

# MINUTES

## CONFIRMED MINUTES

HSWSC221201/14

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

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL minutes of the HSWSC meeting held on Thursday 1 December 2022  
from 9.30 - 10.30 am**

Present: Alex Powell (APo), Gary Mattingley (GM) [Chair], Alan Reeve (AR),  
Christie Rainbird (CR), Jerry Woods (JW), Sarah Irons (SI), Sharon  
Willett (SW) [joint secretary], Simon Hogg (SH), Tim McGill (TM) and  
Zoe Randall (ZR)  
In attendance: Aanushri Patel (APa) [joint secretary]  
Apologies: Abigail Reilly (AR), Brendan Casey (BC), Olga Giles (OG) and Sarah  
Thonemann (ST)

### **1 Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1 Welcome and apologies were noted.
- 1.2 It was noted that Paul Bradley will be joining Brookes as the Director of Occupational Health and Safety on 31 January 2022, Paul will be invited to attend this committee.

### **2 Minutes of the meeting held on 12/05/2022**

[HSWSC221201/02](#)

- 2.1 The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting. The date of the next meeting was changed since the minutes were written, due to the changes made to the H&S committees and structure.

### **3 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12/05/2022**

- 3.1 Action for 25.3 has been completed.

- 3.2 Action for 27.1 will be covered in today's meeting
- 3.3 Action for 28.3 has been completed. The latest guidance for schools is that CO2 monitors are placed in every classroom and there will now be funding for this, hence OBU are also looking at new funding streams for monitors in our teaching rooms.
- 4 Minutes from the HSWOC meeting held on 02/11/2022 and matters arising from this meeting:  
[HSWSC221201/14](#)
- 4.1 TM explained that this meeting was more of an introduction to the new structure of the H&S meetings going forward. The meetings have been split into Operational and Strategic meetings. The Operational meetings will feed into the Strategic meetings.
- 4.2 **Accident reporting will move to ServiceNow.** SH observed that injuries occurring when working from home will also require a free text box. SW and TM will look into this. There was further discussion about room numbers and how you would add in a location if it is not a room. The system will complete testing and final amendments and then be rolled out.
- Action: SW and TM**
- 4.3 There were no new additional measures from local authorities for Covid. The public health dashboard for the country, which covers Oxfordshire provides useful information. There was a high point of covid numbers recently but this dipped back down. The wave at the university mirrored the wave country-wide. Covid is continuing to be monitored. Reporting at Oxford Brookes will be through the new notifiable diseases form on SNow. AR asked what the guidance for working with a positive covid test is. GM stated that for a positive covid test (now covered by the term 'respiratory diseases'), the advice is to not work on campus. This is a higher standard of advice for Oxford Brookes, as the government's advice is 'you can continue to go to work if you feel well enough to do so'. It was agreed that this advice from Oxford Brookes should be communicated more routinely. GM noted that there is an opportunity for this, as it can be included in the notifiable disease update that will be sent out in the following week, in the university wide comms.
- 4.4 GM added that there are 30 different diseases covered in the 'Communicable and Notifiable Disease Policy', including mumps. Going forward, the university will be informed at the start of a diagnosis of an illness rather than waiting for an update.
- 5 **To accept the agreed HSWSC & HSWOC Terms of reference**  
[HSWSC221201/03](#)  
[HSWSC221101/03](#)
- 5.1 A change to both sets of ToR was agreed. The minutes of meetings would be shared with the committee members to review and then passed for approval via chair's action, prior to the date of the next meeting. This will make the process for following up on actions and the flow of the meetings more efficient. This will be added to the ToR.
- Action: SW and APa
- 5.2 SH noted that there is no union representation for the HSWOC meetings. It was agreed that SH, APo and AR will be included in the circulation of the agenda, minutes and papers for the HSWOC meetings going forward. The Unions can then request to the chair, to attend, as and when required.

**6 To review and approve the work plan 2022/23 for the HSWSC**  
[HSWSC221201/04](#)

- 6.1 SW showed the proposed plan of work document. This outlines the objectives for both the strategic and operational H&S committees and shows how they are interlinked. This will be the main plan for the committees scheduled in the year ahead and will form the basis for the meeting agendas. It will give structure and purpose to the meetings.

