



NEWCASTLE UNITED SUPPORTERS TRUST ANNUAL SURVEY REPORT 2024



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

What a year it has been for our beloved Newcastle United. On the pitch, we have seen our first foray into the Champions League for 20 years, with some memorable trips to Milan, Dortmund and Paris. If it wasn't for a somewhat dubious penalty decision in Paris, we'd potentially have progressed into the knockout stages!

In spite of the balls landing somewhat unfortunately, we reached the last 8 of both the FA Cup and the Carabao (League) Cup, including a rare, yet memorable trip to our old foes Sunderland. As I write this, NUFC are in prime position to qualify for Europe once again, against all odds, with an injury ravaged squad for the majority of this campaign.

Off the pitch, it has been a season of huge change, but challenges remain. Ticketing has been the hot topic over the past 12 months, with the introduction of digital ticketing, a new ballot scheme, new ID checks for away games and a host of other discussions that are ongoing. Whilst the club awaits



the feasibility study into the potential of expanding St James' Park, the challenge remains in meeting the incredible demand for tickets.

Engagement with Newcastle United itself is improving. We have day-to-day liaison on quick turnaround projects and monthly meetings to discuss member opinions and requests, both at a strategic and operational level.

We have seen the launch this season of the inaugural Fan Advisory Board, with two of our Board Members having been automatically co-opted. The FAB is a varied representation of supporters who only want the best for our loyal fanbase. We look forward to working closely with the FAB to help influence strategic decisions at NUFC.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a positive year for NUST, marked by significant milestones that demonstrate our dedication to advocating for our fan base and fostering positive change within the club and our community. Our refreshed Board is as active as it has ever been, standing up for our supporters at every turn. We have answered well over 2000 member emails in the past 12 months, together with creating a WhatsApp Broadcast Group; a tool that allows us to get messages out to our members quickly and effectively.

We passionately believe that we have never had better communication with our 10,000+ strong membership, having surveyed on a number of topics throughout the year and held an engaging round-table event in October where we discussed the key off-field topics to gauge further opinion from our members.

I cannot wrap up this update without giving all of our heartfelt thanks to our two outgoing Board members, Charlotte Robson and Greg Tomlinson, both of whom have represented NUST passionately over the years. We plan to

hold our next election in the Autumn and welcome all members from the far reach of the globe to apply for positions on the Board.

My personal thanks must also go to Board member Felicity Thow, who has diligently pulled all of this survey data together and spent many hours producing this report.

Thank you for your support and commitment to NUST – we are member-led for the benefit of our members.

Paul Karter
Chair, Newcastle United Supporters Trust

MESSAGE FROM THE FSA

We're now one year into the Premier League Fan Engagement Standards and a few months into the introduction of a Fan Advisory Board (FAB) at Newcastle United.

The FAB, which features two NUST board members, has the ability to have high level discussions on key strategic issues at the club, however dialogue is a two-way street, and it needs buy-in from the club to commit to engaging on all key decisions, especially those that will affect the supporters of Newcastle United.

Unfortunately, one problem we have seen across the Premier League is many clubs failing at the first big opportunity, which is to engage with their supporters about ticket price rises – instead just announcing prices and dealing with the fallout afterwards. We hear a lot about how football should be kept affordable, yet decisions all 20 Premier League clubs collectively make are continuously having an impact on the pocket of the match-going fan.

More games than ever are featured on TV, with many late changes and late



announcements of fixtures meaning the costs attached to going to the game are on the rise, not just ticket prices. This isn't taken into consideration when people tell us that it's 'affordable'.

Demand is obviously very high at NUFC and across the Premier League, but supporters mustn't lose sight of the fact that our football clubs are part of the community and that rising prices will – and they have already for some – price part of that community out of the game.

We saw the announcement of the bill for the introduction of an Independent Football Regulator, one that will seek to protect our clubs from owners seeking to make decisions for their own personal benefit that has unfortunately

MESSAGE FROM THE FSA

seen clubs going out of business in England and Wales.

There are many changes occurring in football, including changes to the FA Cup to suit the bloat of FIFA and UEFA competitions and we need to ensure as fans that those who run our game don't lose sight of the people that actually made this game great: the people coming through the turnstiles.

Everyone at the Football Supporters' Association would like to thank NUST for their continued involvement in our collective work, which included representation at our most recent meeting with the Premier League. We would also like to praise the membership of NUST for constantly providing feedback that allows the board to represent you both with the club and on a national basis.

If you aren't a member yet, we would encourage you to join and get involved; it's up to us to ensure we have the best environment for fans and that our clubs are protected for generations to come.

Thomas Concannon
Premier League Network Manager,
Football Supporters Association



01 INTRODUCTION

Newcastle United Supporters Trust (NUST) is a democratically elected, non-profit organisation with more than 10,000 members that aims to represent the views of the fans as a critical friend of Newcastle United.

The board is currently made up of the following members with Colin Whittle as Secretary.

At our latest AGM, Charlotte Robson did not stand for re-election at the end of her term and Greg Tomlinson stepped down as NUST Chair after six years. We'd like to sincerely thank both for their time and efforts at NUST.



Paul Karter
NUST Chair



Lisa Mole
NUST Co-Vice Chair
Board member since
2023



Adam Stoker
NUST Co-Vice Chair
Board member since
2023



Cliff Culley
Board member since
2021



Pete Davey
Board member since
2023



Felicity Thow
Board member since
2023



Olivia Thomson
Board member since
2023



Kevin Patterson
Board member since
2023



Colin Whittle
NUST Secretary

02 NUST 2023-2024

There have been many notable achievements by NUST throughout the 2023/24 season.

August 2023 - NUST release a statement opposing the payment process of the proposed new ballot system.

Initially supporters would have been charged for any price category (up to £74 in Category 1) if successful in the ballot. This resulted in NUFC amending the method of application to single categories based on supporter affordability.

August 2023 - NUST meet with NUFC staff, including Darren Eales, to present 2023 Annual Survey Report.

August 2023 - NUST Board Members visit NU Foundation. CEO Steve Beharall gave a tour of the new classroom that was funded by NUST member donations.

August 2023 - NUST Board Members visit The Alan Shearer Centre for the official opening of the Accessible Play Park, paid for with Pledge Scheme donations.



August 2023 - NUST release a statement following the implementation of ID checks at Manchester City (a), and the manner in which they are undertaken.

September 2023 - NUST creates a member-only WhatsApp Broadcast Group. The group has allowed us to reach members quickly for important announcements and initiatives.

September 2023 - NUST release the results of our member survey on home ticketing changes. The report was shared with the club following numerous issues with digital ticketing arising at the start of the season.

02 NUST 2023-2024

September 2023 – NUST (in conjunction with NUFC) release its first supporter guide to away travel in the Champions League. We provided supporter guides for Milan, Dortmund and Paris, working alongside the club.

October 2023 – NUST release a statement opposing television broadcasters' decision to move Wolves vs Chelsea to Christmas Eve. This aligned with many other Supporters Trusts who opposed the move due to lack of travel options for fans.

November 2023 – NUST release a statement in response to the reduced ticket allocation for the Champions League trip to Paris Saint-Germain.

December 2023 – NUST write to PCC Kim McGuinness, NUFC and SAFC to implore all parties to allow the maximum allocation of tickets for the FA Cup Third Round fixture. This resulted in 6000 tickets being made available for the derby.

December 2023 – NUST release the results of stafe standing and atmosphere survey that was open to all NUFC supporters via our website and social media. The report was then shared with the club.

January 2024 – NUST release a statement condemning a TV broadcaster's decision to televise the FA Cup Fourth Round tie at a time supporters would be unable to get home after the match.

February 2024 – NUST representatives attend the club's Ballot Workshop. Notes from the event were added to our website.

February 2024 – NUST representatives attend the inaugural Fan Advisory Board meeting.

February 2024 – NUST hold Annual General Meeting at St James' Park.



02 NUST 2023-2024

March 2024- NUST create Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on website.

April 2024 – NUST write to Darren Eales with our concerns on the price of attending football. This is following the announcement of ticket prices and the end of concession prices at other clubs. This is a Premier League-wide issue on which we are working alongside the FSA and other Supporters Trusts to adopt a unified approach.

April 2024 – NUST release a statement in response to NUFC's announcement of season ticket pricing for the 2024-2025 season. NUST urged NUFC to consider fans and the current financial climate at a time when the Premier League generates enormous income from various revenue streams. The reply from Darren Eales can be seen on our website.

