



**Health and Safety Committee**

Covid-19 Meeting

24 August 2021, 11.30am

Minutes

**Present Members:**

Ms Fiona Ryland, (Convenor)

Ms Victoria Adrienne

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Alun Coker

Ms Yasmeen Daoud

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mr David Ladd

Ms Denise Long

Dr Matt Lougher

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Ms Joanne Tapper

Mr Osman Teklies

Dr Rob Wilson

**Attendees:**

Mr Ian Dancy

Mr Michael Jorge

Mr Duncan Kennedy

Ms Tracy Pearmain

Mr David Stevens

**Apologies:**

Dr Matthew Blain, Executive Director of Human Resources

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Dr Theo Bryer

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Mr Keith Harvey

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Deputy Head of Safety

## **Part I: Preliminary Business**

### **98 Minutes**

98.1 The Health and Safety Committee (HSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 with an amendment at minute 93.2 regarding on-site testing for Covid-19.

### **99 Matters Arising (Paper 12-62)**

99.1 Regarding minute 81.1: provide further information to the Trade Unions on how much time would need to be allocated to attending the five HSC sub-committees; the time required would be 90 minutes every three months and time to review papers.

99.2 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; an update would be provided at the next meeting.

99.3 Regarding minute 81.9: provide an update on the HSC's oversight of stress management and mental health in departments; this would be provided at the next meeting. A paper on departmental stress risk assessments would be submitted to the HSC in the next term.

99.4 The Trade Unions recommended the establishment of a stress management sub-committee with oversight of departmental plans for addressing stress management standards. The Convenor would investigate the best way to engage with deans to pursue the aims of this proposal.

99.5 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; it was stated that this would be included in the next meeting's agenda.

99.6 Regarding minute 90.10: remind Communications and Marketing of the request for weekly email reminders to staff to get a lateral flow test twice a

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week; a line would be included in the 'Coronavirus update' and standard all-staff communications, from the end of the summer onwards.

- 99.7 Regarding minute 92.2: take the Trade Unions' recommendation that social distancing should be maintained and face coverings worn indoors to the PHAP; the Senior Management Team (SMT) had agreed that face masks were mandatory in all indoor spaces at UCL.
- 99.8 Regarding minute 92.2: follow up on the availability and suitability of FFP2 masks for teaching staff; it was reported that FFP2 masks are not designed to be worn for long periods of time and are not reusable, and this runs the risk of staff/students removing them and being without any form of face covering which is a greater cause for concern. It was agreed that individuals would still be able to raise specific concerns through the individual health assessment procedure and if necessary be referred to Workplace Health. If it was deemed necessary for the individual to wear FFP2 masks, these would be supplied by UCL and a face fit test arranged.
- 99.9 Regarding minute 92.3: arrange for the university's policy on vulnerable staff to be included in 'The Week@UCL': the request had been made to Communications & Marketing for inclusion in the newsletter.
- 99.10 Regarding minute 94.1: provide a written response to the questions raised in the Trade Unions' report on their inspection of 20 Bedford Way (UCL Institute of Education); this had been produced on 2 August by the Director, Transformation, Estates Operations.
- 99.11 Regarding minute 94.2: issue a communication focussing on asbestos awareness in buildings; this was included in Safety Services's 'My Safety Matters' newsletter issued 30 July 2021.
- 99.12 Regarding minute 94.3: produce a communication on the importance of reporting problems with the repair of buildings to Estates Maintenance, and of recording any associated incidents on riskNET; a reminder 'that maintenance or service requests and other requests to address building issues should be made via the Estates Customer Helpdesk' was included in 'My Safety Matters' issued 30 July 2021.
- 99.13 Regarding minute 94.5: Produce a communication to make people especially laboratory managers and Departmental Safety Officers, aware of the line of responsibility for dealing with ventilation issues and encourage people to use

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the Estates maintenance helpdesk to report ventilation failures; a reminder 'that maintenance or service requests and other requests to address building issues should be made via the Estates Customer Helpdesk' was included in 'My Safety Matters' issued 30 July 2021.

99.14 Regarding minute 94.6: produce a paper for the next meeting on the use of CO2 monitors to monitor poor ventilation; this was included in this meeting's agenda.

99.15 Regarding minute 95.2: look into improving the completion rate of DSE assessments; this was under review by Safety Services.

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

### **100 Covid-19 update**

100.1 The Convenor commented that the main change was the wearing of face coverings in indoor settings becoming mandatory.

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

101.1 The Director of Workplace Health reported that since the last meeting of HSC there had been no outbreaks on campus. In the past week there had been five positive staff cases on campus and 11 off-campus, and four positive student cases on campus and two off-campus. A communication had been issued encouraging people not to come to the workplace if feeling unwell.

### **102 Workplace Health quarterly report (Paper 11-60)**

102.1 The Director of Workplace Health presented a report postponed from the last meeting, giving an overview of data reported to the SMT for the last quarter. The report was designed to reflect aspects that leaders could influence, such as referrals for advice and wellbeing champion activity in departments.

### **103 Use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to monitor poor ventilation (Paper 12-63)**

103.1 Mr Michael Jorge presented a paper describing the investigation of the use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring at UCL.

103.2 An estimate would be provided of how much coverage would be provided by CO<sub>2</sub> monitors in the estate and the timescale for installation.

**104 Departmental Covid-19 compliance inspections (Paper 12-64)**

104.1 The Director of Safety Services presented a paper proposing that the current monthly Departmental Covid-19 compliance inspections be discontinued, and that risk control measures be monitored by routine departmental workplace inspections.

104.2 The proposal was approved by the Committee.

**105 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 12-65)**

105.1 The Trade Unions requested that staff be informed of any failure of ventilation in the rooms they are working in. As there was a complaint made by a member regarding the efficiency of the alarm/notification system for ventilation failures it was agreed that a description of the system would be circulated to Committee members, and the protocols for communicating failures to departments occupying affected buildings would be reviewed.

105.2 The Trade Unions reiterated their request for signage informing room occupants of how a particular room is ventilated, particularly in teaching spaces. The Convenor declined to agree, given the amount of time it would require and the resource that would be taken from higher priority work.

105.3 The Trade Unions asked what individual risk assessment procedures were in place for individuals who either could not have a vaccine for medical reasons or who had a poor response to the vaccine, and what procedures there were for disabled and other people vulnerable to Covid-19 infection.

105.4 The Director of Workplace Health reported that people with more complex needs could be referred to Workplace Health for an individual risk assessment.

105.5 The Trade Unions asked that UCL develop a set of risk levels based on local Covid-19 prevalence and hospitalisation rates. The Director of Workplace Health stated that UCL's Public Health Advisory Panel (PHAP) had decided not to do this but to follow the Camden & Islington Public Health guidance rather than have parallel local risk levels. UCL's Covid Management Response Team (CMRT) met every week and is regularly in contact with the local councils.

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**106 Update on HSE inspection enforcement actions (Paper 12-66)**

106.1 The Director of Safety Services presented a paper providing a status update on the HSE enforcement actions and the action plan in response. The key actions were progressing well and UCL should be in a position to respond to the HSE by the 30th September.

**107 Any other business**

The meeting finished at 1.00 pm

Jon Blackman

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