

# UHR Engagement Group - 21 May 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

## Engagement Surgery 21.05.24

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↻ **Add here any headings, themes or topics for the Engagement Surgery session on 21.05.24**

This might be challenges you are facing at the moment, insights you can share with the group or topical items that would be helpful for peers.

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**Anonymous** 5/20/24 4:08PM

Engaging people in times of financial restraint and budgetary cuts, particularly where this involves cuts to staff development and wellbeing budgets. How can we continue to motivate people and get them to remain positive when there's no money.

**Anonymous** 5/20/24 4:10PM

Engaging academic colleagues in values - how to get them onboard - any examples of good practice or case studies out there?

**Anonymous** 5/20/24 4:12PM

Tips/ techniques/ experience around creating a university overarching action plan, in the absence of any reporting tools provided via a platform

**Anonymous** 5/21/24 10:46AM

We are working on our engagement with neurodiverse staff and have just created a neurodiverse staff group, (one meeting so far). Have any others done something similar, if so what have you implemented and has this helped staff in the workplace?

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↻ **Action Plan Creation**

Tips/ techniques/ experience around creating a university overarching action plan, in the absence of any reporting tools provided via a platform

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**PHES** 5/21/24 11:25AM

One HEI noted: We are doing actions plans top down and bottom up

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:27AM

One HEI explained they are not having a "Survey Action Plan" but instead focussing on using the survey results to improve the emp experience. Want to shift the focus even though this might take more work. Switches from being survey obsessed into doing what they want to achieve. Will still need to connect the dots to show the insights have lead to action.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:30AM

Lots of discussion about some managers wanting to go very deep into the level of detail, other want the

opposite

PHES 5/21/24 11:31AM

Another HEI also noted the increase in attention paid to employee engagement data.

PHES 5/21/24 11:31AM

One colleague shared insights: David Green on LinkedIn and in the April round of articles the following article was shared:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/time-stop-measuring-employee-engagement-patrick-gallagher-5isxe/>

PHES 5/21/24 11:32AM

One HEI noted: At an institutional level, we facilitated an away day with our Chief Executive's group dedicated to discussing the survey results. We used a world café activity to facilitate discussion on four key areas of focus and used the outputs to help prioritise action areas at a University wide level.

I agree there are challenges around how staff voice is making a difference and aligning actions to existing plans and integrating it as 'business as usual', rather than treating engagement as a standalone activity.

PHES 5/21/24 11:33AM

One HEI noted that they require areas to come up with 3 actions including their Executive Committee. Helps as they have leads on the Committee who are responsible for taking things forward

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### ↪ Engagement with Neurodiverse staff

We are working on our engagement with neurodiverse staff and have just created a neurodiverse staff group, (one meeting so far). Have any others done something similar, if so what have you implemented and has this helped staff in the workplace?

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PHES 5/21/24 11:47AM

one HEI noted: looking at all areas of support, including the inclusion passports. Did a focus group with staff with neurodivergent conditions. Asked qs about what the HEI is doing right and what they could do more about. Some were small issues about accessing headphones or sit/stand desks. How to support managers with team members who are neurodivergent. Also looking at one for staff who are carers for people with neurodivergent conditions.

PHES 5/21/24 11:49AM

One HEI noted that when launching survey they were mindful of trying different approaches. During the drop-in sessions, they offered a quiet space available if people had that preferences. Also having people on hand to help people undersanf

PHES 5/21/24 11:50AM

Suggested that it might be helpful to have neurodivergent colleagues review the questions in advance and see if there are any challenges in interpretation.

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### Discussions Continued

#### ↪ Conversation about going live with survey

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**PHES** 5/21/24 10:58AM

Point made about QR codes and being able to code them in different ways

**PHES** 5/21/24 10:59AM

One HEI who had gone live, used 40 questions with a number of core qs, 2 free text qs, 4 overall engagement qs, 9EDI qs at end. Total of 55.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:01AM

Noted that for various reasons you might need to delay the go live date so helpful to put "w/c xxx" in all the comms in case you need to adjust at the last minute

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:02AM

Another HEI agreed to build flexibility into launch date so you can adapt as needed

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:03AM

Two HEIs noted that they go live on a Tues as people tend to take Mondays as non-working day (or are catching up after the weekend).

## Discussions Continued

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### ⇌ Anonymity

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**PHES** 5/21/24 11:12AM

One HEI shared their wording on how people should be mindful to write anything that would identify themselves.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:13AM

One HEI noted: We made sure we put a 'health warning' in the opening survey text and above the free text question, but we also release themes and almost redact identifiers before sharing

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:13AM

One HEI noted: We've just starting using People Insight so reworded a number of questions in our recent survey. Thankfully they provide benchmarks by question, so we can look at the 6 'engagement' questions we chose individually rather than trying to benchmark overall engagement.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:13AM

One HEI noted: Some providers will remove any names and departments from survey comments to avoid this. You would need to agree the approach to this with them.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:14AM

One HEI noted: our data protection team is keen for us to find more automated ways in which accidental personal data sharing can be avoided, so that the supplier or HR can't identify the respondent

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:17AM

One HEI shared their wording: We don't intend to change any of the words you write. Although your response is anonymous, please be mindful that if you include something personal, you may become identifiable by anyone reading it. This could include university leaders and the leaders of your faculty, department or division.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:17AM

One HEI shared their wording: In line with our values, if you write anything offensive about an individual or write anything that is considered

inappropriate to share, it may be redacted or removed.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:18AM

We'd spotted some identifiable references just before we opened up access to the survey results, so I read through 4000 comments one morning and sent a list of redactions to our provider. I've now got hold of the contract I inherited so will be checking what we've detailed around anonymity in case we can push that back to them.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:23AM

One HEI noted: we were keen to publish all comments as written however did retract some identifiable information from a few comments without losing the key feedback and sentiment (hopefully)

## Discussions Continued

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### ↩ Survey Fatigue / Blended Questions

It was raised that many colleagues are experiencing survey fatigue with other surveys such as Athena Swann, REC surveys etc. Do colleagues try and merge the questions.

