

Minutes of Meeting of University Health and Safety Committee on Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 13:15

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
Andrew Nash – ISO & Compliance Manager, Accommodation & Hospitality
Julian Sulley – Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative
Michael Carley – UCU Representative
Simon Hockenhull – UNITE Representative
Steve Nicholson – UNISON Representative
Andrew Hutchinson –Management, Specialist & Administration Representative
Elizabeth Stacey – Students' Union Officer (Sports)

In attendance

Sue Stove Schofield – Secretary

Apologies

Malcolm Holley – Faculty of Science Management Representative
Mike Porter – Head of Security Services
James Paradise – UNISON Representative
Richard Ball – Education & Research Representative
Sarah Hunter – Technical & Experimental Representative

Minutes

967 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

The apologies were noted. The Chair welcomed the Students' Union Officer to the Committee.

968 Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 14 September 2021 (Paper UHSC 21/22 - 07) were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

969 Matters arising

Minute 960 – Membership 2021-2022 and Terms of Reference

It was noted that there was still a vacancy for the Operational & Facilities Support Representative.

Action:

The Chair and Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services will continue to liaise with colleagues to fill the vacancy for an Operational & Facilities Support Representative.

Minute 962 – Matters Arising

Minute 947 – Significant Non-RIDDOR Reports

Matters regarding the Underdeck would be raised separately under Any Other Business.

Minute 950 – Rights of TU Appointed Health and Safety Representatives

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services had liaised with a UNISON Representative regarding contact details for TU Health and Safety Representatives to whom incident reports could be sent.

Minute 952 – Policy Reviews

The University Health and Safety Policy had been approved by UEB and Council. Agreement was needed on how best to publish the signed policy on the University's website.

Minute 953 – Standardising the Speed Limit on the Roads on Claverton Down Campus

There was only one 'smiley face' LED Speed Indicator sign, which was presently in the East car park but not functioning. This may be because the battery needed to be charged or replaced.

The Head of Security Services had suggested that the current LED sign be used in the Underdeck and a new one obtained for Quarry Road, with further consideration given to Convocation Avenue. He would look at purchasing further LED signs, if the Committee thought they would be of benefit.

The Committee agreed to speed indicator signs being installed in Quarry Road and Convocation Avenue. It was suggested that these signs were connected to the mains, instead of being battery powered, and they did not necessarily need to be 'smiley face' signs. Signage for the Underdeck would be considered separately as part of the wider discussion about this part of campus. (See Any Other Business).

Action:

The Head of Security Services would liaise with the Director of Estates Operations regarding the installation of LED Speed Indicator signs in Quarry Road and Convocation Avenue.

Minute 963 – SHEW Update (including Incidents and Audit Update)

Staff in Human Resources had been made aware of SafeZone and that they could use it if staff needed assistance at home.

Minute 964 – Policy Reviews – Working Away from University Premises Policy

The reference to the University Secretary in Appendix 1 had been removed.

970 SHEW Update (Including Incidents and Audit Update)

Incidents and Accidents

RIDDOR Reportable Accidents

There had been one RIDDOR reportable accident since the last report.

A member of ahs staff suffered a fractured finger when removing goods from the “dumb waiter” lift in the Fresh Store. The lift doors suddenly and unexpectedly closed. The injured party instinctively drew her hands out of the lift, but a finger was caught between the two doors. The lift has been taken out of service and has been looked at by SHEW, ahs staff and lift engineers, but no explanation found. A more thorough examination by Estates was being arranged. The lift was rarely used, but someone from the Students’ Union had previously suffered a similar injury.

The ISO & Compliance Manager noted that there had been an incident involving the goods lift, where the bar inside the lift had come down on someone’s head. The purpose of the bar was to prevent pallets getting in the way of the lift door. When raised the bar was held in place by a magnet. It was likely that the operator thought that the magnet had engaged and removed their hand from the bar which then came down on their head. Use of the lift and ways of working were being reviewed. In the interim foam insulation would be placed around the bar to mitigate against the risk of injury if the bar came down. The Estates Department was intending to replace the lift this year.

Significant Non-RIDDOR Accidents

There had been one significant Non-RIDDOR reportable accident since the last report.

A member of staff from Estates slipped on a wet plant room floor and suffered a bruised and twisted knee, whilst working in the plant room, dismantling a water valve. The plant room floor, which had recently been refurbished, was inspected by SHEW and Estates. It was concluded the floor offered a reasonable level of slip resistance, but that this had been overwhelmed by the quantity of spilt water. In addition, it was noted that spilt water was difficult to see on the floor finish.

Fire Safety

Fire Risk Assessment Programme

The programme was back on schedule.

Fire Warden Training

Part 1 of the Fire Warden Training had now been converted from an in-person course to an online course. Part 2, the use of fire-fighting equipment, remained an in-person course and sessions had been run from October to December.

Fire Drill Completion

Security Services had completed fire drills for student residences. SHEW had undertaken fire drills for a number of other buildings and would do so for the remainder.

