this VLR were the Global Goals dashboard and the statistical report known as the 'Utrecht Monitor'. Where necessary, additional information has been sought in other municipal reports and national databases. Data collection began based on the sub-targets and indicators identified in the table. The availability of corresponding indicators in the Utrecht Monitor was examined for each sub-target, after which relevant additional

sources were considered. Comparisons were made over time, with the national level and with other cities where appropriate. Finally, good examples of initiatives and practices within municipal policy were sought to highlight relevant goals.

Phase 4. Writing

The next step involved drafting the text. The Strategy & Public Affairs department was responsible for writing all the chapters for each SDG, after which the introduction, methodology, highlights and policy context were written. Following the completion of these texts, a review process took place. The 17 substantive chapters were validated by the content experts in the specialist departments in the organisation in order to provide clarity, provide additional data and verify the data used. Taking into account the feedback and additional information provided, the texts were adjusted. Followers also provided feedback to a team of reviewers in the research and advice department.

Phase 5. Rewrite and visualisation

Taking into account all the feedback received, the drafts were rewritten. This feedback helped improve both the use of data and readability of the VLR. Graphs and photos were included where they added value. Finally, the conclusion has been written. After a final review by all parties involved, the VLR took its current form.

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Indicators

SDG	Local indicator	Year	Comparison in time	Other comparison
1.2	Number of homeless people	2020		
1.2	% of households in Utrecht living on an income of up to 125% of the Statutory Social Minimum	2021	X	
1.2	% children in households with an income of up to 125% Statutory Social Minimum	2021	X	
1.2 1.5	% of households with problematic debts	2021	X	Netherlands
1.2	% households living on 125% of the WSM per district	2021		
1.2	% residents who can't make ends meet	2021	X	
1.2	Share of residents in debt, per background characteristic	2021		
1.2	Number of benefits (unemployment, disability, social assistance)			Netherlands
1.3	Number of U-pass users	2021	X	
1.5 7.1	% households at risk of energy poverty	2022	X	
2.1	Number of food parcels issued per week	2021	X	
2.1 2.2	% underweight inhabitants (18+)	2021		
2.1 2.2	% of overweight children (10/11 year olds)	2020	X	Netherlands
2.2	% residents aged 19 years or older who eat breakfast 5 days a week or more	2020	X	
2.4	% residents that buy organic, fair trade and from urban agriculture	2021	X	
2.4	% residents who choose to either eat no meat or less meat to reduce their environmental impact and conserve energy with some regularity	2021	X	
12.8				
3	% residents who are hindered in daily activities by chronic conditions	2020	X	Netherlands
3.3 3.4	% residents who experience their health as good	2020	X	Netherlands
3.3 3.4	Life expectancy (years)	2020	X	
3.4	% young people with an increased score on psychosocial problems	2021	X	
3.4	% Residents expect that to comply with the Exercise Guideline	2020	X	
3.4	% drug users among 18 to 64-year-olds (soft or hard drugs used in the last 12 months)	2021		Netherlands
3.4 3.5	% residents aged 18 and older who smoke	2021		Netherlands
4.1 4.4 4.5	% early school leavers	2022	X	Netherlands
4.1 4.4 4.5	% Participation in early childhood education	2022	X	Netherlands
4.3 4.4	% residents who have difficulty making applications via the internet	2021	X	
4.3 4.4	% highly educated in the population	2021	X	
4.4	% pupils directed to high school at upper intermediate/higher level	2021	X	
4.6	Library membership	2021	X	
4c	Extent of teacher shortage in primary education (FTE)	2021	X	

SDG	Local indicator	Year	Comparison in time	Other comparison
5.2	Number of reports of gender discrimination	2021	X	
5.2	Number of reports of street harassment	2021		
5.2	Number of reports of ex-partner violence	2021	X	
5.2	Number of rapes and sexual assaults	2020	X	
5.5	Employment rate of women	2022	X	Netherlands
5.5	Employment rate of men	2022	X	Netherlands
5.5	% economically independent women	2021	X	Netherlands
5.5	% female members of city board	2022	X	
5.5	% female managers municipal organisation	2022	X	
6.1	Drinking water use	2021		Netherlands
6.1	Sewerage levy per inhabitant (in euros)	2022	X	Netherlands
6.3	% water bodies whose quality meets the standard (fish)	2020	X	Netherlands
6.3	Number of urgent water quality issues	2022	X	
7.1	Number of sustainability loans	2022	X	
7.2	% roofs with solar panels	2022	X	
7.2	Available power from solar panels (kwp)	2022	X	
7.2	Homes with at least two forms of home insulation	2021	X	
7.2	Number of natural gas closures buildings	2022	X	
7.2	% known renewable energy	2021	X	Netherlands
7.2	Total energy consumption built environment (TJ)	2021	X	
8.1	Regional economic growth in the Utrecht metropolitan area (%)	2022	X	Netherlands
8.2	Number of companies (by sector)	2022	X	
8.2	Number of jobs (by sector)	2022	X	
8.3	Number of companies founded	2021	X	
8.3	Number of discontinued companies	2020	X	
8.2	Number of social enterprises	2022		
8.4	Average income men (x 1000 euro)	2021	X	
8.4	Average income women (x 1000 euros)	2021	X	
8.5	Reports of labour market discrimination	2022	X	
8.5	Net employment rate (%)	2022	X	
8.5	Unemployment rate (%)	2022	X	G4
8.5	Number of employers offering jobs for people with disabilities (Midden-Utrecht)	2022	X	
8.6	Number of young people without job or education (NEET)	2020	X	Netherlands
8.8	Number of migrant workers	2020	X	
8.9	% residents experiencing nuisance from temporary rental of housing to tourists	2021	X	
9.4	Number of electric vehicles	2022	X	
9.4	Number of (semi)public charging points	2022	X	G4
9.4	Load requirement coverage ratio (%)	2020		Netherlands
10.2	Personal well-being score	2021	X	
10.2	Social cohesion score	2020	X	

