

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ABRIDGED REPORT 2026

15th May 2026

Presented by

BLYSTRA ARTS



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Empowering Newquay's Future - 16th May 2025

SUMMARY

This report presents initial findings from the Connected Communities Survey, delivered by Blystra Arts CIC in 2025-26 in partnership with Falmouth University, to understand residents' relationship with Newquay, with a particular focus on young people aged 11-17. The purpose of the study was to explore whether residents like living in Newquay, what barriers they perceive to remaining there in the future, and whether the town and surrounding area offer sufficient career and life prospects to retain young people post-education. It can be used by funders, partners and local decision makers to shape strategy and improve funding bids for the area.

The survey gathered 348 responses via an online questionnaire using a mix of Likert Scale and open questions. Young people were intentionally oversampled, with 73% of respondents aged 11-17. Demographic characteristics broadly align with Office for National Statistics data for Newquay in most areas, providing confidence that the findings offer a reliable picture of resident experience, particularly among younger cohorts.



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Thanks & Credits

Appendices 1 to 4 are available with the main report



BACKGROUND

Prior to the commissioning of the Connected Communities report in 2025, a series of local initiatives and investigations helped to build a clearer understanding of community needs in Newquay. These initiatives were the precursor to this report.



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COMMUNITY LISTENING EVENTS

In 2023 and 2024, Karl Fice-Thomson, then Community Lead at Trenance Learning Academy, facilitated a programme of community listening sessions, and the findings of this informed the survey and Connected Communities project.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

The Young People's Participation Framework report, produced by Young People Cornwall in 2024 informed this report. It provided valuable insight into perceptions of safety and young people's experiences of feeling safe within the Newquay.

BACKGROUND 2

●●●● COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ●●●●

During the life of this commission from April 2025 to May 2026 Blystra Arts have had community conversations during the commission at the Empowering Newquay's Future event, during the 2025 Newquay Carnival workshops, at Look Out Festival and during the 2025 Community Lantern Making workshop.



PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

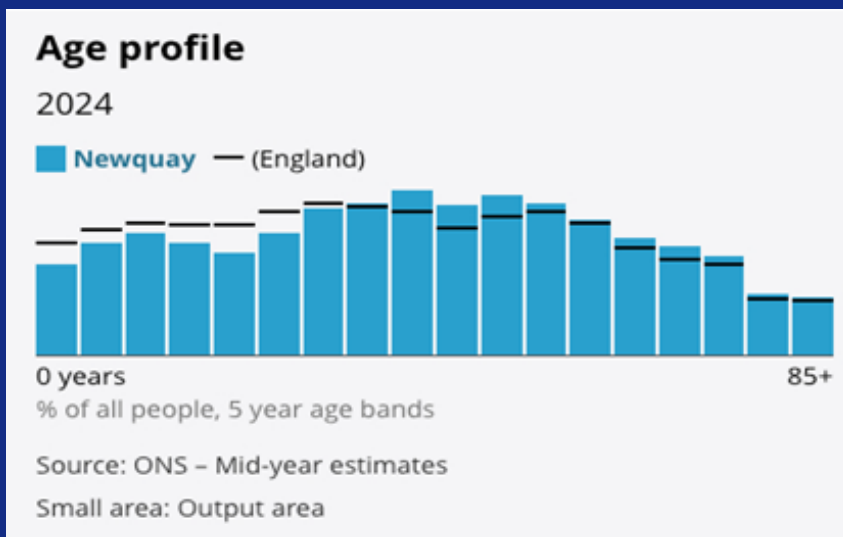


- To draw initial insights from the Connected Communities Survey to inform the direction of future funding bids and strategies by partners and local decision makers.
- To determine Newquay's residents' relationship to Newquay.
- To discover what barriers there might be preventing residents from living in Newquay in the future.
- To determine if Newquay has the career prospects to entice those leaving secondary education to stay.
- The data is drawn from a quantitative, online survey that was designed by Blystra Arts in partnership with Falmouth University to determine barriers to people living and thriving in Newquay.
- The survey included a range of closed (Likert Scale) and open questions.

BACKGROUND 3



Newquay, along with the rest of Cornwall is suffering from highly skilled people and graduates either leaving the area permanently or not returning to it once their educations are completed. This is particularly true for young people. Attracting businesses to the area can become more difficult as there is a shortage of the skilled people they need for their businesses, limiting the choice further for young people looking for high paid, skilled employment. It also leaves the remaining young people under-represented and with older generations having a disproportionate say, this potentially leads to a lack of focus on the needs of young people, such as the career prospects of an area, to be underrepresented.



