

People, Planet & Prosperity | 2024

Advancing the health, wealth and wellbeing
of our region and beyond



From Newcastle.
For the world.

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The redevelopment of the Stephenson Building is harnessing the building's 70 years of heritage and transforming it into a hub for the future, a place to engage, support, and challenge students to fulfil their potential. Driving transformative research across multiple disciplines, it will boost the economy, social wellbeing, and cultural richness of Newcastle. Phase 1 of the redevelopment opened in September 2023, with the project due to complete in Autumn 2024.

Foreword

As a civic university, bringing economic, social and cultural benefit to society through our research, our education and our operations – in our region, nationally and globally – is core to our purpose. Only by working closely with our partners can we deliver on our commitment to making sure the work we do brings about lasting and meaningful change.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to make excellent progress in all six strands of our Engagement and Place Strategy.

I am therefore very proud to present this third edition of our *People, Planet and Prosperity* report, which is packed with examples of projects and partnerships that are changing people's lives for the better.

Acknowledging the colleagues, students and partners who make this work possible is an important part of the story. Our annual Engagement and Place Awards were introduced to recognise and celebrate great examples of collaboration.

In each section that follows, we feature the winners of our 2023 awards. What all of these partnerships have in common is a drive and creativity in the way they have been designed to respond to specific economic and social needs that is really impressive. More importantly still, they all demonstrate impact that is both immediate and sustainable in the longer term.

Our relationships with our key regional and national stakeholders, including the City Council, the new North East Combined Authority, the NHS, and other universities are stronger than ever. We have also welcomed Professor Rachel Pain as our new Dean of Social Justice to take forward all the very valuable work we do with our partners, including the VCSE sector. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their continued support.

Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to our Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement and Place, Professor Jane Robinson, for her outstanding leadership, and to our Head of Engagement, Andrea Henderson, and her team: Dammy Aboderin, Bob Allan, Ellie McGuinness, Carrie Rosenthal, Stevie Smith and Charlie Wilkinson who work tirelessly to support our colleagues, students and partners and to ensure we continue to successfully deliver on our civic commitment.

**Professor Chris Day CBE
Vice-Chancellor and President**



About Newcastle University

Newcastle is one of the UK's great redbrick universities, founded to address the economic, health and social issues of an industrial city.

Today we are ranked among the top 110 universities in the world (QS World University Rankings 2024) and we are home to a thriving international community of some 29,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students from over 145 countries worldwide studying at our vibrant campuses in Newcastle upon Tyne, Malaysia and Singapore.

A member of the Russell Group of the top 24 research-intensive universities in the UK, we were placed 15th in the UK for research power in the most recent Research Excellence Framework. We are committed to focusing our work on addressing some of the most profound challenges facing global society, through our established research excellence in Ageing and Health, Data, Culture

and Creative Arts, Cities and Place and One Planet.

Our world-class, multidisciplinary research is delivered through a growing portfolio of Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence (NUCoREs). Globally connected, our activity is guided by working in partnership across and between disciplinary boundaries and underpinned by our core values of social and environmental justice and equality, diversity and inclusion.

We support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and in doing so ensure that the work we do is channelled towards building a fairer, stronger and more sustainable future for all.





Over
29,000
students from
145
countries



Ranked

110TH
in the world
up 12 places on last year
*(QS World University
Rankings 2024)*

Ranked

24TH
in the world for
sustainable development
*(Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2023)*

Ranked

3RD
in the UK for investment
in student and graduate
start-ups
*(Higher Education Business
and Community Interaction
Survey (HEBCIS) 2022/23)*



**Global
presence**
with our campuses in
Malaysia and Singapore
and strategic partnerships
across all five continents



Ranked

15TH
in the UK for global
research power
(REF 2021)



Delivering in partnership: the Devolution Opportunity



Professor Jane Robinson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement and Place, explains how our place-based approach, coupled with our research, education and engagement, is enabling us to deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth, shape brighter futures and champion social justice.

Our work with an ever-growing list of partners from across academia, industry, regional and national government, healthcare providers and the cultural and voluntary sectors, connecting them with our research and education, is helping us to drive innovation and create an inclusive economy of the future.

Central to this is our relationship with the new North East Combined Authority (NECA). In many ways, the Devolution Deal, announced in December 2022, along with its additional Trailblazer Deal, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our region, with the potential to attract inward investment and create jobs, improving prosperity for all.