April 2024 – NUST help mobilise a number of members to take part in an advertising campaign in the city centre on behalf of NUFC and Saudia and Formula E.



May 2024 – NUST present the results of this survey to staff at NUFC.

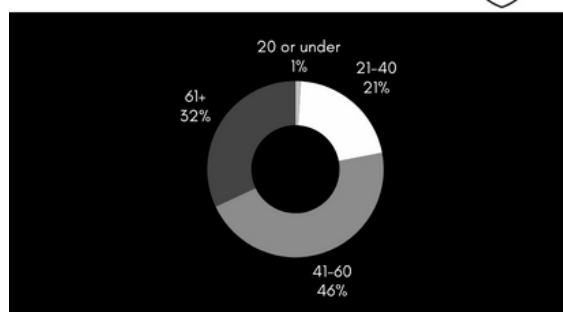
03 NUST MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS

1237 NUST members completed the annual survey, which, at more than 10% of the total membership, is generally deemed a 'good' survey response rate, with an 'excellent' response said to be at 50%. We worked to make the survey as streamlined as possible whilst covering the most important topics but will consider other means of reducing barriers to survey completion for future surveys with a view to improving response rate further.

Age Range

The vast majority of NUST survey respondents are aged between 41 and 60 (almost half), with around a third being over the age of 61.

AGE OF NUST MEMBERS



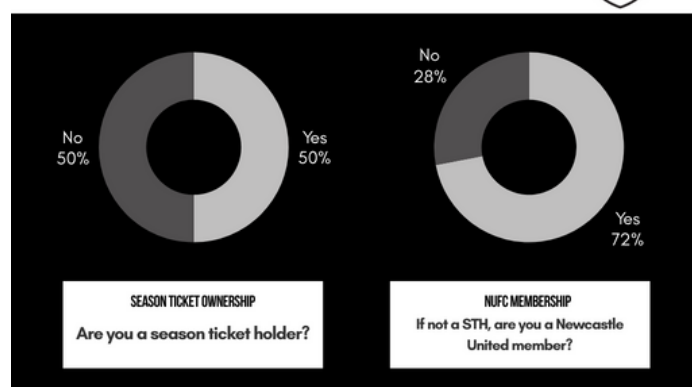
Location

Two thirds of respondents are based in the North East of England with a further 28% based elsewhere in the UK. 6% of respondents live overseas.

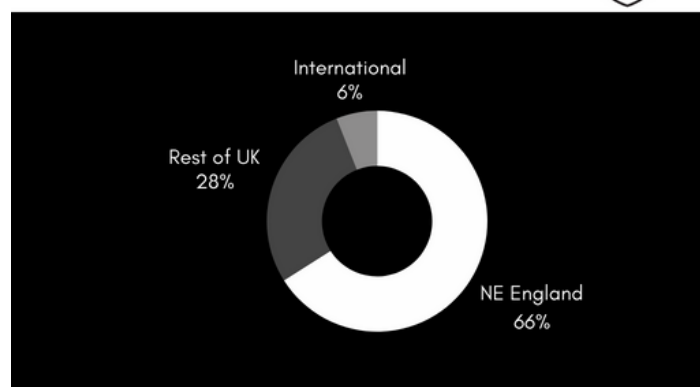
Season Ticket Holders and Members

There is an exact split between season ticket holders and non-season ticket holders in the responses with almost three quarters of the non-season ticket holders being Newcastle United members (6% of those being International Members).

SEASON TICKET OWNERSHIP AND NUFC MEMBERSHIP



LOCATION OF NUST MEMBERS



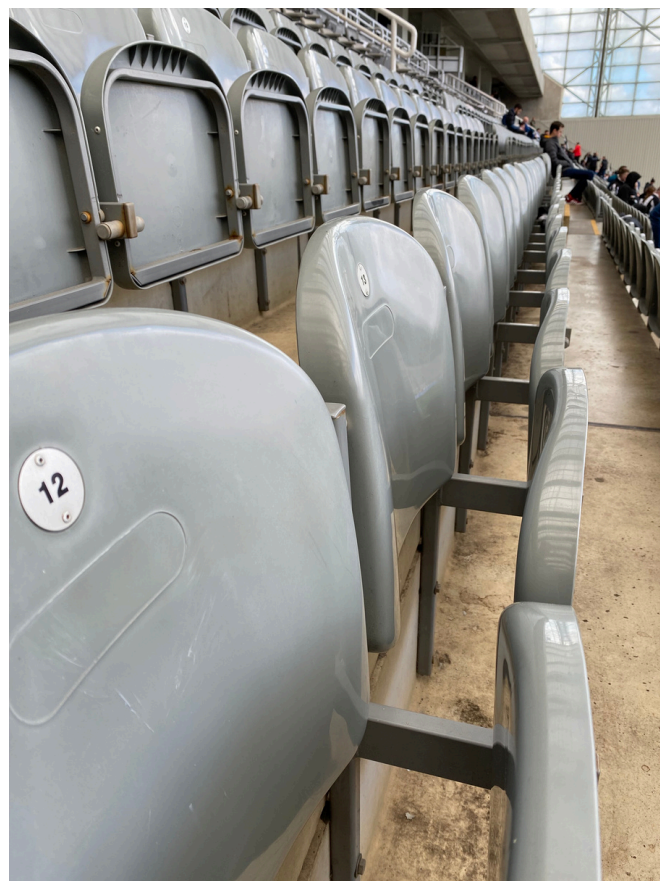
04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Digital Ticketing

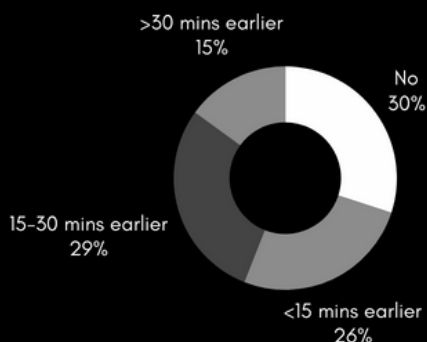
Two thirds of our survey respondents have attended a game at St James' Park (SJP) this season with 86% of that group reporting no problems using digital ticketing or initial issues that were resolved, suggesting that many are now using digital ticketing without problems.

However, the majority of respondents do report a difference in their arrival time to the stadium this season, though around a third arrive at the same time as in previous seasons. Of those who arrive earlier than in the past, the majority (29%) arrive between 15 and 30 minutes earlier than usual, most likely to avoid issues with queues that remain in the East Stand and parts of the Gallowgate (discussed later in this section).

With regards to third party resale sites, only 44 respondents had used a third party site to purchase NUFC home tickets. Of those that had, 39 said their ticket worked without issue and 5 said their ticket was fraudulent and they couldn't access the stadium.



HAS THE TIME YOU ARRIVE AT SJP ON A MATCHDAY CHANGED
THIS SEASON FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF DIGITAL
TICKETING?



04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Ease of Entrance to SJP

We asked season ticket holders which stand/corner of St James' Park they use to access the stadium and then asked how easy access is, taking into account the number of turnstiles available, queues and digital ticket technology.

Easiest entrances

- Leazes Stand and Milburn Stand often received ratings of 'Extremely easy' and 'Somewhat easy', indicating that they are generally accessible and provide a smooth entry experience for fans.
- Leazes East Corner is also often reported as 'Extremely easy', suggesting good accessibility.

Mixed feedback entrances

- Gallowgate Stand shows a variety of responses ranging from 'Neutral' to 'Extremely difficult' and 'Extremely easy', suggesting that experiences can vary significantly, possibly due to which turnstiles are used.
- Milburn Stand, while often rated as easy, also shows 'Somewhat difficult' and 'Neutral' responses, indicating some variability in access experiences.



Most difficult entrances

- East Stand is associated frequently with descriptions such as 'Extremely difficult' and 'Somewhat difficult', marking it as one of the more challenging entrances for fans to access.
- Gallowgate East Corner (Strawberry Corner) has mixed responses but includes several 'Extremely difficult' ratings, indicating that it can present significant access challenges.