**7 Genetic Modification (GM) Committee Report, GM Annual Report and AGM minutes**

[HSWSC221201/06](#)  
[HSWSC221201/07](#)

- 7.1 SI gave a summarised update on the genetic modification work in HLS in Biological and Medical Sciences. Areas covered included bacteria and viruses and even larger organisms and plants. There are 21 research projects covered by 20 project leads. There are GM risk assessments to cover teaching and practicals. The majority of the work is classified as having minimal risk to humans and the environment. There is only one class 2 project this work is covered by a Specified Animal Pathogens Order (SAPO) that is renewed every five years.
- 7.2 The HSE inspections are due next year.
- 7.3 The committee of peers review each other and any risks are adequately reviewed. All class 1 activities are approved. There is a leaving procedure to provide a good handover and to ensure not too many legacy materials are left over. These documents can be shared with other faculties if it would be helpful.
- 7.4 External companies based in the bioinnovation hub conduct GM work. We have opted to seek advice from a safety consultant to ensure we adopt the best practice in managing this. Changes will be made over the coming year. One potential option is that companies will hold their own licences. They may have legal work around this too but it will place the university in a better position.

**8 Health and Safety report 2021/22** [HSWSC221201/08](#)

- 8.1 Since Jonathan Grainger left, the H&S team has taken on new work, which includes contract management and finance for these contracts. The fire risk assessment and fire door inspections management is ongoing and additional finance needs to be found.
- 8.2 The OneLook Permit system has been established in ECS and ITS. It will be rolled out across other areas of the university too.
- 8.3 TM ran through a summary of achievements over the year.
- 8.4 There has been progress made with the H&S arrangements in some areas of the university, whereas other areas need to catch up.
- 8.5 The number of staff returning to work on site has increased to the numbers we now expect.
- 8.6 TM ran through a summary of the accidents from the past year. No RIDDOR accidents were reported.
- 8.7 SH noted that TM and his team need to be commended for their very good work and achievements.
- 8.8 SH asked a question about Students Union accident reporting. TM explained that all accidents are being reported to the H&S team but they are going to become a separate legal entity, therefore TM will speak to Brendan Casey to ensure this

continues.

**Action: TM**

- 8.9 SH added that a lot of colleagues are working remotely. People are on field trips too and working from home. People need to think that their home environment is their workplace when they are working from home. They need to consider legal impacts for home working and working away from OBU sites, and duty of care for the university. TM will need to communicate that their home is the workplace and think about how colleagues can report accidents that occur at the home workplace. GM is currently offering 1:1s and risk assessments at colleagues' homes, which could be done from a manager's perspective. This could be done to review DSEs at home too.
- 8.10 SH noted that the monthly meeting found that all the policies and guidelines need to become more cohesive, updated and in line, especially with H&S. For example, the designated home working policy has not been updated for over 10 years. There needs to be a policy for hybrid working to cover remote working. There needs to be consideration about the risk implications around remote working.
- 8.11 AR asked how do colleagues raise H&S issues that are not accidents? There is no easy mechanism to report these at the moment. SW explained that there is a new ServiceNow form that has a 'matters of concern' area. AR agreed to check this. AR requested that there is an annual report for the statistics for these too. JW will pick this up with ST. JW suggested that staff could come to campus for more than two days a week if they wanted to, as there is the capacity for this currently.

**9 Occupational Health report 2021/22**

[HSWSC221201/09](#)

- 9.1 CR explained that the OH report is split into two parts. Part 1 incorporates continued activity related to the Covid-19 pandemic with three key risk areas: People, First Aid and Statutory Health Surveillance. The Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM) provided guidance throughout the pandemic on health assessment and fitness for work. Principles were followed throughout the process.
- 9.2 OH collected information about anxiety around Covid and anxiety to return to campus. OH worked with counsellors, who also utilised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. There were 28 people that needed an assessment. They were prioritised by high risk people and then this was reduced down to 8 people.
- 9.3 This is the last year that the OH report will be presented in this current format (introduced to record OH activity specifically related to Covid-19 activity as distinct from normal work routine) i.e. Parts 1 & 2.
- 9.4 Part 2 in this report focuses on business as usual activity (BAU). BAU is increasingly busy for the OH team. Reporting is from 31 August to 31 July each year.
- 9.5 Sickness rates have gone up and are higher than ONS statistics. 11% of staff are accessing OH services.
- 9.6 Manager referrals and self referrals are still around 50:50. This is the same as before. Although, more academics are coming through and slightly fewer ECS colleagues than before. Cases are generally more complex and the service has identified an increase in the number of clients considered at high risk of self-harm. The Staff Counselling Service Report embedded in the OH Annual Report provides detail on the organisational themes coming through from staff.

