

Minutes of Meeting of University Health and Safety Committee on Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 13:15

Location: Council Chamber and remotely via MS Teams

Present

Richard Brooks – **Chair** / Director of Human Resources – *left at 14:05*
Chris Young – Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services – **Chair from 14:05**
Sophie Hamer – Sports Operations Manager – *joined at 13:45*
Stephen Godber – Director of Estates Operations
Malcolm Holley – Faculty of Science Management Representative
Andrew Nash – ISO & Compliance Manager, Accommodation & Hospitality
Mike Porter – Head of Security Services
Julian Sulley – Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative
Simon Hockenhull – UNITE Representative
Steve Nicholson – UNISON Representative
Richard Ball – Education & Research Representative
Andrew Hutchinson – Management, Specialist & Administration Representative
Sarah Hunter – Technical & Experimental Representative

In attendance

Sue Stove Schofield – Secretary

Apologies

Michael Carley – UCU Representative
James Paradise – UNISON Representative
Elizabeth Stacey – Students' Union Officer (Sports)

Minutes

985 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

986 Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 March 2022 (Paper UHSC 21/22 - 19) were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

987 Matters arising

Minute 978 – Matters Arising

Minute 970 – SHEW Update – Computer Workstation Assessments

The Chair had raised the matter of the provision of funds for purchasing equipment for working at home in his annual planning submission with a financial estimate. He was awaiting confirmation of budget allocations.

Action:

Chair to provide update at next meeting.

Minute 980 – Fieldwork Safety Standard

As agreed at the previous meeting, the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services had amended the wording of the Standard to take into account the points raised by the UCU Representative around the requirement for context - specific consideration of individual characteristics (beyond those that may routinely be considered under domestic equalities legislation) that may arise in different locations or which may be related to the fieldwork that was being undertaken.

Minute 984 – Any Other Business – Traffic Management on Campus

Work on the bus turning circle was about to commence. The Director of Estates Operations would liaise with IMA Transport Planning Ltd. (IMA) regarding the barricades and plans for the arrivals square.

Work on zebra crossings across campus would be undertaken over the summer.

The Director of Estates Operations would chase IMA regarding the proposal to increase the number of barriers in the Underdeck.

The Faculty of Science Management Representative asked for clarification on arrangements for formal and informal works in the Underdeck. He pointed out that if ad hoc work was undertaken by contractors appropriate measures were needed, such as coning off relevant areas.

Action:

The Director of Estates Operations would follow up progress on traffic management works.

The Director of Estates Operations would liaise with the Faculty of Science Management Representative regarding informal works in the Underdeck.

988 SHEW Update (Including Incidents and Audit Update)

Incidents and Accidents

RIDDOR Reportable Accidents

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

The incident involving the small “dumb waiter” lift in the Fresh Store, which had resulted in injury to a member of staff, had been re-opened. It had come to light that over the years there had previously been two other incidents with the lift. The engineer was on site today to investigate how the incident may have occurred. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing was concerned that it might not be possible to reach a clear conclusion, but had asked the engineer to find way to stop the lift shutting unless instigated by the user.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would provide a further update at the next meeting of this Committee.

Significant Non-RIDDOR Accidents

Several unauthorised persons had been reported as having gained access to the STV roof. This roof does not have physical rails fitted (there is a “mansafe” system installed), so normally access would require the issue of a roof Permit to Work (and keys) by Estates and those working on the roof would have to wear a harness. It appears that the gate to the roof was not padlocked shut at the time of the unauthorised access. It was not clear if the roof had been accessed legitimately in the past and the gate not locked afterwards. Estates is undertaking a review of access to all roofs.

Computer Workstation Assessments

SHEW was still receiving and dealing with a high number of workstation assessments, particularly for home working. For a small number of people specialist ergonomic support has been sourced and provided through a specialist external provider. The cost of this was approximately £400 per assessment. It was being recharged to departments, but there may be a need in future for the assessments to be funded centrally by the University. SHEW will monitor the situation.

Fire Safety

Fire Risk Assessment Programme

The fire risk assessment programme is on schedule.

Fire Evacuation Drills

Fire evacuation drills had been completed for all non-residential campus accommodation this year. Drills for the remaining buildings (a couple of off-campus locations) would be completed in the next month. All buildings will then have had a physical fire drill within the last year as required under our fire safety policy.

