

Minutes of Meeting of University Health and Safety Committee on Tuesday 8 March 2022 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
Mike Porter – Head of Security Services
Julian Sulley – Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative
Michael Carley – UCU Representative
Simon Hockenhull – UNITE Representative
Richard Ball – Education & Research Representative
Andrew Hutchinson – Management, Specialist & Administration Representative
Sarah Hunter – Technical & Experimental Representative

In attendance

Sue Stove Schofield – Secretary

Apologies

Malcolm Holley – Faculty of Science Management
Steve Nicholson – UNISON Representative
James Paradise – UNISON Representative
Elizabeth Stacey – Students' Union Officer (Sports)

Minutes

976 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

977 Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 14 December 2021 (Paper UHSC 21/22 - 13) were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

978 Matters arising

Minute 969 – Matters Arising

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

The speed limit across campus had been standardized to 20mph. All signage had been updated, apart from that in the Underdeck, which would be considered as part of the wider review of that area.

The initial response from IMA regarding the Underdeck was to suggest that the number of barriers be increased. The speed at which the barriers were lifted and lowered could then be adjusted to control the flow of traffic.

Minute 970 – SHEW Update – Computer Workstation Assessments

Action:

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

Minute 973 – Emergency Arrangements Discussion Paper

Surveys would be undertaken to establish which registered first aiders and fire wardens were now working back on site. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would then set up an Emergency Arrangements Working Group to review emergency arrangements and assurance measures.

Minute 975 – Any Other Business – The Underdeck

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services had met with IMA. They would produce a proposal for the Underdeck, which was likely to be based on physical calming measures.

979 SHEW Update (Including Incidents and Audit Update)

Incidents and Accidents

RIDDOR Reportable Accidents

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

Update on Previous RIDDOR Incident

The small “dumb waiter” lift in the Fresh Store had been looked at by SHEW, ahs staff and the lift engineers, but no explanation had been found for the incident (when the lift doors closed suddenly and unexpectedly injuring a member of ahs staff). Also, as the lift was used so infrequently, it was difficult to determine if this was a regular issue.

It was unlikely that another investigation would reveal anything further. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would meet with the injured party and then the incident would be closed as appropriate.

Significant Non-RIDDOR Accidents

There have been a number of issues with crowd control at the bus turning circle. These have involved intoxicated students and students in the road, which meant that it has not been safe for busses to stop.

Crowd barrier arrangements were being reviewed and IMA have put forward a proposal for the installation of new barriers with gates. Supervision by Security Services has been increased and the Head of Security Services was monitoring the situation daily.

Fire Safety

Fire Risk Assessment Programme

Work on the programme was progressing.

Fire Warden Training

The intention was to review the main fire safety training for staff, as it may not be viable in the long term to have a fire warden in every building. If this was the case, it would increase the need to ensure that all staff were aware of fire safety and fire safety procedures.

Significant Fire Incidents

There was an incident in the Department of Chemistry when the movement of pyrophoric materials, resulted in them igniting spontaneously. Measures had been put in place in case this occurred, and the incident was managed safely in accordance with the written procedures.

Computer Workstation Assessment

The number of assessments being submitted to SHEW for home and work workstations was still high and this was expected to continue.

The provision of funds for purchasing equipment for working at home needed to be clarified. The Chair pointed out that data was currently being gathered on hybrid working. Any cost implications of hybrid working would need to be incorporated into the hybrid working policy and plans.

Occupational Health Surveillance

The Occupational Health Surveillance Programme for 2021/22 was underway. Heads of department and technical directors had been contacted about the survey to identify which workers required surveillance. PGRs fell within the scope of this work as they were considered workers under the relevant legislation.

The Radon Survey 2021/22 was underway. The monitoring devices were due to be removed from campus in early April. Once UKHAS had fed the results back to the University, the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would report back to this Committee.

A question was asked about exposure to other sources of radiation on campus. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that all work with radioactive substances was registered with SHEW and that environmental and personal monitoring was in place. It was noted that this monitoring was precautionary as none of the work with these substances was within statutory monitoring requirements.

Occupational Health

There has continued to be a high level of management referrals to Occupational Health. This has been due to a variety of reasons such as: staff returning from furlough; underlying health conditions progressing to more advanced levels than seen previously; and an increase in chronic fatigue, which was potentially linked to long Covid.

From 1 April 2022 all Covid-19 tests would be withdrawn for the public and it was not yet clear how any other testing and reporting would be managed. In addition, the requirement for Covid-19 risk assessments will end on 1st April. However, if Covid remains endemic some protection measures were likely to be retained.

Employee Assistance Use

There had been a decrease in use of the EAP over the last two months. However, presentations continued to be for people with very deep and complex issues and the EAP were still receiving requests for repeat sessions.

The Committee noted the report.

980 Policy Reviews

Policies and Standards Reviews

The report provided an overview of reviewed policies where the review carried out by SHEW had not identified any need for substantive changes.

The Committee noted the report.