- 9.7 The EAP are picking up some of the same items that OH are picking up on, especially around anxiety. EAP have high waiting times as they are struggling to recruit therapists.
- 9.8 OH are working with the Disability Confident Steering Group and on designing a disability passport for Oxford Brookes.
- 9.9 First Aid is a concern. Contacting first aiders this past year is problematic and has been further complicated by agile and hybrid working patterns. The current system for contacting a first aider is not fit for purpose. Between June and September 2022 ambulance services have been called out on 19 occasions. CR will liaise with Paul Bradley when he joins and they will aim to work with the Student Union to ensure students are informed about how first aid is managed and organised at Brookes. SH explained about the unified communications project, as one stream is looking at the telephony. Andy Ball, Catherine Pyke and Jessica Bruce are working on this project. It would be useful for CR to contact Jessica with regards to this project and contacting the first aiders.

**Action: CR**

## **10 To review and approve the following policies: a. PEEP**

- 10.1 SW explained that the PEEPs procedure for students has been reviewed and revised. The new format has worked well. The H&S team will be the first point of contact, and link to faculties and Learning and Resources. The next stage will be to review the PEEPs for staff.

## **11 To review and approve the following policies: a. Fire Strategy**

- 11.1 TM noted that there was only major change in the last section; the fire risk assessment schedule has been changed so that higher risk areas are assessed more frequently than lower risk areas. JW asked if the H&S team were happy with the frequency of the checks? TM explained that they are, although it does create more work for the H&S team.
- 11.2 SI noted that there is no longer any training for fire extinguishers. James Bowes, Seamless Fire Solutions, is going to look at the high risk areas and offer alternative training, as the training is only by pen and paper currently. Fire extinguishers should not be used by staff or students unless they have completed the necessary face to face training.
- 11.3 SH suggested producing good advice for working from home with regards to H&S at home and risk assessments for home working. SW will revisit the advice provided at the start of the pandemic.

Action: SW

## **12 Compliance Reporting**

### **[HSWSC221201/12](#)**

- 12.1 The report on compliance was written by Jonathan Grainger. TM explained that it includes the background data of compliance and where the university is with compliance. The data will need to be collected and reviewed again but it is expected

to have a similar outcome.

## **12.2 Legionella update / Flushing paper**

### **[HSWSC221201/13](#)**

- 12.3 ZR wrote this paper with Jonathan Grainger. Flushing void outlets, particularly when water is dormant over the holidays, such as Christmas, Easter and Summer, is important. The university must move water if the outlet has not been used in 7 days. There are 7100 outlets in the halls of residences, and the flushing takes 8 hours a day, 5 days a week which is done by external contractors. All the campuses are flushed by our Campus Services team. Swindon have their own company to carry out the flushing.
- 12.4 The standard industry is to flush for 3 to 5 minutes, and the advice from our external contractor is to take the temperature at the start and end of the process to check it reaches the compliant temperatures, which can take between 2 to 5 minutes.
- 12.5 Due to two teams flushing there are currently two separate documentation methods. Going forward, this will be moved onto one joint documentation format.
- 12.6 There is currently a legionella outbreak at Harcourt. The H&S team are working with SMS Environmental and ECS to work on rectifying this situation. There have been possibly 10 to 15 cases in the last couple of months. This is down to the piping and its age, as it is a very old system. The calorifier is in one building but long lengths of pipework reach 6 to 8 buildings. As soon as the water goes under 50 degrees Celsius, it allows the legionella to spread. Hot water should turn over within 24 hours but due to less staff and students using the campus, the hybrid way of working, and the old piping, it is causing these cases.
- 12.7 Option 4 in the flushing business case paper is the most realistic option to follow through with. The financial cost and uplift will need to be added to the paper before it is sent to VCG.

## **13 'Guidance on running workplace inspections 'remotely' – ie via email survey' and Union / Inspections verbal update**

- 13.1 AR and SH made a request for the university to allow them to run a survey via email sent to all colleagues (AR clarified this to mean all academic colleagues) with regards to 'stress and over work' but they had not received an answer. AR and SH have spoken with ST but are not sure if it has been taken to Brendan Casey yet. The action is for AR and SH to chase a response from ST. These two agenda items will be postponed to the next meeting.

Action: AR/SH & APa/SW

## **14 AOB**

- 14.1 There were no AOB items for this meeting.

## **15 Date of next meeting**

- 15.1 It was noted that the next meetings are scheduled for 22nd March 2023 and 20th June 2023 at 14.00 for an hour. GM suggested that future meetings should be extended to one and half hours due to the length of the agendas.

End of confirmed minutes.