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# Life: A festival of health, from head to toe

19–24 May 2014



*“Out of the two events I attended I thought that the teddy bear hospital was a great idea. My son who has developed a phobia after a traumatic hospital admission had a great time.”*

## Summary report

June 2014



# Summary report

## Introduction

'Life: A festival of health, from head to toe' was a public engagement platform which took place from Monday 19 to Saturday 24 May 2014.

The festival was the first large-scale public engagement platform for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health.

The project delivered 42 events, which were open to either the public or to school groups. The festival aimed to showcase the research undertaken in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health at the University of Sheffield.

The aims of the festival were to:

- raise awareness of how the Faculty's research is improving lives locally, nationally and internationally
- showcase the collaborative research that takes place between the Faculty and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
- deepen relationships with the community, engender pride in the Faculty's work and build the Faculty's reputation in Sheffield and South Yorkshire
- promote healthy living.

Most of the events took place in the Medical School; this was a deliberate attempt to raise the profile of the School. Events were also held in other University venues, the Hallamshire Hospital and Northern General Hospital, and Barker's Pool in the city centre.

The festival was timed to coincide with International Clinical Trials Day which takes place annually on 20 May. International Clinical Trials Day is celebrated around the world to commemorate the first clinical trial carried out by James Lind on the deadly disease scurvy, and aims to raise awareness of the importance of research in healthcare.



The Festival Planning Group was constituted of staff from the Faculty, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and the Public Engagement with Research Team.

The Group members were Professor Paul Hellewell (Faculty Director of Research & Innovation), Susan Bridgeford (Faculty Director of Operations), Dr Allan Pacey (Course Director for Science Communication MSc), Kevin Corke (Chair of the Faculty Communications Group), Professor Moira Whyte (Head of the Department of Infection & Immunity), Lydia Harris (Representative from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals), Greg Oldfield (Head of Public Engagement), Fran Marshall (Research & Evaluation Manager) and Nicola Donkin (Public Engagement Officer). Professor Vanessa Toulmin, Head of Engagement, provided support in an advisory role and secured in kind support from Sheffield City Council.



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Approximately 2,300 people engaged with events over the course of the festival.

## Events

Life festival consisted of 42 events which included lectures, film-screenings, panel discussions, interactive workshops, tours of hospital facilities, hands-on activities and health checks.

The diversity of the events aimed to attract members of the public of all ages, University staff and students, and NHS staff. Some events were specifically targeted at families, with others only suitable for audiences over 16 years old due to the nature of the content.



All staff in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health had the opportunity to apply to take part in the festival. The Festival Planning Group reviewed the applications and agreed that all were suitable to take part. Some student societies from the Faculty also participated in the festival.

### Some event highlights

The festival launch and close events featured external speakers. The launch event on Monday 19 May – An Audience with Dr Dawn Harper from Embarrassing Bodies – aimed to attract

public interest and provide an opportunity to promote the rest of the festival.



Tuesday 20 May was International Clinical Trials Day. To mark this, the festival programme included tours of the Clinical Research Facilities at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and activities in the Hallamshire Hospital.

Fun Activities For Families took place in the Medical School café on Wednesday 21 May. It was a drop-in event where visitors could take part in research-related activities such as extracting DNA from strawberries, viewing fluorescent zebrafish, fighting cancer cells in a video game and interacting with a robotic seal which used in dementia care.

After Cancer Treatment: What Now, took place in Firth Hall on Wednesday 21 May. The event began with a film screening of local young people sharing their experiences of life after cancer, and a panel discussion. This was followed by an art exhibition of the Phoenix Project which explores patients' attitudes to relationships during cancer.

The Science of Bones, an interactive workshop to learn about the skeleton, took place on Thursday 22 and Friday 23 May. The sessions were run for school groups during the daytime and were



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open to the public on the Thursday evening.

Professor Annalena Venneri gave her inaugural lecture on research into fighting dementia on Thursday 22 May, which was followed by a drinks reception with neurological exhibits.

Friday 23 May included a film screening of the BBC documentary Inside the Human Body: Creation, followed by a panel discussion with the film's director and the lead researcher, and a fertility exhibition.

Teddy Bear Hospital, run by the medical student society, took place in Barker's Pool in Sheffield city centre on Saturday 24 May. The event invited children to bring their teddy bear for a health-check and aims to reduce children's fear of attending hospital.



The close event on Saturday 24 May was a lecture by Wellcome Trust Fellow, Dr Erinma Ochu, and discussed the value of public involvement in research.

Juice, the University's health and wellbeing programme, ran free health checks and a bootcamp as part of the festival programme.



## Finance

The original budget secured was £15,000 from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health and £13,000 Wellcome Trust funding. The total spend is awaiting confirmation but is projected at £25,000.

## Marketing and promotion

The Public Engagement Team worked with the Marketing Team in Corporate Affairs to devise the marketing strategy for the festival. An external design company – Eleven – were employed to work on the branding and design.

A communications plan was initiated three weeks before the event with the launch of the Life festival website and the distribution of brochures. In total, 10,000 copies of the brochure were printed and distributed around venues in Sheffield city centre, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, GP Practices, the University and at the festival events.