There had been some concerns about the lack of fire wardens on site due to hybrid working. However, the initial feedback from the fire drills was that they went well and that evacuations were rapid and well-managed. Staff and students appeared to know what to do and responded appropriately when the fire alarm sounded.

Fire Safety Training

Practical fire extinguisher training, particularly for fire wardens in high-risk areas, would continue over the summer and into the next academic year.

First Aiders (review of provisions)

As with fire warden provision, there had been concern that the shift to hybrid working may have reduced the first aid capacity on campus to below required levels. It was noted that most incidents requiring first aid were attended by staff from Security Services, or by staff based in the STV.

A survey of departmental first aiders had been undertaken and the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that the responses indicated that there were enough first aiders on site to provide good coverage during core working hours. This involved comparing first aider presence against employee wi-fi use to determine coverage. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that he was investigating the possibility of using SafeZone to locate and summon first aiders, other than Security Services, if necessary.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that there had been severe delays in response times of the ambulance service. Recently there was a four and half hour wait for an ambulance to attend to a casualty on campus. The advice from the emergency services was that the casualty should not be moved, therefore Security Services were not able to transport the patient to hospital. Response times will continue to be monitored to identify whether it may be necessary to upgrade first aid provision.

The Head of Security Services advised that his team has a passenger ambulance which was accessible for wheelchair users, and it has separate ventilation for the driver. The ambulance was being used on an almost daily basis to take students to hospital and to recover intoxicated students from town. Security Services also have an emergency tent to provide shelter for casualties outdoors. It was noted that, whilst very helpful, providing this support did put additional pressure on Security Services resources.

Occupational Health Surveillance

Health surveillance questionnaires would be collected over the next three weeks. Physical checks, undertaken by Occupational Health, would then be arranged as appropriate.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would report back to this Committee in the autumn.

Occupational Health

The number of referrals to Occupational Health has decreased considerably. The reasons for referrals continued to be due to a broad range of issues.

The pressure being faced by the NHS was having a noticeable impact on the service provided to the University, which was now supporting many more people through Occupational Health than prior to the pandemic. It was noted that there were anecdotal reports of people finding it difficult to access health services, particularly mental health services, via the NHS, so were looking to Occupational Health and EAP for support. There was some concern that this may not be sustainable in the long-term. Nationally, there was some reporting that there was a lack of trained counselling staff available and that it can take a considerable amount of time to become fully qualified, therefore there are likely to be shortages for the foreseeable future. It was explained that Occupational Health and EAP services were separate from other NHS services so are not using NHS resources.

The Director of Estates Operations raised concerns with a Pre-Employment case that seemed to be taking longer than normal to progress.

Action:

The Director of Estate Operations would liaise with the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services regarding a referral to Occupational Health for a new member of staff, which seemed to be taking longer than usual to progress.

Employee Assistance Use

Although overall the number of users of EAP had decreased slightly, the reasons for people seeking support continued to be more complex than was the case prior to the pandemic (including more issues related to suicide ideation). There were also more cases involving domestic abuse and personal relationship issues. The number of requests for extensions to sessions was continuing to grow, in part due to the complexity of issues that people were presenting with.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services was looking into the possibility of having a counsellor based on campus one day per week.

The RUH had invested in a new management information system. It was hoped that this would enable better reporting on the clinical benefits to users of using EAP.

The Committee noted the report.

989 Policy Reviews

Policies and Standards Reviews

The paper provided an overview of policies which had been reviewed by SHEW and no need for substantive changes were identified.

The Occupation Health Standard, and Noise and Vibration Policy, have been reviewed and no changes were proposed to either document.

The Committee noted the report.

Safe Use of Pressure Systems Standard

At the last meeting the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services asked that the Director of Estates Operations review the Standard and provide him with feedback before it was approved by the Committee. The Standard had then been updated to include reference to legislation on the use of pressure systems and clarification on responsibilities for the use and maintenance of such systems.

The Faculty of Science Management Representative asked if hydraulic and refrigeration systems should be included in the Standard and if vacuum systems were covered under this. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would add hydraulic and refrigeration systems to the scope of the Standard (under examples of typical pressure systems). He would check the regulations regarding vacuum systems.

