



Work Health and Safety Committee

25 February 2022, 10.00am

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 Alun Coker

Mr Ian Dancy, Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee

Miss Yasmin Daoud

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Mr Damian Johnson

Mr David Ladd

Dr Matt Lougher

Professor Ivan Parkin, Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee

Ms Tracy Pearmain

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Head of Safety Governance and Risk

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Ms Joanne Tapper

Dr Rob Wilson

Attendees:

25 February 2022

Ms Jane Adamson

Mr Dev Agarwal

Mr Simon Cooke

Ms Rachel Fairfax

Mr Richard Jackson

Mr Stephen Moore

Ms Fiona Naughton

Apologies:

Dr Rebecca Caygill

Mrs Joanne English

Mr Mike Sheppard, Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Mr Osman Teklies

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

Part I: Preliminary Business

41 Membership

41.1 Mr Damian Johnson had joined as a second Unite representative.

42 Minutes

42.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022.

43 Matters Arising (Paper 5-27)

43.1 Regarding minute 34.8: update the Covid-19 risk assessments to state that LFT tests should be taken twice a week or more if the person doing the testing was going to attend an event on campus. The risk assessments had been reviewed and it was likely that they would need to be updated again in line with further changes to government guidance on Covid-19. A verbal update on any new changes made would be brought to the next meeting.

43.2 Regarding minute 37.2: Assess the impact of the CO₂ monitors already in place and the cost of rolling out the audit programme to multi-user offices. It

25 February 2022

was reported that this was an ongoing phased programme of works and a discussion was taking place to understand what a trial might look like.

- 43.3 Regarding minute 37.3: report the noise produced by the mechanical ventilation in the security operations room to the Estates customer helpdesk. This had been done and Estates Division were investigating the matter.
- 43.4 Regarding minute 38.3: Provide more evidence that the risk of Covid-19 transmission through touching surfaces is lower compared to aerosol transmission. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee had provided a link to a web article on transmission of Covid-19 in indoor environments that was recommended by the Chair, Chemical Safety Sub-Committee.
- 43.5 Regarding minute 38.4: Remind departments to undertake Covid-19 compliance inspections of their buildings. This was to be included in the next edition of My Safety Matters, to be issued on 28 February.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

44 Covid-19 update

- 44.1 The Convenor reported that with remaining government restrictions being lifted there had been changes to UCL's face coverings guidance from 21 February, with students and staff expected to wear face coverings in teaching settings and strongly advised to continue to wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces in other settings. The remaining guidance on working on campus remained in place until the end of the current term.

45 UCL Covid-19 outbreak response

- 45.1 The Director of Workplace Health reported that there had been no outbreaks over the last week. Since the last meeting there had been 9 outbreaks, all except one in student accommodation. The asymptomatic COVID-19 testing centre had closed on 18 February and home testing kits were no longer to be issued, but the remaining stock had all been distributed across the campus. In the future more kits could be distributed if there was an outbreak on campus. Connect to Protect would continue to facilitate reporting to the local health authority but it was anticipated that it would move to an information provider role in the coming months. Because free testing would no longer be

25 February 2022

available a change in culture would be promoted to discourage anyone with symptoms of anything infectious from attending the campus.

- 45.2 The Trade Unions raised the issue of the effect of this culture change on staff sickness absence. The Chief People Officer stated that paid special leave for COVID-19 related illness was still in place, but absence processes would need to be reviewed and the results of the review would come to a future meeting. It was agreed that a summary of Covid-19 absence (including period of absence) since the onset of tracking would be provided at the next meeting.
- 45.3 The Committee formally thanked the team who had supported UCL's testing centres since 2020.

46 Asbestos management plan review (Paper 4-21)*

- 46.1 Ms Jane Adamson presented a paper summarising the changes to UCL's Asbestos Management Plan.
- 46.2 The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee added that there would be increased focus on managing control of asbestos with the creation of the new role of Assistant Director of Compliance and Performance.
- 46.3 The Committee approved the changes to the Asbestos Management Plan.