Part of the deal involves a new Investment Zone, which is aligned with our plans to create an Electrification Process Innovation Centre (EPIC) to support innovation in electric vehicle manufacturing, battery technology and offshore wind, improving productivity and providing the education and skills needed to sustain the future workforce. Meanwhile, the development of a Health Innovation Neighbourhood in Newcastle's West End is set to benefit from investment towards the creation of a Health Innovation Zone for our region (see pages 18-19).

NECA will also establish a Culture and Creative Sector Catalyst to attract investment and support growth in our cultural and creative sectors. We have played a key role supporting this sector for several years through Creative Fuse, and more recently through our role as co-host of the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC).

To create connections and support meaningful relationships with our communities we are opening up our University and welcoming people onto campus. Our Discover Festival (see page 21) is about making our work, partnerships and projects accessible to all. Purposefully-designed for curious minds, families and community groups alike, the festival is all about fostering creativity and inspiring people.

I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made since the launch of our Engagement and Place Strategy in 2019, and immensely grateful to all of our partners and stakeholders who enable us to fulfil our commitment to improving the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our region and beyond.

“The work that Newcastle University does has a huge impact on the city. As the MP for Newcastle Central it is such a source of pride for me to be able to stand up and say that I am representing such a fantastic research-intensive university. Wherever I go in the world, I know Newcastle University is a great advertisement for our city.”



Chi Onwurah
MP for Newcastle Central

This diagram represents Newcastle University's Engagement and Place Strategy. It demonstrates the mechanisms through which we ensure that societal benefit is embedded throughout our core activities of research and education and in our operations.



Inclusive and sustainable economic growth

Working in partnership with regional, national and global industry is pivotal to our strategy to engage for economic benefit, supporting business growth, encouraging inward investment and increasing productivity.

Our collaboration with industry, from SMEs to multi-national corporations, enables us to deliver business innovation as well as identifying and fulfilling current and future skills needs, for example in the emerging clean technology and electric vehicle economic cluster in the North East.

Our Arrow programme provides support for North East SMEs to develop the capacity and ability to innovate, with a focus on developing new products and processes. Over the last four years, Arrow has helped more than 150 regional SMEs innovate by connecting them with expertise from across the University.

Business development, through entrepreneurship and the commercialisation of our research and innovation, is another thriving area for us, and a major part of our contribution to economic growth in our region.

A key enabler of our spin-out success is Northern Accelerator, a collaboration between Newcastle,

Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside and York Universities offering end-to-end support for spin-out companies.

Student and graduate entrepreneurs are supported by the successful START UP scheme, run by the University's Careers Service. Companies and social enterprises established by our entrepreneurial students and graduates are booming. Latest figures from the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS) revealed that our graduate start-ups achieved a combined turnover of £283.1 million and employ almost 1,500 people.

The range of support available to our students and graduates means that an increasing number aren't just staying in the region to work but are starting their own businesses which in turn create employment and generate growth.



“ Through Newcastle University we are able to access a world-class, research intensive university that has excellent expertise in areas that are important to P&G. Newcastle University gives us access to state-of-the-art facilities and to the talent that its academics and students bring, to solve our most difficult technical challenges. By collaborating with Newcastle University, we hope to expand science and have a positive societal impact.”

Ana Morales Garcia
Senior Scientist, P&G





Case study

Spin-out investment

Last year was a record year for our spin-out companies, with investment across life sciences, sustainable engineering and digital tech spin-outs totalling over £40 million in 2023.

Spearheading the surge in investment is Advanced Electric Machines, a spin-out from the University's world-class electric motor research team in 2017, which in 2023 secured £23 million in new investment. The funding will be used to scale up production of sustainable motors for the automotive industry, deliver on ambitious growth plans to establish a global sales footprint, and bolster R&D capabilities.

Over the last five years, the estimated turnover of the University's 37 active spin-out companies has risen from £4.7 million to £9.8 million and they now employ more than 300 people.

Newcastle University's Head of Company Creation, Rick McCordall said: "Our goal when developing new companies is to create high-value jobs in the North East of England. To do this we need to bring together world-leading research and discovery with commercial know-how and investor backing. The investment successes show that we have a strong, investor-friendly approach to ownership and company growth."



Pop-up Primer Programme

The Pop-up Primer Programme pilot project was a collaboration between Newcastle University Business School, Creative Heritage Studios, Community Interest Company (CIC) and Create Intrigue to enhance the retail skills of local creative businesses.

The project team, in partnership with local business owners, developed practical workshops on visual marketing, product photography and social media promotion, providing participants with transferable skills to take part in future pop-up shop events.

The success of the pilot has now led to funding for a more in-depth programme, Commercialise without Compromise. The programme will enable creative designer-makers and artists to commercialise their practice by developing the skills they need to generate a passive income, allowing them to pursue the work they love while making a more sustainable living from their creative practice.



