

# MINUTES

## CONFIRMED MINUTES

### UNIVERSITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE (HSWSC)

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL** minutes of the HSWSC meeting held on Tuesday 10th June 2025, 11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m., VCO Boardroom CLC.2.01.

**Present:** Sarah Thonemann (ST, Chair), Chief People Officer; Abigail Reilly (AbR), Dep Dir Org Effectiveness & Development; Alan Reeve (AR), Savills Reader (UCU); Jill Millar (JM), Senior Lecturer in Business and Management (UCU); Mark Tugwell (MT), Deputy Director of Estates, Estates and Campus Services; Paul Bradley (PB), Director of Occupational Health & Safety; Sarah Irons (SI), Bioinnovation Hub Manager; Neil Fernandes (NF, minute-taker), Health & Safety Administrator; Sharon Willett (SW, Secretary), Safety Manager; Simon Hogg (SH), Unison.

**Apologies:** Andy King (AK), Partnerships and Placements Manager (UNISON); Benjamin Craft (BeC), Timetabling Officer; Brendan Casey (BC), Registrar and Chief Operating Officer; Jerry Woods (JW), Director of Estates and Campus Services

#### 17. Welcome and Apologies

17.1 Apologies as above. ST chaired the meeting in BC's absence and MT attended in place of JW.

#### 18. Minutes of the HSWSC meeting held on 12th November 2024

18.1 The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

#### 19. Action Log Review and matters arising

19.1 The action log was reviewed and updated, with completed actions marked as closed.

19.2 A query was raised about fire assembly points (item 14.4). Maps identifying the assembly points—using What3Words—are being reviewed by the Fire Safety Advisor. They are planned for online publication within three months. Some have been completed and shared locally, but uploading to the website has been delayed.

**Action Point:** PB and Andy Hargrave to ensure fire assembly point maps are posted online within the next three months (from date of original discussion).

#### 20. Health & Safety Report ([HSWSC250610/04](#))

20.1 PB presented an overview of the Health and Safety Report and there were no specific items to note.

20.2 SW reported that the first Health and Safety Forum took place in April, offering a more informal approach than the previous H&S Operations committee meetings. The meeting was well-received. The next meeting was scheduled for later that day. PEEPs would be discussed. JM noted that she hadn't received an invite; SW confirmed unions were invited and was happy to add JM.

**Action Point:** SW to add JM - UCU representative to the Health and Safety Forum invite list.

20.3 H&S Objectives - An update was provided on the five health and safety objectives for the year:

20.3.1 Health and Safety Awareness for Line Managers: An online training session is in development and has been shared with unions for feedback. The next step is to shorten the content, with a planned launch at the start of the academic year.

