

REPORT TO SENATE Newcastle University Public Events 2024-25

Programme Overview

Newcastle University delivers a diverse portfolio of public events designed to engage regional, national and international audiences, including:

- **INSIGHTS Public Lectures and Newcastle Debates**
- **LIVE Music Concerts**
- **From Newcastle Podcast**

Together, these activities position Newcastle University as a civic institution and thought-leader, delivering mutual value for our region while showcasing our research excellence.

The Public Lectures programme was overseen by two co-chairs, Dr Martin Farr and Professor Sally Shortall, working alongside the Corporate Events Team, Umbereen Moir and Stef Moorhead. Dr Farr's term as co-chair came to an end in August 2025, and the committee extends its sincere thanks for his leadership, dedication, and longstanding support of the Public Lectures programme. Dr Meiko O'Halloran assumed the role of co-chair in September 2025.



Attendance and viewing figures (2024-25)

Newcastle University delivered a successful programme of public events in 2024-25, despite challenges faced due to industrial action. Between September 2024 and May 2025, public

events attracted a combined total of **11,475** people/views to Newcastle University (see Appendix 1 for details of the event programme).

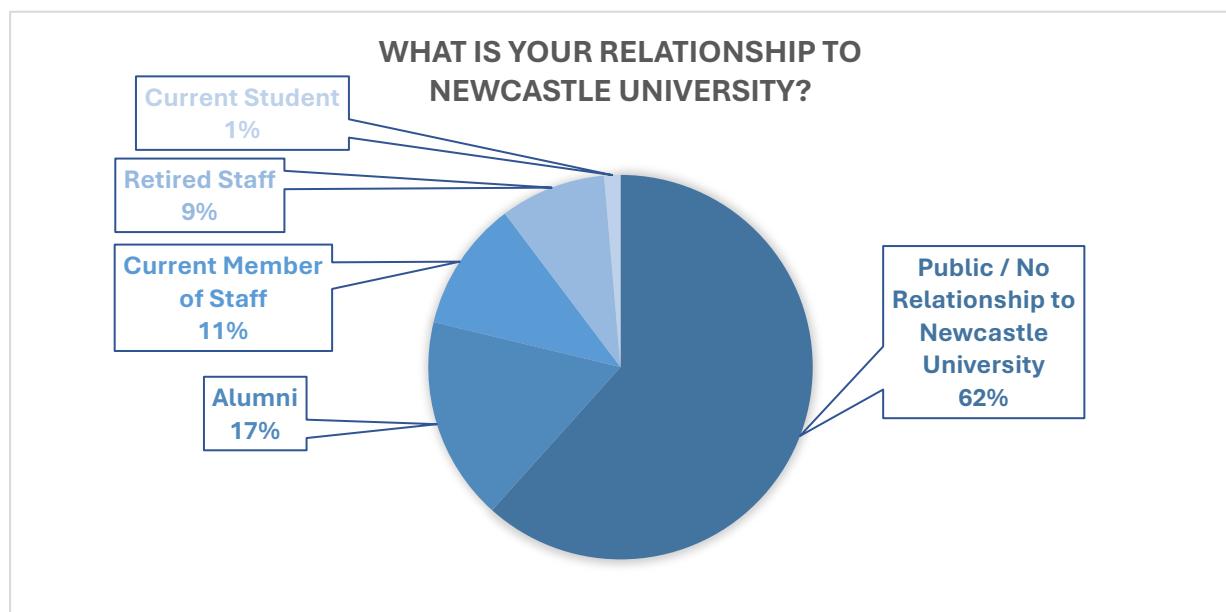
The diversity of the programme, from policy-focused panel discussions to topical political lectures, supports the University's aim of delivering place-based engagement alongside public audiences and our partners.