One of the Pop-up Primer events

Health, wellbeing and societal benefit

From training tomorrow's doctors to leading cutting-edge clinical trials and innovative community healthcare projects, our work is improving the wellbeing and resilience of communities across our region.

Attracting students from the region, across the UK and internationally, our Bachelor of Medical Sciences (MBBS) degree programme sees up to 75 per cent of its graduates choose placements in the North East, providing the future workforces needed to tackle local health inequalities.

Meanwhile, the Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre (NIHR) recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. In partnership with Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust and Cumbria, Northumbria, Tyne and Wear (CNTW) NHS Trust, its translational research turns innovative ideas and discoveries into practical benefits for local patients, as well as contributing to the local and national economy.

We also work with communities to directly shape research and provide invaluable insights. Embedded in the National Innovation Centre for Ageing, VOICE is a community of public, patients and carers who are passionate about working with researchers. This high-quality public and patient involvement and engagement (PPIE) is crucial throughout the research cycle to keep the focus on real needs and priorities.

In November 2023, a new purpose-built Community Health Bus was launched in the city. Staffed by Newcastle University Pharmacy students, it provides a range of health services for adults aged 18 and over, through a partnership between Newcastle GP Services, the GP Federation for the city and Northumbria University.

Rebecca Haynes (*pictured below*), Chief Executive, Newcastle GP Services said: "With the first GP Community Health Bus, which we hope will be the first of many, we can support our local communities and our healthcare workers. This partnership is opening more doors for us for further collaboration. None of us in this city can tackle health inequalities alone. We have got to work with partners across the city and help each other."

“Between the Trust and the University we have proved that we can generate skills, we can create a great healthy workforce and we can develop innovations. Our partnership is all about striving for excellence; in outcomes, in research, in innovation and in making sure our local population and beyond get what they need from us.”



Sir James Mackey
Chief Executive,
Newcastle Hospitals





Case study

Dentaid

In spring 2024, staff and students from the University's School of Dental Sciences and Newcastle Dental Hospital linked up with Newcastle Foodbank to work on a special mobile unit run by a charity called Dentaid, offering assistance to communities in need of dental care.

As part of the Dentaid bus visit to the city, the group provided free dental treatment for foodbank users living in Benwell and Byker, as well as local children living in the area. In collaboration with Newcastle Foodbank, the team volunteered to offer free check-ups and preventative care.

A partnership with Newcastle Hospital Charities and the North East and North Cumbria Child Health and Wellbeing Network offered essential funding to deliver the unit. It also supported researchers to examine barriers to accessing care, levels of child tooth decay in the area and feasibility of bringing a mobile Dentaid unit to a community partnership.

The Dentaid visit was part of an ongoing collaboration with the Newcastle Foodbank exploring integrating health services into community partnerships and engaging with those most vulnerable in society.

Dr Luisa Wakeling, Director of Engagement and Place in the Faculty of Medical Sciences, said: "Having a strong partnership with Newcastle Foodbank has enabled us to address a great need by delivering a mobile dental unit in these areas. By removing the barriers to dental treatment, we were able to offer the community access to the vital dental care they needed."



Engagement in action: Professor Anne Whitehead and Professor Judith Rankin receive an Engagement & Place Award for their project, May 2023

Losing a Baby from a Multiple Pregnancy

Professors Anne Whitehead and Judith Rankin worked with parents who have lost a baby from a multiple pregnancy to create a short, animated film about their experience.

The parents and family members who took part in the project gathered natural materials during 'memory walks' in places of their choice, which were then made into a series of inks that they used to draw pictures based on their experience.

The resulting film captures how families are living beside their loss five or six years on, creating a resource to support and comfort other families dealing with a similar loss.

The project was funded by the University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Impact Fund and the Tilly Hale Fund, in collaboration with the Tiny Lives Trust and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary.

Cultural benefit

Taking part in cultural activities is known to be exceptionally beneficial to our mental health and wellbeing, and we are proud of our role as both a provider and supporter of our region's cultural richness.

Run in collaboration with our long-standing partners, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM), our Great North Museum: Hancock (GNM) and the Hatton Gallery are two of our region's most popular visitor attractions. With outstanding permanent collections and thriving programmes of temporary exhibitions that draw on our research strengths, from climate change to contemporary art, these venues are a valuable educational resource as well as a fun day out. Research England recently confirmed increased funding of more than £300k annually for the next five years supporting our work with the GNM and Hatton – a fantastic achievement in the current financial climate, and deserved recognition of their importance.

attracting well over 200 people. These have been augmented more recently by the introduction of the Newcastle Debates series. We have enhanced our digital offering too, with the From Newcastle podcast featuring conversations with our experts on latest developments in health, science and culture and the creative arts, hosted by our talented students.