04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Recommendations

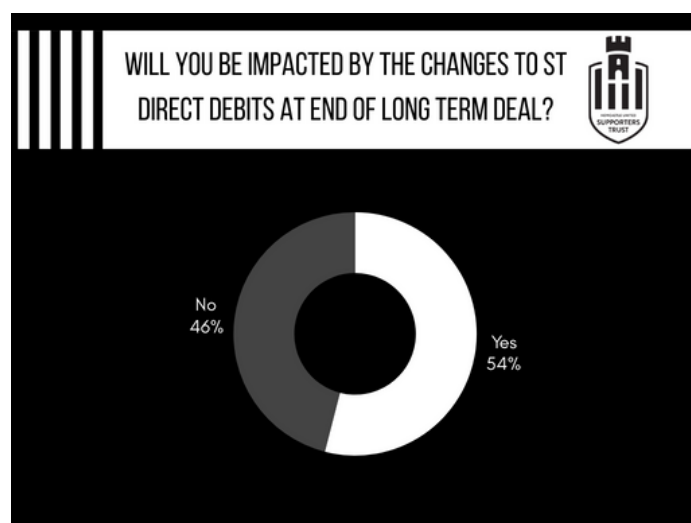
Based on our own experiences, member suggestions and previous survey data, we suggest the following to the club:

- **Review and Improve Turnstiles and Staffing:** For entrances like the East Stand and Gallowgate East Corner, the club could consider reviewing the allocated turnstiles, staffing, and overall management to improve accessibility.
- **Monitor Crowd Management:** For entrances with mixed reviews like the Gallowgate Stand, it may be helpful to monitor and adjust crowd management practices during peak times.
- **Communicate Entrance Details:** Ensure that communication about alternative turnstiles and best practices for entry are clearly communicated to ticket holders, especially for games where supporters are likely to arrive close to kick off time, for example early afternoon or weekday evening games.

Season Ticket Payment Changes

The current fixed term deal for season ticket holders ends in February 2025 with proposed changes to the frequency of direct debit payments from 12 to 9 months commencing in June 2025.

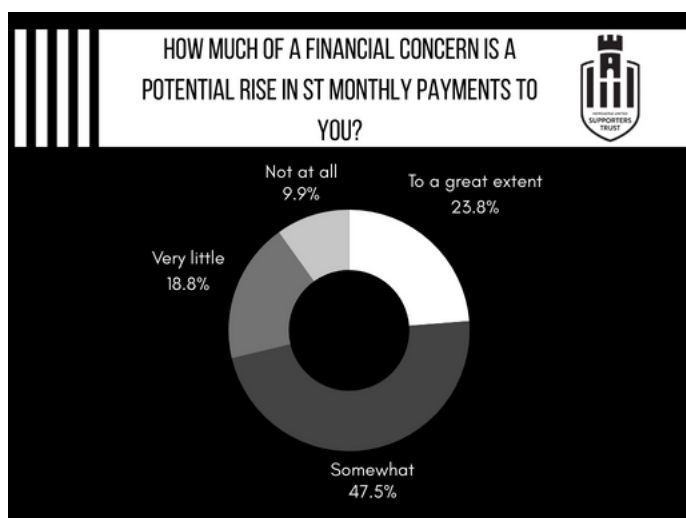
As an example based on 2024-2025 category B pricing (assuming 0% increase next summer): current price freeze holders pay £38.91 per month over 12 months. An adult ticket in this category will be £727, which equates to £80.78 per month, when subsequently paid over 9 months.



04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Impact of Direct Debit Changes

- Impacted by changes: A significant number of respondents (72%) indicated that they would be impacted by the changes to season ticket direct debits 'somewhat' or 'to a great extent'. This suggests a sensitivity to changes in payment structure among a portion of the season ticket holder base.
- Not impacted by changes: Another portion of respondents (29%) said they would be impacted by the changes either 'not at all' or 'very little'. This group may have alternative payment preferences or the financial stability to absorb changes without concern.



Payment Preferences

- 12-Month Direct Debit (60%)

This was the most popular preference, indicating that many season ticket holders prefer to spread the cost over the entire year to lessen the monthly financial burden.

- 10-Month Direct Debit (14%)

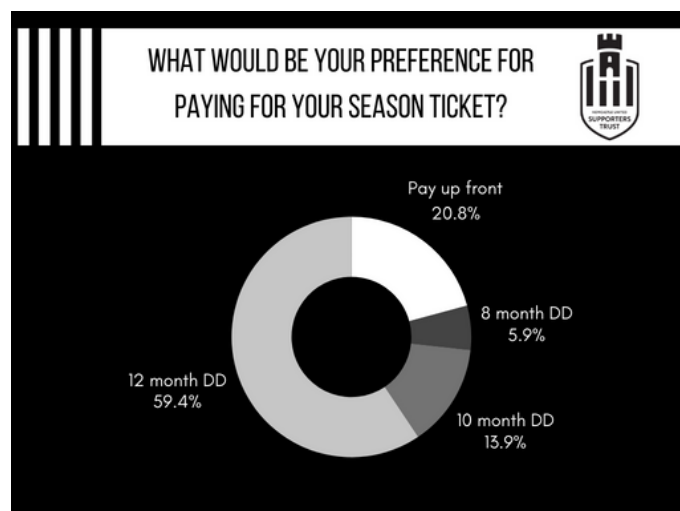
Preferred by those likely looking to balance an extended payment period and a shorter term commitment.

- Pay Up Front (21%)

A portion of respondents prefer to pay the entire amount upfront, possibly to avoid monthly financial planning or to simply be done with the payment.

- 8-Month Direct Debit (6%)

Least preferred option, indicating either a niche preference or specific financial planning scenarios.



04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Summary

The data shows a varied landscape of financial impact and preferences among season ticket holders in response to changes in the direct debit terms and pricing. While a significant number express substantial concern over increased costs, reflecting the need for predictable, manageable payments, others are less affected, either due to financial flexibility or different valuations of their tickets. Most season ticket holders prefer spreading their payments across as many months as possible, indicating a general preference for minimising monthly outlays.

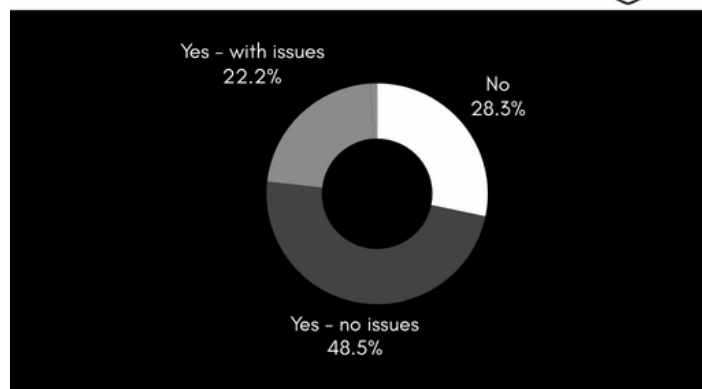
Recommendations for NUFC

- **Communicate Clearly:** Continue to provide clear communication in advance about any changes to help manage expectations.
- **Flexible Payment Options:** Consider introducing varied payment plans and an 'early bird discount' for those paying up front to cater to the diverse financial needs and preferences of the fan base.
- **Retain Concessionary Prices:** It is imperative that concession ticket pricing is retained.

Transfer of Tickets

Over the course of the season we have heard from supporters encountering issues with transferring their season ticket to a family member or friend for a match. We asked about the problems people had had in our survey.

HAVE YOU TRIED TO TRANSFER A TICKET TO ANOTHER SUPPORTER THIS SEASON?



A significant portion (48%) have successfully transferred tickets without any issues, indicating that for many, the system is working well.

A smaller number of users (13%) have encountered issues but were able to resolve them on their own and a further 9% needed support from the club to resolve their issues (22% in total). There are a few cases of unresolved issues (1%), which could indicate more complex problems within the system or perhaps more challenging user scenarios.

04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Season Ticket Holder Feedback

We asked STHs if they had any other feedback on digital ticketing with a free text answer box.

General Feedback on Season Tickets

- **Positive Experiences:** Some members appreciate the convenience of season tickets, highlighting ease of access to games throughout the season.
- **Negative Experiences:** Concerns were raised about the rising costs of season tickets.

Improving experience for STHs

- **Flexible Payment Options:** Members would appreciate more flexible payment plans for season tickets, which could make them more accessible to a broader range of fans.
- **Enhanced Benefits:** There is a desire for more exclusive benefits for season ticket holders, such as discounts on merchandise, exclusive access to meet-and-greet events, or first options on additional tickets.

