

**Meeting:** UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time:** Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
12.30pm

**Venue:** Council Chamber

Present:	<p>Mark Humphriss Peter Eley Greg Dargue Chris Young Malcolm Holley Brian Schofield Ron Stewart Julian Sulley Lorna Woudberg Hedley Bashforth Jo Carter Hartmut Logemann Steve Nicholson Chris Roche Paul Johnson Mareike Posner Holly Clemens</p>	<p>Chair Acting Director of Human Resources Deputy Director of Estates Head of UHS&amp;E Service Faculty of Science Management Representative Head of Security Services Facilities Manager, Sports Development &amp; Recreation Faculty of Engineering &amp; Design Management Representative Facilities Manager, Accommodation and Hospitality Acting UCU Representative UNITE Representative UCU Representative UNISON Representative Management, Specialist and Administration Operations and Facilities Support Education and Research Students' Union Officer</p>
Apologies:	<p>Michael Carley Paul Brooks Walter Guy</p>	<p>UCU Representative UNISON Representative Technical and Experimental</p>
In attendance:	<p>Karen Gleave Mark Ricketts</p>	<p>Secretary Head of Internal Audit for Item 7</p>

**ACTION**

**709 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2015/16 academic year.

The apologies were noted and the Chair welcomed those members who were attending for the first time: Peter Eley as Acting Director of Human Resources, Professor Hartmut Logemann as UCU Representative and Holly Clemens as Students' Union Officer. Those present introduced themselves.

**710 MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The updated Committee membership for 2015/16 and the Terms of Reference were noted.

**711 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2015 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and would be signed by the Chair.

**712 MATTERS ARISING:**

*Minute 700 – Matters Arising:*

*Minute 687 – Gantt Chart Update*

The Head of University Health, Safety & Environment Service (HSE) reported the Gantt chart had been updated to reflect items discussed at the last committee meeting and other events had also been added.

*Minute 695 – Any Other Business: Construction Signs and Works*

The Deputy Director of Estates reported that monthly meetings are being held with contractors regarding signs and works and he is also in regular contact with the Head of Security, which will continue. The UNISON Representative highlighted incidences of contractor vehicles carrying tools occupying car parking spaces in East Car Park. It was agreed this would be kept under review.

*Minute 704 – Policies: Permit to Work Policy*

It was confirmed the Head of UHSE was reviewing the overarching policy framework, and this policy would then be updated. Of concern is the document's inaccessibility due to the overly technical language used. The suggestion of a flow diagram to accompany the policy would be helpful. An update will be given at the next meeting in December.

**HUHSE**

*Minute 706 – Smoking Policy*

The Head of Security Services reported that changes were being implemented. Signage at the back of the Parade Bar is being installed. The bins on the Parade are being changed to ones which do not have a stubbing out top for cigarettes. Signage is also being placed on the bins advertising that no smoking is permitted. The tables outside the Parade Bar are being replaced and new signs will be added once these are in place. There are swing signs installed on the Parade but they have been damaged by the recent rain. Of benefit is that they can be physically moved to other locations, for example to outside the Claverton Rooms when visitors are on campus.

The Facilities Manager, Sports Development and Recreation asked whether there is a standard form for signage. The Head of UHSE advised that signs for buildings need to comply with the requirements set out in the Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006. General signs posted around the University follow these guidelines but are not governed by the same size and text requirements. The Head of UHSE confirmed that additional prohibition signs are in the process of being purchased for the Parade and that additional signs were also being bought for the Parade Bar area to specifically identify where smoking is permitted. He confirmed complaints regarding contractors smoking were being appropriately followed up and informed the Committee that a staff notice on smoking for the University website is being drafted for approval by the Chair before it goes live.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Vice-Chancellor is fully supportive of the actions which are being taken. It was confirmed that the sanction of disciplinary action against staff who were repeatedly reported for smoking on campus is available. It was hoped that an improvement would arise as a result of the collective efforts being made.

*Minute 707 – Any Other Business: Accessible Toilets*

The Deputy Director of Estates reported that at an Access Group meeting held by Estates it had been identified that signage had not been completed throughout campus after updating works had taken place. The wording for the signs advising the correct procedure to be followed in case of an emergency had been reviewed by the Head of Security Services. The signs advise that Security needs to be informed if assistance has been given or informed that their attendance is required to offer assistance. The A5 signs, which were missing, are now being installed.

