

UHR Engagement Group Meeting - 16 Dec 2024

This padlet is created to collect the thoughts and insights from discussions at the UHR Engagement Group meeting for sharing with wider UHR membership

Employee Voice and Staff Forums

↻ Case Study 1 - Involving Staff in Change Process

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PHES 12/16/24 10:24AM

One member talked through the progress made in using employee voice on a major building refurbishment and changing ways of working. They had an initial challenge with agile working adoption and a major building change leading to all non-faculty professional services moving into one building. They adopted a high intensity approach with listening sessions and a champion within each department to provide regular feedback and communicate responses to depts. They ran surveys pre and post move and carved out a staff-only informal social space that colleagues could name. They also ran a fortnightly newsletter email. They worked to co-design spaces which best meets staff needs. Successful outcomes were received in feedback and lead to continuing a "professional services community" that meant enabling more culture change.

PHES 12/16/24 10:26AM

One member asked about the listening sessions. The response was that they were run team by team with a light structure that flexed to the key issues being raised by each team.

PHES 12/16/24 10:29AM

One member asked about the "team neighbourhood" concept and the response was this was an iterative process. They sought to not create hard borders between different depts with spaces between them that were not specifically owned. They balanced the needs and involved departments throughout with extra capacity being allocated as non-assigned hotdesking. Legal and HR teams did have extra considerations due to the confidential nature of work being undertaken.

PHES 12/16/24 10:31AM

One member asked about the different equipment used in terms of laptop docking and lockers. The response was that they worked with IT so all desks had docking stations. Use lockers and spaces to allow people to store belongings. Also have drop-in spaces and bookable rooms.

PHES 12/16/24 10:34AM

One member asked about how they supported reasonable adjustments and accessibility throughout the process. The response was that when moving everything around they ensured spaces were available. In the space booking app they can allocate specific desks and resources to an individual such as riser desks. In terms of neurodiversity and having a structured work environment, they allow people to book up to 5 weeks in advance so people can have some certainty.

PHES 12/16/24 10:36AM

One member asked about balancing Trade Union voice with the listening groups. The response was that they have a good relationship with trade unions locally and tend to meet them monthly. Often concerns are parallel to other channels, including the staff forum.

PHES 12/16/24 10:43AM

Did you do any specific engagement with managers, so they were equipped to support their teams with adoption and managing any individual needs?

We created an 'Agile Working Guidance' SharePoint with guidance, FAQs etc., which also links to a Manager's Toolkit for Agile Working, developed by our Learning & Organisational Development team. The toolkit is set up as a specialism within our LMS which has various activities/modules, e.g. agreeing working patterns, handling difficult conversations, managing remote workers, managing high performing hybrid teams, effective online meetings. Many of these are short e-learning modules provided by a 3rd party.

⇒ **Case Study 2 - Staff Council / Employee Forum**

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PHES 12/16/24 10:45AM

One member talked through the progress made in their institution, which is a smaller institution. There had been a lot of organisational change with HR branded as People and Culture. Feedback was that staff felt they didn't have a voice and didn't feel engaged with the institution. They wanted to understand more about the decisions that were being made. They wanted to introduce a Staff Council so ran some surveys and drop-in sessions. Staff were asked to nominate themselves or other people for 3 academic and 3 prof services representatives. They have been working with the reps since Sept/Oct. Plan to meet once per month. They had an induction plan for the new members and did some teambuilding with them.

PHES 12/16/24 10:49AM

Another HEI explained they have a couple of groups in addition to trade union recognition. They have had to think about the key issues to be discussed. There is an Oversight group and a Panel similar to a staff forum where they seek to engage people from across the institution. Concern that it can be seen as a People and Culture-led venture rather than an organic and institution-owned mechanism.

PHES 12/16/24 10:54AM

Another HEI is redeveloping their Employee Forum in addition to trade union recognition. The Terms of Reference needs to be really clear to delineate what will be covered and what sits with the trade unions. Looking to drive forward meaningful discussions on targeted areas of working.

PHES 12/16/24 10:56AM

Another HEI has a forum that is not run by People and OD but instead by the Registrar which enables there to be really balanced discussions. Set up so each dept/faculty has one rep that is allocated to attend.

PHES 12/16/24 10:57AM

One member added: From my experience of staff forums, it can really help for your senior leadership team to develop a critical friend relationship with

your forum lead or chair. Agendas need to be leadership led (and seen to offer real insight) to be successful.

