



**Work Health and Safety Committee**

28 October 2021, 1.30pm

Minutes

**Present Members:**

Ms Fiona Ryland, (Convenor)

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

Ms Yasmeen Daoud

Mr Simon Galloway

Dr Rachel Hadi-Talab

Mr Keith Harvey

Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health

Dr Matt Lougher

Professor Ivan Parkin

Mrs Hayley Ramsay, Deputy Head of Safety

Mrs Eira Rawlings

Mr Mike Sheppard

Mr Paul Stirk, Director of Safety Services

Professor John Ward

Dr Rob Wilson

Ms Joanne Tapper

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**Attendees:**

Mr Dev Agarwal

Mr Si Deeley

Mr Richard Jackson

Mr Stephen Moore

Mr Chris Morgan

Ms Karen Smith

**Apologies:**

Professor Erik Arstad

Mr Ian Dancy

Ms Denise Long

**Part I: Preliminary Business**

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

- 1.1 The membership was approved by the committee, but the terms of reference were to be reviewed by the Trade Unions for conformity with regulation 9 of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977. Feedback on proposed changes would be provided to the Convenor and secretary.

**2 Minutes**

- 2.1 The Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021 subject to an addition at 113.1 noting that issues with managerial inflexibility regarding how the 40% attendance requirement was observed should be referred to Heads of Department and Trade Unions, and an entry in any other business regarding the 'in-person' ISD termly increment planning event held on 13-14 October.

**3 Matters Arising (Paper 1-02)**

- 3.1 Regarding minute 109.4: 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 sent to all staff; it

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was planned that the items would be included in The Week@UCL for week ending 5 November.

- 3.2 Regarding minute 109.6: Estates Division and Trade Unions to discuss service standards and timescales in the alarm/notification system for ventilation failures; this had yet to take place.
- 3.3 Regarding minute 113.2: Investigate displaying the maximum room occupancy details in rooms; maximum room occupancy details will be displayed in rooms by the end of week 6 of this term, 12 November.
- 3.4 Regarding minute 113.4: Estates Division to produce a flow chart of the response to ventilation failures for the Trade Unions and instigate a programme of inspection of the ventilation rates in all rooms; a written response had been circulated before the meeting which included a 'response and information during a ventilation plant incident' flow chart and which stated that 'plant rooms are monitored by a mix of rounds, planned maintenance activities and BMS monitoring. The mix of these activities mixed with response to reactive calls makes it highly likely that failures would be discovered promptly.'
- 3.5 It was agreed that a checklist would be produced of what staff using a room should do in the event of ventilation failure.
- 3.5 Regarding minute 113.5: Review the Individual Health Assessment Tool particularly with regard to mental health and the assessment of the risk of psychological damage to staff caused by the pandemic; the individual health risk assessment had been updated with information on the support available to help with mental health issues.
- 3.6 The Trade Unions had reservations about reliance on tools such as the UCL Employee Assistance Programme and requested a more explicit reference to the risk of psychological harm. In response it was stated that the individual health risk assessment was designed to address physical risks, being based on the UCLH risk assessment. The risk assessment included the option of a manager's referral to Workplace Health. It was decided to check the content of the current version of the UCLH health risk assessment in terms of mental health.
- 3.7 Regarding minute 113.7: Issue new guidance on face-coverings including the safety measures to observe and the message that visors were not acceptable

face coverings; new guidance had been issued via all of UCL's main communication channels.

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

### **4 Covid-19 update**

- 4.1 The Convenor reported that the University Management Committee (UMC) had agreed that face coverings would continue to be mandatory at UCL.

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

- 5.1 The Director of Workplace Health reported that there had been no outbreaks since the last meeting of WHSC, but four cases in one department linked to a social event. In the last week there had been 9 staff and 16 student cases.
- 5.2 There was as yet no formal policy on social events at UCL and the issue of consumption of food and drink was being looked into in relation to the mandatory face-covering rule.

