



## Minutes

### SAF22-M1

Minutes of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 2 February 2022

#### Attendance

##### Members:

Neil Budworth, Ruth Casey, Paul Conway (ab), Sandy Edwards, Alec Edworthy, Graham Howard, Chris Linton (Chair), Jennifer Maxwell-Harris, Graham Moody, David Roomes (ab), Richard Taylor.

##### Apologies for absence:

Paul Conway, David Roomes

##### In attendance:

M Ashby (Secretary), Michelle Cunningham (Observer), Claudia Eberlein (for M22/3), Gagan Kapoor (for M22/4), Norma King (for M22/3), Julie Turner (for M22/7, 9 10), Hannah Watts (Observer).

#### 22/1 Minutes

##### SAF21-M3

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021 were approved.

#### 22/2 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

##### SAF22-P1

Actions arising from previous minutes were NOTED and their current status confirmed.

#### 22/3 Health, Safety and Environment Update: School of Science

##### SAF22-P2

- 3.1 The Committee RECEIVED a presentation by the School of Science Operations Manager on health, safety and environment arrangements in place in the School.
- 3.2 The presentation had identified an increase in workload as being one of the main risks faced by the School's staff. It had noted that an excessive workload had the potential to affect staff wellbeing and mental health, and result in stress-related absences and the cutting of corners. However, the combination of a more collegial working environment within the School and support given by its mental health first aiders had recently led to a noticeable reduction in stress levels amongst staff. The School was seen by the Health and Safety Service to operate best practice in relation to its Mental Health First Aider scheme.

- 3.3 The School was commended on its approach in focusing on a single risk at each School Health and Safety meeting. It was also commended on its strong reporting record.
- 3.4 The Committee was pleased to note the satisfactory health and safety arrangements within the School and thanked the Dean and Operations Manager for their presentation.

## **22/4 Health, Safety and Environment Update: Residential, Catering and Domestic Services**

### **SAF22-P3**

- 4.1 The Committee RECEIVED a presentation by the Head of Residential Catering and Domestic Services on health, safety and environment arrangements within his area of responsibility.
- 4.2 The Service was thanked for its outstanding response during the pandemic in supporting students. It was also commended for the work undertaken to ensure the safety of the water supply within halls of residence during and following periods of low occupancy.
- 4.3 Members noted, in particular, measures that been put in place to improve safety within dining hall kitchens.
- 4.4 The Service took food safety very seriously, and a number of measures had been put in place to minimise risk. It had carried out a detailed internal audit which was to be audited externally. The Service was commended on the thorough approach taken by its managers when carrying out the audit.

## **22/5 Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report and Covid Update**

### **SAF22-P4**

- 5.1 Members RECEIVED an update from the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
- 5.2 The following points were NOTED in particular:
  - (i) The Health and Safety Service had acted swiftly in response to the arrival of the Omicron variant in the UK in December. It had put in place testing to detect and suppress cases on campus in December and on students' return in the New Year.
  - (ii) The winter graduation ceremonies had taken place successfully in December with safety measure in place to protect participants.
  - (iii) Demand for the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service continued to be high and was increasing. Turnaround of referrals was swift and usually within a week. The physical launch of the Health and Wellbeing Framework had been postponed until April due to the uncertainty caused by Omicron.
  - (iv) Oversight of the Centre for Faith and Spirituality had changed, and it was now overseen by the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing. The Centre was active, and there were more than 400 attendees on its mindfulness and meditation courses. Other activities, such as the bereavement cafes, had seen a big increase in attendance.
  - (v) Pop up vaccination centres were to be set up on campus. Appropriate levels of security would be put in place to ensure the safety of staff and users in light of potential anti-vaccine activities.
  - (vi) Significant action had been taken throughout 2021 to re-engineer the Towers Hall water system to minimise the risk of Legionella, and the water system was now considered to be under control.
- 5.3 The Committee approved a proposal for a lead person to be identified in each multiple occupancy building to oversee fire warden coverage. The identified person would be responsible for coordinating this coverage with other departments in the building. **ACTION: Director of HSW**

- 5.4 The Committee would receive a report at its next meeting on the actions which were being taken to minimise the risks related to stress and mental ill health. The Chair requested that the action being taken to reduce staff workloads and on the measures in place to address the consequences of heavy workloads should be highlighted in particular. **ACTION Director of HSW, OHW Manager**
- 5.5 Members noted that two references within the agenda papers to an incident involving potential asbestos exposure differed slightly. The matter would be investigated, and details of the incident clarified. **ACTION Director of HSW**
- SECRETARY'S NOTE: The Director of HSW sought details of the incident after the meeting. Differing reports of the incident in the agenda papers arose from one referencing the initial report of the incident and the second referencing the report arising from investigation of the incident. An air test following the incident had shown a clear result.**
- 5.6 The Health and Safety Service and Human Resources were thanked by the UCU representative for their outstanding support for staff during the pandemic. Particular mention was made of the action taken by the Strategic Scientific Technical Lead and the Covid Testing Team.

## 22/6 Health and Safety Annual Report

### SAF22-P5

Members RECEIVED the review of progress on the Health and Safety Service Plan for 2020/21 and APPROVED the plan of work for 2021/22.

