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Life: A Festival of Health, from Head to Toe

16–24 April 2016



Summary report

“For me, the best thing about this festival is that there IS a festival! I think it's great living in a city with a university which holds festivals like this - especially relating to health and medicine like the Life Festival”



Summary report

Introduction

'Life: A Festival of Health, from Head to Toe' was a public engagement platform which took place from Saturday 16 to Sunday 24 April 2016. It was the second time Life festival had taken place; the first festival was in 2014.

The project delivered 30 events which were all open the public. The festival aimed to showcase the research undertaken in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health at the University of Sheffield. It is organised by the University of Sheffield in partnership with Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Sheffield Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The aims of the festival were:

- To raise awareness of how the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health's research is improving lives locally, nationally and internationally
- To demonstrate the impact of the Faculty's research
- To showcase the collaborative research and partnerships between the Faculty, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and Sheffield Children's Hospital
- To deepen relationships with the community, engender pride in the Faculty's work and build the Faculty's reputation in Sheffield and South Yorkshire
- To promote healthy living.

Overall, the festival was a great success. Approximately 2940 people attended the 2016 festival, a 30% increase on the 2014 festival numbers. The festival was also successful in engaging a more diverse audience through a concerted effort to hold more events off-campus and engage with people who may not normally attend University events.

The Festival Planning Group was constituted of staff from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry Health, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Sheffield Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and the Public Engagement & Impact Team.

The academic lead for the festival was Professor Allan Pacey. Other members of the Festival Planning Group were Professor Chris Newman (Faculty Director of Research & Innovation), Susan Bridgeford (Faculty Director of Operations), Kevin Corke (Chair of the Faculty Communications Group), Dr Allie Gartland (Oncology & Metabolism), Lydia Harris (Representative from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals), Lea Fountain & George Critchley (Representatives from Sheffield Children's Hospital), Rachel Dwyer (Research Development Officer), Greg Oldfield (Head of Public Engagement) and Nicola Strafford (Public Engagement Manager).

Events

Life festival consisted of 30 events which included talks, hands-on activities, film screenings, exhibitions, pub quizzes, lab tours and health checks. There were three broad themes running through the programme:



1. Wellbeing – keeping people fit and healthy
2. Diagnosing disease and illness
3. Rehabilitation – getting people better

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 suitable for an older audience. A number of events were off-campus, aiming to reach traditionally harder to engage audiences.

Professor Allan Pacey, Nicola Strafford and Fran Marshall from the Public Engagement & Impact Team ran a workshop entitled ‘What makes a good public engagement event?’ in December 2015 to help provide advice and inspiration for researchers who wanted to take part. Holding a dedicated workshop for faculty staff in line with a festival callout was a new approach to try to support the development of creative ideas. In total, 14 people attended and there were five events generated from the workshop in the festival programme, all of which had a creative element, so it seems the workshop worked well and is something to consider repeating.



All staff in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health had the opportunity to apply to take part in the festival. This was advertised through an Announce to all staff in the Faculty from the Public Engagement & Impact Team, emails to departmental contacts and social media. The Festival Planning Group reviewed the applications and agreed that all were suitable. Some student societies from the Faculty also participated in the festival.

Some event highlights

There was a wide variety of events throughout the festival, aiming to appeal to different audiences.

Some of the highlight events from the festival were:



The Big Knit: 100 Hats for 100 Babies – hosted at BBC Radio Sheffield, this knit and chat (with researchers from the Jessop Wing) created 304 hats for premature babies and received radio coverage throughout the day with interviews with academics and knitters. Due to its success, the Jessop Wing are establishing a regular knit and chat and there is the potential to work with BBC Radio Sheffield on events in the future.



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Hands-On with Medical Research at the Moor Market – nine different hands-on activities relating to medicine, dentistry and health research and provided by student societies. It was the first time the University had run an event at the Moor Market and it proved an excellent venue for engaging with new audiences. The footfall in the market increased by 838 from the previous Saturday (11706 to 10868) and an estimated 1000 people engaged with the activities with very positive feedback. The University is now planning to use the venue for Festival of the Mind. The event was featured on BBC Radio Sheffield and featured in a blog post.



