



## Work Health and Safety Committee

22 January 2024, 2.05 pm

### Minutes

#### Present Members

Aimie Chapple (Convenor); Kate Boldry; Dr Theo Bryer; Dr Joanna Carrington; Sandra Bond; Dr Alun Coker; Ian Dancy; Prof Fiona Ducotterd; Joanne English; Simon Galloway; Megan Gerrie; Dr Ralph Hick; Max Hill; Ahmad Ismail; Damian Johnson; David Ladd; Portia Lamb; Denise Long; Mary McHarg; Dr Giulia Massaro; Deb Nichols; Prof Ivan Parkin; Danny Patel; Eira Rawlings; Dr Kerstin Sander; Joanne Tapper; Dr Rob Wilson.

#### Apologies:

Sonia Buckingham  
Adrien Cooper  
Donna Dalrymple  
Keith Harvey  
Tansy Jones  
Prof John Kelsey

#### In attendance:

Emma Shirbon.

### Part I: Preliminary Business

#### 15. Minutes (Paper 2-16)

15.1. Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2023.

#### 16. Matters Arising (Paper 2-17)

16.1. Arising from 6.2: Address the matter of furniture in the JBS Haldane Student Hub being in need of repair or replacement. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-committee reported that funding had been obtained to update the furniture.

- 16.2. Arising from minute 6.3: Review the audit of rest and eating facilities in the Bloomsbury campus that was undertaken before the pandemic and meet with the Trade Unions to discuss. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-committee had been unable to complete the review but work was underway. The Convenor requested that a detailed update be brought to the next meeting.
- 16.3. Arising from minute 6.4: Check for any unresolved issues regarding rest and eating facilities at the Institute of Education and include them in the Estates priority process. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee reported that work was part of a broader space audit and agreed to update the Convenor on progress before the next meeting and hoped to bring details of the completion of the action to the next meeting.
- 16.4. Arising from minute 8.2: Arrange a meeting with the Trade Unions to discuss Bidvest Noonan risk assessments and equalities impact assessments. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee reported that Bidvest Noonan had been reminded and were expected to contact the Trade Unions shortly. *[Post-meeting note: The HR Transformation Director from Bidvest Noonan contacted the Trade Unions on 24 January].*
- 16.5. Arising from minute 8.4: Bring guidance on online intimidation and harassment from external sources including social media to the next meeting. The guidance would be brought to a future meeting.

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

### **17. Water Hygiene Management Plan (Paper 2-18)**

- 17.1. Emma Shirbon presented a Water Hygiene Management Plan which would replace the existing water hygiene documents and procedures and provide instruction, guidance and information for UCL staff and contractors. The plan had been developed with the Authorising Engineer (Water) and received peer review from the Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee as well as Estates staff.
- 17.2. It was agreed that the plan would be updated to include the responsibilities of the Head of Department to check all installed systems for legionella compliance; clarity on where Estates responsibilities finished and those of departments started. It would be checked whether the monitoring of waste streams from BSU units was compliant with the new regulations. Following further engagement with Committee members and Heads of Department the plan would be circulated for approval by WHSC before the next meeting.
- 17.3. The Convenor commented that the responsibilities of Heads of Department regarding legionella compliance should be tied in with the responsibilities of Heads of Department in general and with any communications being produced

on this; she suggested that the Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee investigate this further.

**18. Health and Safety Objectives**

- 18.1 The Director of Health and Safety reported that the objectives were yet to be set. An update was given on progress on incident reporting KPIs and T100.

**19. UMC Health and Safety report (Paper 2-19)**

- 19.1. The Head of Safety Governance and Risk and the Director of Workplace Health presented the health and safety monthly data and activities report for November 2023.
- 19.2. It was agreed that the Trade Unions would meet with the Director of Health and Safety and the Head of Safety Governance and Risk to review incidents before future WHSC meetings.
- 19.3. The Trade Unions commented that tackling the causes of staff absence due to stress and depression could be improved and areas such as the provision of workload modelling and rest areas for staff were taking too long. The Convenor responded that such issues were being discussed by the University Mental Health Charter Working Group and further information would be brought to the next meeting.
- 19.4. The Trade Unions asked if the Workplace Health statistics on stress in the UMC monthly report could be illustrated per faculty. The Director of Workplace Health stated that due to under-reporting the data numbers were low, and higher levels of disaggregation could potentially compromise confidentiality.
- 19.5. The Convenor requested that the Director of Workplace Health bring to the next meeting a briefing on stress including a consideration of what further insight into sickness absence due to stress can be achieved in the short and longer term.