Our Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts is behind the annual Newcastle Poetry Festival, in partnership with the Poetry Book Society and featuring Poetry Live, a touring event where poets perform their poems for schoolchildren studying GCSE English Literature.

Our work also recognises the importance of the cultural and creative sector to our region's economy. Through the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) which we lead in partnership with the Royal Society of Arts, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, we are working to support the growth of the UK's creative industries through the production of independent evidence and policy advice.



Our newest cultural venue, the Farrell Centre, (pictured above), was established with a mission to create a home in Newcastle where everyone can take part in a conversation about the role of architecture and planning in shaping the city's future. More than 14,000 people of all ages have visited the Centre since it opened in April 2023.

Audiences for our flagship Insights Public Lectures and Live in the King's Hall concerts series have bounced back to pre-pandemic levels, regularly

“Through our partnership with Newcastle University we have been able to do so much for artists in the region which otherwise we wouldn't be able to do. The graduates and early career artists we supported are now running their own organisations and studios and creating exciting art in the region. This is a meaningful partnership with actual collaboration, working together to make change happen.”



Rebecca Huggan
Director, NewBridge Project



Case study

The National Trust

Our work with the National Trust is enhancing our understanding of heritage and natural environments to help preserve them for future generations.

From preservation works on Hadrian's Wall, to exploring the relationship between heritage and audiences using contemporary art and digital technologies, we share a passion for open spaces and historic places.

As the partnership has evolved over many years, our work has come to focus on three key themes: Heritage, Landscape, and Everyone Welcome. Previous projects have examined how to make landscapes more inclusive and accessible and also explored the importance of rights of way to inform policy.

Andrew Poad (*pictured above*), General Manager at National Trust Northumberland Coast & Hadrian's Wall Country, says: "If there are questions that we need answering, we know there is a coordinated way in the University that we can get the right people round the table to help us answer them.

"Partnership runs through everything we do here at the National Trust. Being able to provide opportunities for students to experience the challenges we have in the real world and seeing the benefit it brings to their learning and education gives me a lot of satisfaction."



Volunteer Voices: Engaging Volunteers with Contemporary Art and Heritage

Volunteer Voices was a pilot training programme designed to give people who volunteer as guides a better understanding of contemporary art commissioned for heritage sites.

Taking part in the project helped build the volunteers' confidence in explaining contemporary artworks to visitors, creating a better visitor experience at the same time as improving the levels of satisfaction and enjoyment the guides gained from volunteering.

Led by a team from the University's School of Arts and Cultures, the programme was delivered in partnership with Arts & Heritage, National Trust, English Heritage, Durham Cathedral, Ushaw Historic House, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and the national Heritage Volunteering Group.

The pilot's participants have benefitted from advancing their own levels of advocacy, initiating their own programmes at their properties, and the establishment of an independent regional network of Contemporary Art Volunteer Ambassadors (CAVA).



Inclusive education and lifelong learning

The North East of England traditionally has the lowest rates of educational attainment and progression to higher education in the country. We are leading a number of successful initiatives designed to redress the balance.

Our award-winning regional and national partnerships are a key element of our Engagement and Place Strategy.

Through the North East Uni Connect Programme we are removing academic, financial and cultural barriers, ensuring all young people, along with their parents, carers and teachers, have the information and support they need to achieve their ambitions. We also lead Realising Opportunities, an award-winning national fair access scheme which encourages talented students to apply to leading institutions.

The North East Raising Aspiration Partnership (NERAP) is a long-standing collaboration of the five universities in the region who fund and collaborate on outreach activity for under-16s. At the beginning of 2023, NERAP became the first regional Higher Education partnership to collaboratively sign up to the Care Leaver Covenant, committing us to providing all care-experienced students with consistent access to support throughout their university journey.

We partner with Northumbria University to deliver IntoUniversity Newcastle East, a local learning centre that helps raise attainment among young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, providing sessions of structured academic study after school for 7- to 18-year-olds. Progression to higher education among participants stands at 74 per cent, compared to the local average of 12 per cent, and a national average progression of 44 per cent. In the past year, the IntoUniversity Centre has supported more than 1,200 students.