ONS data for age groups in Newquay.

As we can see here, in the Office for National Statistics data, there are fewer young people living and staying in Newquay in the lower age brackets.



METHODS

METHODS EMPLOYED



- A questionnaire was developed with a mixture of Likert Scale and open, optional questions. The questionnaire was filled in by students from Newquay's schools, Newquay Youth Centre and at events such as Look Out Festival, during 2025.
- A large event, 'Empowering Newquay's Future' was held in May 2025 which was attended by students from both of Newquay's secondary schools. 30 local businesses had interactive stalls to engage students. Data was collected from attendees who form a similar sample in terms of being young people (aged 11-17) from Newquay. We talked to some young people at these events about how they perceived the town. You can see a summary of the data we collected from this event in appendix 2.



Look Out Festival - Sept 2025

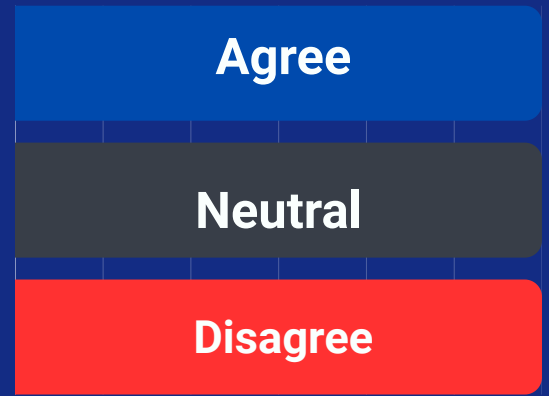
Number of respondents.

- 348 people responded to the survey.
- A large minority of free-text responses (e.g. the sexual orientation question) were not filled or ambiguous.