Significant Fire Incidents

In November a thermostat on scientific equipment used in a class practical in the Department of Physics failed and the equipment overheated. A student raised the alarm and a staff member intervened, turned the equipment off and made it safe. As a result, there was no fire, and the fire alarm was not activated. Due to the extent of the damage caused to the thermostat, further inspection was impossible and therefore the cause of the overheating could not be determined.

From the manufacturer's point of view there were no known defects with the equipment and University PAT testing was up to date, so it was recommended that the equipment was not used unsupervised.

Computer Workstation Assessment

SHEW continued to receive a lot of computer workstation assessments for both home and work workstations. They had received approximately 200 assessments in the last quarter and there was no sign of this slowing down. It seemed that as staff were working at home in the longer term, they were no longer able to make do with equipment and workstations which were less than ideal. The situation appeared to be similar across the HE sector and it was possible that there would be a legacy of back and musculo-skeletal issues to deal with in future.

The Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative asked if a University budget would be made available for equipment required for working from home, as opposed to using departmental budgets. The Chair would discuss this with the Director of Finance.

Action:

The Chair would liaise with the Director of Finance about the provision of funds for purchasing equipment for working at home.

Occupational Health Surveillance

The occupational health surveillance programmes for 2021/2022 were being launched. In the majority of cases this would be done using questionnaires and there would be an option to escalate to the Occupational Health Service where appropriate.

Health and Wellbeing

Occupational Health

There has been a sharp rise in pre-employment questionnaires having to be referred to Occupational Health for further follow up. In some cases, this appeared to be due to a combination of underlying health conditions and concerns about Covid-19 resulting in health assessments being required prior to new employees taking up their role.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of management referrals to Occupational Health in the last two months. A significant portion of these referrals related to staff returning from furlough who had long-term health conditions and who now required support with returning to work. Occupational Health appeared to also be picking up cases where there had been a delay in primary care (e.g., cancer / tumours, cardiovascular) and mental health issues.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services noted there was some pressure on the RUH's Occupation Health team due to recruitment issues. So, University staff referred to the service were not likely to be seen until mid-January. However, he did not expect Occupational Health staff to be redeployed to treat Covid-19 patients as had happened last year.

Employee Assistance Programme

Overall, the number of clients accessing the service was not changing much, but the complexity of the cases was increasing significantly.

There was a peak in activity in October which was due to some sessions being deferred from September to October. There was then a decrease in activity during November. The Omicron variant was likely to cause increased anxiety levels, so an increase in requests to access the service could be expected in January.

Data on use of the services included the staff members' department, but the departments were not published to maintain client confidentiality. Job family data was not collected, but this was something which could be requested in future, if appropriate.

Flu Clinics

In November 12 flu vaccination clinics were held on campus. In total 1200 doses were available; 1054 people booked a vaccination and 1020 were vaccinated (85% of bought

doses were administered). Clinics had also been planned for December, but these sessions were cancelled due to the low uptake of appointments.

Overall, the uptake had been consistent with last year. It seemed that although some staff were eligible for free NHS flu vaccinations, they were more inclined to have the vaccination on campus than go to a pharmacy, which may be less convenient and indeed may mean that they might not bother doing so. It was also identified that a number of local pharmacies had not been able to actually provide vaccinations due to supply chain difficulties.

The Committee noted the report.

971 Policy Reviews

Fieldwork Safety Standard and Placements and Study Abroad Programmes Safety Standard

The two standards were considered together.

More overt reference had been made to the FCDO guidance and the Director of Policy, Planning & Compliance was now responsible for approving all work-related travel to destinations either on the UK Government's Red List (Covid-19) or where the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advised against *All But Essential Travel*. The language around protected characteristics had been revised and links to placement guidance had been added to the appendix of the Placements and Study Abroad Programmes Safety Standard.

The UCU Representative pointed out that the Fieldwork Safety Standard mostly applied to field trips abroad, but field trips did take place in this country. There were other activities which needed to be considered, including: civil engineering students going to building sites; field trips where water and soil samples were taken; and Engineering & Design student competition teams going abroad. He also asked that reference to requirements to comply with other legislation be included. If staff and students were going to other UK-based organisations such as Cranfield or Airbus, these host organisations should have appropriate safety measures in place. The responsibility for checking that these arrangements were in place would be with the person overseeing the field work.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would redraft the Standards, liaise with the UCU Representative and bring the Standards back to the next meeting of the Committee.

972 Radon Survey 2021-2022

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that the University lies in an area that is defined as having an elevated radon risk. Consequently, the University was required to undertake periodic surveys of radon levels in its buildings. The levels of radon reported after the last survey were negligible. Monitors had been obtained from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and would be placed in buildings and residences on campus and in leased buildings in the city. The monitors would then be returned to the UKHSA for analysis. UKHAS would feed the results back to the

University and the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would report back to this Committee at its meeting in March or June.

The Committee noted the report.

973 Emergency Arrangements Discussion Paper

Fire Safety

Previously the University relied on a network of fire wardens drawn from technical or administrative staff, many of whom were now hybrid working. This meant that there was a reduced number of fire wardens on campus. Fire drills had been undertaken and had gone well, but there was a need to review the need for fire wardens and clarify procedures for the future.

