



Minutes SAF21-M2

Minutes of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 26 May 2021

Attendance

Members:

Neil Budworth, Ruth Casey, Paul Conway (ab), Sandy Edwards, Alec Edworthy, Graham Howard, Chris Linton (Chair), Graham Moody, David Roomes, Jo Shields, Oliver Sidwell, Richard Taylor, Maria Turnbull-Kemp (ab).

Apologies for absence:

Paul Conway, Maria Turnbull-Kemp

In attendance:

M Ashby (Secretary), Adam Crawford and Andy Dainty (for M21/22), Max Reid (in place of Maria Turnbull-Kemp), Julie Turner (for M21/24-27).

21/20 Minutes

SAF21-M1

The minutes of the meetings held on 3 February 2021 were approved.

21/21 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

SAF21-P29

- 21.1 Actions arising from previous minutes were NOTED and their current status confirmed.
- 21.2 Arising from SAF20/M1 3.2 *HSE Update: Loughborough Students' Union*, the Students' Union had been unable to gather information on incident rates at other students' unions due to the pandemic but intended to do so in the near future. The Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing offered to circulate a request for information to the Universities Safety and Health Association network and asked Loughborough Students' Union to provide the text of the request that they would like to be circulated. **ACTION: LSU Director of Finance & Operations**
- 21.3 Arising from SAF20-M1 4.3 *HSE Update: Campus Services*, Campus Services had changed their strategy for third-party accommodation providers where health and safety could not be assured. Campus Services were now working with these providers to ensure assurance rather than blacklisting them.
- 21.4 Arising from SAF20-M1 8.1 *Statutory Compliance KPIs*, members noted that new processes and procedures for F-Gas compliance were being finalised. It was anticipated that compliance would be achieved in the next six to 12 months.

21/22 Health, Safety and Environment Update: School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering

SAF21-P30

22.1 The Committee RECEIVED a presentation by the Dean on health, safety and environment arrangements in place in the School.

22.2 The following points were NOTED in particular:

- (i) The School had reflected upon the fact that it had had no near misses or incidents between May 2020 and April 2021. It had concluded that this was due to a number of factors not least a significant reduction in practical activity on campus during the pandemic and extra scrutiny in the School of lab and field-based teaching and research activities during this time.
- (ii) The University as a whole had experienced a reduction in the number of near misses, and there was an assumption that this was due to under-reporting. The Director of HSW was asked to reflect upon the possible causes for the reduction. **ACTION: Director of HSW**
- (iii) There had been a step change in the quality of risk assessments undertaken within the School. This was partially due to greater recognition of their importance amongst staff and students but also to the need to review the assessments to ensure that they were Covid safe.
- (iv) The School wished to ensure that it retained some of the positive outcomes arising from its actions during the pandemic. In particular it wished to retain the measures put in place to support the wellbeing of staff and researchers and the greater emphasis placed on health, safety and the environment.

22.3 The Committee welcomed the actions taken by the School during the pandemic. It noted, in particular, its success in continuing to offer Covid-safe fieldwork and the measures that had been put in place to support the mental health of its staff and researchers.

21/23 Report from the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing

SAF21-P31

23.1 Members RECEIVED an update from the Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

23.2 The following points were NOTED in particular:

- (i) A significant increase in the number of referrals made to the Occupational Health Service and in particular the number relating to mental health, which was higher than the national average. The Service was said to be highly valued and was receiving external recognition.
- (ii) A recent incident involving the modification of laboratory equipment had been investigated and dealt with appropriately.
- (iii) The Health and Safety Service had complied with requirements of a Notice of Contravention relating to the management of water systems in the Towers and was working with the Estates and Facilities Management team to critically evaluate the wider water management system.
- (iv) The Health and Safety Service was continuing to review lessons learnt from the Grenfell Towers tragedy and the fire in The Cube student accommodation block in Bolton. It was participating in a Government survey on halls of residence and cladding.

23.3 The Health and Safety Executive had determined that a gas system on the East Midlands campus was a private gas network and had issued a Notice of Contravention. The Estates and Facilities Management team and the Health and Safety Service were liaising with the Executive over this issue. The Director of HSW had noted that operations on campus were not unsafe but that this action was necessary to ensure that all issues had been covered. The development of a safety case would be a significant piece of work which could take up to a year to fully develop.