ENGAGEMENT BENCHMARKING OPTIONS

The 2 Options available:

Option 1

The first option is to use a spreadsheet that will be hosted on the group's dedicated MS Teams site, allowing group members to provide/update the data for their institution at any time and self-serve to compare against overall figures and specific institutions based on HEI income and staff FTE. Anonymous responses can be provided by emailing Emma directly. Emma will undertake annual analysis at a set point on key elements such as the E-NPS score and participation rates, in addition to the biennial Survey About Survey exercise (see the [2023 report here](#)).

Option 2

The second option is to take up the offer from [SocialOptic](#) to collect these headline statistics and provide aggregated analysis. This would be at no cost to UHR or members but would require that you provide data externally and you would be limited in how much self-service you could undertake. They may in time be able to expand into additional areas and can provide comparison with their clients in other sectors.

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Option 1: UHR Teams site Engagement Benchmarker Spreadsheet

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PHES 12/19/24 9:46AM

Pros of using UHR resource: 1. data stays limited to network members and UHR staff; 2. members can update at any point, 3. members can send anonymous submissions via Emma if needed, 4. members can find who made specific responses and contact them directly, 5. UHR will add HEI income and headcount so you can filter to find other HEIs similar to yours, 6. an overall average of key stats (eNPS and participation rates) will be run at set point every year, 7. this work will sit alongside the "Survey about Surveys" that will be run every two years 8. through this method the exercise remains neutral and free of any provider involvement

PHES 12/19/24 9:56AM

Cons of using UHR resource: 1. limited resource to do detailed analysis/dashboard, 2. won't be able to undertake comparisons with out of sector data

HE Provider (HEP) Name	Contact Name	Contact Job Title
All green columns should be filled in by the lead cont		
Example University 1	Emma Brookes	SPRM

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Engagement Benchmarker DRAFT

Option 2: Social Optic Benchmarking Survey Sample

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PHES 12/19/24 10:01AM

Pros of using SocialOptic: 1. subject matter experts who have data from other clients outside HE, 2. Can potentially provide better visuals and analysis if the project evolves in future 3. Although not initially, eventually they may accept real time data submissions, keeping analysis live

PHES 12/19/24 10:03AM

Cons of using SocialOptic: 1. External provider will be holding your data, 2. limited options to submit anonymously, 3. viewers will only see aggregated data and analysis so no way to identify and contact other respondents, 4. No cost at present as this is funded by their social value projects budget - and they have committed to not introducing costs at a later date



UHR benchmarking project

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this benchmarking project. We have already heard a variety of requests from different members, so it is our intention to make this project as flexible as possible, whilst creating some robust and useful benchmarks.

You may have more than one survey to tell us about - if so, please start by telling us about your last full staff survey. If you have previous full or partial surveys you would also be happy to share details about, you will have that opportunity when you reach the end. The more surveys we receive information about, the more useful the benchmark will be.

We would like to start with creating an eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score) benchmark, which is derived from a question such as 'I would recommend benchmarked as a great place to work.'

Some members have also expressed an interest in collecting and benchmarking other data, such as survey models and action planning, and so there is the opportunity to provide that information too.


Whilst we are aiming for contact details in case we need to contact you, please be assured that your individual organisation's data will not be visible within the benchmark when it is prepared.

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UHR benchmarking survey sample

Option 2: Social Optic Benchmarking Survey FAQs

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FAQ for UHR

Who are SocialOptic?

SocialOptic is a UK-based technology provider on a mission to help people Work Together. We achieve this by harnessing data to bring the understanding and clarity required to make better decisions. We help organisations to use large-scale surveys to understand their people and create positive change. We have worked with Universities and Colleges for over a decade, supporting HR and leadership teams, creating social value and supporting co-operation. SocialOptic is the lead supplier on the APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities & Colleges) framework for project-managed surveys and was also selected for self-managed survey delivery.

What are we proposing?

As part of the framework, and to support creating social value for the sector, SocialOptic is facilitating the secure and confidential exchange of benchmarking data. While benchmarking data does not provide all of the answers, it provides useful context for interpreting survey results, and can serve as a common good. Similarly, sharing best practice and approaches helps everyone to improve. To that end, SocialOptic is supporting UHR and APUC in sharing (aggregated) data and experiences around employee surveys.

We are proposing a collaborative effort to produce benchmarking data for the benefit of universities. By securely and confidentially exchanging this data, we can provide valuable context to interpret survey results, enhance decision-making, and promote best practices across the sector. Our goal is to harness our expertise in data management and anonymisation to create a shared resource that fosters sector-wide improvement.