Highlights of the 2024-25 programme included:

- The 2024 United States Presidential Election by **Emeritus Professor Iwan Morgan** (288 in-person, 373 online)
- Defence Lecture: Defending the UK in unprecedented times by **General Sir Patrick Sanders** KCB CBE DSO (295 in-person, 550 online)
- British Academy Lecture: Neo-Brahmanism in modern India: Reformers and orthodoxy in the 19th century by **Professor Tanika Sarkar** (56 in-person, 758 online)
- **Birkett & Fisk** (jazz) (295 in-person)
- **Tyne Signature Barbershop Quartet** (275 in-person)

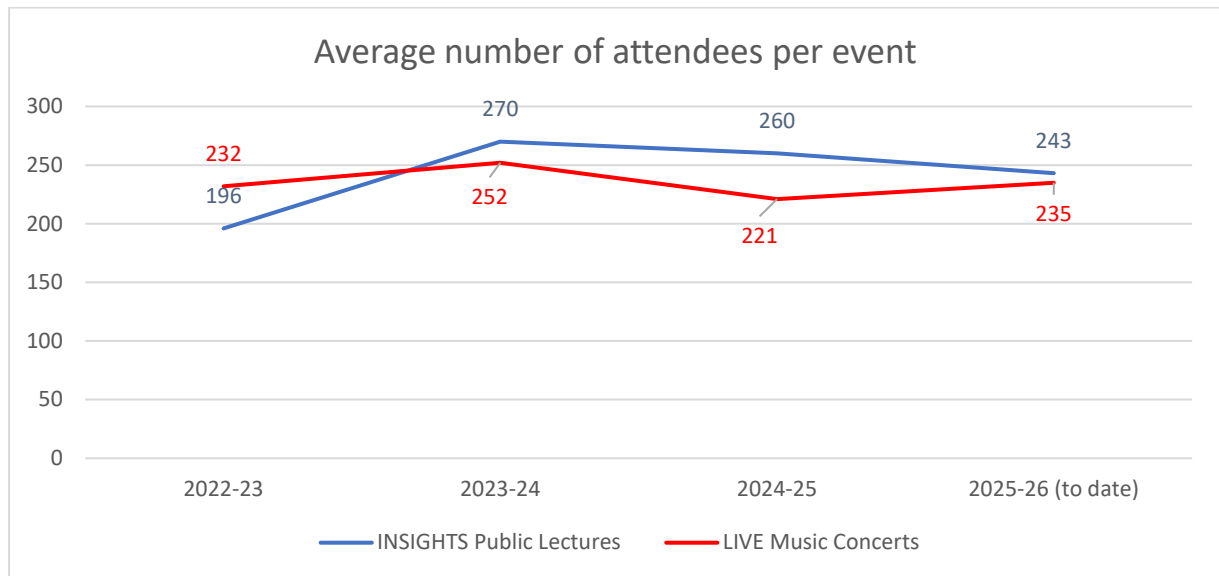
Demographics

Attendee data from the Public Lectures survey shows that the events are engaging the intended audience, with 62% reporting that they are members of the public with no relationship to Newcastle University. This reach advances our commitment to public engagement and our lifelong learning offer, broadening participation beyond those with a pre-existing University relationship.



Attendance and viewing figures (2025-26 to date)

Attendance figures show that public engagement with Newcastle University events continues to be high (see also Appendix 2).



So far, this academic year (October 2025 - January 2026), INSIGHTS Public Lectures have been attended by 1,956 people, and recordings of events have been watched 871 times.

The most popular events were:

- In conversation with **Professor Sir Michael Marmot** (255 in-person, 179 online)
- Last line of defence? Excavating the Roman frontier at Magna fort by **Rachel Frame** (held in partnership with the Society of Antiquaries) (232 in-person, 108 online)

The Autumn 2025 LIVE Concerts were attended by 2,115 people. Concerts by **The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric 1933** (290) and **Chris Newman & Andy Watt (guitar)** (285) were the most well attended.

Public Lectures and Concerts resume in early February 2026 with a new season of events.

Finances

Continued cost-saving measures for the public events programmes include reducing print and postage costs and downsizing hospitality arrangements, which have already resulted in large savings. Over the past three years, the INSIGHTS programme has been scaled back by almost

10%, from around 34 events in 2022-23 to 28 events in 2025-26.

