



Minutes of Meeting of University Health and Safety Committee on Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 13:15

Location: Remotely via MS Teams

Present

Richard Brooks – **Chair** / Director of Human Resources
Chris Young – Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services
Dev Biddlecombe – Director of Campus Infrastructure
Malcolm Holley – Faculty of Science Management Representative
Julian Sulley – Faculty of Engineering & Design Management Representative
Steve Nicholson – UNISON Representative
Richard Ball – Education & Research Representative
Andrew Nash – Head of Campus Services Facilities
Simon Hockenhull – UNITE Representative
Elizabeth Stacey – Students' Union Officer (Sports)

In attendance

Marcia Martin – Secretary

Apologies

James Paradise – UNISON Representative
Sophie Hamer – Sports Operations Manager
Mike Porter – Head of Security Services
Michael Carley – UCU Representative

Minutes

1007 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

1008 Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 13 December 2022 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

1009 Matters Arising

Minute 994 – Membership and Terms of Reference

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that the Terms of reference for this committee still require review.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services to review the Committee's Terms of Reference and bring back to the June Committee.

Minute 998 – Construction and Maintenance Activities in High-Risk Areas Safety Standard

The Director of Campus Infrastructure confirmed that arrangements are in place to ensure that Technical teams are consulted prior to any work commencing in high-risk areas (labs, workshop etc).

Minute 1006 – Underdeck

Director of Campus Infrastructure stated that CI is still awaiting proposals to reduce traffic speed from IMA Transport Planning Ltd in the Underdeck is still to be reviewed.

Action:

The Director of Campus Infrastructure to update the June committee regarding the proposal from IMA Transport Planning Ltd.

Minute 1006 - Defibrillators on Campus

The Head of Security Services sent apologies to the committee. The update on the addition of AED location on the Security webpage was postponed. The Deputy Director Health & Wellbeing Services reported to the meeting that there was a review to the University of Bath staff induction, and they would progress the inclusion of the location of AEDs in these documents. Students' Union Officer (Sports) enquired about the information that students received.

Action:

The Head of Security Services to review and revise the information published on the website about AEDs.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services to liaise with Human Resources recruitment staff and the Students Union about the information sent to new starters and students.

Minute 1006 - Committee Membership

The Deputy Director Health & Safety Services informed the committee that Governance will be organising the election for the vacant committee positions in Operational & Facilities Support Representative, Technical & Experimental and Management, Specialist & Administrative.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services to update the Governance Manager on the vacant committee positions to arrange elections.

1010 SHEW Update (Including Incidents and Audit Update)

Accidents and Incidents

The Deputy Director of Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that there had been two RIDDOR incidents that had been reported to the HSE. The first was a member of staff in Students' Union sustained a cut to their hand whilst preparing avocado which resulted in a reportable 7-day injury. The second RIDDOR occurred when a light diffuser fell, striking a member of staff. Other light fittings have been checked in the area and found to be secure.

There were no other significant accidents to report.

Fire Evacuation Drills

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services informed the committee that these were on track and that response times and complete evacuation of office buildings had good. One issue that occurred is that building occupants tend to congregate on the Parade rather than at their designated fire assembly point.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services to liaise with the Fire Safety Advisors to discuss options for reinforcing the Fire Assembly points for each building.

Occupational Health Surveillance

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that this year's surveillance program will be completed with the on-campus sessions 13th and 16th March.

Occupational Health

Occupational Health

Pre-employment questionnaires were being submitted at similar rate to previous years, after a spike in number seen in the last quarter. There has been a rise in the number of Management referral reviews recommended by OH. This increase appears to be linked to an increase in the number of more complex health issues being referred post-Covid.

Employee Assistance Use

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services reported that the increase in the number of referrals which had been recorded during the pandemic had reduced, although there was a rise in January which was probably due to the Christmas closure period. The EAP service is experiencing some difficulty in recruitment of counsellors, and this is impacting waiting times. Those who contact the service can usually be seen within 6 to 7 days if they are able to take the offered appointment. However, if an employee wants a specific day and time, then this can result in a waiting time of up to a month. The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised the committee that NHS wait for mental health services can be in excess of 6 months.

Auditing and Monitoring

Gas Cylinder Use Audit

An audit of the safe use of gas cylinders on campus has been completed. This audit was conducted against the technical standards of the British Compressed Gas Association. The audit identified some issues with gas cylinders being stored inside buildings instead of in the designated external storage. It was also noted that some regulators were unlabelled and other regulators were found to be out of date. In a small number of cases, cylinders were found to not have flashback arrestors fitted.

The meeting discussed the departmental responsibilities for cylinders. It was stated that initially the technical staff were responsible for delivery and connection of cylinders, but after this, the research group using the cylinder were responsible for its ongoing safe use.

SHEW will be issuing reports to all audited departments and will also provide copies to the relevant Technical Services directorates for action / follow-up.

Departmental Health and Safety Performance Indicators – Self-Reporting

This survey has now been completed with a 70% response rate which is lower than in previous years. The responses indicate that overall departmental heads felt they understood their responsibilities for health and safety within their area.

Each department will be issued with a copy of their responses and links to any guidance that might be required.

The Chair thanked the Health & Safety Adviser for the report.

The Committee noted the report.