**Action Points:** PB & SW to review and implement.

- 20.3.2 *Develop and commence delivery of a program of risk assessment training for all assessors and authorisers:* 108 individuals have been trained so far this year. Positive engagement from Faculties and ECS was highlighted.
- 20.3.3 *Overseas Travel Procedures:* Procedures have been approved, and the process for forms and assessments—mainly within faculties—is being refined using Google Forms. A meeting is scheduled this week to finalise the process, which is linked to related policies.  
**Action Points:** *PB to finalise overseas travel/fieldwork forms and assessments with faculties within the current week.*
- 20.3.4 *Strategy for Fire Risk Assessments:* The strategy is in place and incorporated into the fire safety procedure, with reviews currently underway.
- 20.3.5 *Framework for Events Planning:* This procedure is approximately 90% complete, with ongoing consultation with stakeholders. It is expected to be presented for approval at the next committee meeting.
- 20.4 SH inquired about the Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), noting its historically low usage (Health and Safety Report, Sections 11.5 and 11.7). It was suggested increased usage may be due to service promotion and OH Awareness sessions for Line Managers. The main reason for calls to the EAP are due to anxiety (33%), with work-related concerns also significant. OH referral tracking is complex, but no spikes have been reported.  
**Action Point:** PB to continue analysis of OH referral data by directorate/faculty to correlate with restructures and other organisational changes.
- 20.5 H&S Procedures (For approval)
- 20.5.1 **Fire Safety Procedure:** A revised fire safety procedure was approved, clarifying fire risk assessment frequency and evacuation expectations. It emphasises individual responsibility over formal fire marshal roles, though marshals remain important in high-risk areas, where they will have added training. ECS, including security, provide post-evacuation support. The procedure will be submitted to VC-Ops for final approval.
- 20.5.2 **Powered Transporters Procedure:** The updated Powered Transporters Procedure was approved. It bans powered transporters (e.g., e-scooters, Segways) from university land and buildings, including storage and charging. E-bikes are allowed outdoors but not inside. Enforcement in residences remains a challenge, with regular inspections in place. The procedure includes guidance for mobility scooters and highlights battery risks from poor-quality imports and unsafe charging. Emphasis was placed on clear communication to promote safety awareness. ECS will progress the project for installation of external charging solutions for mobility scooters/e-bikes.  
**Action Points:** ECS.
- 20.5.3 This relates to 20.5.2 above. **PEEP Process Revision:** the PEEP process has been revised. A brief discussion ensued on lithium-ion batteries, noting that water is not effective for extinguishing these fires and that education is needed regarding fire safety, including the importance of not propping open fire doors.
- 20.6 **Workplace Well-being (Stress Risk Assessment)** The progress on the university-level stress risk assessment was discussed. It was noted that the Stress Management Steering Group had recently reviewed the document and recommended that it transition from 'draft' and therefore be submitted to VCG for information. The Risk Assessment is, by nature, a 'live' document and will continue to be reviewed by the steering group bi-monthly, with annual progress updates provided to this committee.  
It was clarified that there is no set time frame for repeating the whole stress risk assessment process, but the steering group activity includes regular review to identify any significant changes and discuss necessary mitigations. It was confirmed that the wellbeing survey in 2023 informed the assessment. Other measures are used to help identify changes, such as sickness absence, which is a lag indicator and the main Staff Survey, the last being in 2024 with the next scheduled for 2026.

The Stress Risk Assessment document provides an overview of the activities identified to address the issues.

A further recommendation concerned the proposed introduction of a mandatory 10-minute e-learning for all managers and key roles, with a three-yearly refresher, focusing on stress awareness. The short duration and recently improved certification process were expected to aid compliance.

**Decision:** The proposal to approve the university-level stress risk assessment and recommend mandatory e-learning to VCG for approval was agreed.

**Action Points:** AbR to submit the university-level Stress Risk Assessment to VCG for information.

AbR to propose mandatory e-learning for managers and key roles on stress awareness to VCG for approval.

AbR to work with the Stress Management Steering Group to monitor and update the university-level stress risk assessment and report progress annually to the committee.

## **21 Trade Union Items (UNISON)**

**21.1 Union H&S Inspection Report (Harcourt Hill to Gibbs Move).** JM presented the Joint Union H&S Inspection Report, which focused on the impact of the transfer of staff from Harcourt Hill to the Gibbs Building. Issues identified included:

- Manual Handling of Heavy Loads.
- DSE Support.
- Hygienic Work Conditions.
- Hybrid working and wellbeing.

JM also stated that a staff member had mentioned that they had a few students with mobility issues who wouldn't be able to evacuate Gibbs easily. PB explained that the proper procedure would be to have students timetabled on the ground floor, which would be even more important when there were multiple students. The H&S office should be notified if the PEEP assessor encountered any issues setting this up.

**21.2** The committee discussed key workplace concerns outlined in the report following the recent moves, focusing on health, safety, and well-being. Remedial actions and responsibilities were identified across several areas, with a deadline of 16 July for some issues. **Action:** PB will coordinate a full management response involving MT and others, to be reviewed at the next meeting. The report proposed several remedial actions.

**22 Any Other Business - There was no other business.**

**23 Dates of next meetings –** Dates to be finalised for next academic year 2025-2026.

**Meeting ended at 12:00 noon**