Fieldwork Safety Standard

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services had redrafted the Standard as discussed at the previous meeting of the Committee. He has also included reference to the need to consider any other non-health and safety legislation or statutory requirements which might apply and the need for travel and accommodation to be booked in line with the University's Business Travel and Expenses Policy (including using the University's travel management company Clarity.)

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would review and revise the wording of section 4 regarding protected characteristics, cultural sensitivities and add a link to FCDO general advice.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would revise section 4 as discussed.

The Committee noted and approved the Standard.

Safe Use of Pressure Systems Standard

This was a new standard relating to very specific risks associated with particular fluids and / or equipment. The Standard required annual checks of pressure system equipment and linked to statutory and insurance requirements.

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.

Action:

The Director of Estates Operations would provide feedback on the Standard to the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would bring the Standard back to the Committee for approval at the June meeting of the Committee.

981 Staff Health and Wellbeing Update

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services explained that the Staff Health & Wellbeing Manager was unable to attend the meeting. The report provided an overview of staff wellbeing activities in 2021.

University Mental Health Charter – Student Minds

The University was currently carrying out work to gain the sector's mental health charter. Despite its name, the charter applied to the whole University and included staff as well as students. It was noted that whilst the Charter was principally focussed on mental health, the University was taking a broader approach to encompass all aspects of wellbeing.

The Charter considers a number of domains, one of which was 'Work' which principally considered staff issues. There was another domain, "Live" that considered the built environment in its entirety and would therefore also include office, academic and other buildings and not just student accommodation as the title implied.

Faculty and Departmental Wellbeing Action Plans (F/DWAPS)

The Staff Health & Wellbeing Manager was keen to continue with the faculty and departmental wellbeing action plans. She would like to purchase a new analysis tool from the HSE which would enable easier surveying and reporting.

The Staff Health & Wellbeing Manager was still doing a lot of work on focus groups within the Faculty of Science. Work with the Faculty of Engineering & Design technicians had focussed on the Technician Commitment. She was also planning to deliver some bespoke training for STV managers.

Staff Wellbeing Champion Network (SWCN)

Another ten champions have been recruited following a recruitment drive in December 2021. The champions were promoting a lot of initiatives across a variety of networks, including training and support for line managers.

Suicide Prevention Working Group

The role of the Group was to raise awareness of the support available to staff and students on the topic of suicide.

Events

A calendar of events for 2022/23 will be published and it was likely that more of next year's events would be held in person.

1-2-1 Support

There had been an increase in demand for 1-2-1 support, which was treated as casework rather than brief advice. Consideration needed to be given to what this would mean for the University in future. Previously there had been suggestion of having a staff counsellor available on campus. There were ongoing conversations with EAP about this and, if implemented, it could relieve the Staff Health & Wellbeing Manager of the casework.

The Committee noted the report.

982 Health and Safety Internal Audit

Internal Audit have undertaken a review of University health and safety governance and reporting mechanisms. To address the findings of the audit, the plan was to review the risk register and map it against departments, policies and standards so that heads of department were clear about what fell within their remit. That would then align the University with ISO4501 Health & Safety Management and enable proactive reporting which could be fed back to this Committee.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services would bring a proposal to the September meeting of the Committee for discussion.

983 Coronavirus

The explicit requirement to have Covid-19 risk assessments in place will end on 1 April 2022. However, there will still be a need to consider infection control measures in the workplace and what this might entail, e.g., cleaning regimes, screens at reception desks, hand hygiene, face coverings and who supplies them. It was expected that UEB will review and approve specific University arrangements and subsequent monitoring of business as usual arrangements will be through the Health and Safety Committee.

984 Any Other Business

Traffic Management on Campus

The ISO & Compliance Manager pointed out that concerns had been raised about traffic management on the roads from Woodland Court heading towards the East building and, in particular, the faded zebra crossing adjacent to the new School of Management building. The Director of Estates Operations advised that the University's transport consultants, IMA, had reviewed zebra crossings across campus (including this one) and he will liaise with IMA on this issue. He thought that money had been allocated to next year's budget for the work. The Head of Security Services pointed out that, although on campus, crossings needed to comply with the requirements of the Road Traffic Act.

The Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative raised concerns about the layby outside the STV and the road junction between the bus turning circle and the East car park. It was confirmed that work to improve the junction had been approved by UEB and funding had been allocated. It was now a question of establishing when the best time to do it would be.

Action:

The Director of Estates Operations would liaise with IMA regarding the review of crossings on campus.

The Director of Estates Operations would liaise with the Head of Security Services to determine the most appropriate time to undertake the work on the junction.

Trees on Campus

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that he was receiving an increasing number of comments on the amount of trees on campus being cut down and this seemed to be gathering momentum.

A condition survey of the University's trees was undertaken in 2018/19, and a plan for every tree on campus for the next ten years was produced. The general comment from the tree surgeons who conducted the survey was that campus had been over-planted. So, the thinning out of trees which was taking place was action resulting from the survey.

Close

The meeting concluded at 14.11.