Digital Ticketing Feedback

- **Benefits Noted:** A segment of members noted the environmental benefit and convenience of digital tickets, appreciating the move towards a more sustainable and technologically advanced approach.
- **Challenges Faced:** Significant challenges include issues with mobile connectivity at turnstiles, problems for those without smartphones, security concerns about transferring or losing access to digital tickets and glitches with scanning devices contributing to delays and congestion.



04 DIGITAL TICKETING AND SEASON TICKETS

Suggestions for Improvements in Digital Ticketing

- **Better Support and Infrastructure:** Members suggest enhancing technical support such as using mobile scanners at games to assist with any digital ticketing issues. Additionally, improving the technological infrastructure at the stadium could alleviate some of the current frustrations.
- **Alternative Options for Non-Smartphone Users:** There is a call for alternative solutions for fans who do not use smartphones, such as maintaining the option for physical tickets or implementing a system that can accommodate both digital and traditional methods.
- **Pre-Game Offerings:** Better food and drink quality and deals were suggested to encourage fans to arrive earlier and reduce congestion.
- **More Turnstiles/Entry Points:** Expanding the number of turnstiles or using emergency exits as temporary entry points, especially in congested areas, was a suggestion to alleviate bottlenecks.

These suggestions focus on improving the practicalities of using digital tickets and ensuring that fans have a smoother and more efficient experience entering the stadium. There's a clear call for the club to consider both the technical and human aspects of matchday entry to address the challenges presented by digital ticketing.



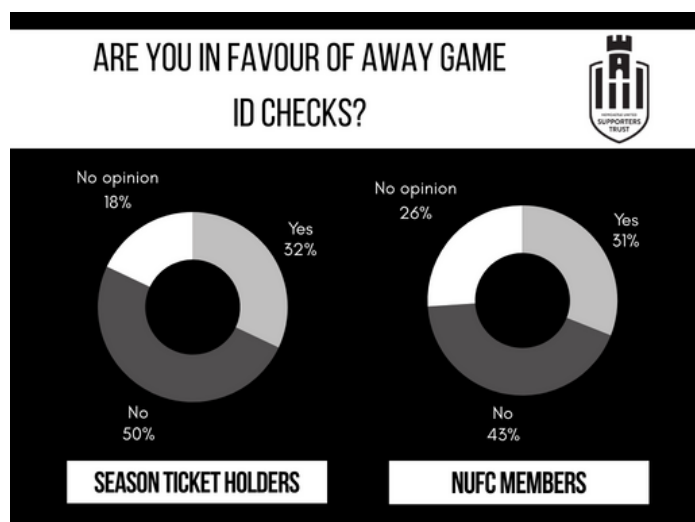
05 AWAY GAMES

Two thirds of STHs who completed the survey had attended an away game this season.

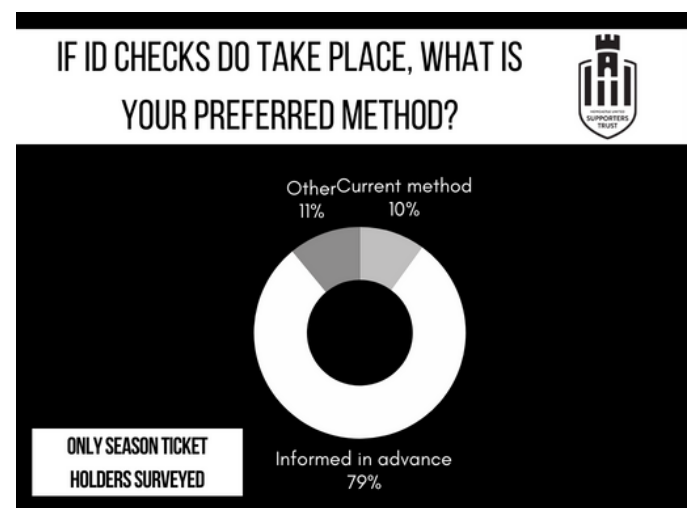
ID Checks

This season, the club introduced ID checks at away games that mean that a number of tickets at each fixture will turn 'red', thereby not allowing entry until the supporter has exchanged the ticket whilst showing their ID at the away stadium Box Office. Earlier in the season, NUST released a statement against ID checks in this format.

We asked if NUST members were in favour of ID checks (surveying season ticket and non-season ticket holders separately) and opinion was split.



Clearly this is a contentious issue on which there are strong opinions on both sides. When we surveyed both season ticket holders and members, there was no majority option of more than 50% with half of season tickets holders being against ID checks and 43% of members being against them. We also asked season ticket holders about their preferred method of ID checks and the vast majority (79%) would prefer an approach where the ticket holder was informed in advance rather than at the turnstile.



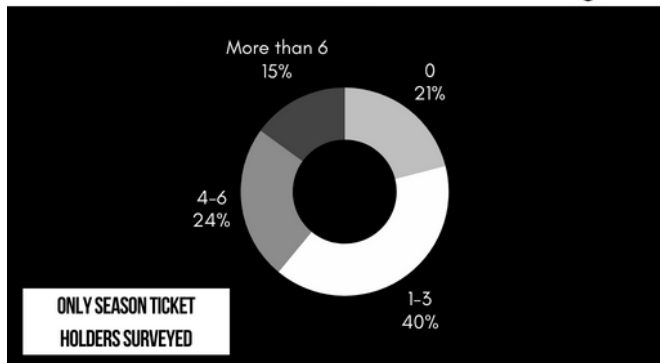
Away Ticket Transfer

We asked season ticket holders for their opinion as to whether there should be an option to transfer their purchased ticket to another supporter a fixed number of times per season, and if yes, to who and how many times per season.

05 AWAY GAMES

77% of season ticket holders we surveyed are in favour of supporters having the ability to transfer away tickets a fixed number of times. This would help reduce the instances of empty away end seats on occasions when transport is disrupted (for example Spurs (a) this season), or in the event someone is unwell on the day of the match.

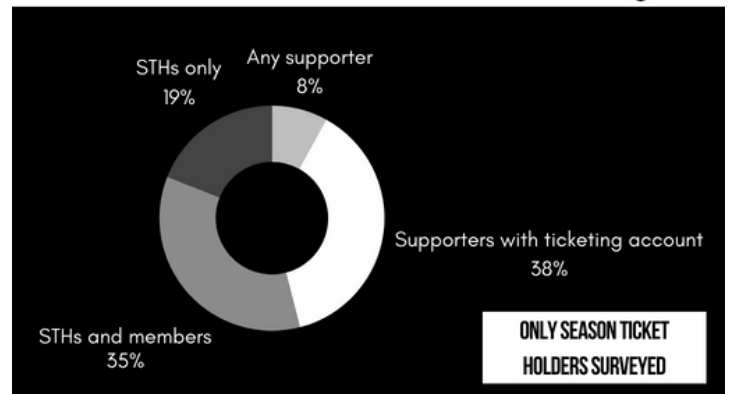
IF SUPPORTERS COULD TRANSFER AN AWAY TICKET A FIXED NUMBER OF TIMES PER SEASON, HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU SEE AS A FAIR AMOUNT?



40% of survey respondents think that a transfer of tickets on 1-3 occasions is fair, although opinions are mixed.

Survey respondents are also split on who away ticket holders should be able to transfer a ticket to if unable to attend themselves, with 38% voting for any supporter with an NUFC ticketing account and 35% voting for season ticket holders and club members only.

IF SUPPORTERS COULD TRANSFER AWAY TICKETS, WHO SHOULD THEY BE ABLE TO TRANSFER THEM TO?



Away Game Feedback

We provided season ticket holders with a space in the survey to let us know their more detailed thoughts on away games including ticketing and away game experience. The following is a summary of the themes and suggestions that emerged.

Loyalty Points

There are suggestions to allocate loyalty points based on actual attendance at games rather than just after ticket purchase. Some believe that points should transfer if tickets are passed to another person.

Transparency and Allocation

Members desire more transparency regarding ticket allocations, especially concerning corporate and player

05 AWAY GAMES

allocations. There's a call for a clearer understanding of how tickets are distributed and who benefits from unused tickets.

Digital vs. Paper Tickets

Mixed preferences exist; some members prefer digital tickets for convenience and to avoid issues with postal delivery, while others express concerns about digital ticketing, especially regarding identity checks at games.

Ticket Transfer and Fair Access

There are calls for a fairer system that allows legitimate ticket transfers a few times per season. The process should ensure fair access to tickets, particularly for high-demand games.