We are also committed to lifelong learning and helping to rebuild the UK's skills system. We lead the Institute of Electrification and Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing, offering flexible and high-quality training in Power Electronics, Machines, and Drives to equip learners with industry-ready transferable skills. With Northumbria University, NCG and Education Partnership North East, we also work to identify and address areas of expertise and potential gaps in health and social care education and training.

“One of the most gratifying things about our relationship with Newcastle University is seeing our former students not only go on to graduate but become successful in their chosen careers because of the support they received from the University.”



Paddy Drought
Careers Leader, Astley
Community High School



Case study

PARTNERS

Now in its 25th year, our own award-winning widening access programme, PARTNERS, is one of the most well-established supported entry routes to higher education of its kind.

Since it was established in 2000, the PARTNERS programme has enabled more than 9,000 students to study at Newcastle University.

PARTNERS aims to support students who have faced barriers in their journey to higher education. Students who participate in the programme can receive a lower contextual offer to study at Newcastle University. Attending the PARTNERS Academic Summer School helps them to increase their confidence and develop the skills they need to succeed as a university student. They are also able to meet other prospective students and receive support with their application, on results day and after they join the University.

This year, the demand from students to take part in the PARTNERS programme has increased by 50 per cent, from just over 2,000 to more than 4,000 applications.

Hannah Morris (*pictured below*) is an undergraduate studying history who joined the University after completing the PARTNERS programme. "PARTNERS took off a lot of pressure, especially with the University application process," she says. "It really helped me mentally and in terms of how I approached my exams. The team were really supportive the entire time."



World Anatomy Day Events

World Anatomy Day is an annual series of public engagement and outreach activities across the world with events targeted at both the public and the scientific community.

Working with regional partners, anatomy colleagues from the School of Medicine delivered a series of events for young children and pupils from widening participation backgrounds. This collaborative approach was also cross-disciplinary, bringing together anatomists, medics, dentists, and students to capture the public's imagination.

By ensuring all activities were age-appropriate and designed to meet a specific aim, it helped young people to understand more about their own bodies and health. In the longer term, the sessions helped the participants to develop their own scientific inquisitiveness.

Engaging globally

Being a global university means that we nurture a sense of care towards the world. It means we consistently seek to engage and not exclude; to connect and not isolate; and to harness scholarship to contribute to the making of a better world.

Being a global university means that we see ourselves as a place of encounter with, and a portal to, the wider world.

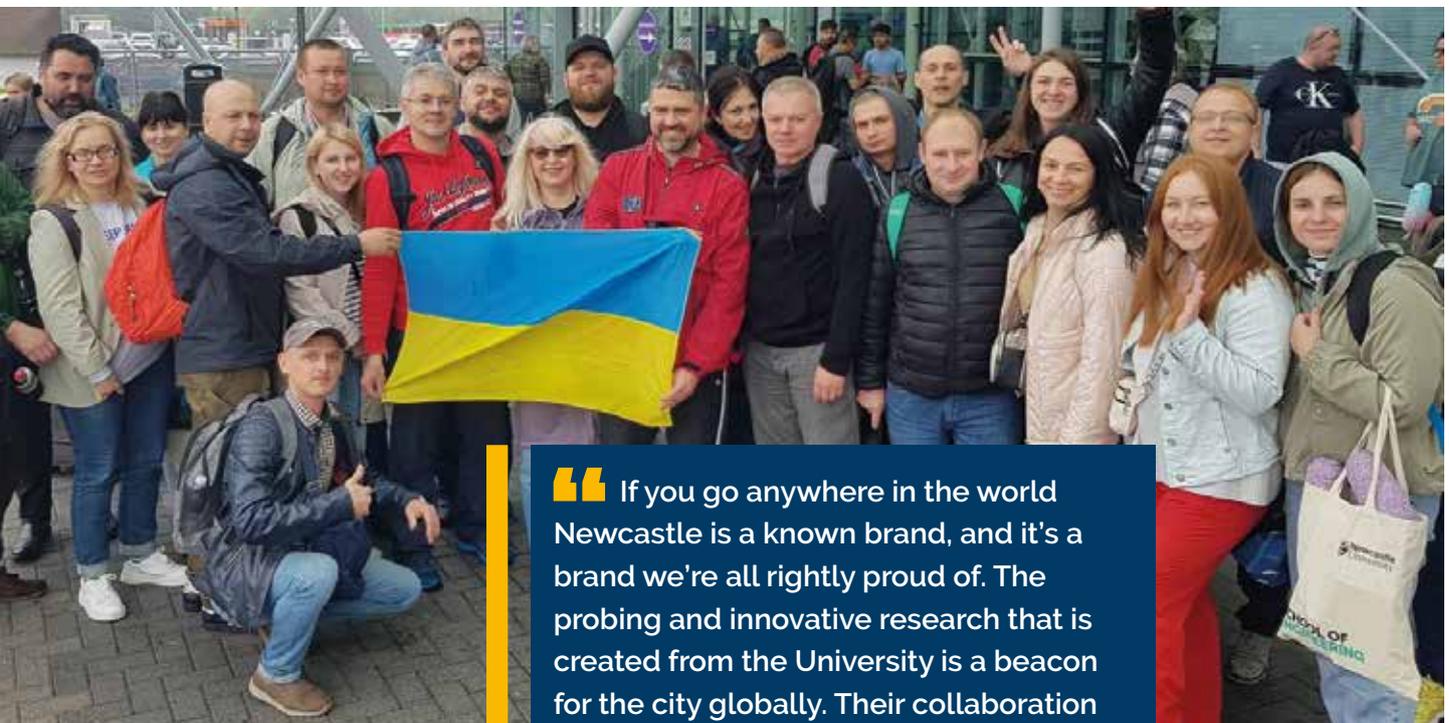
It means we encourage our students and colleagues to think, feel and act as global citizens, understanding the world and our places within it. We recognise and foster our connectedness to global places, communities and institutions, working ethically in partnerships that help us to achieve more than we could alone.

