



**Health and Safety Committee**

Covid-19 Meeting

19 July 2021, 09.00am

Minutes

**Present Members:**

Ms Fiona Ryland, (Convenor)

Ms Victoria Adrienne

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Theo Bryer

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Dr Alun Coker

Ms Yasmeen Daoud

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr David Ladd

Dr Matt Lougher

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Deputy Head of Safety

Ms Joanne Tapper

Mr Osman Teklies

Dr Rob Wilson

**Attendees:**

Mr Dev Agarwal

Mr Michael Jorge

Ms Karen Smith

Mr David Stevens

Mrs Rebecca Whitham

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**Apologies:**

Dr Matthew Blain, Executive Director of Human Resources

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

**Part I: Preliminary Business**

**88 Membership**

88.1 Ms Denise Long had joined as appointed member for Student and Registry Services. The Students Union representatives for 2021-2 were Miss Yasmeen Daoud and Mr Osman Teklies.

**89 Minutes**

89.1 The Health and Safety Committee (HSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021.

**90 Matters Arising (Paper 11-55)**

90.1 Regarding minute 81.5: produce a communication to make laboratory managers and Departmental Safety Officers aware of the line of responsibility for dealing with failures of air conditioning and encourage people to use the Estates maintenance helpdesk to report ventilation failures; the Executive Director of Operations had responded that this has not been communicated yet but was built into a future communication plan. It was planned that it would be sent as part of the Return to UCL communications after the 19 July

90.2 Regarding minute 81.7: investigate technical problems experienced by users of Connect to Protect; the Executive Director of Operations had reported that this has been investigated and although no significant issues were identified it did provide an opportunity to consider the Connect to Protect communications and approach.

90.3 Regarding minute 81.8: take the proposal for a positive feature on Connect to Protect in 'The Week@UCL' to the Covid Management Response Team for approval; the Director of Workplace Health had stated that this has been raised at the Covid Management Response Team (CMRT) and the Connect to

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Protect manager was working with Communications and Marketing colleagues to create a news article.

- 90.4 Regarding minute 81.9: provide an update on the HSC's oversight of stress management and mental health in departments; the Director of Workplace Health was awaiting a response from the Trade Unions to discuss the details of this request.
- 90.5 Regarding minute 81.12: consider a return to quarterly meetings following the July 2021 meeting; the meetings would remain monthly until further notice.
- 90.6 Regarding minute 83.2: put the proposal of testing the occupants of a student accommodation residence where a Covid-19 case is identified to the Covid Management Response Team for consideration; the Director of Workplace Health had responded that this has been discussed at CMRT. The option of testing everyone in a hall had previously been discussed and ruled out as not required. The CMRT cannot mandate testing but if there was a significant outbreak, it would potentially be something that the London Coronavirus Response Centre (LCRC) or Camden & Islington council would require.
- 90.7 Regarding minute 83.2: investigate with the Camden and Islington Public Health team if PCR tests being taken by students who were isolating was a useful intervention; the Director of Strategy and Ops, OVPH, reported that UCL should be reinforcing this message and Connect to Protect had been updated to reflect that.
- 90.8 Regarding minute 85.2: request the advice of PHAP on the benefits of undertaking a pilot survey of vaccination status among a group of students; the Director of Sustainability had replied that this would be discussed at the next PHAP meeting.
- 90.9 Regarding minute 85.4: consider the use of text messages to remind staff and students campus to undertake twice-weekly testing if on campus; the Executive Director of Operations had responded that this was not possible as a means of regular mass communication and was only available for critical incidents (for those who have provided a mobile number), but added that UCL was committed to ensuring that people are aware of the need to undertake twice weekly testing.
- 90.10 The Trade Unions commented that despite earlier requests they had not seen much evidence of a change in the language in UCL communications

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regarding lateral flow testing to an emphasis on 'should,' or of weekly emails on Mondays to encourage staff and students to be tested, or posters going up on campus. In response it was reported that posters were now ready to be displayed and Communications and Marketing would be reminded of the weekly email request.

90.11 Regarding minute 85.8: establish that the appropriate ventilation advice had been provided for the different types of space on campus; a team were working on providing updated ventilation guidance, in preparation for the end of the Government Roadmap.

90.12 Regarding minute 85.9: provide a full response to the Trade Unions on the plans for monitoring of waste water; the Executive Director of Operations had replied that a team had reviewed UCL's approach, helped by a Russell Group-led email discussion which considered the sector's approach to the monitoring of waste water. Like many other universities UCL does not plan to monitor waste water due to cost, complexity and effectiveness.