From Newcastle Podcast

The *From Newcastle* podcast continues to perform well and contributes to our engagement portfolio as a cost-effective channel for co-creation with practitioners and for showcasing insights to a global audience. During 2024–25, the series highlighted a diverse range of strategic themes, including the growth of spin-outs and start-ups, expert analysis of the US Election and groundbreaking engineering discoveries. The current series runs from October 2025 to May 2026, on the theme of AI.

Feedback and Impact

During the 2024-25 academic year, we reinforced cross-sector partnerships across culture, heritage and education, delivering events in partnership with the British Academy, Society of Antiquaries Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyneside Geographical Society and English PEN/New Writing North. The Newcastle Debates series engaged representatives from across the region, including Northumbria Police, The Angelou Centre, Hays Travel group, Schools North East and The Sutton Trust.

“Thank you so much for being such brilliant, supportive partners. The event couldn’t have gone better, in my opinion; it was a great turnout, engaged audience, and inspiring conversation” (New Writing North - 2025 PEN Lecture)

The public events programmes have also encouraged school visits to the university, including St. John's Primary School, Blyth Academy, Benton High School, Newcastle School for Boys and Westfield School (Music Concerts), and All Saints Academy, Mowden Hall School and Park View School (Public Lectures).

The programme continues to reflect Newcastle University’s core values, including events to mark British Science Week, LGBTQ+ History Month, Black History Month and 25 years of the International Centre for Life.

A survey is sent to the INSIGHTS Public Lectures audience after each event and annually. Feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive, positioning Newcastle University as a leading cultural venue within the city. Attendees gave the INSIGHTS Public Lectures programme an overall rating of **4.5 (out of 5)**, with **97%** reporting that they would recommend attending a public lecture at Newcastle University to a friend.

“Given the budget cuts Newcastle Uni are facing, I’m amazed you have such a large and varied programme. I really appreciate the efforts made to offer these lectures-& free-

when you get older & beyond formal education, where else can you listen to & acquire up to date information?! Thank you.” (Audience Member)

“The programme is a valuable addition to life in Newcastle.” (Audience Member)

“I figured out what I wanted to do as a career from a lecture. Also gained events experience which helped me get a seasonal job. Everyone here has also been so nice.”
(Public Lectures Event Steward/ Newcastle University Student)

“Have been attending these lectures for almost 20 years and have rarely found them anything other than enlightening. Thank you for making these available free of charge. It's very much appreciated.” (Audience Member)

“Please keep them going. The University offers a great bonus to the community through the Insights programme.” (Audience Member)

APPENDIX 1: Audience figures 2024-25

PUBLIC LECTURES FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY & PARTNER ORGANISATIONS				
Date	Speaker	In-Person Attendees	YouTube 7 Day Views	Total Audience
08 October 2024	Peter Kellner	245	128	373
10 October 2024	BHM Lecture: Patrice Lawrence	46	45	91
15 October 2024	Nik Money	249	125	374
16 October 2024	Newcastle Debates: Stronger together	49	Not shared online	49
22 October 2024	HASS PhD Talks	55	140	195
24 October 2024	Francisco Ferrándiz	133	27	160
30 October 2024	Ian Haynes & Tony Wilmott	190	188	378
07 November 2024	Emeritus Prof Iwan Morgan	282	373	655
21 November 2024	Chris Harrison	125	231	356
28 November 2024	Tom Shakespeare	101	87	188
03 December 2024	Anne Whitehead & David de la Haye	50	44	94
13 February 2025	Defence Lecture: Patrick Sanders	295	550	845
18 February 2025	Anusha Shah	113	15	128
20 February 2025	Dr Vivek Nityananda	123	54	177
25 February 2025	Jubilee Development Lecture: Matt Winning	255	126	381
06 March 2025	Carol Homden	86	48	134
13 March 2025	Anne-Marie Imafidon	57	0	57
18 March 2025	SAGe PhD Talks	40	35	75
19 March 2025	Newcastle Debates: Opportunities for all	74	34	108
27 March 2025	Eric Thomas Memorial Lecture: Lesley Regan	109	35	144
29 April 2025	Endowed:	56	758	814
01 May 2025	Newcastle Debates: Economic empowerment	113	159	272
06 May 2025	Kenan Malik	178	158	336
15 May 2025	Volker Straub	63	74	137