One such example is the partnership between Newcastle and the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering in Ukraine (NUWEE).

This partnership was born out of the desire to do something tangible in response to the situation in Ukraine. The Twin for Hope programme is a five-year agreement that will support research and educational collaboration based on our academic strengths in water engineering, advanced water treatment and environmental technologies, as well as agronomy, civil engineering, architecture, economics and business.

The project involves both student exchange and research collaboration, with further opportunities for NUWEE to broaden its research and teaching in culture and heritage. In the longer term, we hope also to play an important role in the rebuilding of Ukraine.

The University welcomed 30 Ukrainian academics and PhD students for a NUWEE Summer School, July 2023



“ If you go anywhere in the world Newcastle is a known brand, and it's a brand we're all rightly proud of. The probing and innovative research that is created from the University is a beacon for the city globally. Their collaboration and research really are key to shaping the future of our city.”



Cllr Nick Kemp
Leader of Newcastle City Council



Researchers in Thailand using the University-developed 'lab in a suitcase'.

Case study

Global excellence in water security

We are proud to have been awarded a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for our world-leading research in water security.

Our researchers work with colleagues and communities around the world across a wide range of water research, including floods, droughts, water quality and public health. Our work in areas such as urban flash flooding, mapping water risks – both in cities and across countries – and interventions that improve safety and reduce disruptions, is enabling the improvement of infrastructure and the development of built environments that are resilient to water risks.

Our experts are at the forefront of monitoring and improving water quality for public and environmental health, with work that addresses legacy industrial waste contamination of freshwaters, Combined Sewer Outfall (CSO) pollution, persistent pollutants, and detecting Covid-19 in wastewater.

Another key research area focuses on supporting the transition to net zero wastewater treatment and exploring how this could be implemented at full-scale.

Professor Richard Dawson, Chair in Earth Systems Engineering and Director of Research, School of Engineering, said: "The Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education is a ringing endorsement of the work by the whole team at Newcastle and our many partners in the UK and around the world who are working with us to help us realise our vision of water security for all."



Fighting gender-based violence and HIV-Stigma in Southern Africa

Working with partners across Southern Africa (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia), Nanette De Jong, Professor of Socially Engaged Ethnomusicology has developed and implemented arts-based interventions in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV-stigma.

Tackling HIV-stigma and GBV requires changing attitudes within communities themselves. Drawing on her research, Professor De Jong recognises how music and the arts are exceptionally well-placed to accomplish that goal. Through community-based projects, this work has provided voices, sounds and images to open up new dialogues and forge new public opinion.

The impact of this work has included improving the response services of NGOs working in areas of HIV and GBV, in addition to strengthening legal and policy frameworks around health and gender inequality, and improving the outlook for, and economic power of, women in Southern Africa.



Evidence-based policy making

Our world-leading experts are shaping policy and practice regionally, nationally and around the world. Together with Insights North East and the Creative Industries PEC, our ambition is to establish the University as a Centre for Excellence in Policy Engagement.

Providing research-based evidence to support the development of fit-for-purpose, sustainable policy solutions, from local authorities to international agencies, is an increasingly important strategic aim and one of the ways in which we measure our impact on society.

Engaging with policy is embedded into the ethos of our cross-disciplinary Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence (NUCoREs) and our three National Innovation Centres.