1011 Policy Reviews

Policies and Standards Reviews

No Substantive Changes

No Substantive Changes were recommended for the Violence at Work Policy, Health and Safety Training Safety Standard, Manual Handling Operations Standard, Work at Height Safety Standard and First Aid Guidance.

Minor Changes

A minor change had been made to Controlling Fire and Explosion Risk Standard, Hazardous Substances Safety Policy, Hazardous Substances Safety Standard.

The Controlling Fire and Explosion Risk Standard had been revised to include an annual survey of high-risk areas which is then available to the Emergency Services.

The Hazardous Substances Policy had been amended to update the wording to local exhaust ventilation and generic personal protective equipment.

The Hazardous Substances Safety Standard had links to the updated information on the HSE website.

The First Aid Guidance advice from the National Resuscitation Council remains the same when delivering CPR only chest compressions should be given and no breaths.

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Safety Standard

This standard covers the procurement and use of work equipment outlining the safety considerations such as safe working, machine guarding, required information and training.

The Committee noted and approved the Standard.

1012 Health and Safety Audit Plan

A full three-year audit plan for auditing the safety management systems of high risk faculties and departments was submitted to the Committee.

Each area identified was given a six-month period for audit completion, this time frame would allow the efficient diary management within the department. The audit will look at all the physical areas a department may occupy and the risks they are responsible for managing.

These audits will focus on faculty, departmental and individual to provide assurance to Council. SHEW will review the plan annually to ensure that it is on track. Audit findings will be reported at Health and Safety Committee.

MC2 was discussed because they work in different locations across different departments and are accountable to the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research instead of to the Deans. The Committee was advised that the equipment a research group were using would be audited but if the area in which the equipment was based was a departmental area this would be audited separately. It was agreed that SHEW will meet with Faculty of Engineering & Design Representative and Faculty of Science Management Representative to work out the scope of the MC2 risk register audit.

The Director of Campus Infrastructure noted that the audits were scheduled to take place across a six-month period and asked what level of resource and capacity would be required, both from auditors and auditees. The Deputy Director Safety and Wellbeing Services advised that the window was more about availability and being able to agree meeting timings rather than being indicative of the amount of time each audit would take.

1013 Local Exhaust Ventilation Survey

A survey of the University's exhaust ventilation has been carried out. The committee was advised that the LEV testing across campus had been conducted by different consultants and contractors and they had not always tested in accordance with the full requirements of the COSHH regulations. A consistent testing regime for the LEVs needs to be

introduced and where LEV is being used as a key safety control then a means for demonstrating that containment is being achieved will need to be put in place.

SHEW will issue survey reports to specific departments highlighting any deficiencies and any improvements that might be required.

1014 Any Other Business

Notification of closure days

The Head of Campus Services Facilities raised the issue of those staff who start work at 5:00 a.m. are impacted by the decision to close the university being made later (usually around at 07:00 a.m.). The meeting discussed the issue and The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that the SafeZone app can be used at short notice (by Security) to provide alerts if early decisions were made to close or restrict access to campus.

Hydrogen

The Faculty of Engineering and Design Management Representative raised an issue regarding the number of requests his team are receiving to facilitate research studies into the use of hydrogen as a fuel source. It was noted that the Dean of Engineering and Design has advised that all such research should take place at the IAAPS facility.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised that whilst SHEW may be able to advise about safe use of hydrogen (or identify a suitable external resource to do so), this was not an activity that SHEW is responsible for approving. If research groups wish to pursue interests in this area then these should be pursued through the appropriate University mechanisms. Given the fire and explosion risks that hydrogen can pose, this may be something that would need to be agreed by University Executive Board.

It was advised that the Faculty of Engineering and Design Management Representative should discuss this further with the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Design.

Toasters

The UNITE Representative raised the concern about the fire risk of toasters on campus. Toasters are found in staff kitchen areas and in student kitchens. The risk of a fire was thought to be small because most of our buildings are protected by L1 fire alarm system. The fire risk assessments conducted by our fire advisers have not indicated that these pose a significant risk.

E-bike batteries

The committee discussed the risk of e-bike batteries. Outside the University there have been reported incidents of fires caused by the e-bike lithium batteries.

The transport group are investigating providing external charging points in the bike shelters.

Student residential buildings ban storing e-bike batteries within buildings. This is included in student induction and housekeeping staff in Campus Services police this rule. It was

noted that there is currently no clear guidance on whether staff can charge e-bike batteries in their offices.

Action:

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services to discuss the issue with the University's Insurance Manager and to look at the inclusion of guidance on safe battery charging in University Fire Safety guidance.

Mobile phone masts

The UNISON representative raised the concerns about radiation from the two mobile phone masts on campus. These masts are covered by the Telecommunications Act and are thus outside the University's control and it is not known whether either of these masts are now transmitting a 5G signal.

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services advised the committee that the operators have provided full risk assessment information for these installations and radiation there is no cause for concern for the residents and users of the buildings where the masts are located. He also confirmed that where work is required adjacent to the masts there is an agreed procedure in place to contact the operators in advance so that the masts operate at reduced power whilst works are in progress.

Committee Secretary

The Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing thanked Sue Stove for being secretary for this committee.

Management, Specialist & Administration Representative

The committee expressed sadness at the passing of Andrew Hutchinson who was serving on this committee as the Management, Specialist & Administration Representative.

Next meeting
Tuesday 6th June 2023.

The meeting ended at 14:40