The 2014 University Staff Survey is due to be launched a few days from now. All staff will receive an email during the week commencing Monday 24 March 2014 with a direct and personalised link to the online survey. We’ve also arranged for paper copies to be sent to staff without access to a computer.

I’d really like to ask for your support in making sure that all staff know about the survey – and that it is an opportunity to express their views in confidence on what it’s like to work for our University.

As you may know, the overall response rate in the 2012 survey was 58 per cent. I’d like us to hear from even more staff this time. A high response rate means more reliable and robust results and this will help us to make more informed decisions when the results come out.

I’d also like to ask you to talk about our commitment to take action on the results and encourage your staff to look at the improvements we’ve made since the 2012 Staff Survey.

The below briefing note prepared by the Staff Survey project team has all the key points, including tools for informing your staff about the survey. I hope you find it useful.

If you have any questions, please email the Staff Survey project team at internalcommunications@sheffield.ac.uk

Best wishes

Andrew Dodman
Director of Human Resources.
How we’re telling people about the survey

We’ve created some exciting communications for the 2014 Staff Survey with bold graphics, a new logo and a character called Sam. These include:

- An animated video featuring Sam which includes key information to share with your staff in team meetings, on web pages and social media.
- Staff Survey postcards – batches will be posted to each department before the launch date.
- Pull-up banners in key locations across campus during the survey period.

Also keep your eye out for:

- Sam on @shefuni life week beginning 31 March.
- A special Staff Survey edition of Overview as the survey launches.
- An email to all staff from Andrew Dodman.
- Staff home page – will cover key information during the survey period.

Top tip: Try to mention the Staff Survey to two people every day

Your communications toolkit

The following are available to download from the Staff Survey web pages. Help let people know about the Staff Survey by using them on your plasma screens and web pages, in your newsletters, via social media, on email and during meetings.

- Video link
- Email signature – available from launch date
- Staff Survey logo
- PowerPoint slide
- Staff Survey postcard
- Staff Survey web banner
- Images of Sam
- Copy for use on web pages and in newsletters
- Scripted tweets
How does the survey work?

- Capita Surveys & Research, an independent research organisation, is undertaking the 2014 Staff Survey on behalf of the University.

- Capita will send an email to each member of staff with a unique link and password to the survey. Paper copies will be sent to departments who've requested them.

- The Staff Survey has been carefully designed with input from a University project group and staff focus groups and should take around 15–20 minutes to complete.

- Answers are completely anonymous and confidential. Individual respondents will not be identified in any data or reports.

- The survey will open on your mobile, tablet and computer.

- It can be completed all in one go or you can take your time by saving your progress and editing your answers later before pressing submit.

- The results will be analysed by Capita and results will be shared before the summer.

**Note:** If you or a colleague have not received an email from Capita with a link to the survey by Wednesday 26 March, please email internalcommunications@sheffield.ac.uk

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Improve your response rates

Capita will be sending out reminders to staff throughout the survey period.

We’ll send you weekly emails with response rates for the University and your areas so you can see where encouragement is needed.

League tables will be available from the staff home page to encourage friendly competition and help you with targeted communications.

**2012 Staff Survey response rates** – you could think about contacting areas with high response rates to find top tips.
Giving people time to complete the survey

Time is the biggest barrier to participation in the survey. Where possible please actively support and encourage staff to feel they are allowed to do it in work time. Although, of course, people do also have the option of completing it at home.

You might want to remind people that they can do it in stages. For instance, it could be completed in five-minute sessions over four days at the beginning of each working day. You might also want to think about setting some time aside in a team meeting or activity.

Roadshows: We're more than happy to come out to your area to talk to staff about the survey. Please email us to find out more at internalcommunications@sheffield.ac.uk

Computer rooms: For colleagues who do not have access to a computer, we're looking to put together a timetable of available computer rooms across campus. We'll put this up on the Staff Survey web pages.

Prize draw – help encourage participation

To encourage participation, anyone who completes the survey will have the option of entering a prize draw. There'll be five prizes of £50 high street shopping vouchers every week for the first three weeks of the survey. And in the final week, we'll be giving away an iPad mini.

Staff will be asked as part of the survey process if they would like to be included in the draw. If they say yes, their email address or the contact details they provide will be put into the draw by Capita, who will notify us of the winners. Contact details provided for the prize draw will not be linked to survey responses.

Anonymity and confidentiality

People worry they might be identified when they get to the All About You section of the survey. If they are unique in their role they might feel that by ticking one box or another that it will be easy to identify who has said what. This is not the case and information on the survey itself will make this clear.

Capita are undertaking the survey in line with the Data Protection Act which means they will only provide aggregate data back to the University. They will never provide any analysis of a group of less than ten people. The results and reports are completely anonymous.

Although Capita will know who has completed the survey when the survey is live, they only use this information to target reminders at non-responders. Once the survey closes this information is deleted.
Alternative methods of completion – paper and telephone

Not everyone has access to a computer at work. So where we know this is the case Capita will be providing them with a postal survey pack. Each pack has a survey and pre-paid reply envelope. If a member of staff receives a survey pack but would prefer to complete it online, from home or at a spare computer, then they should contact Capita on the FREEPHONE helpline.

If a member of staff has received an email invitation but would prefer a paper copy, they can click on the link on the web survey ‘Prefer a paper questionnaire’ and request one from Capita.

**Note:** Paper copies of the Staff Survey will be treated with the same level of anonymity as the online version. No names will be associated with responses. If departments have a list of names alongside the paper copies, these will be used for making sure everyone who wants a copy has one and will not be associated with the survey itself.

Staff can also complete the survey over the telephone if they prefer. They should ring the Capita FREEPHONE helpline where they will talk to a trained researcher. The FREEPHONE number is 0800 587 3115.

Who won’t be asked to complete the Staff Survey?

We’ll not be asking Graduate Teaching Assistants to complete the Staff Survey. This is because of their dual status as both a member of staff and a student. To better find out their views, we’ll be inviting them to attend focus groups to discuss their experiences.

We’ll also not be seeking the views of members of staff who started work on or after 1 March 2014 as we feel they won’t have had enough time here to fully answer the survey questions.

Actions taken following our 2012 Staff Survey

We’ve all made lots of changes and improvements since the 2012 survey. We’ve captured the key changes on the 2012 posters. This link will also take you to the action plans you put together.

Staff Survey responses do help shape important decisions about our future. It’s not just a box-ticking exercise – what is said affects the direction of individual areas, faculties and the University. Changes introduced following the 2012 Staff Survey include the launch of Juice, our health and wellbeing initiative; the network for professional staff – The Sheffield Professional; and many local changes at departmental and faculty level.

We’re keen to make sure having bright ideas for change doesn’t just happen when the Staff Survey comes round. And this is why we created #TellSam and bright ideas – please encourage your colleagues to share theirs.
What happens next?

We’re hoping to receive headline results from Capita in May 2014. At that point, we’ll share these with the University Executive Board (UEB). We’re looking to have a full set of results before the summer and will then share these with all staff.

We’ll then need to look at what we do with the results. We’ll need to work hard to analyse the results and take action. We’ll work with you to help you through this process.

If you have any questions, please email us at internalcommunications@sheffield.ac.uk
Or visit the Staff Survey web pages
You can also call Capita direct on 0800 587 3115.

With thanks
The Staff Survey project team