Sheffield Steel, Yemeni Dreams – a screening of a film made in collaborating with the School of Nursing & Midwifery, documenting the life stories of men who

had migrated from the Yemen to work in the steel industry. The event was held in Burngreave – 50 people attended with approximately 80% from the local Yemeni community.

The Future of Genomic Medicine – this event included presentations from Professor Winston Hide and clinical leads from the newly established Yorkshire & Humber Genomic Medicine Centre. Approximately 80 people attended and it was an interesting event involving multiple organisations. In a recent visit by NHS England the event was cited when the Centre was asked about its public engagement activity.

From Head to Toe: An Evening of Storytelling – eight researchers and one patient were trained in storytelling by Tim Ralphs, a professional storyteller. They performed at the Roco to a capacity room, with brilliant feedback received.



Finance

The original budget secured was £10,000 from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health and £10,000 from the Public Engagement & Impact Team. The total spend was £18,323.59.



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Marketing and promotion

An external design company – Eleven – were employed to work on the branding and design. The same overall design from 2014 was maintained to keep brand consistency.

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 and Sheffield Children's Hospital, GP practices, the University and at the festival events.

The festival was promoted on city centre poster sites, the University tram stops and internal adverts on trams.



The festival was also promoted via email communications to the University's public email events list, to Sheffield Teaching Hospital and Sheffield

Children's Hospital staff, and University staff and students.

There was also significant promotion via the @UniShefEngage Twitter account. The festival hashtag was #lifefestshef.

Marketing was tailored for certain events with promotion to relevant organisations and individuals via social media and email.

There were 16,566 pageviews of the Life festival website from 21 March 2016 to 1 May 2016 (www.sheffield.ac.uk/life). The hashtag #lifefestshef was tweeted 283 times from 1 March to 1 May 2016.

Media coverage

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

The festival generated seven media clippings. It was featured in the Sheffield Telegraph, Sheffield Star, Yorkshire Post and BBC Radio Sheffield and Sheffield Live TV station.

There was extensive coverage on BBC Radio Sheffield on Tuesday 19 April 2016 of The Big Knit, with interviews throughout the day with researchers from the Jessop Wing. These were Professor Allan Pacey, Dr Elspeth Whitby, Mr Stephen Radley and Dr Neil Chapman.

There was also a blog post for a visitor to the Moor Market activities: <https://leedsdad.com/2016/04/24/sheffield-life-festival-2342016/>

Audience evaluation



A number of methods were employed to gain audience feedback. For all drop-in events and informal events, feedback was gathered using Life festival feedback postcards; a few events also used post-it notes. In total there were 141 feedback postcards completed and 30 post-it notes.

Following the festival, an online survey was sent to all pre-booked visitors asking for their feedback on all events they had attended. There were 63 responses to the online survey from a total potential of 385 responses, giving a response rate of 16%.

Some of the key findings were:

- Attending multiple events: of those completing the online survey, 59% attended one event, 19% attendee two events and 22% attended three or more events.
- Event promotion: of those completing the online survey, people found out about the festival by:
 - Brochure: 38%
 - Email from University of Sheffield: 32%
 - Word of mouth: 30%
 - Website: 18%
 - Email from STH or SCH: 15%
 - Attended another event: 8%
 - Billboard poster: 8%
 - Local radio: 6%
 - Twitter: 6%
 - Poster : 6%
 - Facebook: 4%
 - Google or other search engine: 4%
 - Article in a newspaper or magazine : 2%
 - Tram advert: 0%

- Reasons for attending: of those completing the online survey, the reasons for attending were:
 - I thought I could learn something new: 68.4%
 - I thought it would be enjoyable: 52.6%
 - I was interested in hearing the speaker: 33.3%
 - I wanted to take part in the activity: 26.3%
 - I know someone who is involved with the event: 22.8%
 - Other: 12.3%
 - I came with a friend: 10.5%
- Enjoyment: the vast majority of attendees enjoyed the festival; 82% of those completing the online form agreed and 98% of those completing the postcards rated the event with a 'smiley face'.
- Awareness of how the research at the University of Sheffield is improving lives: 75% of people completing the online form and 93% of people completing postcards are now more aware.
- Learning: 79% of those completing the online form agreed they had learnt new information or facts about research at the festival; of those completing the feedback postcard 81% had learnt a lot of new information and 17% had learnt a small amount.
- Recommendation: 98% of those completing the online form would recommend the festival to a friend or colleague.



