



Work Health and Safety Committee

Monday 24 October 2022, 2.05pm

Minutes

Present Members:

Mr Andy Smith, Convenor

Professor Erik Arstad, Chair, Radiation Safety Sub-Committee

Miss Hayley Boakes

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Theo Bryer

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Mr Adrien Cooper, Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee

Miss Donna Dalrymple, Chief People Officer

Mrs Joanne English

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Damian Johnson

Mrs Portia Lamb, Head of Safety Governance and Risk

Ms Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing

Dr Matt Lougher

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Dr Alun Coker

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Dr Robert Wilson

Attendees:

Mrs Sally Belcher

Ms Kate Boldry

Mr Ronnie Davidson

Mr Pan Joannou

Mr Danny Patel

Ms Lorren Rea

Ms Catherine Stow

Apologies:

Mr Deniz Akinci

Mr Ian Dancy, Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee

Mr Simon Galloway

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mr David Ladd

Professor Ivan Parkin, Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee

Ms Tracy Pearmain

Part I: Preliminary Business

1 Terms of reference and membership (Paper 1-01)

- 1.2 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the terms of reference and membership. The Convenor asked that any queries regarding faculty representation in the membership be directed to him.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022.

3 Matters Arising (Paper 1-02)

- 3.1 Regarding minute 59.2: monitor absence rates and review the formal procedures for managing sickness absence accordingly, following the change to encouraging staff to stay at home if feeling unwell. The Chief People Officer reported that this had been incorporated in the review of temporary adjusted trigger points under the Sickness Absence Policy discussed at minute 5.
- 3.2 Regarding minute 71.5: produce a report summarising the resolution of the Institute of Prion Diseases Containment Level 3 laboratories incidents/HSE inspection issues. The report was being completed by the Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee. The Convenor requested that this and other older matters arising be resolved as soon as possible.

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- 3.3 Regarding minute 83.1: update the fieldwork risk assessment webpages. The Safety Services website had been updated.
- 3.4 Regarding minute 85.2: check that the maximum ventilation changes are in effect in the Rockefeller anatomy laboratory. Miss Hayley Boakes had received an Estates Customer Helpdesk ticket closure update indicating a report had been issued to Estates Division but had not seen the report.
- 3.5 Regarding minute 86.2: provide a summary of the investigation into an incident involving a student removing toxic chemicals from a laboratory. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had responded that he was still awaiting a response from the legal team conducting the review. It was agreed that the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing would bring the review to the next meeting to enable lessons learned to be drawn.
- 3.6 Regarding minute 86.3: seek external advice on whether a derogation needs to be made to apply the required control of 'sealability' of the Containment Level 3 laboratory at 1 Wakefield St. With the recent submission of the derogation to the Health and Safety Executive this matter was now closed.
- 3.4 Regarding minute 87.1: confirm that what had been agreed at the March WHSC meeting for requesting the installation of new AEDs had been implemented. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had confirmed that the agreed measures had been implemented.
- 3.5 Regarding minute 90.1: include a Unison representative (Mrs Joanne English) in the ongoing discussions about the Workload Management Systems working group. This had been done.
- 3.6 Regarding minute 90.1: contact Mr Martin Oliver to discuss workload management modelling with regard to the UCL Institute of Education. This had been done.
- 3.7 Regarding minute 95.1: raise with Security their response to an incident where a staff member was stuck in a lift. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had reported that a lessons learned exercise had been completed by Security. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee agreed to bring the findings to the next meeting.
- 3.8 Regarding minute 99.2: Develop a policy, guidance and communications plan clarifying UCL's position on the use of illegal EV (electric vehicle) equipment (such as e-scooters) and establishing the provision of safe charging points for

legal equipment. Mrs Emma Shirbon had responded that work had begun on the guidance regarding installation of safe charging points but not on the policy, guidance and communication plan around UCL's position on EV (electric vehicle) equipment.