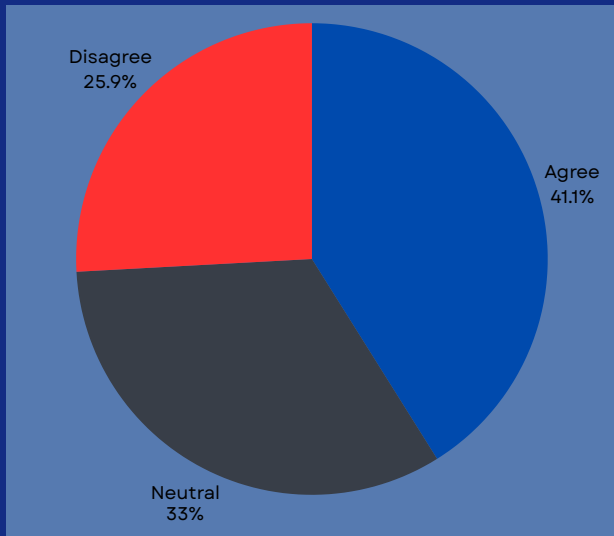
FINDINGS



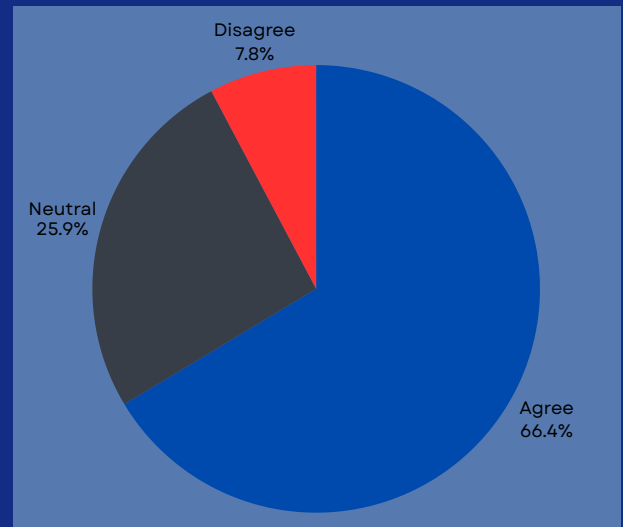
Overview 1



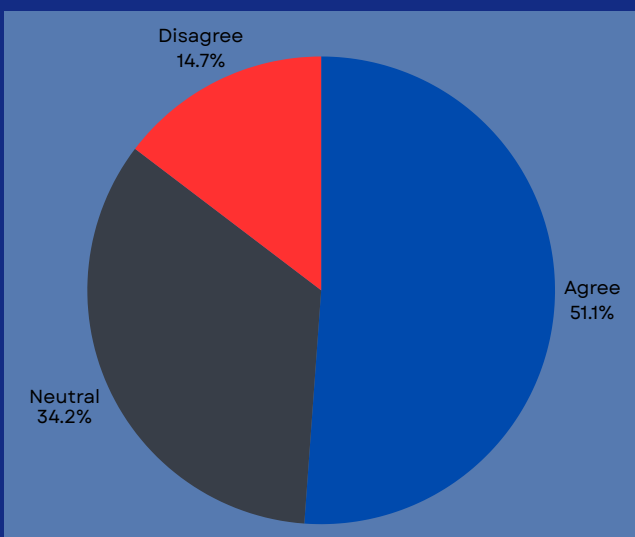
I WANT TO LIVE IN NEWQUAY LONG-TERM



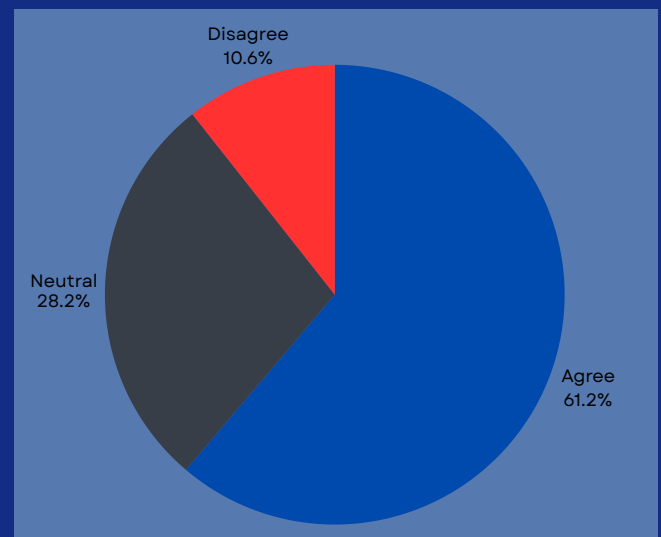
I ENJOY LIVING IN NEWQUAY



NEWQUAY HAS A GOOD COMMUNITY WHICH I FEEL CONNECTED TO

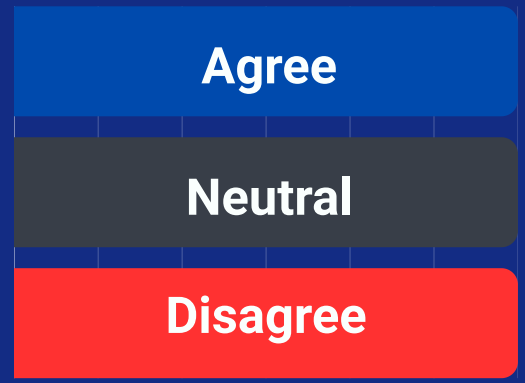


I THINK NEWQUAY AND THE SURROUNDING AREA HAS ENOUGH SPORTS, LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE HERE HAPPILY