The Faculty of Science Management Representative also asked for clarification on the definition of pressure systems. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that he understood that the definition provided was taken directly from the regulations, but that he would check the wording to ensure this was the case.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would amend the Standard to include hydraulic and refrigeration systems as appropriate.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would check the regulations regarding vacuum systems and the definition of pressures systems and amend the Standard as appropriate.

The Committee noted and approved the Standard.

Food Safety Policy

Over last couple of years there had been incidents where people on campus had experienced quite severe allergic reactions to food, be it provided by the University or external food suppliers, or as part of events held by specific parts of the University. This had raised concerns about compliance with food safety legislation and had highlighted a need for more standard control of food safety and food hygiene provisions.

It was noted that there have been changes in national legislation on food labelling, particularly with regards to allergen labelling following some fatalities caused by people eating foodstuffs that had caused them to suffer a severe allergic reaction.

The University has not previously had a Food Safety Policy. The policy did not introduce anything that was not already required under legislation, but it was hoped it would raise awareness of food safety matters so that these were better understood by departments and teams who may be providing food as part of departmental events.

The policy was intended to apply to all onsite food provision, whether provided by ahs or external suppliers or directly catered by departments or societies themselves. This would ensure a consistent approach to all food provision.

The University's Food Safety Compliance Manager (based in ahs) has been actively supporting departments, including the Chaplaincy and Students' Union, to ensure they

are aware of any responsibilities they may have as food providers and that appropriate standards are being met.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services confirmed that as part of this work, the ad hoc food stalls on campus were approved and vetted. The Food Safety Compliance Manager was actively involved in this work and had made improvements to some of the arrangements.

The ISO & Compliance Manager pointed out that the scope of food safety requirements at the University had proved much greater than anticipated. The work undertaken to date was just the start and Food Safety Compliance Manager was intending to develop a series of toolkits that would support the implementation of the Policy.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services emphasized that the aim was to have a proportionate approach, so that staff running departmental events such as cake sales, would not be unduly disadvantaged (or asked to provide compliance over and above that which is statutorily required).

The Committee noted and approved the Policy.

Driving at Work Safety Policy and Work-Related Driving Safety Standard

The Policy and Standard were considered together. The main changes focussed on the use of the University's travel company, Clarity.

The following points were discussed:

- Drivers of University vehicles were responsible for carrying out appropriate checks of the vehicle before driving. There were also responsibilities on the University to check and maintain its vehicles, if it required someone to drive them.
- Occupational drivers were still required to submit their licence to the Department of Estates for checking on an annual basis. This process would be reviewed as part of the organisational review of Estates.
- If someone committed a driving offence during the 12 months after their licence had been checked, it was not clear if there was a requirement to inform the University's insurers. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would check with the Insurance Services Manager and amend the Policy as appropriate.
- The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would check with the Insurance Services Manager if the insurers needed to be informed if it was a driver's first offence and they opted to do a speed awareness course instead of receiving a penalty.
- It was noted that the use of motorised scooters is advocated in some quarters as one of the available measures to reduce carbon emissions associated with travel. However, it was noted that the use of the scooters on public roads and footpaths outside of the geofenced test areas is currently illegal. It was noted that this applied to scooters, which could be purchased privately, and therefore users could be stopped by the police. In addition, the Highway's Act applies to campus roads, even though it was private property (i.e., use of scooters on our roads would be illegal).

- The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services was concerned about the battery technology used in scooters and e-cycles and the risk of fire, particularly if the batteries were being recharged in accommodation. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services was in discussion with the University's insurers about where electric bikes could be charged.
- The Faculty of Science Management Representative suggested the Policy / Standard needed to include specific information about off road driving, particularly for fieldwork. Also, consideration needed to be given as to whether proof was required that drivers were competent to drive off road, e.g. proof of completion of appropriate training. The Head of Security Services pointed out that there was a suitable course that Security Services staff had undertaken, but there had then been a move away from it as there was not much use for it. He would provide the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services with details of the trainer. There was also the British Off Road Driving Association (BORDA). The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would investigate and update the Policy.
- The UNITE Representative reported that he had encountered two people using BMX type bikes on the Parade and on the steps from the Parade to the lake. They had told him they were students, but he was not sure that this was the case. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services confirmed that cycling was not permitted on Parade or in any pedestrian area. The Head of Security Services suggested that the UNITE Representative contacted Security if this happened again.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would check with the Insurance Services Manager what was required if a driver committed a driving offence within 12 months of having their licence checked or if they opted to do a speed awareness course instead of receiving a penalty.