SDG	Local indicator	Year	Comparison in time	Other comparison
10.3	Number of discrimination reports	2022	X	
10.3	% of residents who feel discriminated against (by location)	2021	X	
10.4	Income inequality (Gini coefficient)	2018		Netherlands
10.4	Wealth inequality (Gini coefficient)	2018		Netherlands
10.4	Socioeconomic status (total score)	2019		
10.3	% of municipal buildings accessible for handicapped people	2022		
10.3	Diversity within municipal organisation	2022	X	
10.4	Household income distribution	2021		
10.4	Median household wealth (x 1,000 euros)	2021	X	
10.4	Average disposable income (x 1,000 euros)	2020	X	
10.7	Number of immigrants	2022	X	
10.7	Number of status holders housed	2022	X	
10.7	Population by migration background	2023		
10.7	% working status holders	2022	X	
11.1	Average waiting time for (social) rental housing (years)	2022	X	
11.1	Development average transaction price per m ² (euro)	2022	X	G4
11.1	Share of social housing	2022	X	
11.1	Housing ratio tenants	2021	X	
11.1	Housing ratio home owners	2021	X	
11.1	Score satisfaction with housing	2021	X	
11.2	% of bus stops that was made accessible	2022		
11.2	Passenger cars per 1,000 residents	2022		
11.2	% households with one or more bicycle	2021		
11.2	Vehicle choice to go downtown (bike)	2021	X	
11.2	Number of traffic accidents	2022	X	
11.2	% residents who are very satisfied with road safety	2021		
11.2	Number of shared cars	2021	X	G4
11.2	% residents who are satisfied with public transport	2021		
11.2	Cycling city: total score	2020	X	Netherlands
11.3	% residents who have tried to influence municipal policy through participation	2021	X	
11.4	Number of municipal and national monuments	2022	X	
11.4	Budget Utrecht Restoration Fund (in euros)	2022	X	
11.6	Air quality: Exposure to PM (ug/m ³)	2021	X	
11.6	Perceived noise pollution per 10,000 inhabitants	2022	X	
11.7	Area of public green space per household (m ²)	2020		
11.7	Satisfaction score nearby amenities	2021	X	
11.7	Average distance from house to green areas (m)	2018		
11.7	Assessment of the state of public space	2019	X	
11.7	Safety experience	2020	X	
11.7	Registered reports of nuisance	2022	X	
12.2	MPG value new buildings	2022	X	

SDG	Local indicator	Year	Comparison in time	Other comparison
12.2 12.5	Waste generation per capita (kg)	2022	X	G4
12.5 12.7	% Circular procurement by the municipality	2022	X	
12.5	% separated household waste	2022	X	G4
12.3	Number of companies in the green register	2020	X	
13.1	Surface green roof with subsidy municipality (m ²)	2022	X	
13.1	Disconnected surface (ha)	2022	X	
13.1	% green areas in private space per district	2021		
13.2	Number of pupils participating in nature and environmental education	2019	X	
13.2	CO ₂ emissions avoided from renewable sources (ktonnes)	2021	X	
13.2	CO ₂ emissions municipal real estate (kg)	2021	X	
13.2	CO ₂ emissions per capita (kg)	2020	X	
15.1	Distribution of public space managed by the municipality	2022		
15.2	Area of green space per district (ha)	2022		
15.3	Number of cases of soil remediation	2022	X	
15.8	Number of invasive plants	2022	X	
16.1	Number of reports of physical integrity impairment per 1,000 inhabitants	2022	X	
16.1	Total crime	2022	X	
16.1	Number of cybercrime offences	2022	X	
16.2	Number of reports of child abuse identified by Veilig Thuis	2022	X	
16.3	Number of appeal procedures in the municipality and the proportion of judicial proceedings	2022	X	
16.6	% that has a lot of trust in council-college officials	2021		
16.6	Number of complaints about the municipality	2022	X	
16.7	% Voter turnout municipal elections	2022	X	

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City of Utrecht
P.O. box 16200
3500 CE Utrecht
+31 (0)30 286 00 00

Internet

www.utrecht.nl/internationaal

Data

Research department

Report

Bert van Vijfeijken

Photography

Koen Peters, Robbert Frank Hagens, Jerry van der Weert, Lois de Vries, Rebecca Brockbernd, Sven Verbruggen, Juri Hiensch, Edwin van Wanrooij, Mike Spaans, Rob Aarsen, Terra Kombrink, Renzo Gerritsen, Barbra Verbij, Jurjen Drenth, Ruben Drenth, Lotte Stierhout, Jelle Verhoeks, Kamil Scholten, Gerrit Serne, Willem Mes, Ton de Koning, Robert Oosterbroek

Design

DDK Creative Marketing

Printer

Drukkerij Badoux

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