The Management, Specialist and Administration Representative questioned whether interior signage was required to inform users of the procedure to be followed. The Deputy Head of Estates will explore this suggestion.

**DHE**

*Minute 707 – Any Other Business: Laboratory Taps*

The Faculty of Science, Management Representative reported that Class 2 laboratories should be equipped with purple taps, which can be operated by means other than hands. It was acknowledged that laboratories had morphed over time. Departments should fund spaces when they are used for a different purpose, in this instance the changing of the tap head. A Class 2 laboratory should have a non-hand operated tap. It was agreed that the next step is to identify the extent of any required changes and to install the new tap heads. The Head of UHSE suggested that this should be included in Departmental Safety inspections. If necessary, advice on requirements could be sought from the Scientific Safety Advisor

*Minute 673 – Health and Wellbeing Annual Report – Mental Health*

The Management, Specialist and Administration (MSA) Representative raised that he had requested from the former Director of Human Resources, a quarterly update broken down by nature of illness and department, which had not been provided to date. The Acting Director of Human Resources said that this could be provided but he suggested it being available on a less frequent basis with more time being allocated to its consideration and could be a regular item for consideration. The MSA Representative confirmed the report' showing data on a quarterly basis would be particularly helpful to identify whether there were departmental patterns of illness over the academic cycle. It was agreed the report would be issued annually showing data by quarter.

**FSMR**

**Acting Head of  
HR**

*Minute 695 – Any Other Business: Construction Signs and Work*

The Deputy Director of Estates confirmed this item had been answered. Construction Health & Safety signs are the constructor's responsibility. The current constructor signs are in English and Polish and caution needs to be exercised so that meaning is not lost. He confirmed that contractors are using industry standard signs. If any variation to signage was required, the University would have to purchase its own signs. The Chair agreed that the question had been answered.

**713 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 4 – 2014/15, HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Committee agreed to take item 7 against the Agenda order.

The Head of Internal Audit, described the report as a review which had looked at the theme of risk assessments in departments, in relation to: manual handling and stress related illness. The results which had been found are detailed in the report. The audit was generally good and raised issues put before the Committee. Agreement was sought to the action plan in order that it could go forward to the Audit Committee.

The Head of UHSE confirmed the audit had taken place before he was in post. He and the Director of Process Improvement had met regarding the report and he accepted the results.

The Chair first invited any comments in relation to manual handling. There were none.

In relation to stress related illness, the Acting UCU Representative felt the report highlighted aspects which were already known and highlighted that the role of managers appeared to be reduced to firefighting. He was less sure on the solutions and did not view a review of the toolkit as sufficient. When queried, the Acting Director of Human Resources stated it was likely the figures did not include hourly paid staff. The Head of Internal Audit confirmed the arrangements for identifying risks take place on both an individual and a team basis.

The Acting ACU Representative highlighted that managers are struggling to deal with issues being generated in areas which are outside the remit of the Committee. He suggested if the Committee wanted to look at this seriously, it would need to take the time to consider those areas. It was not suggested the Committee should replicate discussions elsewhere, but recognition of contributing factors to stress related illness by the Committee would be helpful. He confirmed that if the checklist is to be reviewed, the unions would wish to be involved.

The Acting Director of Human Resources confirmed feedback which had been received from managers reflecting a feeling that the system was complicated. The system needs implementing in line with other work functions so that it is not an additional task but becomes one which is subsumed into those which already exist.

The Education and Research Representative asked what training is available for managers to enable them to undertake stress monitoring. The Head of University Health, Safety and Environment advised that training had been targeted at specific management bands with the intention that they should then take responsibility for cascading this training down through the management line. He confirmed that the intention was not to simply review the checklists but to look at the system as a whole and to identify areas for improvement. This would include a review of the training that is provided and to whom.

It was asked why staff SDPRs are not capturing stress management issues before people are going off sick? The Acting Director of Human Resources confirmed the SDPR is the environment that such discussions should be taking place in. Concern was expressed at the way in which stigma is attached to certain conditions, which may affect open discussion in SDPRs. The UCU Representative stated he believed there needed to be more awareness training made available for staff together with an understanding that situations such as the run up to events like the REF can cause stress levels to increase. The Head of Security asked whether trends were being captured. The Acting Head of Human Resources confirmed this was dealt with by managers in HR.