### **6 Update on HSE inspection enforcement actions and action plan (Paper 1-03)**

- 6.1 The Director of Safety Services presented a paper providing a status update on the HSE enforcement actions and the response action plan. Further updates would be given in December and March.

### **7 Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser annual report (Paper 1-04)**

- 7.1 The Deputy Head of Safety presented a paper summarising the transport of dangerous goods by UCL for the past year.

### **8 Genetic Modification Safety Committee Annual Report (Paper 1-05)**

- 8.1 Mr Stephen Moore presented a paper highlighting key activities for the past year.

### **9 Quarterly performance report (Paper 1-06)**

- 9.1 Mr Dev Agarwal presented a report on health and safety performance data for the fourth quarter of the academic year 2020/21.

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9.2 The low figures for completion of mandatory training by new staff was queried by departmental representatives. It was reported that HR was working with ISD to investigate and improve the training recording process.

9.3 It was agreed that the next report would include a summary of staff incidents and that the inclusion of data for asbestos training would be investigated.

## **10 Items for discussion from the Trade Unions (Paper 1-07)**

10.1 The Trade Unions asked that the Committee recommend a change to UCL's policy on face coverings from 'should' wear to 'must', and asked for a short weekly email to all staff and students reminding them of their obligation to take two lateral flow tests a week and to wear a face covering indoors.

10.2 The Convenor reported that the UMC had agreed to retain the use of 'should' wear in their recent review of face-coverings guidance, as the wearing couldn't be enforced.

10.3 It was agreed that 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 would be made to Communications and Marketing.

10.4 The Trade Unions asked that any scheduled events involving over 35 students be reviewed and held online, and that for practical classes with over 35 students additional risk controls be put in place (at least evidence of a negative lateral flow test taken no more than 24 hours prior to the event).

10.5 It was agreed that guidance would be produced on the holding of events involving over 35 people on campus.

10.6 The Trade Unions asked that the Committee recommend suspension of the 40% of time working on campus guideline until there was a sustained drop in the Covid-19 infection rates.

10.7 In response the Chief People Officer stated that the university was following government guidance and would review the guideline in the new year should there not be a change in the government's advice before then. The Trade Unions persisted that the University should act before any anticipated rise in infections occurred.

10.8 The convenor agreed to discuss the matter at the next meeting of the UMC.

- 10.9 The Trade Unions requested that Estates Division share details of ventilation rates in all buildings with them. In response it was reported that Estates Division could not provide ventilation rate details for every room but a ventilation survey had been done on most teaching rooms that are mechanically ventilated. A full survey of natural ventilation arrangements had been undertaken and a survey mechanical ventilation in multi person occupied spaces was underway, regularly baselined by independent consultants. It would be arranged for the guidance on best practice for CO2 monitors that Estates Division had obtained to be circulated to WHSC members, and it would be investigated if nominal ventilation rates on buildings could be provided.
- 10.10 The Trade Unions reported that many staff were anxious to get a Covid-19 booster vaccine; some were under-50 and wondering if they could get a booster at UCL's vaccination centre. In response it was noted that the vaccination centre followed the NHS's eligibility rules for the booster vaccine.
- 10.11 The Trade Unions asked the Committee if it was appropriate to recommend suspension of all events on campus involving groups of school age children for the remainder of this term (with a review for next term), due to the extremely high infection rates in that age group. The Convenor would find out if the ages of attendees were recorded for Institute of Education events, to enable discussions with the relevant departments.

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

#### **11 Health and Safety Committee Annual Report 2020/21 (Paper 1-08)**

- 11.1 The Deputy Head of Safety presented the summary of the main activities and developments within the purview of the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) since the last HSC report to Council.
- 11.2 The Committee approved the report.

#### **12 Any other business**

- 12.1 Future health and safety annual reports would note where the Trade Unions had disagreed with the Committee.
- 12.2 The Workplace Health annual report and the health and safety objectives for 2021/22 would both now be presented at the next meeting.

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The meeting finished at 3.00 pm

Jon Blackman

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