Family and Generational Concerns

Concerns about family access to games are prominent, with suggestions for policies that enable parents to attend games with their children in order to foster a new generation of fans who can accumulate loyalty points.

"My son has entered most ballots as he is only 14. We are unable to apply together as I have enough points to apply earlier therefore if he is successful he ends up in a separate location."

ID Checks and Security

Suggestions for improving the ID check process include arranging checks in advance, providing specific time windows for ID verification at games, and avoiding situations where fans must navigate through opposing supporters.

"[would prefer] checks by Newcastle staff as the home staff are quite hostile and dismissive."

"Atmosphere gone downhill as people can't get tickets who used to go."

Atmosphere and Fan Experience

Some members feel that the atmosphere at away games has declined with the new ticketing processes, impacting the overall fan experience.

05 AWAY GAMES

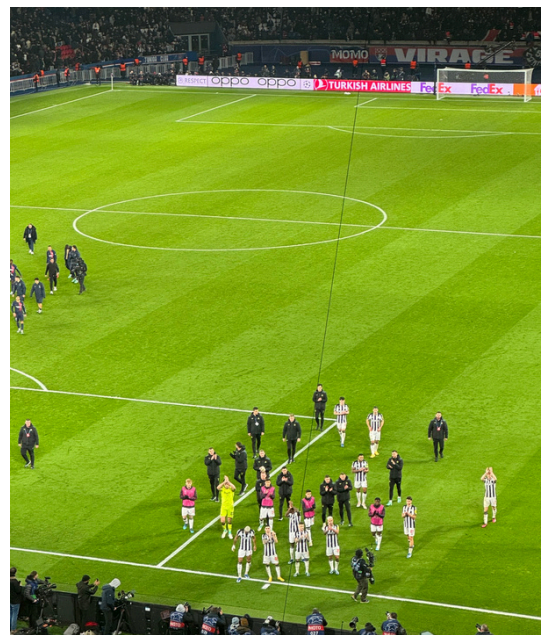
These responses highlight a desire for a more fan-friendly approach that balances security and convenience with the tradition and community aspects of football. NUST members are looking for solutions that ensure fair access while maintaining the integrity and enjoyment of the away game experience.

"This year has been brilliant for me – I have had the opportunity to attend away matches in my own name and earn the loyalty points in my name. Previously, for away games I have had to ask friends who have points but not planning on attending the game to source my ticket. I have read lots of people complaining presumably because they too relied on the loyalty points of others which obviously was a flawed system."

"It is essential that the £30 cap on away tickets prices remains in place. Every other part of away expenditure (travel, food, drink etc) is sky rocketing, therefore the ticket prices need to remain at £30 to keep away games affordable to most fans."

"I think current system is fair(ish). Those with ample points who want to go can still go. Those who historically gathered points but never went and always sold on can go if they wish but there is now a deterrent to prevent them selling on and gaining loyalty points for not going (I suspect there are many in this category with artificially high points after selling on to others for a considerable time). Tickets now regularly drop to lower thresholds making them more accessible to more people."

"The club need to have a more fluid communication with fans. Persistent negativity online from supporters doesn't help the situation and it just breeds negativity amongst people that probably don't even go to away games in any case."



06 MEMBERSHIP, BALLOT AND RESALE

This season the club introduced a ballot system for home ticket sales, replacing the previous 10am online sale.

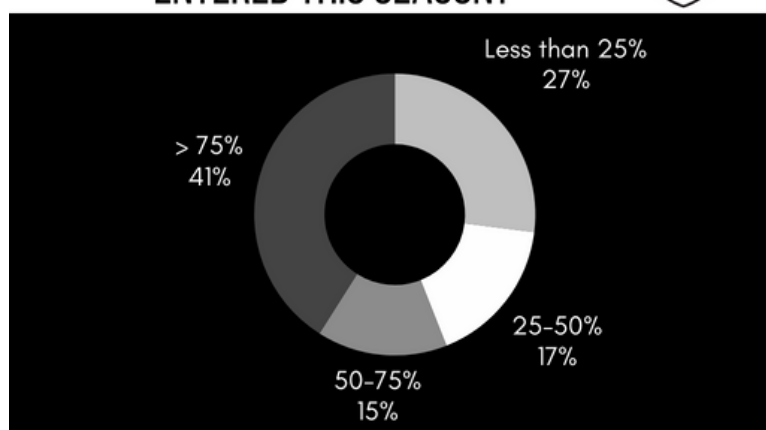
Member Ballot

87% of the club members we surveyed have entered a home ticket ballot this season, with almost half of them entering more than 75% of the season's ballots. At this season's We Are United event in November, the NUFC Executive Board stated that the ballot success rate at that point of the season was 1 in 3 (33%). However, the majority of our survey respondents report less than 25% success rate in the ballot (less than 1 in 4). The club have yet to comment on whether the success rate has changed over the season but with unlimited memberships on sale, it would be a possibility that there are more ballot applications (and therefore less chance of success) towards the end of the season. The club have not shared the total number of memberships sold.

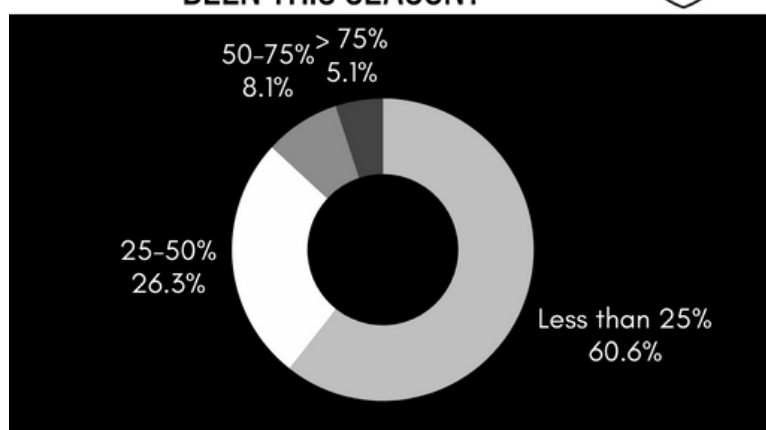
Ballot process score given by NUST members: 2.34/5.



HOW MANY BALLOTS HAVE YOU ENTERED THIS SEASON?



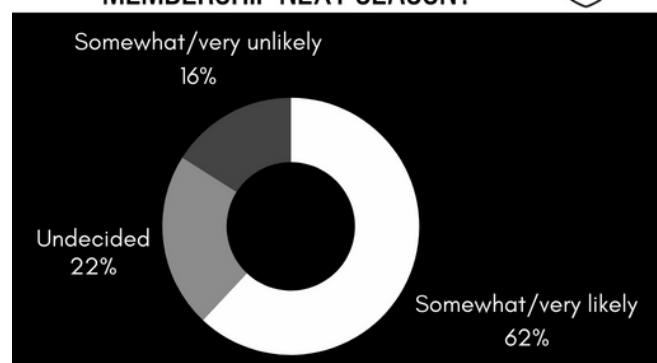
WHAT HAS YOUR BALLOT SUCCESS BEEN THIS SEASON?



06 MEMBERSHIP, BALLOT AND RESALE

We asked our survey respondents to score the ballot process and then their membership package out of five where 5 is excellent and 1 is terrible. The ballot system scores 2.34/5 and membership scores 2.35/5. However, as comes with the territory of being a supporter who wishes to attend games, the ballot is one of the only official channels to purchase tickets and so unsurprisingly, 62% of members are very or somewhat likely to renew next season. A not insignificant 16% are unlikely to renew and a further 22% are undecided, possibly indicating that those who are unable to attend a lot of games and so enter only a small number of ballots (for example due to work or where they live) are finding the membership package poor value for money.

HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NEXT SEASON?



