

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10:00, Wednesday 10 March 2021

Present	Michael Ward	MW	Head of Department, Chemistry (Chair)
	John Phillips	JP	Director of Health and Safety Services
	Paul Allsopp	PA	Trade Union Representative (UNITE)
	Lee Cartwright	LC	Trade Union Representative (UNITE)
	Claire Daffern	CD	Trade Union Representative (UCU)
	Lisa Burton	LB	Member of staff from the Faculty of Social Sciences
	Richard Campbell-Kelly	RCK	Member of staff from Insurance Services
	Dr. Andrew Marsh	AM	Chair of H&S Committee (Chemistry)
	Prof. Victor Zammit	VZ	Chair of H&S Committee (WMS)
	Dr. Tom Hase	TH	Chair of H&S Committee (Physics)
	Prof. Paul Jennings	PJ	Chair of H&S Committee (WMG)
	Prof. David Towers	DT	Chair of H&S Committee (Engineering)
	Diana Stonefield	DS1	Member of staff from the Faculty of Arts
	Duncan Stiles	DS	Member of staff from the Estates Office
	Heather Green	HG	Member of staff from the Library
Mayur Patel	MP	Assistance Secretary to the UHSC	
Attending	Mayers Antonia	MA	Member of staff from the Library
	Nicola Rogers	NR	Senior Research Fellow from Chemistry
Ref	Item		
015	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Caroline Farren, Professor Yin Chen, Leon Sealey-Huggins, Charlotte Lloyd, Duncan Parkes, Hannah Friend.</p>		
016	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No new declarations were made.</p>		
017	<p>Minutes of last meeting on 11 November 2020</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2020 were received and approved.</p> <p>The Chair of the H&S Committee (Physics) wanted to make the Committee aware, that approval of the LEV Policy at the UHSEC prior to discussion at the UHSC had not allowed for proper feedback to be reported from local departmental H&S Committees, in particular associated with 'Fume cupboard' checks. It was felt that if a daily fume cupboards check was completed by the first user, later users would not check if the fume cupboard was still operating at its optimum performance and was concerned of the direction of travel moving away from individual responsibility of checking equipment before using.</p> <p>The Senior Research Fellow (Chemistry) also agreed that user feedback needed to be considered prior to the policy approval at the UHSEC. They reported that they had been approached to participate in the production a training video for checking fume cupboards, and discussions had indicated that for checking a fume cupboard it needed to be fully empty, the concern was that if this was identified in the policy, this would have a direct effect on work time.</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services reported that the LEV Policy had been approved at the Policy Oversight Group (POG) prior to being approved at the University Executive Board (UEB), but reassured the Committee that now it meant that the policy would be in place for the start of the next academic year and work could continue on finalising the details.</p> <p>The Chair also agreed that further work was required and the level of detailed needed to be clarified.</p>		

018	<p>Matters arising from last meeting held on 11 November 2020</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the last meeting.</p>
Chair's Update	
019	<p>Chair's Business and Actions</p> <p>The Committee received no updates from the Chair but invited the Director of Health and Safety to provide members with an update on the additional paper circulated, 019-UHSC100321.</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services, presented report 019-UHSC100321 highlighting minor changes to the UHSC Terms of Reference and Membership 2020-21. The paper was received and approved following further minor amendments, additions in red, deletions struck through:</p> <p>Richard Campbell-Kelly</p> <p>One member of staff from Insurance Services, appointed by the Senior Manager of Procurement and Insurance Services asked to attend by the Head of Procurement and Insurance Services</p> <p>UNISON (2) Steven Stynes Antonia Mayers</p> <p>UCU (2) Leon Sealey-Huggins Claire Daffern Nicola Rogers</p> <p>The Chair of the H&S Committee (Physics) raised a concern that the Terms of Reference had no student representation. The Trade Union Representative (UCU) agreed that there should be representation but was unsure how it would be achieved.</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services informed the Committee that student representation was done through membership of 'A Sabbatical Officer of the Students' Union' and 'One member of staff of the Students' Union appointed by the Chief Executive of the Students' Union, and if further representation was thought to be required then this should be considered at local department Health and Safety Committee level.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that further student representation should be at local departmental Health and Safety Committee level, but was concerned to then invite all representatives to this Committee would mean a further 35 members. The Chair proposed that representation at faculty level should be considered.</p> <p>The Chair of H&S Committee (Chemistry) agreed that representation should be done at local departmental level, but added that representation at this Committee should include reps from both Undergraduate and Postgraduate level.</p> <p>The Senior Research Fellow (Chemistry) suggested that student representation could be achieved by inclusion of Directors of Student Experience and Progression (DSEP) from departments into the Committee, but it was pointed out that not all departments have DSEP's.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair and the Director of Health and Safety Services to take item to the University Health and Safety Executive Committee for clarification as to who agrees committee membership and quantities.</p>

Executive Update

020

Key Points relating to the University Health and Safety Executive Committee

The Director of Health and Safety Services presented, the report from the meetings of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee (UHSEC) on 10 December 2020 and 11 February 2021 (020-UHSC100321). The paper was received and content noted by Committee members.