## **Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion**

### **91 UCL Covid-19 outbreak response**

91.1 The Head of Workplace Wellbeing reported that since the last meeting of HSC there had been three outbreaks, two in UCL student accommodation with six and ten positive cases respectively, and one departmental outbreak with five cases. In addition there had been unconnected cases of two staff on campus and two off campus in the last 24 hours, and nine on campus and ten off campus in the last seven days. Unconnected student cases numbered three students on campus and two off campus in the last 24 hours, and five on campus and five off campus in the last seven days.

91.2 The total positive cases for the past month were: 18 staff on campus and 19 off campus; 67 students on campus and 35 off.

### **92 Operational response to end of government Covid-19 Roadmap (Paper 11-56)**

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- 92.1 The Convenor presented a paper summarising UCL's operational response to the Government guidance on the final easing of COVID-19 restrictions, including the removal of social distancing, face coverings and self-isolation.
- 92.2 The Trade Unions commented that they felt social distancing should be maintained and face coverings worn indoors; the Convenor agreed to take the recommendation to PHAP. The Trade Unions asked if the provision of FFP2 masks could be extended to teaching staff; the Convenor agreed to take follow up on the availability and suitability of the masks for that purpose and let the Committee know the outcome. Alternative clear face coverings were to be sourced as the ones that had been used were unsuitable.
- 92.3 The Convenor agreed to arrange for the university's policy on vulnerable staff to be included in 'The Week@UCL.'

### **93 UCL Symptom-free Testing (Paper 11-57)**

- 93.1 Mrs Rebecca Whitham presented a paper on the Department for Education's update (released 14th July) on testing expectations for higher education settings over the summer break and the return to campus.
- 93.2 The current Government guidance would continue until the end of September, arrangements for after that period had not been confirmed but may well be extended. Government policy-permitting, UCL has planned for on-site testing to be available for the first half of the autumn term; and for self-test kits to be available for collection by staff/students for as long as this offer is available to us.

### **94 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 11-58)**

- 94.1 The Trade Unions presented a report on their inspection of 20 Bedford Way (UCL Institute of Education) that took place on 9 July. A written response would be provided by Estates Division to the questions raised in the report.
- 94.2 It became evident that asbestos warning stickers could be misinterpreted, as there wasn't widespread knowledge of their meaning and the actual/possible location of asbestos in the places where they were displayed. A communication addressing this and the importance of checking the UCL asbestos register if there were concerns about the potential presence of asbestos in a building, would be issued.

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- 94.3 A communication would also be produced on the importance of reporting problems with the repair of buildings to Estates Maintenance, and of recording any associated incidents on riskNET.
- 94.4 In response to the issue of the uncertainty felt by building users about how and if ventilation is provided in rooms in 20 Bedford Way, UCL Estates confirmed that when a maintenance report is received requesting verification of whether a room is ventilated, the Division would check that the ventilation was working.
- 94.5 As an open action already exists (see min. 90.1 above) to make laboratory managers and Departmental Safety Officers aware of the line of responsibility for dealing with ventilation issues and encourage people to use the Estates maintenance helpdesk to report the issues, the communication's audience would be widened to all staff.
- 94.6 A paper would be produced for the next meeting on the use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to monitor poor ventilation.

## **95 Quarterly performance report (Paper 11-59)**

- 95.1 Mr Dev Agarwal presented a report on health and safety performance data for the third quarter of the academic year 2020/21.
- 95.2 The Trade Unions commented that the validation rate of DSE assessment remained low and that staff had reported not knowing who should validate completed self-assessments. Safety Services agreed to look in to improving the completion rate and to include the topic in their next newsletter.
- 95.3 In response to a comment that users were not confident in signing off incidents on riskNET, it was reported that new automatic email reminders were to be sent on the system and a 'how to' video was being developed.

## **96 FaceFit Train the Trainer Training Programme (Paper 11-61)**

- 96.1 Mr Dev Agarwal presented a paper describing the proposed Face Fit 'Train the Trainer' training programme, allowing UCL Safety Services to train faculty face fit testers in qualitative fit testing.
- 96.2 The Committee approved the proposed programme.

## **97 Any other business**

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97.1 The Workplace Health quarterly report (paper 11-60) of monthly data was postponed until the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 10.30 am

Jon Blackman

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