

University of Glasgow

Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Meeting held on Tuesday 7 March at 10:00 AM in Melville Room

Present: Hazel Bookham, David Duncan, Elise Gallagher, Peter Haggarty, David Harty, Paul Fairie, William Howie, Christopher Kennedy, Paula McKerrow, Jenna Millar, Cyril Pacot, Gary Stephen, Louise Stergar, Mark Wildman, Selina Woolcott

In Attendance: Karen Biggins, Alice Gallagher

Apologies: Debbie Beales, Sharon Burns, Ian Campbell, James Gray, Gillian Shaw, David McLean, Hailie Pentleton

HSWC/2023/1 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2022

The Minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2022 was approved.

HSWC/2023/2 Matters arising

HSWC/2023/2.1 Estates Safety Report (Paper 1)

The Committee noted the paper had been shared - highlights from this are:

- There is an ongoing focus on scaffolding around campus and a continuing dialogue with relevant contractors. Mobile elevated platforms also form part of these conversations. Issues have arisen with perpetrators using these for graffiti vandalism. Also reinforcing with contractors their obligations to ensure rubbish is removed from sites.
- There is an ongoing engagement with CBRE to ensure a smooth handover to the new hard FM contractor.
- Fire door maintenance is being undertaken in James Watt South and GUU.
- A new compliance advisor has been engaged.
- An authorised engineer is identifying gaps in gas safety with work to update drawings and identify redundant lines and corrosion.
- With regard to failed PAT equipment being left in circulation, processes are now in place to ensure these are removed from circulation.
- It was noted at the recent safety forum that the appropriate level of management was not in attendance and Peter Haggarty is personally contacting relevant senior managers to ensure they sign up to the Estates safety charter.
- David Harty will follow up detail in relation to asbestos removal methodology and terminology.

HSWC/2023/2.2 HSE biological safety report (Paper 2)

The Committee noted the paper that had been shared – highlights from this are:

HSE visited the University in December 2022 to review some of our higher-risk CL3 activities. Their focus was on higher containment facilities. HSE are changing their inspection approach due to our high-risk profile and the visit was part of a pilot of a new model of inspection involving the UofG and one other UK higher-risk facility. AG, the University Biological Safety Adviser (BSA) explained that HSE issued a letter of requirements and served an enforcement (improvement) notice in relation to the management of biosafety, reflecting a need to have defined biosafety management structures, systems and arrangements in place. CMVLS have recognised that this

will require additional biosafety manager resource and have developed a job description for the recruitment of a post at Gilmorehill which will incorporate both general biosafety and GM. This role will complement the existing Biosafety Manager role already in place at Garscube. PF, College Head of Facilities, confirmed this and thanked AG for all her efforts in both preparing for and responding to the audit by HSE.

AG explained that, of the other written requirements stipulated in HSE's letter, those actions required to be completed by 31st March had already been so and she had notified HSE accordingly.

SW noted that during the visit she met with HSE, and part of their discussion covered the central biosafety advice provision within SEPS. HSE had some concern over the level of resource and SW had advised them that a bid had been submitted for budgetary provision for an assistant biosafety assistant post to enable a greater focus on the substantial number of CL2 facilities as well as a degree of succession planning for the BSA post, a key post and single point of failure for the University. SW went on to explain to the Committee that the bid was not successful and HSW and the wider Estates management team are now considering alternative options. The high- risk profile of the pathogens held in our CL3 facilities, increasing levels of activity and associated interest from HSE generates an enormous volume of work for one advisory/ governance post and leave the University vulnerable should the current BSA not be available. Preparation for the next HSE audit later in March began in January. This audit will consider maintenance management systems and will require involvement of both CMVLS and Estates. A further inspection by HSE is planned for the autumn/winter. This is expected to focus on CL2 labs, human factors and local inspections.

