



# FAN ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2023/24 SEASON

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Our commitment to strengthening consultation  
and engagement with fans.



AUGUST 2023





## DARREN EALES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND  
NOMINATED BOARD LEVEL OFFICIAL,  
NEWCASTLE UNITED

Newcastle upon Tyne is famed for many things. But it is perhaps known best of all for its beloved football club – Newcastle United – and the club’s incredible fans.

We are privileged to have a special place in the heart of the community and to have such passionate support, and we know how important it is to listen and work in partnership with you as we continue our exciting journey together.

Our vision is to be a results driven, world class, sustainable organisation. We want to put supporters at the heart of what we do, and we know this is best achieved together – one city, one club, united.

We should be proud of our achievements together so far. While our men’s, women’s and Academy teams have achieved on the pitch, we have worked in consultation with fans to introduce several initiatives to improve the supporter experience at St. James’ Park. This includes the introduction of licensed standing, digital ticketing to bring us in line with other world class arenas, the introduction of ticket ballots for season tickets holders and members to give greater matchday access for a wider range of fans, and we have announced plans for what we believe will be a best-in-class fan zone at Strawberry Place.

As we move forward, we are proud to publish our first Fan Engagement Plan (FEP). We wanted to clearly set out the club’s overall approach to fan engagement, what activities we will deliver during the season and demonstrate our passion for putting fans at the heart of this football club.

I understand the impact our senior leadership team has in instilling a positive and inclusive culture and, as CEO of Newcastle United, I will lead the club’s fan engagement activities as we establish our Fan Advisory Board (FAB) and present our Fan Engagement Report to the club’s board at the end of each season.

My aim is to ensure we continue to have meaningful, long-term dialogue between the club and supporters on a consistent and sustained basis, assisted by our dedicated Supporter Services team and Supporter Liaison Officer on a day-to-day basis.

From all at Newcastle United, thank you to our fans from around the world for your continued support. Wherever you are, we truly appreciate you, and we will continue to value your feedback and ideas as we move forward together – United as One.

## FAN ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

We are committed to collaborative, constructive and consistent engagement with supporters, wherever they may be, ensuring fans have an opportunity to inform the club’s decision-making at all levels.



# A NEW ERA FOR FAN ENGAGEMENT.

In November 2022, we joined all Premier League clubs in unanimously approving the introduction of a new Premier League Fan Engagement Standard (FES). Since then, we have worked in consultation with supporters' clubs, representative groups and our wider fanbase to deliver meaningful fan engagement activities. These include:

- Installing licensed standing at St. James' Park following a supporter consultation process, during which more than 4,000 fans responded to an online survey - with 70 fans attending a subsequent working group.
- Conducting our first 'United As One' fan event attended by the club's CEO and senior executives providing feedback on a range of supporter issues and ideas.
- Launching a new Supporter Services department created to deliver improved customer service and enhanced fan engagement.
- Recruiting a Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO) to support direct communication between fans and the club.
- Introducing ticketing initiatives including ticket forwarding, an official resale platform and a specified daily time for the loyalty point threshold to drop for away ticket sales.
- Implementing a new ballot system, offering a fairer way for fans to purchase tickets.
- Commissioning fan surveys and face-to-face workshops on key topics affecting fans.
- Delivering official overseas supporter events in Saudi Arabia and the United States, attracting more than a thousand fans – underlining the club's commitment to its international fan base.
- Holding monthly meetings with individual supporters and groups including Newcastle United Supporter Trust (NUST) and Newcastle United Disabled Supporters Association (NUDSA).
- Delivering 40,000 black and white flags to loyal fans at the Carabao Cup final at Wembley, supported by independent fan group Wor Flags.
- Launching a new in-stadium commentary service for visually impaired supporters.
- Working with Newcastle United, Newcastle United Foundation and city partners to support the community at Christmas through the 'Helping Hands' campaign.



# FAN ADVISORY BOARD

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As part of the FES framework, we commit to publishing our annual Fan Engagement Plan at the start of each Premier League season. A core element of FEP this season is the establishment of our first Fan Advisory Board. This will provide a new inclusive and diverse forum for fan group representatives and independent fans to represent the interests of supporters.

The FAB's primary purpose is to consult and engage with fans, creating structured and strategic dialogue with regards to off-field matters and assist the club in decision making that affects supporters. The FAB will comprise of nine fan members and will assist and advise the club's leadership team on areas including, but not limited to:

- The club's vision and strategic objectives.
- Improving the matchday fan experience through face-to face and digital connection.
- Proposals relating to the club's heritage assets.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) commitments.
- Development plans at St. James' Park.
- Supporting the growth of the club's fanbase domestically and globally.
- Communications by the club with its supporters.
- Work in the local community.

Football pitch and certain commercially sensitive matters will not be in scope for the FAB.



**The club agrees that the following 'Heritage Assets' will be in scope for fan discussion:**

- First Team Home Shirt Club Colours
- Club Crest
- Club Name

Darren Eales, Newcastle United CEO and Nominated Board Level Official (NBLO) will have strategic oversight of the FAB, with the group meeting at least three times a year with Sarah Medcalf, Head of Supporter Services, and club SLO Matt Willis in attendance, alongside key senior club executives at selected meetings.