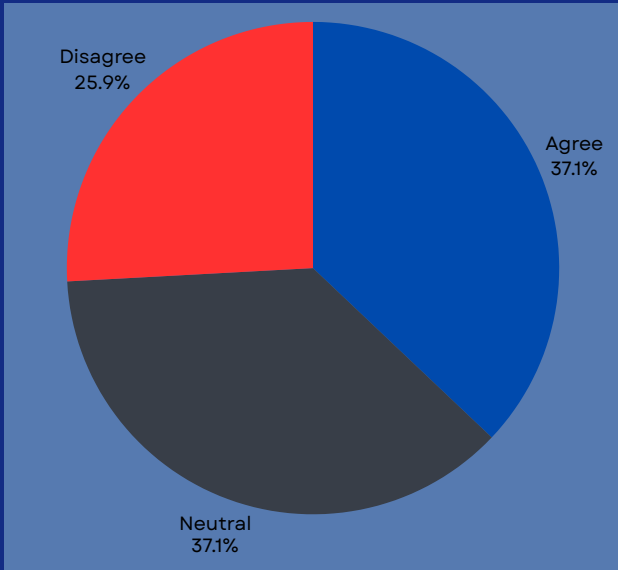


FINDINGS 2

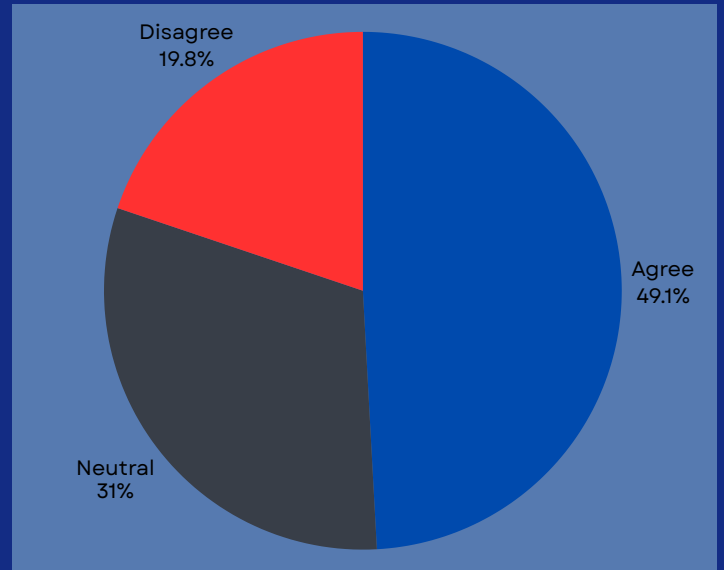
Overview 2



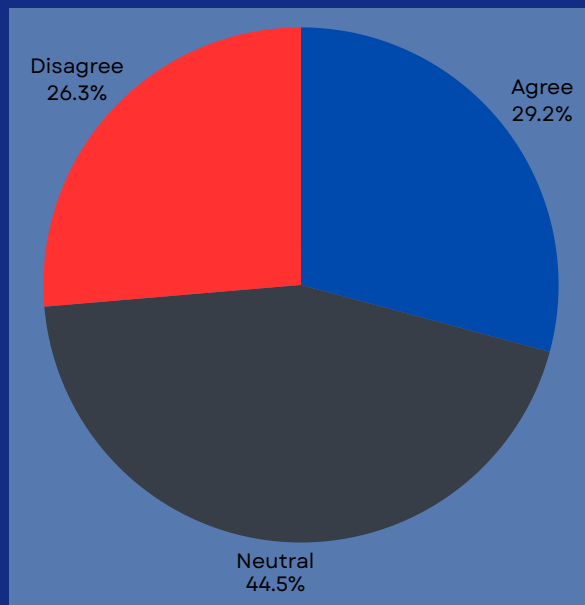
I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO FIND MY OWN HOME IN NEWQUAY (EITHER BUYING OR RENTING A HOME)



I FEEL SAFE IN NEWQUAY (THIS QUESTION RELATES TO CRIME, ANTI-SOCIAL BEVAIOUR, DISCRIMINATION, DRUGS & ALCOHOL)