PUBLIC LECTURES FUNDED BY ENDOWMENTS/SPONSORSHIP				
12 November 2024	Jack Jeffery Lecture: Helen Holmes	148	72	220
15 January 2025	Holmes Lectures: Discover Engineering	204	50	254
22 January 2025	Holmes Lectures: Discover Engineering	121	32	153
04 February 2025	Fickling Lecture: Joseph Coehlo	119	0	119
				TOTAL: 7,267

CONCERTS FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY		
Date	Artist(s)	In-Person Attendees
26 September 2024	Marsyas Trio	230
3 October 2024	Three sonatas for viola da gamba	210
10 October 2024	Tyne Signature Barbershop Quartet	275
17 October 2024	The Olivia Cuttill Quintet	285
24 October 2024	John Garner	140
31 October 2024	Antal Zalai and Adam Heron	215
14 November 2024	Faye MacCalman and John Pope	190
21 November 2024	Adam Johnson	270
12 December 2024	Ryan Corbett	125
6 February 2025	Lewis Watson Quartet	220
13 February 2025	Sam Stadlen and John Green	270
20 February 2025	Birkett & Fisk	295
27 February 2025	Amanda Babington and David Smith	250
6 March 2025	Lantivet Duo	200
13 March 2025	And to think, at one time I did not know your name	170
20 March 2025	Grace Smith Trio	260
27 March 2025	Hannabiell & Midnight Blue	260
1 May 2025	Duo Flor de Tilo	145
CONCERTS FUNDED BY ENDOWMENTS		
27 April 2025	Henry Miller Concert	198
		TOTAL: 4,208

FROM NEWCASTLE PODCAST		
Date	Episode	Listens
6 October 2024	Black History Month Special: Championing equality and inclusion in the North East and beyond with Zoe Hingston	148
7 October 2024	Polybox: The Newcastle University start up empowering marketing agencies with Rojin Yarahmadi	121
13 October 2024	Rob Wood Enterprising Futures Academy	185
29 October 2024	US Election Special: Part 1 with Dr Skyler Hawkins and Dr Matt Davies	176
30 October 2024	US Election Special: Part 2 with Dr Skyler Hawkins and Dr Matt Davies	151
3 November 2024	Equiwatt: The Newcastle University start up saving energy and helping the planet with Johnson Fernandes	176
18 November 2024	XR Therapeutics: The Newcastle University spin out using technology to revolutionise the world of therapy with Billy Webber	191
10 February 2025	Engineering a better world: Regenerative medicine with Dr Ana Ferreira-Duarte and Professor Kenny Dalgarno	230
24 February 2025	Microbritt: The Newcastle University spin out manufacturing on a microscale with Dr Carl Dale	201
03 March 2025	International Womens Day: Northern Women changing the world with Simone Roche MBE	192
7 March 2025	From Newcastle Trailer 2025	445
17 March 2025	Engineering a better world: Inventing reversible glue with Dr Adriana Sierra-Romero, Professor Mark Geoghegan and Professor Katarina Novakovic	465
28 April 2025	Engineering a better world: The science and sustainability behind Stu Brew	119
30 April 2025	100 days of Trump with Dr Skyler Hawkins and Dr Matt Davies	148
12 May 2025	25 years of Life - Transforming Life: Medical treatments with Professor Sir John Burn	251
27 May 2025	25 years of Life - Understanding Life: Pioneering research with Dr Jennifer Munkley	169
9 June 2025	25 years of Life - Creating Life: Fertility treatment with Dr Meenakshi Choudhary	161
TOTAL:		3,529

APPENDIX 2: Attendance Figures 2022 – Present

INSIGHTS Public Lectures	Number of events	Average attendees per event	Total attendees
2022-23	25	196	4,894
2023-24	32	270	8,464
2024-25	28	260	7,267
<i>2025-26 (to date)</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>2,673</i>

LIVE Music Concerts	Number of events	Average attendees per event	Total attendees
2022-23	18	232	4,175
2023-24	17	252	4,290
2024-25	18	223	4,010
<i>2025-26 (to date)</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>2,115</i>