One option could be to ask all staff to complete the online fire warden training so that everyone knew what to do. The overarching online fire safety training module was mandatory, and this could either be supplemented with fire warden information or people could be required to attend the separate fire warden module.

STV operational staff were trained as fire wardens and there was a strict evacuation process for the building, particularly as it was used by members of the public. So, the Sports Operations Manager felt that the STV needed to maintain its own fire wardens. The STV was less impacted by hybrid working and therefore retention of wardens did not create an issue.

The Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative pointed out that fire wardens were needed to prevent people entering 4 East from adjoining buildings in the event of a fire. Currently there were not enough fire wardens in 4 East to do this. It was also noted that there were no light boxes (with Fire Alarm Do Not Enter messaging) above the doors between the 4 East and adjoining buildings.

The Director of Estates Operations questioned whether fire wardens were still needed. It was noted that approximately 85% of staff had completed the mandatory fire safety course and there was very good fire alarm coverage across campus. So, in the event of a fire, it was likely that there would be people around who knew what to do. Security Services would deal with anyone with access requirements.

The Chair noted that, except for the STV, it was now far harder to rely on fire wardens and other means of assurance were required.

First Aid

Most first aid, other than that provided by STV staff, was administered by staff from Security Services. There was concern that the Security Services were required to provide the initial response to a wide variety of situations (both on and off campus), and this may impact on their ability to respond to all emergencies.

All Security Services staff were first aid trained and they had a qualified trainer to train their staff. All STV operational staff were first aid at work qualified and the coaches were emergency first aid qualified.

It was currently difficult to know who was on site and could be available to provide first aid. It was suggested that SafeZone may provide a solution, if first aiders logged on when they arrived on campus. It may be possible to set up an automated log on as first aiders arrived on site, but this would need to be checked with SafeZone.

Alternatively, a small, trained emergency response team could be established (and provided with radios) to act as first aiders and fire wardens. Security Services would remain the University's first responders.

The Chair requested that emergency arrangements and assurance measures were reviewed.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would set up an Emergency Arrangements Working Group (including representatives from Security Services, STV, ahs, Estates, the Faculty of Engineering & Design, the Faculty of Science). He would report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

974 Coronavirus

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services noted the increase in community transmission of Covid-19 and the Omicron variant. There were still a lot of unknowns so the situation would be monitored.

The UCU Representative noted that the NHS had run out of LFT and PCR tests and asked how this would affect the University's risk assessments. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services pointed out that the University still had plenty of test kits (both Lateral Flow and PCR) and consideration would be given to how they could be distributed to the staff who needed them.

975 Any Other Business

Calling the NHS Ambulance Service

The Chair reported that the Head of Security Services and his team had done an amazing job when responding to a contractor who had been taken ill on campus. An ambulance had been called, but there was a two-hour response time, so Security Services conveyed the patient to hospital in the University's ambulance.

The Director of Estates Operations asked for confirmation that the University would pay for any fines incurred by Security Services (e.g., for going through red lights) when taking patient to hospital. The Chair agreed to this.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that, if an ambulance was required, the correct protocol was that staff call Security Services who would then call the Ambulance Service. However, he emphasized that, in the event a member of staff did call the Ambulance Service directly, it was very important that they then informed Security Services so that they could respond.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services was satisfied that there were appropriate numbers of defibrillators on campus and that having staff who were well trained and confident in using them was the most effective solution. Defibrillators were held by Security Services, the STV and there was an AED provided in 4 East South to support a student who has been identified as having a serious heart condition.

It was pointed out that this incident had also raised issues about lone working. The contractor did have the mobile number for a member of Estates staff, but without that he would not have been able to alert anyone to his situation. The Director of Estates Operations suggested there needed to be a conversation about making SafeZone available in plant rooms. Bluetooth beacons would need to be installed to achieve this and it would need to be discussed with DD&T. Also, he thought it may be possible for contractors to use SafeZone to identify where they were on campus, but not all contractors were employed by Estates.

The ISO & Compliance Manager reported it had been noticed that fire alert and first aid notices in residences listed the contact number for Security Services as the internal extension number 666, which could be dialled from a University landline. However, as most people now used mobile phones the notices were being updated to show the full telephone number. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services suggested that emergency contact numbers on all fire and first aid notices across campus be reviewed and updated as appropriate. The Chair added that he would expect emergency numbers to be displayed on the wall inside plant rooms and asked that the Emergency Arrangements Working Group checked this was the case.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would pick up the follow matters through the Emergency Arrangements Working Group:

- emergency contact numbers on all fire and first aid notices across campus to be reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- emergency contact numbers to be displayed inside plant rooms.

The Underdeck

It was noted that there have been several incidents in the Underdeck. There were many issues with the infrastructure and activities in this area. It was a high-risk area and the way in which it was used needed to be reviewed and improved. The Chair asked the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services to set up and lead a working group to investigate the issues and propose a solution.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would set up and lead an Underdeck Working Group.

Close

The meeting concluded at 14.35.