

MINUTES

CONFIRMED MINUTES

HSWSC241112/08

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

NON-CONFIDENTIAL minutes of the HSWSC meeting held on Tuesday 12 November 2024, 10:00-11:00, VCO Boardroom CLC.2.01.

Present: Brendan Casey (BC, Chair), Registrar and Chief Operating Officer;
 Alan Reeve (AR), Savills Reader (UCU),
 Andy King (AK), Partnerships and Placements Manager (UNISON);
 Jerry Woods (JW), Director of Estates and Campus Services;
 Jill Millar (JM), Senior Lecturer in Business and Management (UCU);
 Paul Bradley (PB), Director of Occupational Health & Safety;
 Sarah Thonemann (ST), Chief People Officer;
 Sarah Irons (SI), Bioinnovation Hub Manager;
 Neil Fernandes (NF, minute-taker), Health & Safety Administrator;
 Sharon Willett (SW, Secretary), Safety Manager;
 Simon Hogg (SH), Unison (UNISON).

Apologies: Benjamin Craft (BeC), Timetabling Officer.

1. Welcome and Apologies - Chair

There were apologies from Benjamin Craft (BeC).

- 1.1 Although Alex Powell is no longer serving as a health and safety representative, we appreciate his previous participation.

2. Minutes of the HSWSC meeting held on 4 June 2024, HSWSC241112/09

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

3. Action Log Review and matters arising, HSWSC240206/03 - Chair

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

- 3.2 A query from AR and JM regarding the progress of the stress management risk assessment and related actions was briefly discussed. They asked what the formal reporting mechanism was. ST explained that this is addressed within the Wellbeing Strategy document, which includes progress updates and an action plan. The Stress Risk Assessment Steering Group has oversight of progress against the work-related stress risk assessment and the Director of Organisational Effectiveness & Development liaises directly with Unions on the associated sub group. Progress on wellbeing and work-related stress will continue to be reported for information to the HSWSC.

4. Health and Safety Report

[HSWSC241112/04](#)

- *Specific Issues*

PB addressed the terrace restaurant's fire alarm and water heater fire problems. Everyone is pleased with the arrangements and steps taken to improve things.

- *Local Governance Arrangements*

Local governance arrangements were discussed, and SW reported plans to transition away from the HSWOC. Instead, a model of direct communication with faculties and directorates will be implemented. This approach will be complemented by an informal forum to facilitate the sharing of ideas. As an action, SW will draft the proposal and share it with the committee to review.

- *Health and Safety objectives*

Significant improvement over Health & Safety and DSE training had been observed but the new approach was now demonstrating diminishing returns. Directorate and faculty support led to increased completion of H&S training. Considerable progress has been made in completing the health and safety e-learning modules relating to DSE and Health & Safety Essentials, with completion rates reaching 90% and 88%, respectively.

- *Annual Occupational Health and Safety Report*

The report was presented at the meeting and is now available for review.

- *Health & Safety Procedures for Approval*

Two procedures were presented to the Committee for approval:

1. *Management of Hepatitis B Procedure*

PB noted that, in line with the COSHH regulations, the emphasis is on managing risks and activity rather than vaccination as the primary control measure. The Health and Safety team will continue to administer the vaccination process for those considered at medium or high risk. Vaccinations will be arranged via a voucher scheme.

2. *Management of Contractors Procedure*

PB explained the procedure and detailed the roles and responsibilities of the Host, Supervisor and Contractor duty holders.

Both procedures were recommended to progress to the VCG Operations Group for final approval.

3. *E-Bikes, E-Scooters, Powered Mobility Scooters and Electric Wheelchair Procedure*

SW is currently developing this procedure and will liaise with ECS regarding external battery charging solutions. **Action: SW**

- *Workplace wellbeing*
See comments above at minute 3.
- *Visits by Enforcing Authorities*
There have been no enforcement visits made in this reporting period.
- *H&S Indicators*
For this year, an inspection program has been created, and at future meetings, progress will be reported.
- *H&S Accidents and near misses*
Since the beginning of this academic year, the H&S team has received reports of 18 accidents. 3 of these were unrelated to sports, while 15 were. There have been no RIDDOR reports this academic year.
- *Fire information*
For the Committee's information, a revised procedure for completing fire risk assessments and related reviews was provided.

Since the revised procedure, 61 activations occurred in total. Of these, 15 took place in non-residential buildings and 46 in residential ones.
- *Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Program.*
Information was provided on the current usage rates of the two services. Further updates will be provided at future committee meetings.

5. Genetic Modification of Organisms (GMO) committee minutes (ACGM 2024/1) and annual report 2024 (ACGM 2024/2) - (HSWSC241112/05)

BC and ST left the meeting at this point (12:00pm).

SI provided an update on the committee's minutes and annual report. It was highlighted that Sue Vaughn has taken over as chair from Linda King, who retired.

The University is managing 33 ongoing GMO-related research projects, led by 23 project leaders, with ten risk assessments related to GMOs in teaching practicals. In 2024, the GM committee reviewed and approved five risk assessments (one new and four revised), all classified as Class 1 activities (low to negligible risk).

The research covers a broad range of organisms, with most projects classified as Class 1, except for one involving an animal pathogen, which is classified as Class 2. This project operates under a Specified Animal Pathogens Order (SAPO) license from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), valid until 2025.

Laboratory inspections throughout the year, including GM containment reviews, found the workspaces in good condition, with minor recommendations for improvement. Additionally, a visit from the HSE was very positive.

6. Trade union items (UNISON) - (HSWSC241112/06)

The issues around the chair lift at Marston Road not being operational were discussed. The issue has been highlighted to JW for further progression. Further comments raised in relation to

concerns around adequate fire marshalling arrangements have been reviewed and recommendations made in the Fire strategy document.

SH asked about the coverage of first aiders across the University. PB advised that the current approach was in line with the plan presented to the Committee last year. However, with the recent changes to Faculty structures and upcoming relocations to new buildings, a more formal review of first aid cover is planned for the new year.

7. Any Other Business

- There was no other business.

8. Dates of the next meetings

- 11th February 2025, 11:00am - 12:00pm
- 10th June 2025, 11:00am - 12:00pm.