- 3.9 Regarding minute 104.1: arrange for Ms Catherine Stow to provide an update on the scope and timelines of the workload management, to include the Trade Unions' requests that the workload model address stress management standards and be time-based, and training be provided for Heads of Department. Ms Catherine Stow presented a paper at minute 4.
- 3.10 Regarding minute 104.2: the Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee to provide an update to Mr Damian Johnson on progress with the report on the Institute of Prion Diseases Containment Level 3 laboratories incidents/HSE inspection issues raised. This matter was covered by minute 3.2.
- 3.11 Regarding minute 104.4: confirm all room capacity signage is in place by 3 October 2022, with the Institute of Education prioritised to account for their earlier start of term. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had confirmed that this had been done and recommended reporting to the Estates Customer Helpdesk any instances where signage was not in place.
- 3.12 Regarding minute 104.5: arrange for operational guidance on situations where room capacity is exceeded to be issued by 30 September. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had confirmed that this had been included in the 30th September Leadership Briefing for cascading to staff. The Trade Unions responded that the guidance had not been seen by them despite two previous requests made to the Committee.
- 3.13 Regarding minute 104.5: meet with Dr Theo Bryer to discuss her concerns about situations where teaching room capacity is exceeded. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee had met Dr Bryer and would also meet with Ms Sian Minett and report back to the Committee with an update.
- 3.14 Regarding minute 104.6: conduct a walk of waste management areas on campus with Paul Monk and subsequently arrange a meeting with a group of stakeholders to address the issues raised regarding the performance of the waste management contractors. Dr Rob Wilson reported that the walk round had taken place and some progress made regarding a mechanism to discuss issues.

- 3.15 Regarding minute 105.2: Consider making stress management training for managers mandatory and having it incorporated in the People Management Essentials training. The Chief People Officer reported that the forthcoming People Management Essentials training did include stress management training for managers.
- 3.16 Regarding minute 107.3: present the outcome of the review of the current FEM arrangements to the Committee. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee agreed to present a detailed plan at the next meeting.
- 3.17 Regarding minute 107.4: speak to Mr Martin Treacy (delivery lead of the Institute of Education Masterplan) to ensure that building signage is adequate while works are ongoing at the Institute of Education. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had responded that he had raised the concerns directly with Martin and the project team and spoken to the team about linked concerns regarding catering, with a separate response provided to individual members. The response to issues at the Institute of Education were combined at minute 8.3.
- 3.18 Regarding minute 108.3: bring an action plan to the next meeting addressing concerns over hazardous waste collection, including a mechanism to review the performance of the waste management contractor. The Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee agreed to establish a mechanism of measures and checks on the waste management contractor's performance.
- 3.19 Regarding minute 109.1: review the flow of information between the sub-committees and the WHSC and the wider communication of outcomes. The Convenor had delegated the review to The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee and Director of Safety Services to take forward with the sub-committee chairs as appropriate and develop/commission any papers that were needed.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

4 Workload modelling (Paper 1-03)

- 4.1 Ms Catherine Stow presented a paper requesting approval of the scope, associated timelines and some key elements underpinning the implementation process of an over-arching set of workload allocation principles for the organisation, that could be applied locally for staff in teaching, research and professional services.

- 4.2 The Trade Unions asked if Professional Services included technical staff such as maintenance staff, workshop technicians and teaching lab technicians. This would be checked. The Trade Unions insisted that the scope requirement for faculties should include time tariffs, with an indicative example, and that the workload modelling be reviewed regularly in the future with the Trade Unions, in response to changing events and conditions.
- 4.3 The Chair, Radiation Safety Sub-Committee, asked that the effect of the introduction of new policies on workload be made a central consideration of the scope.
- 4.4 The Chief People Officer responded that the requests would be considered as part of the scoping exercise.

5 Sickness Absence Policy amendment (Paper 1-04)

- 5.1 Ms Lorren Rea presented a paper asking the Committee to consider whether the temporary adjusted trigger points introduced in April as a response to Covid-19 should be extended or removed. The adjusted trigger points had been brought in so that those whose work did not lend itself to remote working were not at a disadvantage. The usual sickness absence triggers of 12 or more working days (pro rata) or 6 or more episodes in any rolling 12-month period were extended for this group of staff to 18 or more working days (pro-rata), or 9 or more episodes in any rolling 12-month period.
- 5.2 The Committee recommended that the use of the trigger points be extended until 30th April 2023.