21/24 Covid 19 Response Update

SAF21-P32, SAF21-P33

- 24.1 Members RECEIVED an update on the University's Covid 19 response and on the testing regime in operation.
- 24.2 The University was seen to be the sector leader in testing, by some measure, both in absolute test numbers and percentage compliance. It was held in high regard within the sector and by the Government and was at the heart of discussions on standards and guidance with the Department for Education, Universities UK, Public Health England and other stakeholders.
- 24.3 The Committee noted that some parts of the HE sector could have done more to put in place testing to ensure that normal activity could resume at an earlier stage in the pandemic. The Director of HSW had made this point to Universities UK and to the Department for Education.
- 24.4 The Connect and Protect system had been set up to organise Covid 19 testing at the University. It had received over 120,000 submissions to date. Testing compliance was checked automatically on entry to the University Library, sport facilities and 'Parcels'. Random spot checks were also carried out in dining halls, laboratories and workshops.
- 24.5 The following points were NOTED in particular:
- (i) The University had made the decision to remove students' access rights in order to be in a position to limit access to facilities for those who did not engage with testing. This, and students' goodwill, had resulted in high levels of engagement amongst students.
 - (ii) Planning was under way for the vaccination strategy for students in June and for arrangements on campus in the new academic year. The Director of HSW and the Director of Student Services were pressing the Department for Education and Charnwood Clinical Commissioning Group for information on their expectations of the HE sector for the next academic year.
 - (iii) Physical events, including graduation ceremonies and hall balls, would present additional health and safety challenges for the University during the summer.
 - (iv) The testing centre was carrying out PCR tests for staff and students who needed to travel outside the UK and was able to provide them with a testing certificate.
- 24.5 The UCU representative thanked the Director of HSW and the Strategic Scientific Technical Lead for their work during the pandemic and also their engagement with the trade unions over aspects of the University's response.
- 24.6 The Committee ENDORSED the testing regime.

21/25 Statutory Compliance Key Performance Indicators

SAF21-P34, SAF21-P35

- 25.1 Members RECEIVED updates on statutory compliance key performance indicators. All DAP areas were rated as either amber or green, with most areas showing improvement. A number of areas had been rated as amber, rather than green, due to the need for staff in some areas to focus on Covid 19-related safety measures. The Health and Safety Service was asked to include descriptors in future KPI reports to clarify the nature of the categories used. **ACTION: Director of HSW**
- 25.2 The following points were NOTED in particular:
- (i) An agreed programme of work on fire safety had led to this area being changed from red to amber.
 - (ii) Significant work had been undertaken to secure the safety of the University's water system following a case of Legionnaires Disease in a hall of residence, and additional resources had been allocated to oversee water safety. The area remained amber but demonstrated improvement.

25.3 The Committee agreed that it was important to capture the business continuity learnings arising from the case of Legionnaires Disease. Estates and Facilities Management would develop a report for consideration by Operations Committee.

ACTION: Head of Catering, Domestic and Residential Services & the Head of Operations and Student Accommodation Services

21/26 Radiation Protection Update

SAF21-P36

26.1 The Committee RECEIVED a radiation protection update and ENDORSED radiological non-compliances and associated recommendations. The Chair would contact the Dean in one School regarding a non-compliance to establish what action had been taken to address the matter. **ACTION: DVC**

26.2 Decommissioning work had been paused when key staff had been redeployed to work in the Connect & Protect/Covid testing team but had recently begun again.

26.3 Recent changes to International Atomic Energy Agency requirements had led to more rigorous processes being put in place by the Health and Safety Executive for organisations that undertook work with ionising radiation. The new change could lead to the University incurring increased costs, an increased administrative burden and HSE inspections on all equipment producing ionising radiation.

21/27 Chemical and Biological Safety Update

SAF21-P37

The Committee APPROVED a proposed change to the health and safety element of human participation work to remove a temporary additional step that had been put in place during the pandemic.

21/28 Fire Safety Update

SAF21-P38

28.1 The Committee RECEIVED a fire safety update and noted actions that had moved the fire compliance KPI from red to amber.

28.2 The Committee APPROVED proposed criteria to determine appropriate standards that would apply in the event of a significant refurbishment.

28.3 The Committee CONFIRMED its commitment to the current two-year Fire Risk Assessment review period for accommodation and APPROVED a proposed wider position on University fire risk assessment review periods.