Discussion at UHSEC had included: proposed changes to the Health and safety Policy and the Leadership and Management of Health and Safety document; Health and Safety Services Plan of work for 2020-21; the revisions to the LEV Policy; reports from the Fire Group, the Water Group, the Asbestos Group, the Genetic Modification and Biological Safety Committee, the University Health and Safety Committee, and the newly formed Ionising Radiation and Non-Ionising Radiation Committee; OHSAS 18001/ISO 45001 Audit carried out by BSi in January 2021; work of the Statutory Inspection and Compliance Programme Board; Health and Safety Performance, including detail relating to further Phenol incidents at Gibbet Hill; minor amendments to the Fire Safety Policy following an audit against BS9997 by an external body; the latest issue of Management Information on the usage of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) from Health Assured; and the postponement of the Chemical Inventory Tool procurement and roll out.

The Chair was keen to understand at what stage the procurement of the new Chemical Inventory Tool was and why such a large period had lapsed being the selection of a preferred supplier and implementation. If the University's specification could not be met, are they set too high and too detailed, could we look at lowering the levels and use an off the shelf inventory tool, other universities must be using a tool.

Chair of H&S Committee (Chemistry) was keen to understand what options were available to the university to speed up the implementation of an Inventory Tool.

The Director of Health and Safety informed the committee that following the formal procurement process, no one supplier was identified who met all of the university's requirements, these were revisited and lowered, and one supplier from three shortlisted was chosen, LabCup. Due to the onset of Covid-19 and restricted working the implementation had not been progressed and had given rise to three options, as detailed below.

Option One: To contact LapCup to discuss and finalise an implementation programme.

Option Two: Investigate and identify an off the shelf Inventory Tool which would meet most of our requirements.

Option Three: Software Engineers at Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) are developing a software tool as part of a research bid and which they will be offering commercially in the longer term. Part of the tool included an inventory tool element, the engineers are evaluating whether the tool could fit the requirements for a Chemical Inventory Tool the university were seeking. WMG had indicated that they would work with Health and Safety Services and were looking at Chemical Inventory Tool already available, but would need to secure funding for the work.

The Chair of H&S Committee (Physics) informed the committee that regarding the specification of the Inventory Tool, there was lots of ideas put forward, but it was unclear who had conflicts of interest and how the inventory tool would connect to the existing university ordering system (Opera/SAP).

The Director of Health and Safety Services reported that there was still work to be done to investigate how the link would work and further information would be bought to this committee as it became available.

The Member of staff from the Faculty of Social Sciences asked if further clarification could be provided regarding the data from Employment Assistance Programme reported at the UHSEC. The Director of Health and Safety Services confirmed that the data would be shared but only indicated usage and no trends could be identified.