Ticket Resale

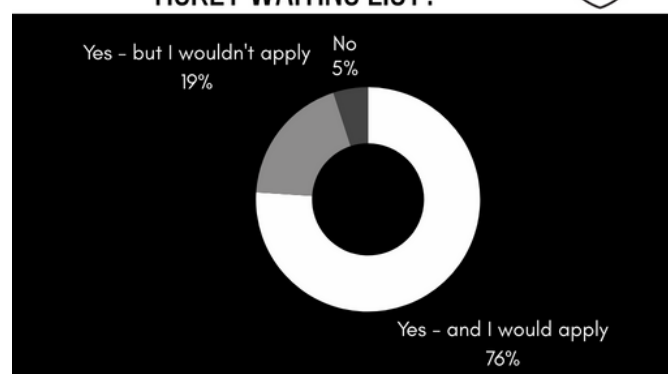
This season, the club introduced a ticket resale system where members could purchase tickets that were returned to the club. Only 23% of the members we surveyed have bought a ticket via this system. This could be due to not being aware of the function in its first season in use or due to poor user-friendliness of the system, illustrated by the score given by those who had used it: 2.07/5.



Season Ticket Waiting List

95% of club members surveyed are in favour of a season ticket waiting list and 76% would be interested in joining it themselves.

WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOUR OF A SEASON TICKET WAITING LIST?



06 MEMBERSHIP, BALLOT AND RESALE

Member Feedback

We asked club members to share their thoughts on membership and ticketing processes. The following is a summary of their feedback.

Loyalty and Membership Issues

- Many members feel that the current system does not reward long-term loyalty, with long-established fans particularly feeling side-lined.
- Some members who have supported the club for decades report very low success rates in the ballots, suggesting the need for greater consideration of member loyalty in the allocation process.
- Unlimited memberships have led to dissatisfaction due to reduced chances of obtaining tickets, and there are calls for a cap on membership sales.

Ballot and Resale System Concerns

- The ballot system is viewed as lacking transparency, with many members asking for clear information about the number of memberships sold, the number of tickets available, and the odds of winning a ballot.

- A common suggestion is to improve the chances of obtaining tickets for those who have been unsuccessful in multiple ballots though it is unclear how this could be done whilst ensuring fairness for all other members entering the ballot.
- Members find the resale system frustrating due to the difficulty of obtaining tickets, especially for those trying to purchase multiple seats together.

Access and Fairness

- There is a perceived unfairness in the distribution of tickets, with a perception that some members are consistently successful and others never winning ballots.
- Suggestions for improving fairness include introducing loyalty points for home games and a tiered membership system.
- There are some calls for members to be allowed to enter the away ticket ballot.

Digital Ticketing and Seat Selection

- Digital ticketing has been challenging for some, and there is a desire for paper tickets or a more straightforward digital system.

06 MEMBERSHIP, BALLOT AND RESALE

- Members express dissatisfaction with not being able to choose their seats, which impacts their experience and the stadium's atmosphere.

Atmosphere and Matchday Experience

- Members report that the atmosphere at games has been negatively affected by the current system, with suggestions for grouping like-minded fans together.
- There are complaints about the treatment of long-standing fans compared to new members.

Technical and Logistical Improvements

- The website for resale tickets is described as difficult to use, with tickets appearing and disappearing quickly, leading to frustration.
- Members want earlier notification of ballot results to arrange travel and accommodation, and some have mentioned the old "stick man" (10am sale) system favourably for its immediacy (in knowing if you had tickets).
- Email notification of unsuccessful ballot would be appreciated, perhaps with for example, a club shop discount included.

Cost of Membership and Tickets

- The cost of membership in relation to the chance of getting tickets is a concern, with some feeling it's not value for money.
- Ticket prices are considered high, particularly when compared to season ticket cost per game.

Communication and Transparency

- Members want the club to communicate more openly about the ticketing process, including success rates and available ticket numbers for each game.
- They also want more information about what happens with unsold tickets and how they can be better distributed to loyal fans.



06 MEMBERSHIP, BALLOT AND RESALE

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The survey responses suggest a need for Newcastle United to consider revising the membership and ticketing processes to address transparency, fairness, and loyalty recognition.
- Introducing a tiered membership system, providing more detailed information about the ballot process, and considering a home loyalty point system could improve member satisfaction.
- The club could also explore more effective use of technology to enhance the resale system and make the ticket purchasing process more user-friendly.
- It's also clear that the club needs to consider the implications of unlimited memberships on the ability of fans to obtain tickets and the overall matchday atmosphere.
- Feedback suggests that more attention should be given to ensuring that the distribution of tickets aligns with the desires of long-term, loyal supporters who feel their commitment is currently unrewarded.

- Overall, members are looking for a system that is transparent, fair, rewards loyalty, and offers a better chance to experience Newcastle United games, reflecting their passion and dedication to the club.

"We have 3 memberships in the family and have applied for 15-20 ballots and only won 2 tickets. It has been a waste of money."

"Every game has hundreds on resale sites... This system is broken for genuine fans."

"Ballot tickets are really expensive - sorry, but £45+ to sit miles away, on my own, is too much for me."

"Basically all members want is to go to games and none of the other perks. But getting a membership at £37 or so is basically the same as being charged a fee for having the pleasure of then having to pay to put the lottery on."

"The growing division between members and STHs is an area of great concern. The idea that those who stayed are now considered significantly more loyal, sticks in the throat."

07 INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

We asked NUST members who are International club Members to score their membership package out of five with a result of 2.5/5.



"I'd like to see the club connect me with other members in my country (Netherlands) - maybe host some specific watch alongs etc?" - Suggests a desire for more community-oriented features.

"As a lifelong fan but now out of UK member I can't really see any point of the membership if there is no way of being able to confirm access to tickets more than a month or so in advance." - Expresses frustration with the timing of ticket availability.

"The ballot scheme must be tuned - let applications start earlier, and instigate the organised return for redistribution by the club to allow for people not being able to take up their ticket." - Recommends improvements to make the ballot system more flexible and user-friendly.

"As an international supporter, if I make it to one game a year that's a lot. I'd love to be able to bring a friend or two for the experience, but can only get one ticket through the membership." - Highlights restrictions on ticket availability for international members.

"I'm in Australia, the lads are coming here in May, my international membership conferred me no benefits in getting access to tickets for the games." - Points out the lack of benefits from memberships during international tours.

"The membership is pointless. Doesn't give enough time to book flights etc before knowing if you have been successful in the ballot." - Critiques the practicality of planning trips around uncertain ticket allocations.

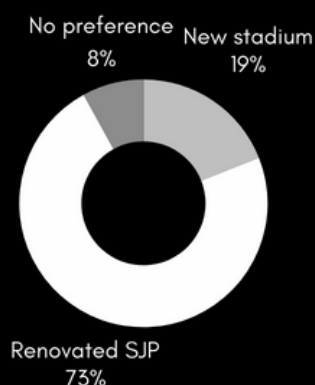
These quotes reflect various aspects of International Memberships, including dissatisfaction with the current benefits and suggestions for improvements to enhance the value of memberships for international fans.

08 ST JAMES' PARK

Stadium Future

The club recently surveyed fans on their opinions on the future of St James' Park and we asked NUST members about their preference. The overwhelming majority (73%) would prefer to stay at SJP with 19% preferring to move to a new stadium.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF SJP?



Safe Standing

The responses to the survey show that the majority of NUST members have a positive view towards the implementation of safe standing areas in the stadium. A significant number of season ticket holders support safe standing but have reservations about their current seats becoming part of a safe standing zone, suggesting some generally support the concept but have a reluctance for their matchday

experience to change. There is a clear preference for maintaining an option to sit, with some willing to move to different seats to accommodate the transition to safe standing areas. There were also respondents whose season tickets are already in a safe standing area (6%), and a portion of respondents are interested in moving to a safe standing area. However, a minority of NUST members are not in favour of safe standing at all.

The insights suggest that any changes to seating to incorporate safe standing should be communicated clearly and should take into account the preferences of existing ticket holders, perhaps by providing options for those who need or prefer to sit to relocate. The feedback also indicates a need for clear information and possibly a transition plan to ensure that those who are pro-safe standing but do not want their seats changed are accommodated.

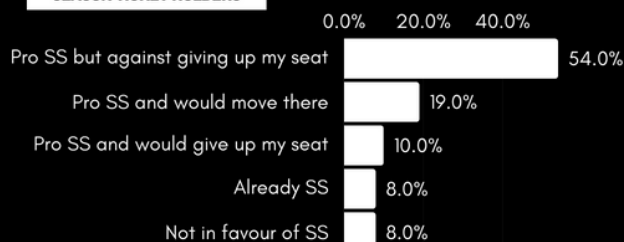
Ensuring a diverse range of seating options could satisfy both sets of supporters and those who are resistant or indifferent to change. Ultimately, the concerns of those not in favour must be taken into account to maintain an inclusive environment for all fans.