Why are we doing this?

Universities recognise the importance of data-driven decision-making, but there is often a lack of comprehensive, shared benchmarks. By pooling resources and knowledge, together we can address this gap. Our initiative aligns with our commitment to social value; we strive to positively impact the communities we serve. We acknowledge that no single vendor can provide a fully comprehensive benchmark, but by collaborating as a community, we can produce richer, more contextual insights.

What are our credentials for doing this?

SocialOptic has a proven track record in facilitating data-driven decision-making, without compromising participant anonymity. Our team has deep expertise in survey-based research and statistics, ensuring robust and reliable data handling practices.

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Benchmarking FAQ for UHR

Agenda Formalities

Any Other Business

Would you like to raise something under Any Other Business? Post here and we will make time for covering it in the final slot of the session.

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Urgent Queries

↳ **Does anyone have any urgent questions they would like to ask the network about today?**

This is an opportunity to raise questions or seek advice from your peers about real life challenges you are facing in relation to ways of working. Post here and we will make time for you in the final segment of the session.

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↳ **Staff Survey Response**

Be helpful to know other HEIs staff survey overall response rates if willing to share in confidence please? Thanks.

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Catherine Harrison 12/16/24 10:09AM

55% - survey held in May/June 2024

saddis2 12/16/24 10:10AM

68% - survey held June 2024 (from Arts University Bournemouth)

Catherine Harrison 12/16/24 10:11AM

55% - survey held in May/June 2024

Katie Coward 12/16/24 10:12AM

76% for full staff survey held in 2023. Next one will be held in 2025.

Amanda Hopwood 12/16/24 10:15AM

We do short pulse surveys at Stirling: average completion rate just over 50% since 2023

Lesley H 12/16/24 10:21AM

Thanks, all!

PHES 12/16/24 10:30AM

Access our dedicated webpage hosting the [UHR Survey About Surveys 2024](#) and a recording of a webinar talking through the findings

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michellesimpson7 12/16/24 10:30AM

60% Oct 2024

Eve Goodison 12/16/24 10:51AM

23% in our last pulse survey in January 2024

Michelle Giles 12/16/24 11:26AM

Just closed our triennial survey - 65% response rate. (split 83% prof services/49% academic) - Solent University

Lesley H 12/16/24 11:31AM

Thank you!

Helen 12/16/24 1:47PM

51% in the full survey we did in May/June 2024

↳ **Turning feedback into local action**

Interested in asking how other HEIs support teams/areas across their institutions turn full/pulse survey feedback into local actions. What approaches have been effective?

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Catherine Harrison 12/16/24 11:01AM

We deliberately decided not to use action plans. It's more about embedding the findings into everyday decisions. Makes it difficult to evidence of course...

PHES 12/16/24 11:15AM

We discussed this at the last meeting and you can access the key points in the [Session Padlet](#)

Amanda Hopwood 12/16/24 11:25AM

We developed a toolkit for leadership teams to support them in action planning and identifying 2 - 3 key actions based on survey data and conversation. I can send on if this would be useful

rossstrong 12/16/24 11:36AM

We gave each Director & Head of College access to their own results (we use the People Insight platform) and then tasked them with sharing locally and developing 2-3 key actions which were submitted and monitored centrally (by me in partnership with HR Business Partners). There are 33 local actions plans and from this week I'll begin the process of reviewing a pulse survey which closed last week, hopefully identifying areas where they're progressing against the themes their actions are targeted to, or areas where they need greater support.

Helen 12/16/24 1:50PM

Similar to Ross, we gave access to all Directors of Professional Service Areas, Heads of College and Heads of School. We also give access to any colleagues they request who will support in the preparation of action plans (e.g. Directors of Operation and other Ops colleagues in Schools/Departments). We ask for a highlighted success, and area for improvement, and then up to 5 actions (which can be continuation of previous survey actions to try to remove the feeling of workload generated by a survey). We also gave guidance this year that actions could/should be linked to initiatives already underway so we aren't asking people to kick off lots of new things but rather to tie everything together with any sensible additions as required

Geraldine Musajjakawa 12/16/24 3:39PM

Thank you for all the comments, much appreciated

Sharing Links / Resources

⇨ **Please post here links to any websites, articles or webinars that are relevant to today's discussions**

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Using the dedicated MS Teams site

⇨ **Add here any specific issues or questions about access to the Teams site (or email emma@uhr.ac.uk)**

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⇨ **Link to Teams Guidance Document**

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