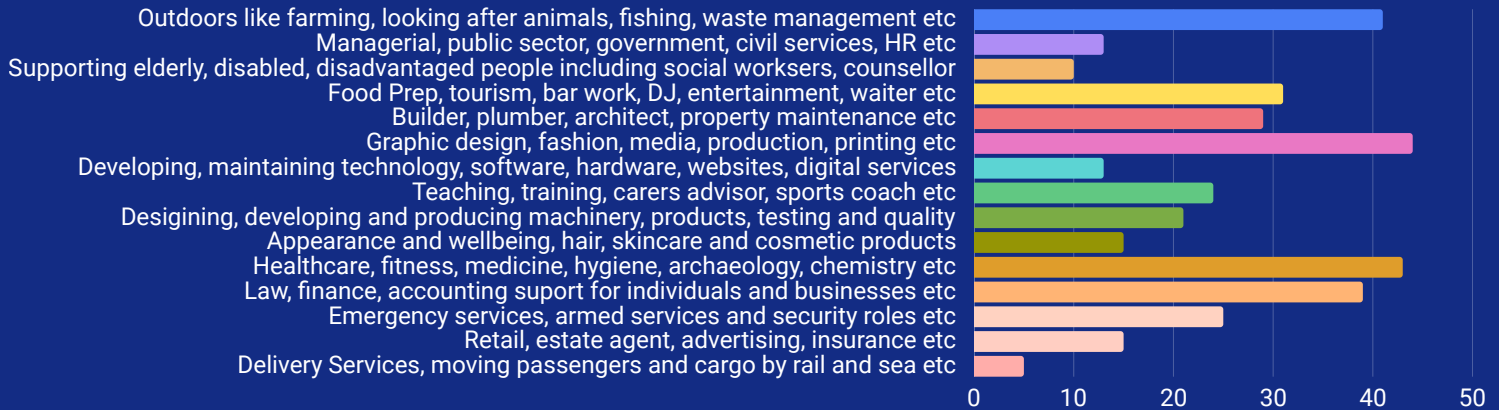
I CAN SEE A POSITIVE CAREER PATH FOR ME IN NEWQUAY OR ITS SURROUNDING AREA



FINDINGS 3

OVERVIEW 3

WHAT TYPE OF FUTURE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF HAVING



SUMMARY

Overall, the Likert Scale responses about Newquay were positive with the majority answering either positive or neutral responses to questions about their relationship to the town. 'I can see a positive career path for me in Newquay or its surrounding area' performed the weakest and 'I enjoy living in Newquay' performed the strongest.

This is also comparable to the ENF data (see appendix 2), which showed that those who did not see themselves achieving their preferred career in Newquay stated it was because 'there's not much about in Newquay and it's a bit of a boring place' 'not many opportunities' 'Not enough high-paying opportunities' 'Newquay has nothing to do except tourism related', and 'Not sufficient RAF provisions' and 'no army'.

FINDINGS 4

SUMMARY

There were also responses which indicated an ambition or aspiration to move away, answers such as 'I like cities', 'I don't want to stay in Cornwall', 'Opportunity to learn or work somewhere else', 'I want to travel', 'I want variety, I doubt I'll find it somewhere I've lived almost my entire life' were common.

When we asked, 'If you don't feel safe in Newquay, can you give further details?' 40% responded reiterating a positive answer, but the negative responses cited knife crime, alcohol and drugs as a concern. Night time was seen as a time when you are more at risk too by some respondents. Most of the lengthy and most vociferous responses were from adults aged 35 and over.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Strong affection for place, weak confidence in the future.**

Most respondents, especially young people, say they enjoy living in Newquay, but this enjoyment does not translate into confidence about staying long-term.

- **Perceived lack of career pathways is the strongest driver of young people leaving.**

Belief in access to meaningful, well-paid career opportunities is the single strongest predictor of whether 11-17-year-olds want to remain in Newquay.

FINDINGS 5

KEY FINDINGS

- **Safety perceptions significantly shape young people's attachment to the town.**

Young people who feel unsafe in Newquay are nearly three times more likely to say they do not want to stay long-term, and negative sentiment about the town rises sharply where safety concerns exist.

- **Housing insecurity undermines long-term intentions.**

Low confidence in the ability to rent or buy a home locally is closely associated with intentions to leave.

- **Young people want to stay but believe they must leave to succeed.**

Many 11-17-year-olds describe Newquay as “home” and express emotional attachment, yet expect to move away due to low pay, seasonal work, limited progression, and concerns about economic stability. Their responses indicate hope and engagement rather than apathy or hostility.



FINDINGS 6

KEY FINDINGS

The most common responses to 'Is there a specific place in Newquay where you feel safe?' centred round home. Three respondents said the Youth Centre and many also stated that the beaches felt safe. Many areas and businesses were mentioned. There was no theme to where, in public, in Newquay where people felt safe with some saying the town centre and others saying the opposite. 62% responded in total.

'Any further comments on how you feel about Newquay.' 151 people added a comment (43.4%). 45.7% were negative, 90% of which were from 11–17-year-olds, 27.8% mixed or neutral and 26.5% positive.

One positive comment stated:

'I moved to Newquay with my 4-year-old daughter and husband about a year ago. I have been blown away by the number of community activities available and I love living here!'

Negative comments varied, two examples are:

'It is very run down' and 'I feel it's very boring and there's not a lot to do'



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◆ FINDINGS ◆

◆◆◆ SUMMARY ◆◆◆

The survey findings reinforce evidence gathered through recent youth consultation undertaken for the Newquay Youth Centre Strategic Business Plan. That consultation found that young people consistently requested more safe, welcoming indoor spaces, extended opening hours, creative activities, and opportunities to develop skills for adulthood. Young people described having “nowhere safe to go” in the evenings and winter months, highlighting the importance of youth-focused community infrastructure. The proposed expansion of Newquay Youth Centre into a coordinated seven-day hub responds directly to these identified needs and represents a potential mechanism for strengthening young people’s connection to the town.

