



**Work Health and Safety Committee**

25 November 2021, 11.00am

Minutes

**Present Members:**

Ms Fiona Ryland, Convenor

Professor Erik Arstad, Chair, Radiation Safety Sub-Committee

Dr Matthew Blain, Chief People Officer

Ms Sandra Bond

Dr Theo Bryer

Mrs Sonia Buckingham

Mr Colin Byelong

Dr Rebecca Caygill

Mr Ian Dancy, Chair, Fire Safety Sub-Committee

Ms Yasmeen Daoud

Mrs Joanne English

Mr Simon Galloway

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Ms Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing

Dr Matt Lougher

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Head of Safety Governance and Risk

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Mike Sheppard, Chair, Infrastructure Safety Sub-Committee

Ms Joanne Tapper

Dr Rob Wilson

**Attendees:**

Mr David Benton

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Mr Si Deeley

Mr Michael Jorge

**Apologies:**

Miss Hayley Boakes

Dr Alun Coker

Professor Ivan Parkin, Chair, Chemical 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**

**13 Membership**

13.1 Mrs Joanne English had joined the Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) as the Unison observer.

**14 Minutes**

14.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021.

**15 Matters Arising (Paper 2-11)**

15.1 Regarding minute 1.1: review the terms of reference for conformity with regulation 9 of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and provide feedback on proposed changes. The inclusion of 'the WHSC is constituted in accordance with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (1977) as amended by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (1996)' was agreed. The Head of Safety Governance and Risk also had proposed changes to the terms of reference and would circulate these to members.

15.2 Regarding minute 3.1: arrange for the communications that were issued on asbestos awareness in buildings and the importance of reporting problems with the repair of buildings to Estates Maintenance, to be included in The

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Week@UCL for week ending 5 November. It was reported that this had been done but the Trade Unions requested that regular reminders be issued on asbestos awareness. The Head of Safety Governance and Risk agreed to consider this.

- 15.3 Regarding minute 3.5: produce a checklist of what staff using a room should do in the event of ventilation failure; staff should call the Estates Customer Helpdesk to report the fault as all ventilation faults would be prioritised.
- 15.4 Regarding minute 3.6: check the content of the current version of the UCLH risk assessment in terms of mental health; the UCLH individual health risk assessment did not cover mental health.
- 15.5 Regarding minute 10.3: take requests for a stand-alone reminder email to staff and students on taking two lateral flow tests and an aide-memoire for Heads of Departments and Professional Services leads on the same subject to Communications and Marketing. UCL would continue to recommend the existing safety measures to stop the spread of Covid-19; Communications and Marketing would be working with UCL's Centre for Behaviour Change to ensure that the messages on keeping safe on campus were reaching their target.
- 15.6 Regarding minute 10.5: produce guidance on the holding of events involving over 35 people on campus; the guidance had been relayed to all managers via a leadership briefing.
- 15.7 Regarding minute 10.8: discuss at the next meeting of the UMC the suspension of the 40% working on campus guideline until there is a sustained drop in the Covid-19 infection rates. The guideline would remain in place until the next review which was due on 6 December.
- 15.8 Regarding minute 10.9: investigate if nominal ventilation rates on buildings could be provided to WHSC. A table based on findings for teaching spaces from the initial survey in 2020 had been circulated to Committee members. Estates Division were currently taking readings in other teaching and permanently occupied spaces.
- 15.9 Regarding minute 10.11: find out if the ages of attendees were recorded for Institute of Education events, to enable discussions with the relevant departments re suspension of events on campus involving groups of school age children. [Post-meeting note: The Convenor had received a response

from the Institute of Education but this related to visits to schools rather than events at the Institute. The Convenor was happy to pursue the matter but noted that any such events had already occurred. School events/visits would be reviewed next term to align with government guidance changes or when more data was available on the new Covid-19 variant].

15.10: Regarding minute 11.1: include where the Trade Unions disagreed with the Committee in future health and safety annual reports. It was agreed that the annual report would include only the instances where the Trade Unions specifically requested the minuting of their disagreement with the Committee.

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

### **16 Covid-19 update**

16.1 The Convenor summarised the main changes since the last meeting.

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

17.1 The Director of Workplace Health reported that there had been no outbreaks since the last meeting of WHSC. In the past week there had been 15 staff and 22 student cases.