The Head of internal Audit reassured the Committee that proper consideration is being given to the area of stress related illness. The Acting UCU Representative thanked the Head of Internal Audit for the report but recorded his disappointment

that the opportunity to conduct proactive risk assessments had not been taken but hoped they would be in future.

The Management, Specialist and Administration Representative highlighted that hourly paid staff are neither captured in the report or are part of the SDPR process but they are given an exit survey. She suggested that zero hours workers are in a stressful situation not knowing whether there will be work from one week to another, especially if they are also off sick, or pregnant, or involved in the adoption process, therefore, regardless of role, the University should be collecting their data.

The Chair confirmed the report included information from a few sample departments, not the whole University. He highlighted that departments, including the Office of the University Secretary, are conducting proactive stress risk assessment. At present Stages 1 and 2 do not have quite the right machinery to ensure the system is used but increased communication would deliver improvements. The Head of UHSE felt an action plan needed to come to the Committee for consideration. It was confirmed the next report on stress related illness was due in March 2016. The Committee agreed this was an acceptable timeframe to allow any necessary work to be completed.

**714 GANTT CHART UPDATE**

The Head of UHSE explained the Gantt chart included areas discussed at the previous meeting to ensure areas of business are being monitored. The work being undertaken to capture departmental H&S KPIs has been included on the chart and will be analysed and reported at the December meeting. He also advised that the policy framework is to be reviewed to ensure that it is “user friendly” and meets legal and organisational needs. He intends to report back in December. He reported that UHSE will be conducting an analysis of the key health and safety risks facing the University so that a more meaningful plan of work / Gantt Chart can be constructed and monitored. The Head of UHSE advised that following discussions at the Scientific Safety Sub-Committee, it has been agreed to not reduce the Environment Radioactive Substances Permit as this may have an adverse impact on future research capability.

**UHSE**

The Students' Union Officer confirmed they would be working on delivering improvements to student mental health counselling, in conjunction with the University, to improve the length of time students have to wait before they have a counselling appointment. The Head of University Health, Safety and Environment confirmed he had met with the Students' Union Community Officer.

**715 HEALTH & SAFETY MONITORING REPORT – INCIDENTS UPDATE**

The Head of UHSE tabled a report of notable incidents that have occurred during the last quarter. He advised that the investigation for the more serious report was ongoing and that a fuller account would be made available to the Health and Safety Committee once the investigation was concluded.

**716 AUDIT UPDATE**

Paper 5 identified that a low level audit had been completed for the International Relations Office. The Head of UHSE confirmed that the Health and Safety Adviser that undertook the audit is working with the Office to make any necessary improvements.

**717 POLICIES**

**Reviewed Policies:**

*Paper 07 – Control of Legionella Policy*

The Head of UHSE explained the changes to this policy were to the wording as detailed.

The policy was agreed.

*Paper 08 – University Evacuation Policy*

The Head of UHSE explained a minor change had been made to reflect what should be done in buildings in the case of evacuation. It was noted that it would be useful to note where evacuation lifts are. The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment will action.

*Paper 09 – Nanomaterial Safety Policy*

The Head of UHSE explained the policy had been updated to include the University's Scientific Safety Sub-Committee responsibilities as detailed. It was queried whether the wording could be harmonised. The policy as worded cites safety coordinators and also makes reference to safety coordinators in departments, added to which South building has a pan coordinator so the wording needs to be consistent rather than implying there are two different roles. The Chair asked whether using the 'safety co-ordinator' in all instances would be clearer. This was agreed.

The policy was agreed.

*Paper 10 – Radon Monitoring and Remediation*

The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment confirmed the policy reflects a gap in practice and, as such, needs to be revisited.

The policy was withdrawn pending further discussion with DHE.

*Paper 11 – Transport Safety Changes*

The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment explained the changes to this policy were to the wording, as detailed.

The policy was agreed.

*Policy 12 – Violence at Work*

The Head of UHSE highlighted that the policy had been amended to reflect that contractors involved in work place violence may lead to the person being thrown off site and questioned whether the police would be called. The Head of Security advised that police involvement was usually determined on a case by case basis depending on the individual circumstances of each issue.

The UCU Representative raised a general point in relation to a post-graduate student who made teaching staff feel uncomfortable. When the matter was reported, the response received was that there was little that could be done 'as he has not hit you yet'. The Chair reassured the Committee there were other policies in place to deal with behaviour of this type and the Acting Director of Human Resources confirmed the Disciplinary Procedure was also available.