Examples include the new national hub to provide expertise, innovative modelling and engagement to support net zero transport networks which we are leading with £10 million in funding from the Department for Transport and government research funding body, UK Research and Innovation. The Research Hub for Decarbonised Adaptable and Resilient Transport Infrastructures will help the UK's complex and interconnected national, regional and local transport infrastructures to upgrade and decarbonise and to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Colleagues from our National Innovation Centre for Data (NICD) recently contributed to the *Tech for Good, Tech for Growth* report produced by the Parliamentary Internet Communications and Technology Forum. The report highlighted NICD's approach to helping businesses and organisations of all sizes to unlock insights and value from their own data to support the effective transfer of data science skills into the regional and national economy.

Through our partnership with the new Combined Authority, we are playing an integral role in unlocking the potential for social, cultural and economic benefit represented by the £4.2 billion Devolution Deal for the North East and the Trailblazer Deal announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Spring budget, including an 'Inclusive Innovation Deal', developments in digital and AI, rural policy, and venture capital funding to support University spin-outs.

“ North of Tyne Combined Authority has absolutely benefitted from the rich depth of knowledge the University provides; institutions like Insights North East have really helped the interface between policy development and research expertise.”



Adrian Dougherty
Head of Public Sector Innovation,
North of Tyne Combined Authority





Case study

Insights North East

Through Insights North East (INE), we are playing a pivotal role in connecting academics and policymakers to address the needs of the region.

INE is a regional partnership that is bridging the divide between research and place-based policymaking. A partnership between Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, the NHS and local government, INE is working hand in hand with the region's policymakers to understand their policy questions and draw out actionable insights from the evidence base. Its aim is to support policy partners in their work to tackle many of their significant and long-standing social and economic challenges.

Harnessing the opportunity of the region's new devolution deal is a central focus, with INE closing the gap between research and policy design and implementation to deliver better outcomes to benefit the region's people, economy and environment.

INE sits alongside the wider Collaborative Newcastle agreement, an innovative partnership between the NHS, local government, higher education, and the voluntary and community sector in Newcastle to combine efforts, expertise and resources in new and creative ways with the aim of reducing inequality and providing better opportunities for all.

Collaborative Newcastle aims to build a shared understanding of the knowledge and data within each of its partner organisations to identify and develop how it can support regional policymakers in better responding to and focusing on local communities and their requirements.



A Wellbeing Framework for the North of Tyne

Working with the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) and Carnegie UK, Professor Mark Shucksmith OBE co-chaired a wellbeing roundtable which devised a set of goals to enhance the social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing of everyone in the NTCA area.

More than 1,700 residents across North Tyneside were asked questions about what they felt would support their future wellbeing. Their responses were translated into a series of recommendations that were subsequently endorsed by NTCA.



The new framework can now be used to monitor collective wellbeing in the region, all with a view to promoting a sense of ownership and involvement for people living in the region, driving economic prosperity and greater wellbeing.

Driving inclusive innovation

Building on our world-leading academic research, our strong and enduring relationships with our national and regional stakeholders and our proven track record of successfully delivering a major urban regeneration project – Newcastle Helix – we are leading the development of a Health Innovation Neighbourhood (HIN) and the Electrification Process Innovation Centre (EPIC).

Together, these two major projects are set to deliver solutions to the health, social and sustainability challenges facing society today.

HIN – the Health Innovation Neighbourhood

HIN is an ambitious project to develop the former General Hospital in Newcastle's West End. The long-term ambition for HIN is to help people live longer, healthier, more sustainable lives.

Underpinned by our internationally-recognised expertise in healthy ageing, HIN has the potential to reshape approaches to preventative healthcare, reduce inequalities, and serve as a model for holistic community wellbeing, influencing global health practice and neighbourhood place-making for years to come.

Described by Newcastle City Council as a flagship regeneration project for the city, phase one will include residential, later living accommodation, supported by a transport hub and an Integrated Care and Education hub, complete with up to 70

clinic rooms for pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, clinical psychology, speech and language therapy, dietetics, physiotherapy, nursing and occupational therapy allied to specialised and non-specialised community engagement and education spaces.

The announcement in the March 2023 budget of the North East Combined Authority Trailblazer Deal, which included £10 million towards a Health Innovation Zone, will enable the site to be ready for the first phase of development, bringing the realisation of our exciting plans for HIN a step closer.

Our vision for a Health Innovation Neighbourhood (This image is not representative of the proposed developments, but rather shows the aspirations for the site.)