## 22/7 Statutory Compliance Key Performance Indicators

### SAF22-P6, SAF22-P7

- 7.1 Members RECEIVED updates on statutory compliance key performance indicators. They NOTED progress on the development of key performance indicators for key areas of statutory compliance and actions relating to areas of concern. The Committee confirmed that it was content with the rate of progress.
- 7.2 Members CONSIDERED compliance indicators for biological/chemical/radiation safety and NOTED the action being taken to move areas to a 'Green' status.

## 22/8 Health, Safety and Environment Risk Rating

### SAF22-P8

- 8.1 The Committee ENDORSED a recommendation by the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing that the University's overall Health, Safety and Environment risk rating should be changed from 'Amber' to 'Green'. In endorsing the recommendation, members noted that there were three issues which remained of concern, but which had mitigations which were either planned or already in place which had led to the recommendation of a 'Green' rating.
- 8.2 Risks associated with the pandemic had reduced due to the national vaccination programme and the controls instigated within the University. The risk of new variants remained. However, controls were in place to manage these risks.
- 8.3 Legionella had been identified as a significant risk following a decrease in water usage and flow during the pandemic. However, additional controls had been put in place in higher risk buildings, and water usage had increased as the campus had been repopulated.
- 8.4 Fire risk management continued to change and develop following the Grenfell Tower and Bolton student accommodation fires and was being carefully monitored. Mitigation plans had been developed and put in place.
- 8.5 Taking these factors into consideration, the Committee AGREED to recommend the 'Green' risk rating to Senate and Council.

## 22/9 Annual Radiation Protection Report

### SAF22-P9

The Committee ENDORSED the 2021 Annual Report of the Radiation Protection Officer and RECOMMENDED it for submission to Council.

## 22/10 Chemical and Biological Safety Update

### SAF22-P10

- 10.1 The Committee RECEIVED an update on Chemical and Biological Safety from the Strategic Scientific Technical Lead.
- 10.2 Members ENDORSED a proposed seven-point action plan to improve the handling of incidents involving chemicals and to clarify areas of responsibility. The actions reflected the greater levels of trust being placed on staff and proportionate levels of checking. This compared favourably with the more restrictive approach currently taken for ethical review.  
**ACTION: Strategic Scientific Technical Lead**

## 22/11 Centre for Faith and Spirituality Report

### SAF22-P11

- 11.1 The Committee RECEIVED a report from the Centre for Faith and Spirituality and NOTED the extent of reach of the Centre's activities, particularly in times of crisis.
- 11.2 It AGREED that the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service and the Centre for Faith and Spirituality should provide joint reports to the Committee in the future. **ACTION: Director of HSW, OHW Manager**

## 22/12 F-Gas Remedial Works

### SAF22-P12

- 12.1 The Committee RECEIVED an update on F-Gas remedial works and NOTED recent progress. An internal audit was planned for March/April. If progress remained on track, all assets should have at least one service record by the end of April. This meant that this area could be classed as 'Green' within months. Members noted that there would be a need to ensure that there was a service record for all assets going forward. **ACTION: F-Gas DAP**
- 12.2 Members APPROVED the recommendation of the Duty Authorised Person for this area that reports on progress should in future be made through the Statutory Compliance Sub Committee as a routine compliance assessment. **ACTION: F-Gas DAP**

## 22/13 Appointment of Sustainability Manager

The Committee RECEIVED a verbal update from the Director of Estates and Facilities Management on progress in the recruitment of a new University Sustainability Manager. The post was being readvertised after only attracting a small number of applications when first advertised. In the meantime, the post's key responsibilities were being covered by colleagues in Estates and Facilities Management.

## 22/14 Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service Update

### SAF22-P13

The Committee RECEIVED an update from the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager including an update on health and wellbeing plans and progress.

## 22/15 Health and Safety Policy

### SAF22-P14

The Committee RATIFIED the action of the Chair in approving minor changes to the Health and Safety Policy to reflect the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor and changes to some job descriptions.

## 22/16 Reports to Health, Safety and Environment Committee

The Committee RECEIVED the following reports:

(i) **SAF22-P15**

Fire Officer's Report - Members NOTED a reference in the report to some legacy fire alarms being considered a priority for life safety. The Committee noted that the University was prepared to accept a potential risk to its assets where this could not be avoided. However, it would not countenance arrangements where there was a risk to life. The Fire Officer would be asked to provide further details of the status of the fire alarms in question. **ACTION: Director of HSW**

**SECRETARY'S NOTE: Following further investigation, the Director of HSW has established that the fire alarm systems are currently acceptable from a life safety perspective. However, some of the systems may need to be updated before the planned redevelopment of the Student Village has been completed. The Fire Officer is evaluating the risk and developing mitigation options. The outcome of this exercise may impact upon the sequence in which the Student Village is developed.**

(ii) **SAF22-P16**

Incident Data Report

(iii) **SAF22-P17**

Insurance Report

## 22/17 Sub-Committee Minutes

The Committee RECEIVED minutes of meetings of the following groups and sub-committees:

(i) **SAF22-P18**

GM/Biosafety Committee (meeting on 14th October 2021)

(ii) **SAF22-P19**

Health, Safety and Environment Statutory Compliance Sub-Committee (meeting on 20th January 2022)

## 22/18 Sustainability and Social Responsibility Sub-Committee

The Committee NOTED that the Sustainability and Social Responsibility Sub-Committee had been disbanded following its meeting on 6th May 2021.

## 22/19 Date of Meetings in 2021/22

Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 2.00pm