The Management, Specialist and Administration Representative questioned whether the term employee included hourly paid staff? The Acting Director of

**UHSE**

**Head of UHSE**

Human Resources explained the differences in understanding of the word from a Human Resource and Health and Safety perspective, with the former being narrower than the latter, which needs to be borne in mind. The Head of UHSE suggested the policy could benefit from the inclusion of a definition of the word employee.

The Management, Specialist and Administration Representative suggested that zero hours contract staff find it difficult to “whistle-blow” and asked whether there was anything the University could do to assist them? The Chair confirmed the Whistleblowing Policy covers zero hours staff and he hoped staff would fully engage with it where appropriate and, if necessary, any other ways of dealing with any problems.

The policy was agreed.

*Policy 13 – Working Off-Site Policy*

The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment stated the policy covers a broad variety of workers who work off-site. The policy would benefit from being more guidance oriented and this would be captured by a review which is going to take place. This was welcomed by the Chair.

Policy to be reviewed.

**UHSE**

*Policy 14 – Working with Genetically Modified Organisms*

The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment identified the key changes in relation to GMO oversight as detailed.

The policy was agreed.

*Policy 15 – Work Placements and Study Abroad Policy*

The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment explained the minor changes and informed the Committee the International Relations Office had engaged with this policy.

The policy was agreed.

*Policy 16 – Chemical and Biological Safety*

The policy was agreed.

*Policy 17 – Non-ionising Radiation*

The policy was agreed.

*Policy 18 – Laboratory Safety*

The Head of UHSE highlighted the minor changes made.

The UCU Representative highlighted an area of concern regarding laboratory demonstrators (students) and hazardous materials. He understood preparation time is not being paid and questioned the safety implications if there is a temptation to cut corners as a result. The Head of UHSE advised that he had discussed this with the Faculty of Science, Management Representative and had also confirmed that he had looked back through the statistics and could not find any records of incidents involving demonstrators.

The Faculty of Science, Management Representative confirmed demonstrators assisting with “practicals” are assessed by the lecturer. They are chosen on the basis that they know what is going on and are familiar with the topic. They understand the theory behind the practical. Whilst they may not know everything, if it was felt a deeper understanding were needed, they would be given that information and paid accordingly. He was not aware of any issues arising from lack of safety.

The Management, Specialist and Administration Representation felt there to be wide variation in practice. Within Chemistry for example, demonstrators are working with substances not previously used and are not familiarising themselves with COSH beforehand, whereas undergraduate students do. The Faculty of Science, Management Representative conceded there was variation but highlighted the expectation that there would have been assimilation of information.

The Faculty of Science, Management Representative agreed to look at where there are variations in preparation time (and pay) and if so, whether this is justified by skills / knowledge differences.

**FSMR****718 UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Head of UHSE highlighted the HSE inspection report and noted that no formal recommendations had been made.

- Incident reporting on campus is being reviewed in conjunction with the Head of Security. Discussions are ongoing as to whether there is a more suitable package available after the current contract with Rivo expires in December 2015. A further meeting on this is taking place next week.
- Fire safety awareness training has taken place. A review of the existing online fire safety training module will look at the module’s structure and content together with the way in which feedback is received.

**719 MINUTES OF SCIENTIFIC SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE, 8 JULY 2015**

An annual review of the Health and Safety area of work would shortly take place and the timescale for the availability of information is March 2016.

**720 FIRE ARRANGEMENTS**

Due to the UNISON Representative not being present, this paper was deferred until the next meeting.

The Head of University Safety, Health and Environment and the Deputy Director of Estates agreed the report contained factual inaccuracies. The Chair suggested they meet with the UNISON Representative to discuss and bring back to the meeting any points that are not able to be resolved. The Head of UHSE will facilitate the meeting.

**721 HEALTH & WELLBEING – FIT FOR WORK SCHEME****UHSE**

This Scheme has been launched by the Government and applies to all workplaces whether they have Occupational Health provision or not. This represents a difficulty for the University in that it will have two processes running parallel. Consultation has taken place with the unions and it has been decided that the University’s Occupational Health scheme will be first priority.

The Deputy Director of Estates questioned whether there should be clarification for staff on what the correct return to work procedure should be. The Acting Director of Human Resources confirmed the University's Occupational Health scheme procedure should be followed whilst cross-referencing the Sickness Policy.

**722 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**723 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 15 December 2015

The meeting concluded at 2.15pm

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Chair: