



Meeting: UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Thursday, 24 June 2021
13.15

Venue: MS Teams

Present:	Richard Brooks	Chair / Director of Human Resources
	Chris Young	Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services
	Sophie Hamer	Sports Operations Manager
	Stephen Godber	Director of Estates Operations
	Mike Porter	Head of Security Services
	Julian Sulley	Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative
	Michael Carley	UCU Representative
	Steve Nicholson	UNISON Representative
	James Paradise	UNISON Representative
	Melanie Torrance	Management, Specialist & Administration Representative
Apologies:	Andrew Nash	ISO & Compliance Manager, Accommodation & Hospitality
	Malcolm Holley	Faculty of Science Management Representative
	Simon Hockenhull	UNITE Representative
	Brigit Nunes Simoes	Technical & Experimental Representative
	Rodrigues	
	Tom Sawko	Students' Union Officer (Sports)
In attendance:	Sue Stove Schofield	Secretary

ACTION

944 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

The apologies were noted.

945 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9 March 2021 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

946 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 939 – Policy Reviews:

The Asbestos Management Policy, the Control of Legionella Policy and the Management of Contractors Policy were due to be revised and reviewed at this meeting. However, they would be deferred to later in the year as the Department of

**Deputy Director
Safety &**

Estates was currently reviewing its systems and procedures for managing these issues.

**Wellbeing
Services**

947 SHEW UPDATE (INCLUDING INCIDENTS AND AUDIT UPDATE)

Accidents and Incidents

RIDDOR Reportable Accidents and Incidents

There have been no RIDDOR reportable accidents since the last report.

Significant Non-RIDDOR Accidents

Handling Bins

A porter suffered a broken finger whilst manoeuvring large waste bins. The accident has been investigated and no further action was required.

Struck by Delivery Cage

A delivery driver (from an external company) was struck by a delivery cage trolley when it toppled over. The driver sustained a cut to his leg. The investigation was ongoing.

The UNISON Representative asked if anything could be done to manage delivery drivers using the Underdeck. There had been some near misses with vehicles almost hitting the pipework under Norwood House. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services pointed out that there were hanging chains either end of the Underdeck to deter drivers of large vehicles, but traffic controls in this area may need to be reviewed. The UNISON Representative would send a photo of an incident involving a delivery driver to the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services.

**UNISON
Representative**

Gas Cylinder Dropped and Leaked

This incident was covered in a separate report, Paper 12.

Significant Fire Incidents

Kitchen Fire

Food packets were left on a kitchen hob and ignited when the hob was turned on. The fire alarm was activated. Security Services attended and spoke with the kitchen group.

Lithium Battery Storage Facility

This incident was covered in a separate report, Paper 11.

WFH Computer Workstation Assessments

SHEW continued to deal with a large volume of workstation assessments and it is anticipated that this will continue as the Future Ways of Working Project is rolled out. For members of staff presenting with complex and significant ergonomic issues it may be necessary for specialist ergonomist services to be bought in to assess them at home. Consideration needed to be given to how the ongoing costs for this would be met. Currently, these have been recharged to specific departments.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that a significant number of the recent assessments included requests for better equipment to be provided. Therefore, it may be necessary to re-open the working at home equipment funding programme.

The Management, Specialist & Administration Representative asked if the University would continue to use workstation assessors when more staff returned to campus. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services confirmed that this was the plan but noted that often this role has fallen to administrative staff, who may possibly spend less working time on campus in future. This issue also applies to fire wardens and first aiders. He is talking to other universities about how they were dealing with similar situations. It may be possible to use the SafeZone App as a means of summoning staff as needed. Also, we may need a wider group of first aiders who would report to Security Services. It would need to be established if this would be feasible and if it would provide enough capacity.

Fire Safety

Fire Safety Training

In person fire warden and fire extinguisher training would be re-introduced. Initially it would be offered to Security Services and members of Science Faculty Technical Services. It would then be made available more widely.

Fire Safety Adviser

Gavin Ison, formerly a Technical Fire Specialist with Hampshire Fire Services, has been appointed to the role of Fire Safety Adviser (0.4 FTE).

Now that there was increased capacity within the team, the fire risk assessment programme and fire drills were back on track.

Health and Wellbeing

Occupational Health

It was noted that the number of referrals may increase as campus activity increased.

SHEW is in discussion with Occupational Health about guidance on people who were clinical extremely vulnerable (CEV) returning to work. He advised that Occupational Health has reported that RUH staff who are CEV are now returning to work, including in patient-facing roles, three weeks after being fully vaccinated. Occupational Health advice for pregnant workers is still based on the nationally developed risk management tool up to 28 weeks. After 28 weeks, the advice continues to be precautionary and pregnant workers should work from home, where possible, or be given medical leave until commencing their maternity leave. The

Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that Occupational Health is monitoring the model and will report back on further recommendations as and when these are developed.

There had been a slight increase in management referrals. This may be related to staff returning to work from furlough and sickness absences which had not previously been recorded.

Employee Assistance Programme

There had been an increase in the total number of sessions that people were attending. There has also been a significant number of people requesting extensions (to provide additional sessions). Many of these extensions have been related to anxiety around COVID-19 and the impacts of lockdown on mental health. A few of the requests have related to serious mental health issues (including suicide ideation) and significant domestic abuse. SHEW has asked that EAP direct staff to the University's Report and Support tool if appropriate.

Work tended to account for 25 % of all referrals. The remainder were due to a mixture of home and work-related issues and the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services expected this to continue for some time.

The UNISON representative had received an email from a Health and Safety Representative regarding Occupational Health and enquired if there were any problems with employees being referred to the service. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services said there no issue and the normal process would involve a discussion between Human Resources and the and the individual. If it was then deemed appropriate, a referral to Occupational Health would be made. He added that Occupational Health was not always the most appropriate solution, so there may be some discussion as to what that would be. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would follow this up with the UNISON Representative outside of this meeting.

**Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

The Committee noted the report.

948 INVESTIGATION REPORT: FIRE INCIDENT, BATTERY STORAGE CONTAINER

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that there were 3 battery storage containers in the East Overflow Car Park which were used by TBRe (Team Bath Electric Racing, the electric race car) and Bath Zero (the electric motorcycle racing team) to store batteries and do work. The containers had been sited there as in 2018 the electric motorcycle racing team had experienced a battery fire whilst in the in Isle of Man.

The day before fire occurred the facility was reported as being in good condition. The damage caused by the fire was such that it was not possible to identify what had caused it. It may be that one of the cells had overheated, combusted and then the fire had spread. It was noted that a propane gas cylinder had been found in the debris and CCTV footage indicated that gas vented from the cylinder a number of times (which then ignited). However, this was unlikely to have been the original cause of the fire.

The fire brigade attended and were assisted by Security Services. The area has been cordoned off and the burnt-out batteries stored in water. The waste will now need to be removed from site by a registered hazardous waste contractor.

The Head of Security Services advised that there was no fire hydrant near to the site of the containers. It would be helpful to have one in that area, close to the containers and to the East fields which were used for events such as graduations. The Director of Estates Operations explained that there was a problem with water pressure and, when the campus masterplan was developed, the use of pumps would need to be considered. He added that there was a shortage of infrastructure (power and water) on the East side of campus and a major upgrade was required. In the meantime, options for supplying power and water from the South side of campus were being investigated.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services commented that the container facilities would not be covered by building regulations for new buildings and associated hydrant requirements, but this was something which could be considered when the facility is brought back into operation.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that Avon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (AFRS) had attended campus the following week to discuss the incident. AFRS advised that they were generally satisfied that the University had taken the necessary steps to manage life safely.

It was noted that the fire would have burned itself out, but there was a concern that the adjacent caravan and containers could have sustained damage had AFRS not intervened. When the existing and replacement containers were re-sited, if possible, they may need to be positioned further apart to reduce the risk of fire spreading across them. It may also be necessary to install some sort of drench system. It was noted that some of the batteries were quite old (and therefore vulnerable to becoming unstable) so, in future, it would be advisable for batteries to be disposed of / replaced before they reached the end of their shelf life.

Due to COVID-19 it there had not been adequate handovers between the racing teams. This had implications for other aspects of the University such as student societies, in particular Backstage, where we would need assurance that appropriate safety handovers would take place between outgoing and incoming teams.

The UNISON Representative asked if the incident had any implications for the increasing number of electric vehicles on camps, such as an increased risk of fires. The Chair pointed out that, if electric vehicles complied with manufacturers' requirements, they should be no more hazardous than petrol or diesel vehicles.

The Committee noted the report.

949 INVESTIGATION REPORT: RELEASE FROM ARGON GAS CYLINDER

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services provided an overview of the incident.

The argon gas cylinder was being transported on a trolley from the 4 West store to 3 West by a lone worker. The trolley become unbalanced when the technician was trying to hold a door open and get the trolley through a door, instead of chocking the door open. The cylinder became unbalanced, slid off the trolley and landed on the floor. On hearing the sound of gas escaping from the cylinder, the technician evacuated and called for assistance.

The fire brigade attended and the Faculty of Science Management Representative advised. The cylinder valve was closed, the cylinder was removed and the area was vented.

The incident highlighted a number of issues including: the need to have 2 people present when moving gas cylinders from the 4 West store; the need for extra care

when transporting cylinders through / across the Underdeck – 2 people would be more easily visible to oncoming traffic; and a need to review where gas cylinders were stored and how the need for movement could be limited. It was noted that gas cylinders were taken to the battery storage containers on the East side of campus for welding. Putting in a gas pipeline as an alternative would be difficult and there would be risks associated with having gas running through pipes and in buildings.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services confirmed that the trolley used to transport the cylinder was appropriate. It was the loss of control which was an issue. The cylinder itself was not damaged; it is thought that the cylinder valve struck against the prong of a stored pallet-truck and this caused the valve to open slightly. If the bottle had fallen slightly differently, then the cylinder's protective collar would have prevented the prong from coming into contact with the valve and there would have been no issue.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services was liaising with the Organisational Resilience and Business Continuity Manager about on campus emergency responses and areas for improvement. The Director of Estates Operations suggested he also liaised with the Estates staff who attended the incident.

**Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

The Committee noted the report.

950 RIGHTS OF TU APPOINTED HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

The UNISON Representative explained that there seemed to be a delay before the Trades Unions got to know about incidents. It was proposed that a system was put in place to inform TU Health and Safety Representatives when an incident occurred and to ensure they were involved in investigations as soon as possible. He added that this proposal related to incidents involving staff, not students, and the only the more serious incidents.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that the Trades Unions had not previously asked to receive incident reports or be involved in incident investigations, but that he was very happy for them to be included. He agreed in future to advise the TU Health and Safety Representatives of any major (RIDDOR reportable) incidents.

An appropriate process would need to be established. Also, he would need to ask those submitting reports for permission to release personal details. If a report was received from a third party, the individual concerned would need to be contacted and permission sought. If someone withheld their consent for their personal information to be shared, incident reports would need to be redacted before being shared with the TUs. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services added that the time scale for forwarding reports on to TU representatives would also depend on how long it took for him to receive the reports.

It was agreed that for joint investigations to be undertaken, appropriate protocols and actions would need to be put in place. In addition, there was a need to understand the requirement for confidentiality. If agreement could not be reached the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would look to the Chair of this Committee to adjudicate.

The UNISON Representative would provide the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing with list of contacts and clarify who would be involved in the process. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing pointed out that the procedures would need to satisfy

**UNISON
Representative**

all 3 unions (UNISON, UCU and UNITE) and all 3 unions would receive the incident reports.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would liaise the UNISON Representative.

**Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

The Committee noted the report.

951 UNIVERSITIES SAFETY AND HEALTH ASSOCIATION (USHA) RAISING A CONCERN

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that paper 14 was a HE sector document which provided a template for partnership working between universities and Trades Union on health and safety matters.

He asked for feedback from each of the Trades Unions on the template so that it could be adapted and tailored to the University. He would then bring a revised version back to the meeting of this Committee in September.

**Trades Unions /
Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

The UCU Representative raised a question on the process for raising concerns anonymously through TU Health and Safety Representatives. It was very difficult to investigate an incident if it had been reported anonymously, but it would also be helpful to have some way of protecting anonymity as part of the process.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services suggested that Report and Support Tool may provide a suitable mechanism, which could be replicated for reporting health and safety incidents.

The Head of Security Services added that the SafeZone App had a 'Tip' function which could be used for anonymous reporting. Any incident reported would be sent to Security Services who could then forward on the report. It was noted that this could also be a good way of making more use of the App. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services suggested a demonstration was arranged for the Trades Unions. The Head of Security Services would follow this up with the Applications Support Developer.

**Head of Security
Services**

The Committee noted the report.

952 POLICY REVIEWS

University Health and Safety Policy

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that administrative changes had been made to the policy to reflect changes to University's management structure. He had also included a statement about the role of Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

**Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

The UCU Representative pointed out that the role of Chief Operating Officer did not appear in the University's Statutes or Ordinances and asked for clarification of the role and how it compared to the other roles listed in the Statutes or Ordinances. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that the closest comparison would be the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, exercising responsibility delegated by the Vice-Chancellor.

**Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

It was noted that in future the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost would be changed to Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would amend the policy.

The Committee agreed the policy. The Chair of the Committee will take the policy to UEB for approval and signing.

Chair

953 STANDARDISING THE SPEED LIMIT ON THE ROADS ON CLAVERTON DOWN CAMPUS

There were a variety of speed limits on campus, some of which were inconsistent.

The Department of Estates had liaised with the University's transport consultants (IMA) and it was recommended that a single campus speed limit of 20mph was implemented. The existing campus signage and road markings would be updated accordingly.

The Head of Security Services suggested that any guidance made it clear that the speed limit was up to a maximum of 20mph and only if it was safe to do so.

The Director of Estates Operations would liaise with Marketing about how to advise Google and satellite navigation companies of the change.

**Director of
Estates
Operations**

The Committee noted the report and endorsed the proposal.

954 UNIVERSITY ARRIVALS SQUARE JUNCTION

The University's transport consultants (IMA) had looked at the road layout at the entrance to the Arrivals Square and had come up with 4 options. Of these, options 1 was preferred. This had been endorsed by the Transport Committee and the Buildings Board. It was also approved by UEB, subject to review by the University Health and Safety Committee.

Papers regarding proposed works to the Arrivals Square Junction were circulated to the Committee prior to this meeting and no comments have been received.

The Head of Security Services suggested the addition of a yellow box junction at the junction of the road leading to the East Car Park. The Director of Estates Operations would put this forward.

**Director of
Estates
Operations**

The Committee noted the report and endorsed the proposal.

955 CORONAVIRUS

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services pointed out that due to the current pause in relaxing restrictions we were still at Step 3 of the Road Map. Planning for the next academic year was underway as far as possible, including a review of space occupancy and ways of working. However, in the absence of detailed guidance there is still a lot of uncertainty around how the University would be expected to operate in future.

Office Space

It has become apparent from ventilation surveys that a number of office spaces do not have efficient ventilation and that in some instances additional workstations have been added into offices resulting in cramped working conditions for occupants. Work is planned to look at workspaces to identify appropriate occupancy numbers.

Teaching

There was likely to be an ongoing need for risk assessments and infection control measures such as enhanced cleaning of touch points and the use of face coverings in certain settings.

Teaching requirements and spaces were still being investigated, particularly for those spaces which relied on windows for ventilation.

COVID-19 Statistics

There has been an increase in the number of student cases, but there had not been an equivalent rise of cases in staff. The increase in student cases did not seem to be linked to the Summer at Bath activities and was more likely to be linked to kitchen groups and other social events in residences.

Vaccination

It was likely that there would be a vaccination facility on campus site for the new academic year. There would also be a testing facility, although it was not clear yet where this would take place.

There was a focus on communications to new students encouraging them to ensure that they are fully vaccinated at least 3 weeks before coming to Bath.

Security Services / Students

The Head of Security Services reported that there had not been a single case of COVID-19 amongst Security staff. However, several staff had resigned in the last few months and student behaviour had been an influencing factor in their decision to do so.

He gave a summary of some of the situations being dealt with by his team:

- Security Services had the facility to issue a fixed penalty notice of with a fine of up to £100 for a second offence. Normally about 45 such fines would be issued in a year. This year 450 had been issued.
- 2 members of Security Services staff had been assaulted by students.
- A party had been held in a kitchen in Polden. The kitchen was designed for 12 people. There were 125 at the party and some were standing on work surfaces.
- There were occasions when the police had to be called out to disband parties inside accommodation and outside.

- There were currently 80 students in isolation, but it was evident from Access Control that some of them were going out. This was not fair on Security Services staff.
- The number of student discipline cases that have been referred to a formal disciplinary panel has increased by 600% compared to last year. The majority being for COVID related breaches.

The Head of Security Services therefore asked that there was a very clear and strong message to new students and that strong action be taken if necessary.

The Chair would escalate the matter to UEB as there were significant and unacceptable health and safety risks to staff.

Chair

The Director of Estates Operations added that the amount of damage to buildings that occurred overnight has been extensive.

The Committee noted the update.

956 EMPLOYEE ELECTED STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

The Secretary reported that elections have been held for job family staff representatives on the Committee for the term 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024. The results were as follows:

- Richard Ball, Reader Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, has been elected unopposed as the Education and Research job family staff representative.
- Andrew Hutchinson, Head of Library Operational Services, has been elected unopposed as the Management, Specialist and Administration job family staff representative.
- Sarah Hunter, Teaching & Research Support Technician Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology, has been elected as the Technical and Experimental job family staff representative.
- There were no nominations for the Operational and Facilities Support job family staff representative, even though the call for nominations had been extended.

This role had been vacant for some time now. So, the Chair would write to the key departments within the job family (ahs, Estates and Sports Development and Recreation) to encourage representation.

Chair / Secretary

The Students' Union Officer representative for 2021-2022 would be confirmed in the next few weeks.

The Chair thanked the outgoing representatives for their contributions to the Committee.

The Committee noted the update.

957 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services confirmed that the 'grab bags' for first aiders were still available. (The bags contained items such as gloves, appropriate face coverings, eye protection, disposable aprons and hand sanitiser.) He would ask the Health & Safety Technical Officer to contact first aiders and re-advertise the bags.

**Deputy Director
Safety &
Wellbeing
Services**

958 DATES OF MEETINGS

Tuesday, 14 September 2021
Tuesday, 14 December 2021
Tuesday, 8 March 2022
Tuesday, 7 June 2022

The meeting concluded at 14.45

Chair: Richard Brooks