Recruitment for a number of FAB member positions will commence in September 2023, with the first FAB meeting held in January 2024.

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# UNITED AS ONE

We are committed to our long-standing relationship with groups including, but not limited to, Newcastle United Supporters Trust, United with Pride, Newcastle United Disabled Supporters Association and our Independent Advisory Group, which is designed to ensure the club reflects and champions the diverse needs of the communities it serves.



“The Trust is delighted by the inception of the Fan Advisory Board (FAB) as a significant stride towards enhancing fan involvement in decision-making at Newcastle United. This marks a significant commitment to involving supporters’ representatives in pivotal matters, a cause we have tirelessly advocated for.

“I firmly believe that we are embarking on a journey to establish a sound and enduring relationship between the club and our supporters. Throughout this journey, there will be instances of alignment, as well as moments where we will actively challenge. The Trust is fully committed to fostering open and transparent dialogue through the Fan Advisory Board as we all work together to achieve our goals of a successful Newcastle United that remains deeply tuned into its supporters.”

**GREG TOMLINSON | CHAIR OF NEWCASTLE UNITED SUPPORTERS TRUST**

“United with Pride fully support and endorse the fan advisory board. We have been impressed with the level of commitment and support to all NUFC supporters groups shown by the club, since the inception of this project. We look forward to working with everyone in the future to help spread the message even further that we are United as One.”

**DEBBIE CANNON (SHE/HER) / CLAIRE WINTRIP (SHE/HER) | CO-CHAIRS OF UNITED WITH PRIDE**

“Newcastle United Disabled Supporters Association (NUDSA) is excited by the plans for a Fans Advisory Board. This provides an opportunity for supporters and their representatives to engage with the club about a range of issues that directly affect them.

“The club’s willingness to create a meaningful dialogue with supporters on matters that affect them now and in the future demonstrates their commitment to both fans and the city as we head towards an even brighter future.”

**JOE AYTON | CHAIRMAN, NUDSA**

Alongside the FAB, official Working Groups will continue to be delivered on a quarterly basis on topics that are of importance to fans. We will introduce a digital forum for those that cannot attend face-to-face workshops to ensure we offer a wide range of supporters the opportunity to put forward ideas. All feedback will be reported back to the FAB. The club also proudly supports independent fan group Wor Flags, which is dedicated to enhancing the matchday atmosphere at St. James’ Park through coordinated displays of flags, banners and scarves.





# FURTHER COMMITMENTS

## 2023/24 SEASON

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- Implement a new Fan Advisory Board (FAB) with associated terms of reference and code of conduct. It will convene three times per year, with the first meeting in January 2024.
- Publish our annual Fan Engagement Report at the end of the season, detailing fan engagement activities during that campaign.
- Deliver Working Groups both face-to-face and digitally on a quarterly basis on off-pitch topics that are of importance to all fans.
- Support communication from the Newcastle United CEO with fans twice annually.
- Launch an Official Supporters Club network to support the growth of the club's domestic and international fanbase, supported by a dedicated webpage and branding.
- Hold regular meetings with independent fans groups including NUST, NUDSA and United with Pride.
- Hold bespoke digital events for season tickets holders and members.
- Work with club partners to reward loyal fans and support the matchday experience.
- Commission regular fan surveys.
- Introduce a 'Local Heroes Hub' and Wellbeing Officers to improve matchday support for fans.
- Review club communications within our FAB framework to ensure we bring fans closer to the club.



# FAN SUPPORT

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The club will continue to develop engagement with fans on a regional, national, and global level, including strengthening relationships with supporter groups and individual fans, and ensuring effective day-to-day service is delivered through the Supporter Services team.

## CONTACT THE CLUB

Whether you have feedback, a new idea or feel we can do something better, we are always looking to hear from supporters. To contact Newcastle United, please email [supporter.services@nufc.co.uk](mailto:supporter.services@nufc.co.uk).

Your correspondence will be picked up directly by the team or sent to the correct department and we will get back to you within five working days. Our Supporter Charter can be found [here](#).

## INFORMATION FOR DISABLED FANS

We take great pride in the service and facilities we offer supporters with disabilities.

We encourage fans with disabilities to inform us of their personal situations in order to allow us to make your matchday experience as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

You can download Newcastle United's Disability Access Statement in full by [clicking here](#).

## SAFEGUARDING OR EDI CONCERN

Anybody wishing to report a safeguarding concern or an equality, diversity or inclusion (EDI) related incident can contact the relevant club team [here](#).

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The club takes seriously its duty to all its supporters and will always seek to resolve any complaints in the most effective way possible. Full details of our complaints procedure can be found [here](#).

Once you have been through the club's complaints process outlined above, any unresolved supporter complaints can be referred to the Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO). Please visit the IFO website at [theifo.co.uk/](http://theifo.co.uk/) for more information.

## RELEVANT CLUB PERSONNEL



**DARREN EALES**

Chief Executive Officer/  
Nominated Board Level  
Official



**SARAH MEDCALF**

Head of Supporter  
Services



**ZOE HINGSTON**

Head of Inclusion



**MATT WILLIS**

Supporter Liaison  
Officer



**CARLY SINCLAIR**

Disability Access  
Officer

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT**