Accessible youth spaces and trusted adult relationships are widely recognised as protective factors that improve young people’s perceptions of safety and belonging. The Newquay Youth Centre Strategic Business Plan identifies the development of safe, youth-led spaces and consistent open-access provision as central to improving wellbeing and reducing isolation. By providing structured evening and weekend activities, trusted youth workers, and coordinated support from partner organisations, youth provision can play a preventative role in addressing the safety concerns identified in the survey.



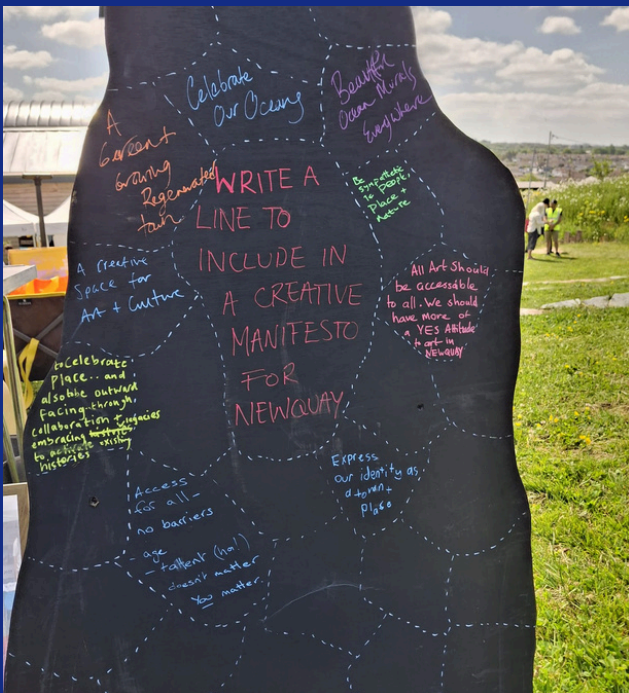
CONCLUSIONS



From the data collected in the survey, we can make some assertions and recommend actions for the future which may mitigate some of the drivers for people wanting, or being forced by circumstance, to leave Newquay.

- Many people leave Newquay to improve their education or training to learn, but the amount of them who return after completing their learning can be improved.
- The survey conducted tells us that young people mostly like Newquay as a place to live but lack any confidence that the town, or the surrounding area will be able to meet their future needs, particularly in respect to careers and housing.

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CONCLUSIONS 2

Young people feel:

- Affection for the environment and town.
- That Newquay is “home”.
- There are very few jobs or careers for them.
- They will have to leave to succeed.
- Work is low-paid or seasonal.
- Drugs and alcohol issues are a concern in the town.
- Antisocial behaviour issues are a concern in the town.
- That they are unsafe in certain areas, especially at night or in the town centre.
- There are limited youth spaces.
- There is seasonal provision that disappears in winter.

Compared to older age groups:

• 11–17-year-olds are:

- More negative
- More anxious about the future
- More focused on opportunity and safety

Adults are:

- More mixed in their views about Newquay.
- More reflective about change in Newquay.
- More focused on change, decline, or community.





CONCLUSIONS 3



- Young people are talking about prospects, not nostalgia.
- 11–17-year-olds care about Newquay, but don't trust it to care for them in return. Their responses suggest:
 - Hope, not hostility.
 - Engagement, not apathy.
 - A desire to stay if conditions change.

This makes them a critical group for future-focused policy.



We can use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a tool to interpret the findings around enjoyment vs perceived careers and housing prospects.

The survey reflects that young people feel that Newquay can deliver self-actualisation, self-esteem, belonging and (by-and-large) safety, but is, in their opinion, unable to deliver basic needs such as a regular well-paid income and adequate housing. This is likely to explain the disparity between enjoying living in Newquay and the desire to leave.

RECOMMENDATIONS



INTRODUCTION



Based on the findings of this report, we're suggesting two levels of recommendation. The first is an immediate and localised list of recommendations which will endeavour to respond immediately to the needs of the community, particularly young people, and the second are a series of recommendations that endeavour to deal with some of the wider overarching findings of the report.



IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATIONS



RAISING ASPIRATIONS



We think delivering projects or events that raise the aspirations of the people living in Newquay, will showcase the town as a dynamic place for businesses to settle, at the same time as bolstering the feelings of connection young people and residents have to the town, which in turn will create a greater sense of safety and civic pride in the people who live here.