021	<p>Covid-19 Update</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services provided a verbal update regarding measures relating to Covid Secure that the university were investigating and would like to put in place prior to students returning in Term Three. It was reported that at the time of this meeting there were estimated 3000 students on campus and it was anticipated to increase after the Easter break. Risk Assessments which were carried out in Term One would need to be reviewed and updated to include new variants announced by the Government, building ventilation and the implementation of wearing face coverings provided by the university are of a high standard and meet guidelines. With the anticipated return of students at the start of Term Three, the University are investigating the usage of Student Ambassadors to promote Covid awareness. Covid testing continued to be available at The Slate and Gibbet Hill, but usage was low due to the small numbers of students and staff on site, there was a capacity to increase the scope required. A weekly meeting was held with Unions to discuss all Covid related issues and then taken to the Campus Operation Group (COG) for further discussion.</p> <p>The Member of staff from the Faculty of Social Sciences reported that risk assessments carried out in Term One, the Estates department provided excellent support ensuring that ventilation of buildings was assessed to meet the standards, now updating the risk assessments due to student return would the Estates department be available to provide the same support.</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services confirmed that risk assessments completed in September/October 2020 would continue to be valid as the assessment level at the time was above the recommended levels by the Government.</p> <p>The member of staff from the Library reported to the committee that they had been tasked with an action from another meeting to promote and encourage the uptake of the Natural Flow Covid Test. They had encouraged staff but wanted clarification how this could be done throughout the student committee, other Universities had made the test mandatory.</p> <p>The Chair reported that until the University made it compulsory it would be very difficult to police and at this stage all that could be done was encourage and advise the uptake of the testing.</p> <p>The Senior Research Fellow from Chemistry suggested that it should be communicated to students and staff, that to keep campus facilities open, the Natural Flow test should be take-up so the spread of Covid could be controlled.</p> <p>The Chair of H&S Committee (Physics) was keen to know when the Natural Flow testing kits would be made available to be taken home for use.</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services reported the discussions were taking place with 'Test and Trace', but no further information was currently available, as information became available it would be reported at this committee.</p>
022	<p>OHSAS 18001 Audit Update</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services, presented the report (022-UHSC100321) and the Member of staff from the Estates Office highlighted the key points related to the Estates department. The Committee received and noted the content of the paper.</p>
Governance	
023	<p>Health and Safety Performance</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services, presented the report (023-UHSC100321) outlining the key points of the paper. The Committee received and noted the content of the paper.</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services wanted to highlight the two 'serious' incidents at the School of Life Science involving 'phenol' exposure to the committee. It was reported that there were waste streams in place which involved autoclaving of contaminated equipment, but phenol contaminated equipment needed to use a separate route. There was evidence that phenol contaminated equipment was being left for autoclaving and it appears that a small number of people were not working correctly. The Committee were encouraged to discuss this matter, Further discussion by committee members included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenol odour can be detected and so highlights that an incorrect waste stream was being used. This raises a bigger question that how confident can we be that other waste streams are not being compromised with chemicals that cannot be detected. Maybe a solution to be implemented was not to allow the purchase of phenol purchased. • A total ban of phenol use was not seen to be required at this stage and the committee felt that researchers should not be dictated to but advised. • A committee member who had worked in a laboratory in the United States of America shared that a problem with staff eating sweets in the laboratory was overcome by removing all dust bins. It was difficult to begin with, but working habits changed and became the normal. So not working with phenol would soon become normal. • It was discussed that phenol was used as a disinfectant in certain process, for plant based work a substitution could be made but there was no suitable substitution for animal work at the moment. • The Committee agreed that action was required but further discussions were required to decide the finer details of what should be done and this should be done before incident became RIDDOR reportable. • A concern was raised that as staff had been exposed to phenol was there a need to carry out house surveillance. • It was reported, that at the last UHSEC meeting, it was discussed that an independent investigation team from outside the department may be an option to determine the root cause of the incidents. • It was raised that there may be individuals who are not aware of all the waste streams available and this may be the root cause. • Phenol user's competence and training records need to be checked to ensure that they are up to date, but prior to this a tracking system needs to be established so the correct action can be taken.
024	<p>Activities around the University</p> <p>Committee members reported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All Committee members reported that risk assessments were being reviewed and updated from their respective areas in readiness of students returning at the start of Term Three. 2) Trade Unions were discussing weekly with Human Resources issues relating to Covid. In particular, 'Work-Load-Burn-Out' and we should encourage home working to continue to mirror individual normal working patterns where possible. 3) WBS were reviewing their Leadership and Management Document and thinking of how to get staff engaged to their return to campus after this long period of being away, working patterns and locations were under discussion as in the future flexible working maybe an option. 4) Insurance renewals for the University were being done for the forthcoming year. 5) The Library reported that a Covid Safety Working Group had been established to raise any issues and extra study spaces were available for use. 6) Physics had reported a man-hole being worked on for more than three weeks had still not been completed. The concern was that it has blocked a walk way which is a designated fire escape route and when yard gates are locked at the end of the day, there is no other means of escape. 7) WMG continue to have weekly Senior Team Meetings, laboratories are operational with no incidents, wellbeing and flexible working remains and were working to ensure better communication when engaging work with contractors and so they are not working in the same area.
Other	
025	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Director of Health and Safety Services reported that the a new Ionising Radiation and Non-ionising Radiation Committee had been established and their first meeting had been held in December 2020, a second meeting had been scheduled but was still to take place.</p>
Next meeting: 10.00am, Wednesday 09 June 2021, CMR1.0 (University House)	

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
019- Chair's Business and Actions	ACTION: The Chair and the Director of Health and Safety Services to take item to the University Health and Safety Executive Committee for clarification as to who agrees committee membership and quantities.	John Phillips June 2021	