**20. Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 2-20)**

- 20.1. The Trade Unions reported that building works coinciding with significant moving challenges, asbestos removal, overcrowding and a failure to meet the basic needs of all building users had led to an untenable situation that continued to generate significant stress and threats to the safety of staff and students.
- 20.2 A number of comments gathered from Trade Union members working at 20 Bedford Way and other Institute of Education sites had been quoted in the paper regarding such aspects as heating failures; fire safety; access and

hazards; impact of the masterplan and asbestos removal. The Trade Unions asked if sections of the building should have been closed and the issues described been anticipated.

- 20.3. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee reported that he had arranged a meeting between the Trade Unions and Estates Division to discuss the operational matters detailed in the Trade Unions' paper. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee also reported that the issues described had been anticipated, with a plan in place and that processes were in place to close rooms when necessary.
- 20.4. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee emphasised the importance of reporting heating issues in rooms. The Trade Unions requested action to ensure thermometers were installed in rooms so that UCL complied with the statutory obligation to monitor temperature in rooms.
- 20.5. The Convenor asked that all the issues discussed be addressed at the next meeting of the Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee and that the other members of the Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee be invited to attend the forthcoming meeting between the Trade Unions and Estates Division.
- 20.6. The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee added that there were a number of rooms that were unsuitable for teaching and remained so because they were not top priority to fix. He recommended a patrolling check of temperature in rooms by Estates Division. He also drew the Committee's attention to the condition of the toilets.
- 20.7. The Trade Unions asked for further detail on the process regarding accountability for incidents, including clear responsibilities, timelines, and oversight. The Convenor asked that the Director of Health and Safety (who had joined UCL since the last meeting) meet with Damian Johnson to understand the issues about accountability for incidents and produce a plan for short and long term solutions for the next meeting.
- 20.8. The Trade Unions stated that as stress risk assessments currently need to be completed by the line manager, this caused an issue if the stress arose from interpersonal issues between the line manager and reportee. The Convenor asked the Director of Workplace Health to investigate if a stress risk assessment could be raised by someone other than the line manager, where the line manager is contributing to the stress.
- 20.9. The Trade Unions requested that past room moves be reviewed and lessons learned be outlined, and also mentioned the impact of densification, with staff feeling uncertain if they would have their own desk. The Convenor reported

that 'space principles' were being discussed at the Academic Board with a view to make the best use of space and the process would include impact statements.

**21. Quarterly Report Chemical Safety Sub-Committee (Paper 2-21)**

- 21.1. The Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee presented a report of the sub-committee's activities over the last quarter. The Chair was concerned at local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and chemical waste management problems at UCL East. The ventilation system from the fume cupboards had not been certified, and the local system of chemical waste removal was not working properly. It was agreed that the Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee would urgently pursue the resolution of the issues.
- 21.2. WHSC noted the report.

**22. Quarterly Report: Fire Safety Sub-Committee (Paper 2-22)**

- 22.1. Emma Shirbon presented a report of the sub-committee's activities over the last quarter and requested approval of the change of governance for the Building Safety Act work from the Building Safety Act Working Group to the Fire Improvement Delivery Board.
- 22.2. An update was requested on fire evacuation marshal recruitment. It was reported that this was part of the fire safety improvement work, with higher risk buildings being looked at first and departments being consulted. The challenge was having sufficient FEMs on site with hybrid working.
- 22.3. WHSC approved the change and noted the report.

**23. Quarterly Report: Genetic Modification and Biological Safety Sub-Committee (Paper 2-23)**

- 23.1. The Chair, Genetic Modification and Biological Safety Sub-Committee presented a report of the sub-committee's activities over the last quarter. It was reported that Security had not been able to contact the Prion Unit front desk regarding emergency alarms due to a problem with the Teams connection.
- 23.2. It was agreed that the Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee would work with the relevant teams to review the specific issue of the security control on the emergency alarm being directed through Teams at the Prion Unit and more broadly at other Containment Level 3 laboratories.
- 23.3. Regarding laboratories, the issue of staff leaving a post but retaining access to secure facilities connected with the role after taking up a new post at UCL was raised. The Convenor asked the Director of Workplace Health (on behalf of

the Chief People Officer) to pursue how to ensure staff changing roles within UCL have only the correct access for their new job.

23.4. WHSC noted the report.

**24. Quarterly Report: Radiation Safety Sub-Committee (Paper 2-24)**

24.1. The Chair, Radiation Safety Sub-Committee presented a report of the sub-committee's activities over the last quarter including a request for approval of the updated terms of reference.

24.2. WHSC approved the updated terms of reference and noted the report.

24.3. It was noted that reports for two quarters would be provided for the Infrastructure and Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committees at the next meeting.

**Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information**

**25. Agenda pre-meetings**

25.1. The Chair, Work Operational Health and Safety Sub-Committee asked that the agenda pre-meeting be reintroduced to allow for papers to be reviewed in advance and in order for them to be issued to an agreed deadline a week before meetings.

25.2. This was agreed and future meeting date(s) and deadlines would be communicated to Committee members.

Jonathan Blackman  
January 2024