INCREASE AWARENESS OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



Raise awareness of career opportunities in Newquay through events such as Empowering Newquay's Future, which showcase the wide range of career options in the town, including showcasing national companies based in Newquay and highlighting alternative career paths such as freelance & self-employed options.



RECOMMENDATIONS 2

●●●● IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATIONS ●●●●

◆ **STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS AROUND YOUTH** ◆

This report can have an influence in current, strategic conversations happening around youth provision in the town by Newquay Youth Centre, Newquay Conveying Partnership and Watergate Integrated Neighbourhood Team Group VCSE. We hope this report will give a voice to young people in these conversations.

◆ **AWARENESS OF SAFETY SCHEMES IN NEWQUAY** ◆

This report and the ENF event have shown us that sometimes initiatives exist already that respond to the identified needs of young people, such as Newquay BID's Safe Spaces Strategy, which was launched in 2025, but which many young people are unaware of. Conversations and links with youth organisations can spread the word about these initiatives

●●●● LONGER TERM RECOMMENDATIONS ●●●●

DEVELOP YOUTH CENTRE AND COMMUNITY SPACES

Newquay has a strong community of partners delivering services to young people. Currently the town has no arts venue or culture hub, which means that the arts and culture provision and opportunities in the town are limited, also until recently the youth centre has been owned and leased by Cornwall Council, but that is about to change and this one change could have a huge impact on youth provision and youth confidence in staying in Newquay after post 16 education.

RECOMMENDATIONS 3

Newquay Youth Centre

Newquay has the only remaining dedicated youth centre building in Cornwall. The space is currently being devolved from Cornwall Council to ownership by Newquay Town Council. Existing funding and activity in this space is primarily aimed at assisting young people with additional needs, those disengaged with education or who have been in trouble with the police.

The town council's intention is to:

- Open the service more regularly to increase inclusivity.
- Use partners in the NHS to deliver drop-in sessions.
- Set up a business mentoring programme with local business and young people involvement.
- Create a register of local skills amongst young people in Newquay to be published for businesses to have access to, to promote what Newquay has to offer and upskill young people.

On the back of this report we hope to see initiatives that improve their lives and the town in terms of safety and how the town is perceived by residents and potential businesses looking to expand or relocate to the area.



RECOMMENDATIONS 4

OTHER COMMUNITY SPACES

Other community spaces can also play their part in responding to the needs of this report. Currently there is no venue or art centre space in Newquay, and no culture hub in the town, but there is a group of artists and producers in the town, exploring the possibility of repurposing the old Royal British Legion building in the town centre into an art centre or community space. The development of such a space would have a direct and positive impact on life in Newquay, the feeling of prosperity in the town, and the ability to create an economy of support for arts and culture activity in the town. This building would have a youth as well as community focus.

LOOK AT ATTRACTING MORE BUSINESSES TO THE TOWN

Businesses require stability, certainty, the right accommodation, the right local workforce and housing for their workforce. They require highly skilled, well-paid employees and staff who can fulfil their business's requirements. They will not move to an area if they perceive there is a skills shortage there. In response we need to make Newquay more attractive to businesses by creating:

- A visible pool of skilled workers.
- Clear pathways for graduates to return.
- Links with nearby universities, FE colleges.
- Returner schemes for people who grew up locally.

The data shows that young people want a fulfilling career that means something to them and pays them enough to afford housing in the area, so by increasing career opportunities in the town and encouraging skilled businesses to set up here we can support by developing this need in the community.



THANKS & CREDITS



This report was commissioned and funded by Safer Stronger Communities in April 2025 and delivered by Blystra Arts CIC in May 2026.

During this commission Blystra Arts worked alongside Natalie Semley, senior lecturer at Falmouth University who supported with data collection and analysis. Special thanks to both Treviglas Academy and Newquay Tretherras for supporting us to chat to students and collecting surveys from their students which allowed this report to be so focused on young people in the town.



Look Out Festival - Sept 2025

Throughout 2025 Blystra Arts collected data and had conversations at four community events during the year. These events were: Empowering Newquay's Future, the Newquay Carnival workshops, Look Out Festival and the Community Lantern Making workshop. Thanks to each of these partners for allowing us to collect data at these events. A film which presents the findings of the report in a more accessible way can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@blystraarts2472>



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