6 Workplace Health Annual Report (Paper 1-05)

- 6.1 Mrs Sally Belcher and Mr Pan Joannou presented a paper giving an overview of health and wellbeing activities for the year 2021/22. It included the support provided to UCL staff and postgraduate research students and activity data for the period. A narrative around activity data including management and student referral for occupational health advice and health surveillance statistics for staff exposed to laboratory animal allergens was also included.
- 6.2 The Convenor requested that any comments or questions be sent directly to the presenters of the paper, owing to time constraints at the meeting.

7 Workplace Health and Safety Gap Analysis (Paper 1-09)

- 7.1 The Chief People Officer presented a paper summarising the management response to the recent Workplace Health & Safety Gap Analysis report and considering how best to address its findings.
- 7.2 The Director of Safety Services expressed disappointment that the final version of the gap analysis report had been issued without Safety Services having any involvement. Constructive criticism was appreciated but it was not clear that the evidence on which the gap analysis was based had been verified. The management response mentioned the need to review the organisational structure of the Safety Services team, but this was not mentioned in the gap analysis. The team had recently undergone a restructure to be more resilient especially in key specialist areas and aligned with the safety sub-committee governance structure, which was approved and supported by the previous Convenor of the WHSC and the previous Chief People Officer. The restructure still had one or two posts to recruit and had had very little time to embed. The Director of Safety Services added that Safety Services had produced a review of the gap analysis detailing their concerns about its robustness and would be happy to share this with the Committee, in order that it could comment appropriately on the management paper.
- 7.3 The Trade Unions commented that Safety Services' response would be useful. They believed Departmental Safety Officers had the accountability but not the power to correct problems, which was where the real gap was. The complexity of the organisation meant that different departments often shared the same building and there was no direct interaction. It was mentioned that it would be helpful if there were area safety coordinators to fill this gap. It was also added that it was key that heads of department commit themselves to the management of health and safety.
- 7.4 An appointed member agreed that it was difficult to coordinate health and safety oversight with other departments who shared the same buildings, which was why she relied on the support of Safety Services and was concerned that the gap analysis seemed to say that this support was not forthcoming. Another appointed member was shocked at the criticism of

Safety Services in the report and added that she counted on the support of the team, which provided a good service.

- 7.5 The Convenor commented that the gap analysis suggested a stronger role for Safety Services in improving safety management at UCL. He asked that rather than having separate reports circulating, the item be brought back for consideration following a meeting with the Director of Safety Services, the Chief People Officer and the authors of the gap analysis report.

8 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 1-07)

- 8.1 Dr Theo Bryer presented a paper raising again concerns over overcrowding and associated risks at the Institute of Education. It was reported that a hazardous combination of a huge influx of students, building work, hazards along fire routes, inadequate signage and lack of advice about how to deal with incidents of overcrowding meant that fire safety was significantly compromised. It was added that associated risks to safety and wellbeing needed to be dealt with urgently and actively monitored thereafter.
- 8.2 It was requested that a review of rest and eating areas across the estate be revived given the rise in student numbers and the ongoing building work. There were no quiet rest and eating places specifically for staff at 20 Bedford Way.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee would address the overcrowding and associated issues in an action plan to be brought to the next meeting. The Convenor added that all the necessary support would be provided to achieve this.
- 8.4 The Convenor agreed to raise the matter at the next meeting of the University Management Committee (UMC).

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

9 Any other business

- 9.1 The remaining items would be held over until the next meeting apart from the Annual Report to Council, comments on which would be requested by email within seven days, followed by approval by the Convenor if no objections were raised.

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- 9.2 *Post-meeting note:* After the meeting the appointed member for the Division of Biosciences requested a response to a report on the latest flooding event in the Darwin Building sub-basement. The Convenor asked the Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee to respond.

The meeting finished at 4.05pm.

Jonathan Blackman