08 ST JAMES' PARK

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR STANCE ON SAFE STANDING (SS) AT SJP?



SEASON TICKET HOLDERS



WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR STANCE ON SAFE STANDING (SS) AT SJP?



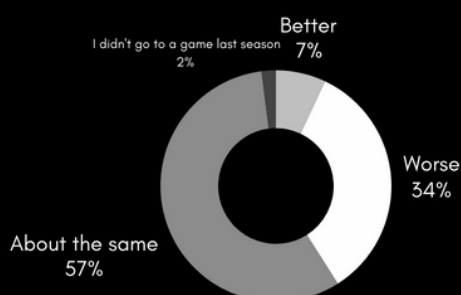
MEMBERS



Stadium Atmosphere

The majority of respondents (57%) feel that the atmosphere at St James' Park is about the same as last season, though 34% feel it is worse.

IN YOUR OPINION IS SJP ATMOSPHERE THE SAME, BETTER, OR WORSE THAN LAST SEASON?



We asked respondents to pick the top three factors that they felt influenced atmosphere, either positively or negatively, and the most often selected were:

1. Performance of the team on the day
2. Match opposition/context of the game
3. Day and time of the match.

Whilst all of these factors are outside the control of individual supporters, the next three most selected factors are more amenable to being influenced by fans:

4. Flag displays/Tifos
5. Existence of singing sections
6. Actions of supporters (whether positive, eg chanting or negative, eg empty seats).



08 ST JAMES' PARK

We also asked respondents what other factors influence matchday atmosphere, which reflected a mix of logistical, social and emotional elements.

- Social Gatherings

The mention of 'Toon pubs' signifies the importance of pre-match rituals in building camaraderie and anticipation, which carries into the stadium.

- Ticketing Issues

A recurring theme involves the challenges posed by ticketing systems that prevent fans from sitting together, thereby dispersing groups that might otherwise contribute to a unified and vibrant atmosphere. The inability to select seats affects the social aspect of attending matches and dilutes the collective enthusiasm.

- Participation and Engagement

There is a clear delineation between engaged fans who actively contribute to the atmosphere through singing, chanting, and other actions, and those who are less involved, often referred to as 'tourists' or 'day-trippers.' These less engaged attendees, while not a negative presence per se, do not add to the vocal support that many fans value.

- Technological and Infrastructural Aspects

The dissatisfaction with the PA system, digital ticketing, and the VAR process suggests that technology and infrastructure can significantly impact the matchday experience, either by enhancing engagement or causing frustration and distraction.

- Cultural Dynamics

There is an undercurrent of tension between traditional, local, and long-term supporters versus newer, less attached spectators. This tension speaks to a broader cultural shift in football viewership where the global appeal can sometimes clash with local fandom traditions.

- Match Influences

External factors such as the team's performance, refereeing decisions, and the importance of the game are all noted as significant influencers of the atmosphere. These factors can sway emotions and engagement levels during the match.

08 ST JAMES' PARK

- Environmental Factors

The physical environment, including the weather and the acoustics of the stadium, also plays a role. Poor weather can dampen spirits, while good acoustics can amplify them.

- Club Management and Expectations

The competence of the club's management and the expectations set by previous performances influence fans' moods and levels of support.

In summary, the atmosphere at football matches is a complex interplay of many factors that extend beyond the pitch. It's shaped by the fans' ability to gather and participate collectively, the functional aspects of the stadium experience, and the broader cultural context within which the sport is consumed. The feedback calls for a more fan-centric approach to matchday organisation, emphasising the importance of community, engagement, and the preservation of traditions that foster a robust and inclusive atmosphere.



Newcastle United Women

Newcastle United Women (NUW) finish this season as Champions, which means that next season they join Sunderland Women and Durham Women in the Championship.

17% of NUST members surveyed report that they have attended a NUW game this season, home or away. We know from last season's survey that the majority of respondents were in support of the growth of NUW and women's football in the North East.

09 CLUB EXEC AND LIAISON

Club Executive Board and Ownership

We asked NUST members to rate the ON-the-field decisions of the club ownership and executive board. On-the-field decisions would include playing staff, squad management, transfers and league performance.



The score given of 3.91/5 was said by most respondents (59%) to be about the same as last season.

Scores were similar though overall lower when we asked respondents to rate the OFF-the-field decisions of the club ownership and Executive Board, with off-the-field issues including the stadium, ticketing and supporter concerns.

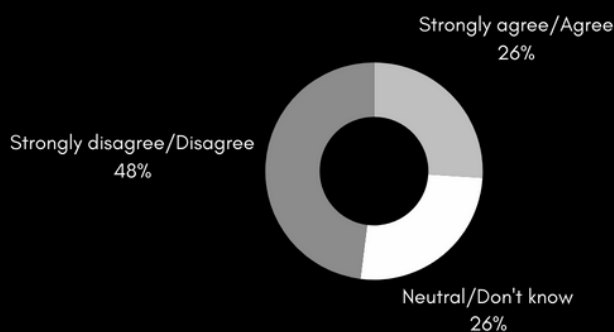


The score given was 3.45/5. 50% feel this was about the same as last season and 40% feel this season is worse for off-the-field decisions.

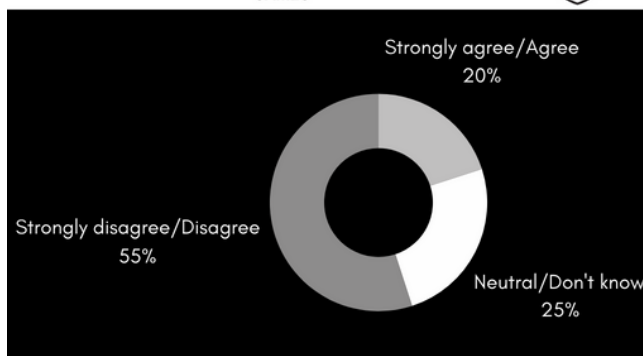
Most supporters disagreed that the club's decision making processes for new ticket allocation systems are clear

and transparent, indicating that many supporters aren't sure of the justification for some of the changes this season. The concerns about transparency are also present with regards to ticket sales with most survey respondents feeling that home or away ticket availability and allocation is not clear and transparent.

CLUB DECISION MAKING PROCESSES FOR NEW TICKET SYSTEMS ARE CLEAR AND

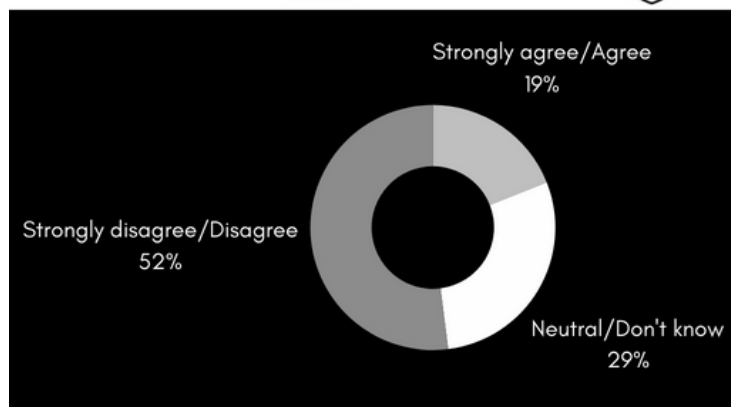


THE CLUB IS CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT WHEN IT COMES TO NUMBERS OF TICKETS AVAILABLE AND ALLOCATED FOR HOME GAMES



09 CLUB EXEC AND LIAISON

THE CLUB IS CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT WHEN IT COMES TO
NUMBERS OF TICKETS AVAILABLE AND ALLOCATED FOR AWAY
GAMES



Fan Workshops

This season saw a number of forum-style Fan Workshops run by the club, each discussing different topics such as away games, memberships and ticketing, which fans could attend in person or online if selected by ballot. Only 9% of our respondents have attended a Fan Workshop this season and those who attended score the Workshops 3.18/5.



The collective feedback regarding the Fan Workshops paints a picture of mixed reception, with several key themes emerging:

1. *Transparency and Follow-up*

Many responses highlight a desire for transparency and detailed communication post-workshops. Fans express a need for published minutes, outcomes, and clear follow-through on the discussions that take place.

2. *Scepticism of Authenticity and Impact*

A sentiment echoed across many responses is scepticism regarding whether the workshops are genuinely impactful or merely a formality ('tick box exercise'). This indicates a trust deficit between the club and its supporters.

