



**Health and Safety Committee**

Covid-19 Meeting

29 March 2021, 3.30pm

Minutes

**Present Members:**

Ms Fiona Ryland, (Convenor)

Ms Victoria Adrienne

Dr Matthew Blain, Executive Director of Human Resources

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Theo Bryer

Ms Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Dr Alun Coker

Miss Yasmeen Daoud

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mr David Ladd

Dr Matt Lougher

Ms Carol Paige

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Deputy Head of Safety

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Ms Joanne Tapper

Dr Rob Wilson

**Attendees:**

Mr Ian Dancy

Mr David Everett

Mr Richard Jackson

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Prof Irene Petersen

Mr David Stevens

**Apologies:**

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

**Part I: Preliminary Business**

**54 Membership**

54.1 Ms Victoria Adrienne had replaced Miss Tansy Jones as Representative for UCL GOS Institute of Child Health.

**55 Minutes**

55.1 The Health and Safety Committee (HSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2021 with the addition at minute 51.2 that ‘the trade unions commented that the staff survey results couldn’t show the level of wellbeing and workload at individual departments or locations.’

**56 Matters Arising (Paper 7-38)**

56.1 Regarding minute 44.1: confirm that a meeting had been arranged between the Trade Unions and Estates Division to discuss the prioritisation of ventilation; it was planned that a meeting would be arranged after Easter.

56.2 Regarding minute 51.1: the Trade Unions’ request for a report on how the risks associated with staffing issues - exacerbated by the increased workload associated with the pandemic and the rise in student numbers - were being addressed; this would be considered as part of the workload management review.

56.3 Regarding minute 51.3: instigate a new review of workload to be led by a UCL academic and to include members of the Committee; the Trade Unions emphasised that local negotiations around workload management were a priority and were recommended in the paper that emerged from the UCL Workload Management Working Group.

56.4 It was agreed that the Trade Unions would be involved in the workload management review from the early stages.

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- 56.5 Regarding minute 51.7, establish a process for requesting a screen at reception areas, to include requests from contractor staff; anyone who required a screen should contact Ian Dancy, Duncan Palmer or David Everett.
- 56.6 Regarding minute 51.9: address the problem of the lack of social distancing by students that had been observed in the Refectory Café; new posters were being produced and re-introducing student ambassadors to promote self-distancing rules was being considered for the new term.
- 56.7 Regarding minute 51.9: review areas on campus where outdoor seating might be an option; new seating had been installed in the Quad and Malet Place. A request was made for outdoor seating on the Institute of Education concourse.

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

### **57 Covid-19 update**

- 57.1 The Convenor outlined the changes that the UCL roadmap out of lockdown would bring to the campus in the coming months.

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

- 58.1 Mr Richard Jackson reported that since the last meeting two outbreaks had been identified through the Connect to Protect tool, both in student accommodation (one a University of London hall), with a total of 10 positive cases. Both outbreaks were caused by residents not adhering to social distancing measures.

### **59 Increasing On-site Activity (Paper 7-39)**

- 59.1 Mr Ian Dancy presented a paper examining the implications of the Government's 'Roadmap out of Lockdown' for UCL. It outlined a four-step plan to increase on-site activity, culminating with a return to on-site working by step 4 (no sooner than 21st June 2021). The paper also covered the plans for the safe return of staff and the preparation of spaces, underpinned by UCL's core COVID-19 services and policies, including the introduction of the Future of Work at UCL programme.
- 59.2 All UCL staff were currently being consulted through the Future of Work pulse checker survey for their opinion of working from home, to inform the decision-

making on the Future of Work at UCL programme. The programme recommended a flexible model whereby staff would work on-site and/or remotely, depending on their role. The results of the survey would be available once they had been analysed.

59.3 The Trade Unions expressed support for the use of home test kits but UCL is obligated to provide testing in on-site facilities only.

59.4 The Trade Unions asked if there would be a time limit on meetings, a period between meetings to enable the ventilation of rooms, and more guidance made available on their use - ready for the proposed reintroduction of socially-distanced face-to-face meetings at Step 3 (not before 17 May). It was anticipated that new government guidance would be provided by then and assurance was given that any steps taken would be from a 'safety- and people-first' approach.

## **60 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 7-40)**

60.1 The Trade Unions requested that library and study spaces opening times be restricted to those periods when occupancy was recorded as above 50% and any increases in opening hours piloted to gauge demand.

60.2 The request was declined: the Students Union argued that closure would impact students negatively and student numbers would be changing. Hour by hour usage would be investigated and also whether availability of the service was being advertised to students.

60.3 The Trade Unions requested that all UCL-wide and Faculty-specific operating plans involving reduction of social distancing have the following caveat added to them: "... dependent on continued protection by vaccination from COVID variants in circulation." The Trade Unions also requested clarification regarding vaccine requirements for overseas students planning to come to campus.

60.4 The requests would be impossible to apply, as proof of vaccination could not be enforced.

60.5 The Students Union suggested that student accommodation could be considered for use as a quarantine hotel for students arriving from countries on the banned travel list.

**61 Health and Safety Governance and Committee Structure Improvement (Paper 7-41)**

- 61.1 Mr Richard Jackson presented a paper exploring changes that could be made in order to facilitate the broad improvement of the governance of Health and Safety at UCL through amendments to committee structures and membership.
- 61.2 The paper recommended the development of the existing specialist committees and the introduction of new sub-committees to be aligned to cover the same basic management and governance principles and report at frequent intervals to the HSC.
- 61.3 The paper also proposed that departmental safety committees for high hazard departments move from having a suggested senior manager as the chair to a mandated requirement for the head of department or manager with equivalent or higher authority to chair the committee.
- 61.4 It was noted that inclusion of a Trade Union member would be part of the terms of reference for each proposed HSC sub-committee.
- 61.5 The proposal that the chair of each sub-committee should become a member of the HSC would need to be approved by the Senior Management Team.
- 61.6 The Students Union requested that student concerns inform more of the matters discussed by the HSC. It was agreed that a proposal to this effect for the HSC agenda or for a separate meeting process would be produced in conjunction with the Students Union representatives.
- 61.7 The proposals were approved.

**62 Face Fit testing update (Paper 7-42)**

- 62.1 Mr Dev Agarwal provided an update on the approved guidance on fit testing facemasks to avoid transmission during the pandemic.

**63 Any other business**

- 63.1 None.

The meeting finished at 4.55 pm

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Jon Blackman

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