### **18 Workplace Health annual report (Paper 2-12)**

18.1 The Director of Workplace Health presented a summary of Workplace Health's activity data for the academic year 2020/2021, including referral for advice, health surveillance statistics and wellbeing activity.

### **19 KPMG internal safety audit (Paper 2-13)**

19.1 The Head of Safety Governance and Risk presented a paper summarising a report from UCL's internal auditors KPMG, who periodically undertake a health and safety audit to review the process and controls in place to ensure compliance with health and safety practices. The audit took place in September/October 2021 and KPMG had provided an assurance rating of 'significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities' (amber-green).

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- 19.2 Regarding the recommendation that approval of risk assessments by a second individual be made mandatory, it was commented that this change could increase the existing delay in approval of risk assessments.
- 19.3 Regarding the proposal to revise the target time for initial assessment of an incident from the current 10 working days to 5 days, the Head of Safety Governance and Risk agreed to investigate whether an email reminder to complete initial assessments could be sent to riskNET users.
- 19.4 Regarding mandatory learning, the Chief People Officer outlined proposed changes to the online learning platform that would improve access and reporting.
- 19.5 The Committee approved the proposals put forward for dealing with the specific recommendations in the KPMG report.

## **20 Ventilation policy and minimum office temperature (Paper 2-14)**

- 20.1 The Head of Safety Governance and Risk presented a paper addressing the potential conflict between the natural ventilation controls needed for combating Covid-19 and maintaining a suitable environmental working temperature.
- 20.2 The Committee approved the proposals for managing situations that may arise. A problem with very low temperatures would be raised to the Estates Customer Helpdesk, which would trigger a more detailed examination for the area to be carried out by the local manager with support from Estates Division. Where inadequate temperatures existed due to the impact of maintaining adequate natural ventilation, a range of options would be considered to help alleviate the problem such as extension of lunch breaks, access to warmer environments/hot food/drink, wearing of warmer clothing, increased or additional heating and discontinuing the use of rooms with inadequate heating/ventilation.
- 20.3 The Trade Unions asked if thermometers could be supplied to building receptions to enable people to determine the temperature in their workplace, and if they could work at home if it was persistently cold. In response it was recommended that people report such issues to the Estates Customer Helpdesk and follow the options outlined above.

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20.4 The Head of Safety Governance and Risk agreed to publish the proposals on the Safety Services website.

20.5 The Committee approved the proposals.

## **21 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 2-15)**

21.1 The Trade Unions requested that signage indicating maximum room occupancy and ventilation status be displayed in teaching rooms and offices. They also asked for signage to direct staff where to ask for support with potential failures of ventilation or issues with window opening; to explain what to do if a CO<sub>2</sub> monitor goes red; to explain whether or not to use the fan/cool ventilation; and to suggest leaving doors open, as well as windows if this would help to maintain a flow of air in specific spaces. There was also concern that the void period between teaching sessions was not being observed, leading to congestion in corridors.

21.2 In response it was reported that a review of rooms would shortly take place to assess the level of signage and improve the situation. The guidance for lecturers would be updated and reissued as soon as possible to include a reminder about the void period, which would also be the subject of a communication to be issued.

21.3 Regarding the CO<sub>2</sub> monitor signage, it was agreed that Estates Division would replace the existing signs with new ones providing details of what to do if the monitor warning light stays at red.

21.4 The Trade Unions asked that staff be given a clearer recommendation as to their responsibilities in the case of a Covid outbreak in their teaching group or office area.

21.5 The Director of Workplace Health reported that a new graphic is being launched by Communications & Marketing in the next day or so which would clarify the updated process.

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

### **22 Health and Safety objectives (Paper 2-16)**

22.1 The Head of Safety Governance and Risk presented the UCL health and safety objectives for 2021/2022.

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22.2 The Committee approved the objectives.

**23 Any other business**

23.1 An update would be provided at the next meeting on the servicing of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) on the UCL estate.

23.2 It was agreed that the review of rest and eating facilities that was postponed due to the pandemic would be added to a future WHSC meeting agenda and would be included in the Estates strategy.

The meeting finished at 12.20 pm

Jon Blackman

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