Some of the comments from the audience feedback were:

- The best thing about the festival was the way in which the students and staff engaged us in their activity or area of research. They were really enthusiastic and clearly keen to help us understand their subject area. We were really impressed with the stalls at the Moor Market and with the ways in which the research was presented e.g. hands on, equipment to try, clearly presented / explained. Above all it was just really really interesting!!
- Pub quiz- It brought the festival out into 'normal life', making it accessible and fun with beer
- Looking inside bones - very hands-on and seeing what real researchers and scientists do.
- It gave me a chance to hear about the latest research first-hand from a clinical expert. It's rare that we have these opportunities.
- Gluten Attack was a great talk and may favourite thing about it was how accessible the information was - not too scientific but not dumbed down either.
- Friendly, helpful, informative, fun. Learnt a new skill and information I will pass on to people.
- Friendly and approachable staff who explained their area of work very well and made the activity very accessible. Very relaxed and inclusive.

- Made me think about my own attitude to technology. I felt that the event was well resourced and that events were friendly and informative
- The range of activities on offer. While I attended two specific events with students, we also distributed a number of programmes to our students, several of which attended additional events. The feedback from these students about the events they attended was all positive. We will definitely be attending events again next year, would love to look at the possibility of even hosting an event at Forge Valley School as part of the festival!



Academic evaluation

Following the festival, a survey was sent to all event leaders to evaluate their experience of participating. We received



29 responses from 51 potential, giving a response rate of 57%. The headline responses were:

- 52% were taking part in a University of Sheffield public engagement event or festival for the first time and for 24% it was the first time they had delivered a public event.
- 72% felt they had gained new skills from taking part including explaining complex scientific research in an accessible way, an awareness of what draws people in and organisational skills.
- 45% felt they were able to convey their research very effectively and the remainder felt they were able to convey it somewhat effectively.
- Some of the benefits respondents stated for their research were:
 - Media attention which is good for the department
 - Increased public awareness of the topic
 - I have gained valuable insights into designing a trial I am currently writing a proposal for
 - Understanding the lived experience of stroke survivors with eating after stroke
 - The replies have informed a grant application going in shortly - which is extremely useful

- It helped me to develop my confidence and hopefully I can present well in future!
- These events help out students to think more broadly about their research topic, I believe this has a positive impact on their learning and promotes creativity and critique.

- 69% said the event was better than they expected and 24% said it met expectations.
- 97% of people enjoyed taking part and 97% would recommend taking part to a colleague.
- 79% of people now feel more positive about public engagement and the remainder feel the same as before.

Some other general comments included:

- I enjoyed it greatly. Thanks for giving us the opportunity (and the funding) to take part in this fantastic event. I thought the Moor Markets was a risky choice, but it really paid off. Taking the science to the public rather than the other way round was much more rewarding.
- I found attending the briefing session very useful and the Public Engagement Team very efficient and helpful

Learnings for future festivals

Based on feedback from attendees and academics, and discussion with the Life festival planning group, some considerations for future festivals are:



- Does there need to be more of a focus to the festival?
- Is the number of events vs the scale of events right?
- Look at promoting more widely, to reach different audiences
- Hold an event at the Moor Market at the start of the festival to help promote the events during the rest of the week
- Consider an event approximately two weeks before to promote the upcoming festival
- Consider how we can promote more to schools
- Think about how to get coverage on other radio stations for their target audiences
- Consider if it could be held during school holidays
- Run a compulsory training event for all new event leads to ensure quality
- Have a back-up plan for if things go wrong (e.g. tech)
- Pens are more popular than badges
- Mix up the start time of evening events more so some start earlier
- Keep cafes open when holding events on-campus
- Promote the festival via special food in cafes e.g. Life festival cakes
- Small scale lab tours are very popular; consider whether some could be tailored to teenagers



Concluding remarks

Overall, Life festival was a success in meeting its original aims. The festival has become more established the second time around, and working between the University and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and Sheffield Children's Hospital has been strengthened. The Faculty intends to continue running the festival every two years, so it will return in Spring 2018.

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