47 GM & Biological Safety Sub-Committee quarterly report (Paper 4-22)*

- 47.1 Mr Stephen Moore presented a paper providing key updates and reporting performance for the first quarter of the academic year 2021/22.
- 47.2 Exempt from publication, see confidential minutes.
- 47.3 Exempt from publication, see confidential minutes.
- 47.4 A member raised concerns that a CL3 laboratory managers were not aware whether a permit to work was required for safety-controlling processes such as fumigating a cabinet, as there was no guidance to refer to from Estates Division. This could result in fumigating occurring when an engineer was working on plant. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee would follow this up.
- 47.5 It was reported that Safety Services were working with Estates Division to identify the plant that supported CL3 laboratories to make the Permit to Work system more effective.

25 February 2022

47.6 The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee stated that he was aware of the importance of improved integration between Estates Division and CL3 laboratory managers and was introducing staff roles involving closer working with departments.

48 Quarterly performance report (Paper 4-23)*

48.1 Mr Dev Agarwal presented a report on health and safety performance data for the first quarter of the academic year 2021/22.

48.2 Regarding the number of incidents of cuts occurring especially in undergraduate dissection programmes, the Trade Unions noted the rising cases among the general population of serious illness caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria and asked that information be provided on a standardised treatment to mitigate the risk to students of infection considering the potential for antibiotic resistance.

48.3 The Chief People Officer reported that a campaign was underway to try to raise the completion rate of online mandatory safety training to 95% compliance over the next few months.

49 Fire Safety and Fire Risk Management Standard (Paper 5-28)

49.1 The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee presented a new fire safety and fire risk management standard, the aim of which was to encourage and promote the safe management of departmental work activities to reduce the risk of fire incidents.

49.2 The Trade Unions emphasised the need for an effective method of making teaching staff aware of their responsibilities in avoiding overcrowding in lecture theatres. The Director, Sustainability suggested that information and training in their responsibilities be targeted at discrete groups of duty holders.

49.3 The Convenor requested that a policy on evacuation procedures and a communication plan for different stakeholder groups, such as Heads of Department and lecturers, be produced.

49.4 Exempt from publication, see confidential minutes.

49.5 The Convenor asked for a communication to be produced for the attention of Deans on the importance of having sufficient departmental fire evacuation marshals to maintain fire safety in buildings used by students.

25 February 2022

- 49.6 A member reported that a request to repair damaged fire doors in his department's building was being delayed due to purchasing system issues. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee agreed to investigate.

50 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 5-29)

- 50.1 The Trade Unions asked for a commitment that staff at higher risk from COVID-19 (as defined by the NHS) be allowed to delay a return to campus until infection rates in London fall below 0.3 per cent; that they be provided with FFP2 respirators when they do return; and that those protections be extended to staff who share a household with someone who is immuno-compromised.
- 50.2 In response the Convenor referred to UCL's guidance which supported staff whose immune system meant that they were at higher risk of serious illness if they became infected with COVID-19, or lived with someone in this group, to work remotely. In cases where people with other conditions felt at higher risk of infection, managers should refer them to Workplace Health who could provide a report to advise whether working from home was appropriate.
- 50.3 The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee added that FFP2 masks were still available across the campus.
- 50.4 The Trade Unions sought a commitment to maintain a staff canteen at the Institute of Education. The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee agreed to ask the Director (Estates Development) to discuss the matter with the Institute of Education estates team.
- 50.5 The Trade Unions requested that the importance of staff rest and eating areas be discussed by the University Management Committee (UMC). The Convenor asked that as a first step the subject be included in the Estates masterplan, and this be brought to the Committee for review. The findings of the last review of eating and rest facilities would be sent to The Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

51 Any other business

- 51.1 Due to the absence of the author, the Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) paper was postponed to the March meeting.

25 February 2022

51.2 A Safety Moments talk given to Estates by a safety adviser had been much appreciated and generated considerable interest.

The meeting finished at 11.25am

Jon Blackman

February 2022

*Paper postponed from 28 January 2022