The festival was promoted on 52 JC Decaux sites around the city and on two University tram stop posters two weeks before the festival commenced. Sheffield City Council supported the University by offering reduced rates for the hire of the JC Decaux poster sites and by providing free hire of Barker's Pool.



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Life was also advertised on a network of bus back for two weeks, which commenced a week prior to the start of the festival.

An advert was placed in the Sheffield Telegraph with an average circulation of 14,510 and readership of 41,659.

The festival was also promoted via email communications to Sheffield Teaching Hospital staff, and University staff and students.

The festival website had a **19,425** pageviews, including visits from the USA, Spain and Saudi Arabia.

Amy Stone, Faculty Graduate School Administrator, curated the @shefunilife Twitter account for the week of the festival and used this to further promote the events. There were 103 uses of the festival Twitter hashtag (#lifefestshef).

## Media coverage

A traditional approach was taken for the Life festival coverage with a focus on South Yorkshire.

The festival generated 13 media clippings and was featured in *Times Higher Education*, *University Business*, *Yorkshire Post*, *Sheffield Telegraph*, and

*Sheffield Star* – which generated an Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) of £3,367.

Life festival was also featured on Radio Sheffield.

## Visitor comments

The following are a selection of visitor comments about Life festival from post-it notes, on-the-spot interviews and an online feedback form:

- “I attended 3 talks, they were all excellent and made me wish I'd had time to attend some of the others.”
- “The film gives a really good insight into the feelings of the people involved.”



- “I think it's amazing that we can get to engage with what's going on in the university, I love the idea that academic research is accessible to us, and any opportunity for my children to learn from the real world.” Parent
- “I really liked the variety of what was offered. The program sounded really interesting.”
- “They're well informed and know what they're talking about, you

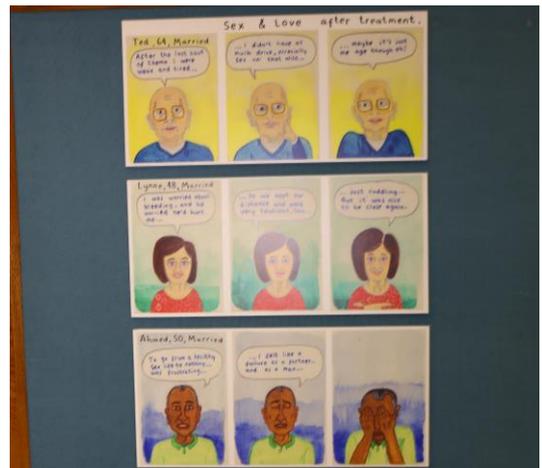


could ask them questions and you could join in. Joining in was the best part.” 12 year old

- “I had an amazing time but they should make the session longer that’s how cool they were” Year 6 pupil



- “The interview with Dr Dawn Harper was extremely interesting and offered an insight into her life as a GP and on Embarrassing Bodies.”
- “I have recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and was interested to attend the seminar on it.”
- “Interesting and very educational. Thank you.”
- “The Parkinson's event was most interesting, although every event I attended (4 over 2 days) I found excellent presentations, easy to understand and most interesting.”
- “Zombie Stats was both interesting from a professional and personal point of view - a good lesson in remember to question the info behind all stats in life.”



- “Would definitely attend if a similar event was organised again in the future.”

## Feedback from the Faculty

- “The Festival has been a very important and positive way to engage with the public and highlight the tremendous work that goes on in the Faculty.” Professor Tony Weetman, Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor
- “I'd like to specifically thank Greg, Nicola and Fran from the Public Engagement with Research team who did a wonderful and professional job in pulling the whole festival together and keeping us all on track.” Dr Allan Pacey, Medical School
- “It was a terrific programme, created a great atmosphere and I have heard lots of positive comments from staff and public who attended events.” Susan Bridgeford, Faculty Director of Operations



## External evaluation

Hope-Stone Research, an external evaluation company that is working with the Public Engagement & Impact Team, undertook evaluation of Life festival. This included short face-to-face interviews with Faculty leaders, a post-festival questionnaire sent to the participating researchers and attendance at two events on Wednesday 21 May to observe and conduct on-the-spot interviews with visitors.

Some of the comments and findings from the external evaluation were:

- “We couldn’t have done it without them. They’ve done everything really.” Faculty leadership
- “Didn’t appreciate they’d give academics that kind of support, hugely valuable.” Faculty leadership
- “[It was good] practice at explaining research in lay terms. Feedback was that they valued and were interested in what we are doing.” Academic
- “Some useful information was gained from children about completing questionnaires and the language they used to talk about going to the dentist.” Academic
- “Given me ideas about dissemination of research output beyond the standard academic venues.” Academic
- “This [media] coverage is very, very important for our funding and to help raise our profile in both the student community and wider community of Sheffield.” Academic

- “We need to do it again! And the Faculty need to be much better engaged with it.” Academic
- For 18 of the 23 researchers who completed the post-festival questionnaire it was the first time that they had participated in a public engagement event.
- All of the researchers who completed the post-festival questionnaire said that the Team’s support had been ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.

## Concluding remarks

Life festival was a great success for the first dedicated public engagement festival for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health, with very positive feedback from attendees, academics and Faculty leaders. The Faculty has indicated that they want to run Life festival again, either on an annual or a biennial basis.