28.4 Members noted that there had been 50 occasions between January and April where fire alarms had been activated due to a fault in the system. It was unclear whether these incidents had occurred across the University's campuses or whether they were concentrated in a few buildings. The Health and Safety Service would provide a breakdown of these instances at the next meeting. **ACTION: Director of HSW**

21/29 Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service Annual Report

SAF21-P39

29.1 Members RECEIVED the annual report of the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service. The report conveyed the ongoing success of the Service and positive changes that had been made over the previous year. These included the relocation of the Service, replacement of the existing employee assistance provider, recruitment of an additional occupational health advisor and the implementation of occupational health physician services from Nottingham University Hospital.

- 29.2 The Service had received external recognition. It had been awarded 'Team of the Year' in the Personnel Today Awards 2020. The service was also featured in Occupational Health magazine.
- 29.3 The Service continued to receive high levels of referrals. Of these 28 per cent were mental health related. This was noted to be higher than the national average of 12 per cent. Members noted that Long Covid could be a concern in the future, with an estimated ten per cent of those who had been infected with Covid 19 continuing to suffer from symptoms over an extended period.

21/30 Sustainability Annual Report

SAF21-P40

30.1 The Committee RECEIVED the Sustainability Annual Report.

30.2 The following points were NOTED in particular:

- (i) The Sustainability Action Plan would be reviewed in due course to reflect the University's new Strategy.
- (ii) The University had been recognised as a sector leader for spill management, having received a British Safety Industry Federation Water Pollution Prevention Award in 2020.
- (iii) The Climate and Environment Task Group would report to the Committee in October. Its report would identify the top five climate change risks for the University and would put forward some recommendations.
- (iv) Estates and FM were developing a decarbonisation plan which would be considered by Operations Committee in due course.
- (v) A recent report, 'Building Back Better', had highlighted opportunities for improving the way in which the University operated in the future. One potential area, a reduction in business travel by academic staff, could achieve a significant saving for the University and reduce Scope 3 emissions. The future demand for business travel was currently unclear and warranted further discussion by the Committee. The Associate Head of Sustainability would engage with Schools to explore a future strategy for business travel with academic staff with a view to presenting her findings to the Committee. **ACTION: Associate Head of Sustainability**

21/31 Future Business

SAF21-P41

The Committee APPROVED a schedule of business for forthcoming meetings.

21/32 Committee Effectiveness

SAF21-P42

- 32.1 Members CONSIDERED the effectiveness of the Committee and confirmed that they were content with the way in which it operated. They NOTED that 2020 had been an unusual year from a health, safety and environment perspective, where effort had needed to be focused on measures to respond to the pandemic. The Health and Safety Service was gradually moving to a better footing where it was in a position to focus on its future strategy.
- 32.2 The Committee NOTED that its membership included two external members, one of whom was also a member of the University Council and, who in that capacity, was able to assure Council of the work of the Committee. This arrangement was considered by members to be appropriate from a governance perspective.
- 32.3 Members were encouraged to forward any comments on the effectiveness of the Committee to the Chair or Secretary. **ACTION: HSE Members**

21/33 Fire Safety Policy

SAF21-P43

Proposed changes to the existing Fire Safety Policy, as detailed in SAF21-P38 and SAF21-P43, were APPROVED.

21/34 Safeguarding Policy

SAF21-P44

Proposed changes to the existing Safeguarding Policy were APPROVED subject to a reference to the 1998 Data Protection Act being changed to the 2018 Data Protection Act.

21/35 Reports to Health, Safety and Environment Committee

The Committee RECEIVED the following reports:

- (i) **SAF21-P45**
Environmental Compliance Report
- (ii) **SAF21-P46**
Accident Data Report
- (iii) **SAF21-P47**
Annual Report of Ethics Review Sub-Committee for 2020/21

21/36 Minutes of Sub-Committees

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

- (i) **SAF21-P48**
GM/Biosafety Committee (24th March 2021)
- (ii) **SAF21-P49**
Health Safety Environment Statutory Sub-Committee (22nd April 2021))
- (iii) **SAF21-P50**
Non-Ionising Radiation Committee (25th March 2021)
- (iv) **SAF21-P51**
Radiological Protection Sub-Committee (18th May 2021)

21/37 Valediction

The Committee thanked retiring member Oliver Sidwell for his valued contributions to the Committee's discussions.

21/38 Date of Meetings in 2021/22

Wednesday 6 October 2021 at 2.00pm
Wednesday 2 February 2022 at 2.00pm
Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 2.00pm