“Newcastle University is at the forefront of redesigning what a good longer life can be so people of any age can make their contribution and feel part of society. We want our residents to be designing their own future and making the most of our inclusive city and living their best life.”



Pam Smith, Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council





Photo courtesy of NEAA

“ We have a real opportunity here in the North East to harness our existing unique capability, expertise and potential not only to positively contribute to efforts to decarbonise our society, but also to create jobs and deliver tangible and inclusive economic growth. In doing so, EPIC and all the other electrification related aspects we excel at will help ensure the future sustainability of the UK’s transport, energy and other manufacturing sectors.”



Professor Roberto Palacin
Director of Electrification

EPIC – the Electrification Process Innovation Centre

The future of the transport, energy, consumer goods and many other sectors will eventually rely heavily on electrification, but our ability to deliver this agenda is multi-faceted.

Advances in power electronics, machines, and drives (PEMD), battery technology, ultraefficient transmission systems, sustainable energy sources, the development of innovative manufacturing processes and building an appropriately skilled workforce are all critical to achieving net zero.

The North East is already the largest manufacturer of electric vehicles in the UK, and Nissan has announced a £3 billion investment in its Sunderland factory, where it will build a range of new electric vehicles and a new gigafactory for EV battery production. Combined with rapid growth in the renewables sector driven by the world’s largest offshore wind farm at Dogger Bank, off the North East coast, the region is rapidly becoming the centre of the UK’s electrification revolution.

Through our leadership of IESAM – the Institute of Electrification and Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing, which brings together the North East Institute of Technology and regional higher and further education providers, the National Battery Training and Skills Academy in which we partner with New College Durham, and the Driving the Electric Revolution Industrialisation Centres (DER-IC), the University is well placed to coordinate a focused push to advance the North East’s international leadership in electrification technologies.

In response to this need, we are planning to establish the Electrification Process Innovation Centre (EPIC). By providing the right combination of equipment, facilities and expertise in partnership with industry, EPIC will support the development of innovation and skills, placing the North East at the forefront of the UK’s electrification R&D, creating jobs, driving inward investment and securing inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Championing Social Justice

Social and environmental justice is one of Newcastle University's core values, and our aspiration is that it runs through everything we do. Leading this theme for the University, ensuring that we deliver on our commitment, is the responsibility of Dean of Social Justice, Professor Rachel Pain.

Rachel took up her role in January 2024. As well as taking forward social justice as one of our core values, she is also tasked with supporting collaborative research and education on themes related to social justice.

Both these objectives are delivered, in particular, through strengthening partnerships between the University and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. This brings together our academic research, education, and operations with the real-world experience of practitioners and communities for mutual benefit.

A key element of this work is our role as a partner member of Tyne & Wear Citizens, part of Citizens UK, the UK's biggest, most diverse, and most effective people-powered alliance. Through Citizens, our colleagues and students work

with charities, education institutions, faith organisations and trade unions to develop local leaders, strengthen civil society, and work towards social justice.

Rachel has a wealth of experience to draw on. An internationally recognised expert in social and political geography, she has conducted extensive research into violence, community safety, trauma and fear, working in collaboration with national and local government, charities, community organisations, activists, artists and survivors. She also has a background of leadership in education, supporting postgraduate research students, and equality, diversity and inclusion. She has published widely on co-produced research and approaches to University-community collaboration.



“ I am excited about working with colleagues, students and partner organisations, building on the University's strong foundations in social justice and community engagement to reach across all of our activities. From working in EDI I am aware of where we need to improve, and how we can work for mutual benefit with our partners as we go forward.”



Professor Rachel Pain, Dean of Social Justice

As part of Refugee Week, Newcastle University organises a series of events celebrating the talent and contribution of refugees and asylum seekers.

Creating a culture of engagement

Newcastle University is proud to hold a Gold Watermark from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) in recognition of our outstanding work with our partners and communities.

The Engagement & Place Team (*pictured below*) are a committed group of public engagement professionals who work with colleagues across the three faculties of our University to embed a culture of engagement.

The team also works with a range of partners and communities to ensure that the benefits of our research and teaching go beyond the University, working collaboratively to foster mutually-beneficial relationships.

The Discover Festival is just one of the initiatives led by the team. The Festival is all about bringing ideas and people together, making the impossible feel possible, building connections, sparking ideas, and leaving visitors with a sense of wonder.

Over the course of a day, our city-centre campus is transformed into a vibrant hub of curiosity and creativity for children and adults alike. Discover Festival brings together experts at the forefront of their fields, from poets to performers, scientists to engineers. It's not just entertainment, it's inspiring play with a purpose.