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**PHES** 5/21/24 11:15AM

Discussion about bringing in q's from other surveys such as Athena Swan/REC etc.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:15AM

One HEI noted: We have included Athena Swan questions and are creating a specific place on our dashboard for Athena Swan leads

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:15AM

One HEI noted: At the moment we've been driving home the difference from the survey. We often hear people say 'Well I filled it in but nothing happened' so really presenting the action and impact

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:16AM

One HEI noted: We are including REC questions with the full staff survey launching in 2 weeks for the first time. We are using the 12 core REC questions and 2 optional questions

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:16AM

One HEI noted: We link up with all relevant internal stakeholders to identify who is looking to do surveys and when best to implement them in order to avoid survey fatigue

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:17AM

We no longer run CEDARS survey for researchers. We now run our all staff survey every two years. We actually got a much higher response rate and useful information from researchers as a group from our internal survey than the CEDARS survey

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:19AM

One HEI explained that business areas might come to say they need a survey but through discussions they understand that what would be better is a focus group.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:19AM

One HEI explained that they had made data available to Athena Swan Leads so they could access as needed

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:19AM

In terms of question sign off, we positioned it that Hive are designing the questions based on the various workshops that they held with our staff, trade unions and leadership groups. That didn't stop all of the iteration, but certainly reduced it compared to previous experience. An Exec Sponsor then 'signed off'.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:20AM

One HEI blended 6 q's into the circle q but slightly reworded to fit better.

**PHES** 5/21/24 11:24AM

Discussion about how many people want to be involved in q sign off. Others shared that it can be frustrating but it does help with getting buy-in to the actions based on the questions.

## UHR Conference Reflections

⇒ **For those who attended #UHR24 - are there any reflections you would like to share from an Engagement practitioner perspective?**

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**Anonymous** 5/21/24 10:42AM

The sessions from Nottingham, Hertfordshire and Northumbria were really insightful and helpful to see the detail of their approaches on engagement/culture/values.

⇒ <https://www.uhr.ac.uk/events/annual-conference/programme/>

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UHR : Universities Human Resources

⇒ **Specialist Shortcut Guide**

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Specialist Area	Programme Session Reference No* (chronological order)	Summary of subjects covered
AI	BA1, BB3, LB2, Plenary 4, SIG5, WC3	Unleashing potential, rethinking work in the age of AI, AI in the field of disability, AI panel discussion, AI in HR, AI in data analysis.
Digital and Data	WA1, WB3, WB6, WC2, WC3, BC1	Warm data, digital skills for collaboration, automating recruitment, digital literacy, AI in data analysis, technology in recruitment.
EDI	Plenary 1, LA1, WB4, LB2, LB3, SIG6, WC5, LC1	Inclusivity, generational differences, menstrual health and menopause, disability and beyond, equality and freedom of speech, inclusive recruitment, lived experience of disability, age discrimination.
Employment Law / ER	Plenary 2, LA1, LA2, LA3, WB5, LB1, LB2, LB3, SIG1, SIG4, LC1, LC2, LC3	Freedom of speech/academic freedom, generational differences, role of social media, legal update, transforming ER, disability and beyond, equality and freedom of speech, competing beliefs, age discrimination, sexual harassment.
Engagement	WA1, WA2, WA6, BB2, WC3	Warm data, staff survey approach, retention surveys, acting on survey data, AI in survey data analysis.
Enhancing HR Services	WA3, WA4, Plenary 3, WB2, Plenary 4, SIG5, Plenary 5	Adapting to change, role of HR in REF, creating impactful workplaces, people strategy, AI in HR, futureproofing HR. Winners of UHR Awards for Excellence in HR will be announced 9.15 on Day 2.
HR Business Partnering	Plenary 2, Plenary 3, WB1, BB4, SIG4	Freedom of speech and academic freedom, creating impactful workplaces, succession planning, reward made simple, cost saving people strategy.
Organisational Development	WA5, BA4, Plenary 2, WB1, WB3, BB1, WC1, WC2, WC4, WC6, BC4, Plenary 5	Aligning capability, coaching culture, culture on campus, succession planning, digital skills for collaboration, strengths-based development, talent pipeline, digital literacy, futureproofing HE workforce, values, TrailBlazers 2024, futureproofing HR.
Resourcing	WA6, BA3, WB2, WB6, SIG6, BC1, BC2	Recruitment and retention crisis, attracting talent, EVP, automating recruitment processes, inclusive recruitment, technology in recruitment, reducing recruitment spend.
Reward	WB2, BB4, SIG3, BC3	EVP, transforming non-specialists into reward champions, pensions strategy, inclusive reward.
Wellbeing	BA2, WB4, SIG2, WC5	Money health, menstrual health/menopause, personal financial planning, lived experience of disability.

\*Decoding our session reference numbers:

- Letter 1 indicates a Workshop, Business Session or Legal Session
- Letter 2 indicates the conference day: A = Day 1 (Tues 14 May), B = Day 2 (Weds 15 May), C = Day 3 (Thurs 16 May)
- The number identifies the specific session within each block
- Special Interest Topic Discussions are given the unique indicator SIG and all take place on Thurs 16 May

So, for example:

- WA1 is the first Workshop session on Day 1
- LB2 is the second Legal session on Day 2
- BC3 is the third Business session on Day 3
- SIG1 is the first Special Interest Topic Discussion (all on Day 3)