The Head of Security Services would provide the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services with details of the off road driving trainer.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would investigate information on off road driver training and update the Policy.

Work-Related Stress and Wellbeing Policy

The existing policy has been refreshed to capture common understandings of wellbeing and boundaries to make clear the potential impact of work on wellbeing.

The University had signed up to the University Mental Health Charter and established a University Mental Health Charter Working Group. The whole university approach to mental health and wellbeing will now include the development of an overarching employee-facing action plan (as part of the University's accreditation under the Charter.) Guidance on developing a Faculty / Department Wellbeing Action Plan was provided at Appendix 1 to facilitate a standardised approach.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services requested that the Committee endorsed Faculty / Department Wellbeing Action Plans and work-related stress risk assessments becoming mandatory with reporting back to the Wellbeing Steering Group.

The Committee agreed to this.

990 Radon Survey Results 2022

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that 55 radon monitors had been placed at appropriate locations across campus. The results recorded by all the monitors were below the threshold. UKHSA had confirmed that no radon controls were required. There was no need to undertake another survey for 10 years.

Three locations had shown higher radon levels than other sites, so these would be re-tested even though the results were well below the threshold. It may be that the location of these monitors in enclosed spaces (e.g., in cupboards) had impacted the results.

The Committee noted the report.

991 Coronavirus

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that the University had maintained some infection control measures such as encouraging the wearing of face coverings and the use of sanitiser. Also, additional cleaning measures were still in place. He was still liaising with UKHSA and BaNES, but did not yet know what the guidance for the autumn was likely to be. The University would continue to monitor the situation and respond as required if there was a resurgence in Covid-19.

The University still advised that if anyone tested positive, they should not come to work. As it was difficult to obtain Lateral Flow Tests, anyone with a respiratory illness should not go on to University premises until they were feeling better. If anyone had concerns, they should contact Human Resources in the first instance.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services confirmed that overarching risk assessments for Open Days should be undertaken, including infection control measures. Guidance should be provided for visitors, encouraging those who could test to do so, and for those who were unwell to stay away.

992 Any Other Business

Deliveroo Drivers

The UNISON Representative raised concerns about the way in which some Deliveroo motorbike drivers drove on campus. The Head of Security Services had raised this with Deliveroo, but there was a limit to what could be done as it had not been possible to establish the identities of individual drivers.

Catalytic Converter Thefts

The Head of Security Services confirmed that thefts of catalytic converters from cars parked on campus were still occurring. They had happened in the East, West and South car parks. It took just one minute to remove a catalytic converter and so far, it tended to be older, Japanese vehicles that were targeted. Car owners needed to report thefts to the police, not the University. Security Services were continuing to liaise with the police,

but it was noted that the Police has limited resources to actively patrol campus. If it happened again Security Services may conduct unannounced road stops at the entrances to campus as a deterrent.

He added that it was possible to buy a catalytic converter lock from car dealers or get one fitted for approximately £200. The cost of replacing a catalytic converter was approximately £3,000 - £4,000.

Invacuation

The Management, Specialist & Administration Representative pointed out that, during the invacuation exercise held in April, students did not pay much attention or did not appear to know what to do. He asked for clarification on how invacuation was being managed and reported.

It was explained that the exercise was run and monitored through the Organisational Resilience and Business Continuity Standing Group. Options for different types of alerts (such as a siren and audible warning messages) were being considered. The Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative was very keen that a siren and audible warning messages be installed / reinstated.

SafeZone had been used for the invacuation exercise, but alternatives needed to be considered for those who did not have SafeZone or who were not at a PC when messages were sent. It was important to have a system that would enable quick communication. However, there would not be a 'one size fits all' solution and those that were available could be cost prohibitive.

The likelihood of different types of incidents and their potential impacts were discussed. Also, how people perceived and reacted to the messages that were put out.

There would be a big push to promote SafeZone at the start of the new academic year, including its use for other applications such as when lone working and to request first aid.

The Technical & Experimental Representative confirmed that the Faculty of Science inductions had been updated regarding invacuation and the use of SafeZone.

Director of Estates Operations

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services thanked the Director of Estates Operations for all his contributions and wished him all the best for the future.

Close

The meeting concluded at 14.30.