



Work Health and Safety Committee

17 December 2021, 1.30pm

Minutes

Present Members:

Ms Fiona Ryland, Convenor

Professor Erik Arstad, Chair, Radiation Safety Sub-Committee

Dr Matthew Blain, Chief People Officer

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Theo Bryer

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Dr Rebecca Caygill

Dr Alun Coker

Mr Ian Dancy, Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee

Mr Simon Galloway

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Ms Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing

Dr Matt Lougher

Professor Ivan Parkin, Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Ms Joanne Tapper

Dr Rob Wilson

Attendees:

Mr Si Deeley

Mr Michael Jorge

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Apologies:

Mrs Joanne English

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Head of Safety Governance and Risk

Mr Mike Sheppard, Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee

Professor John Ward, Chair, GM and Biological Safety Sub-Committee

Part I: Preliminary Business

24 Minutes

24.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021.

25 Matters Arising (Paper 3-17)

25.1 Regarding minute 15.2: consider the Trade Unions' request that regular reminders be issued on asbestos awareness. The Director of Safety Services would arrange for asbestos awareness to be included in the new safety induction. It was also agreed that improving asbestos awareness would be an early objective for the new Assistant Director, Compliance and Performance in Estates Division.

25.2 Regarding minute 19.3: investigate whether an email reminder to complete incident initial assessments could be sent to riskNET users. The Director of Safety Services reported that the reminder would be included in the email notifications to incident coordinators and those who are allocated the initial investigation.

25.3 Regarding minute 20.4: publish the approved proposals on ventilation and working temperatures on the Safety Services website. A news item had been published and included in the My Safety Matters newsletter.

25.4 Regarding minute 21.2: update/reissue the guidance for lecturers to include a reminder about the void period; also arrange for a communication on the void period. The communication had been included as a small item in a wider communication. It was agreed that messages about the importance of void periods would be reconsidered; that the appropriateness of the current communication plan and format would be reviewed with Communications and

Marketing; and that the messaging regarding the process of notifying people after a positive case would be looked at again.

- 25.5 Regarding minute 21.3: replace the existing CO₂ signs with new ones providing details of what to do if the monitor warning light stays at red. It was reported that the signage had been reviewed and revised. The Trade Unions still had concerns that the signage in rooms wasn't helpful regarding the use of CO₂ monitors. It was agreed that the room signage would be reviewed again.
- 25.6 Regarding minute 23.2: add to a future WHSC meeting agenda the review of rest and eating facilities and include it in the Estates strategy. The item would be included in a forthcoming agenda and considered for inclusion in the Estates strategy.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

26 Covid-19 update

- 26.1 The Chief People Officer summarised the main changes since the last meeting. A communication had been issued on 13 December that all office workers at UCL who could work remotely should do so. The current situation with the increasing spread of the new Covid-19 Omicron variant was being monitored closely. The Bidborough House NHS vaccine license had been extended until the summer of 2022.

27 UCL Covid-19 outbreak response

- 27.1 The Director of Workplace Health reported that there had been 24 outbreaks, mainly in Student Accommodation, since the last meeting of WHSC. It was proposed that the testing centre would remain open subject to approval from the Department of Health and Social Care. A full package of support measures would be available for students who reported a positive Covid-19 test result on Connect to Protect and who were self-isolating in halls and in private accommodation over Christmas.

28 Terms of Reference review (Paper 3-18)

28.1 The Director of Safety Services presented proposed changes to the Committee terms of reference. The changes were approved subject to the inclusion of 'welfare' in point 1 and the addition of a third UCU Trade Union representative in the nominated membership. The revised terms of reference and membership would be circulated to members.

29 Update on HSE inspection enforcement actions (Paper 3-19)

- 29.1 The Director of Safety Services presented a paper providing a status update on the HSE enforcement actions and the response action plan.
- 29.2 Safety Services would be meeting with Containment Level 3 laboratory managers individually to determine realistic target dates for completion of emergency training by the end of February 2022, which was also the target date for completion of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) manuals by each laboratory.

30 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions

- 30.1 The Trade Unions requested that the position of those who live with people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable be clarified in the light of the new Omicron variant.
- 30.2 In response it was agreed that those who live with people who are severely immunocompromised would be identified and be advised to work at home.
- 30.3 The Trade Unions asked for the introduction of Covid-19 passes for coming on to campus, requiring the individual to have had a booster jab and negative LFT test within the previous 48 hours. The Convener agreed to consider this and also requested the help of the Trade Unions in relaying to their members that those working for the Connect to Protect programme be treated with courtesy and politeness when fulfilling their duties.
- 30.4 The Trade Unions called for the Covid-19 risk assessments to be reviewed for the return to campus in the new year – this was agreed by the Convenor.
- 30.5 The Trade Unions asked that rooms with ventilation rates of less than 12.17 metres per person have their occupancy level reduced to meet the standard. The Convener agreed to consider this.

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Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

31 Any other business

- 31.1 A member brought to the Committee's attention the recent flooding in the basement of the Darwin Building and how recurrent infrastructure issues were affecting the building users' ability to conduct research in a safe and hygienic environment.
- 31.2 The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee apologised for the recurrent flooding problem (due to the flooding of a Thames Water main manhole cover) and offered assurances that Estates Division sought to improve the customer service that they provided and would work with the building users to reach an acceptable short-term and long-term solution.
- 31.3 The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee expressed his thanks to Student Support and Wellbeing, Workplace Health and Safety Services for all their work over the last year, seconded by the Convenor.

The meeting finished at 2.50pm

Jon Blackman

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