3. *Inclusiveness and Representation*

There is a concern that the workshops may not be representative, either due to the selection process or the perceived exclusivity of participants. Calls for broader inclusion, especially of long-term supporters and those with deep-rooted connections to the club, are prominent.

4. *Access and Participation*

Difficulty in gaining access to the workshops, either through unsuccessful ballot entries or logistical barriers contributes to a feeling of being unheard. Suggestions include greater

09 CLUB EXEC AND LIAISON

online access, more sessions, and reaching out to fans for input even if they cannot attend on the day.

5. Effectiveness and Utility

Respondents question the effectiveness of the workshops. There's a consensus that the real value lies in the club's implementation of fan suggestions and whether genuine change occurs as a result.

6. Diverse Fan Experience

Fans stress the importance of considering diverse viewpoints, including away game experiences, digital ticketing issues, and international supporter engagement.

7. Communication Challenges

There are repeated calls for improved communication, both in the technical aspects of participating in workshops and in conveying the outcomes to the wider supporter base.

8. Perceived Corporate Focus

Some fans perceive a bias toward corporate interests or 'tourist' fans at the expense of longer term supporters, feeling that their experiences and contributions are undervalued.

9. Facilitation and Management

Critiques of the workshop's management include the handling of discussions, the quality of facilitation,

and the structure of the sessions, suggesting a need for more open and less scripted interaction.

10. Action Orientation

Fans want more than just discussion; they seek visible, actionable steps taken by the club in response to the workshops. There is a call for the club to not only listen but to act and to be held accountable.

In essence, while the workshops are seen as a potential platform for meaningful fan engagement, many feel there is substantial room for improvement. Fans are asking for a more transparent, inclusive, and action-oriented approach to ensure that their voices are not only heard but have a tangible impact on the club's operations and policies.



09 CLUB EXEC AND LIAISON

Fan Advisory Board

This season also saw the introduction of the Fan Advisory Board, which is a Premier League stipulation for all clubs. Two members of the NUST Board (Paul Karter and Adam Stoker) sit on the FAB. The vast majority of survey respondents (86%) are aware of the FAB and 58% feel its creation shows that the club is interested in listening to supporters.

Supporter Services and Liaison

Last year, we asked NUST members if they were aware of Supporter Services at the club and only 43% were. This season, the response was similar, with only 44% being aware of the department.

However, Supporter Liaison Officer Matt Willis has seen his profile increase with 55% of NUST members now aware of his role, compared to only 19% in 2023.



**SUPPORTER SERVICES
AT NUFC**



Head of Supporter Services - Sarah Medcalf
Supporter Liaison Officer - Matt Willis

Email: supporter.services@nufc.co.uk



10 NUST FEEDBACK

The final part of our survey asked for our members' opinions about the Trust itself. 88% would recommend joining NUST to a fellow Toon fan and our overall rating was 3.82/5.



Last season's survey highlighted four key areas of improvement for the Trust based on responses from members.

They were:

- Communication with members
- Representation of all NUST members (with the perception being that STHs were most commonly represented).
- Clarification of NUST's purpose and goals
- Working with other supporter groups.

Communication

This season has seen the launch of our Whatsapp Community where members receive updates affecting supporters of NUFC. NUST members can join this via the link in any of our emails.

Since last season and the election of a number of new Board members, we have been able to dedicate more time

to the NUST social media accounts (X, Instagram and Facebook).

We continue to send regular member update emails and have recently created a FAQ page on our website. 39% of NUST members feel communication has improved this season and 52% feel it is about the same as last season.

Representation of NUST members

Last season's survey saw feedback that NUST members perceived the Trust to cater more towards season ticket holders. The Board now features representation from two non-season ticket holders (Felicity Thow and Pete Davey).

About a third of members surveyed aren't sure if wider member representation has improved since last season, with 22% feeling it has improved and 40% reporting it seems about the same.

Clarification of NUST's purpose and goals

This year, 71% of NUST members feel they understand NUST's purpose and goals very or somewhat well.

10 NUST FEEDBACK

Working with other supporter groups

Over the course of this season, NUST has strengthened links with both United with Pride and NUDSA (Newcastle United Disabled Supporters Association) via events with both groups. When running our Ticketing Roundtable earlier this season, we invited representatives from NUSC, The London Mags and The Irish Mags. This year, 48% of respondents aren't sure if our work with other supporter groups has improved this season with 17% feeling it has and 33% feeling it is about the same as last season.

Feedback and Suggestions

We asked members for their feedback and suggestions for the remainder of this season and next. The insights gathered aim to assist NUST in enhancing its representation and provision for its diverse membership base.

Positive Feedback:

- Members appreciate the efforts of those organising and managing NUST activities, acknowledging the challenges of representing a diverse fan base.

- Specific initiatives, particularly in communication and member engagement, were praised for helping members feel more connected to the trust and its activities.

Negative Feedback:

- Criticisms focus on the perceived ineffectiveness of NUST in influencing club policies or adequately representing member interests.
- Concerns about NUST catering predominantly to specific groups, potentially neglecting the broader member base.
- International and New Fans: Some local and long-standing fans feel that recent policies favour newer or international members, particularly concerning ticket allocations.
- Active Online Community: A focus on digitally active members raises concerns about neglecting those less engaged online.
- Match-Attending vs. Non-Attending Supporters: Perceptions exist of a disparity in attention between fans who attend matches regularly and those who do not.

10 NUST FEEDBACK

- Corporate and Higher Revenue Interests: Some perceive that NUST may align too closely with the club's revenue-driven strategies, which could overshadow the traditional supporter interests.

Neutral Feedback:

- Many members provided constructive criticism, suggesting areas for improvement without overt negativity. These comments often called for greater transparency and more detailed communication about NUST actions and outcomes.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Enhance Communication and Transparency

- Implement clearer, more frequent communications about NUST activities, decisions, and their impacts.
- Ensure transparency in actions taken and the rationale behind decisions, particularly regarding contentious issues like ticketing and member representation.

2. Increase Collaboration and Unity

- Foster closer relationships with other fan groups and explore potential mergers to strengthen the collective fan voice.
- Engage with diverse supporter segments to ensure all views are considered and represented in discussions with the club.

3. Improve Representation and Inclusivity

- Regularly review and adjust representation strategies to ensure all member groups, including international fans, non-attending supporters, and various demographic segments, feel valued and heard.

4. Action and Accountability

- Focus on translating member feedback into concrete actions that reflect the collective interests of the membership.
- Establish mechanisms for members to track progress on issues they care about, enhancing accountability.

10 NUST FEEDBACK

Focus for Next Season

- The feedback underscores a need for NUST to evolve in its communication, representation, and operational approaches to better serve its entire membership. By addressing these concerns through strategic improvements, NUST can strengthen its role as a vital supporter organisation, ensuring that all fans, regardless of their location, mode of support, or tenure, feel equally represented and supported.

Value of NUST

There are aspects of the work NUST does that members value and should be continued into next season:

- **Appreciation for Efforts:** Many members appreciate the hard work and dedication of those involved with NUST, acknowledging the challenges they face in representing a diverse fan base.
- **Important Advocacy Role:** Members recognise NUST as an important advocate for supporter interests, especially in discussions with the club's management and in fostering a community voice.

Communication Enhancements:

Initiatives like the WhatsApp group for communication are well-received, providing members with timely updates and a platform for discussion.

"Thanks to all those organising it. Easy for others to criticise but great we have NUST."

"You lads & lasses are doing a great job, your love of the club is clear - a thank you from me, and keep it up folks."

"It's a hard task and you will never keep everybody happy. Your efforts are appreciated."

"A valuable asset for myself being a member as living in the South East it's difficult to attend many games."

"I know NUST have detractors but it is the only democratic supporter group that is member led."

"The change in Trust since last year is huge. Much better on social media and really helpful when contacted. The Whatsapp group is really good as keep up to date with everything."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to:

All NUST members for their support and to the members who completed this survey.

NUST member Dean Biggs for his advice and support in the use of AI in the analysis of our free text survey data.

Thomas Concannon for his work at the Football Supporters' Association and for providing comments from the FSA at the start of this report.

Matt Willis and Sarah Medcalf for their work in Supporter Services.

Wor Flags for their ongoing efforts in bringing exceptional displays to SJP – which feature heavily in the photos that illustrate this report!





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