BH noted there is no visibility of risk assessments on a shared platform and suggested this might help better support audits. AG advised that risk assessments for some areas are biosecurity sensitive and that a full- time post would be required to maintain such a platform. A review of risk assessment policy would be required and the new biosafety manager position, once filled, would review the current documents. SW is looking at software for travel risk assessment and pointed out that even for this single activity this had been challenging. DD noted that we should consider the options, given the new level of scrutiny being applied by HSE.

HSWC/2023/3 OH Report (Paper 3)

The Committee noted the Paper that was circulated. Highlights from the paper include:

- Occupational Health and Wellbeing have now appointed two new clinicians, an OH Adviser and a part-time screening nurse who both started in January.
- HB, Head of OH and Wellbeing, explained that a drop in numbers requiring bloods taking was largely due to a dip in research activity during the pandemic and that these appointments and those related to research passports are once again increasing.
- HB believed the increase in DNA (patients who did not attend appointments) was due to an increased visibility with improved recording of these events.
- OH had successfully completed undergraduate MVLS Student screening programmes for cohorts 2020 & 2021; this included a mop up of students who required vaccines that were not available until Dec 2022.
- Initial research has commenced into clinical software availability to support the transition from paper record management to electronic.
- Staff have been identified to undertake T4 training to support the enhancement of the OH intranet/ website.
- OH&W commenced engagement with external and internal partners to ensure alignment and best practice for the provision of professional OH services.
- OH had commenced the programme of review and enhancement of support systems.
- Discussions with Blood Transfusion Scotland had resulted in agreement of dates for coming year.

HSWC/2023/4 SEPS Report (Paper 4)

The Committee noted the Paper that was circulated for information only. Highlights from the paper include:

Increases in RIDDOR reporting were expected due to increased activity, both work and study, on campus. Second and third year students coming into lab sessions are less experienced than they would usually be. Schools had been pre-warned of this likelihood and additional student lab inductions had been recommended. However, there has still been an increase in numbers of incidents. One notable incident was an item of equipment that had failed a routine PAT – it had not been removed from use and this had resulted in an electric shock to a student. A report was submitted to the school in question and Estates to make recommendations to avoid a recurrence. There were also two cases of minor allergic reactions at work reported. Members were encouraged to email any specific enquiries to David McLean, Head of SEPS.

HSWC/2023/5 Audit update (Paper 5)

The Committee noted the Paper that was circulated for information only. SW spoke briefly to this paper to highlight the generally good progress with the audit programme. Since the paper's submission, the audit report for the School of Social and Political Studies had been finalised and issued and that for the Hunterian Museum was on the point of issue.

HSWC/2023/6 Sickness absence stats (Paper 6)

The Committee noted the Paper that was circulated for information only. The statistics remained fairly consistent and similar trends were in evidence to previous report. Longer term absences that had previously not been addressed were now coming to light and HR colleagues were supporting managers to manage this.

HSWC/2023/7 HSW Annual Report (Paper 7)

The Committee noted the Paper that was circulated for information only. SW covered highlights from the executive summary but recommended the detail of the contents to committee members.

The early part of the year was complex with lingering Covid guidance to update, covid-related anxieties and concerns about returning to campus.

The Chemical Safety Adviser (CSA) Phil Rodger provided support for activities relocating into the newly handed-over ARC building, The BSA provided similar support for biosafety activities. SW pointed out that both the CSA and BSA also have generalist roles, contributing substantially to training, accident investigation and the audit programme.

Key policy updates included a review of the Fire Safety Management Policy to reflect changes in the provision of those duties previously delivered by local Area Fire Officers (AFO). A new role of Fire Safety Coordinator has been created, with many of the original AFO duties now being carried out by local Zone staff within the Estates structure in order to address the shortage of AFOs arising from new hybrid working patterns.

The Radiation Protection Service (RPS) workload expanded quite rapidly as research activities increased, although key elements of the service, such as dose badge circulations and isotope delivery management continued throughout the pandemic.

Total training volumes increased, year on year, even allowing for the high numbers completing the return to campus induction the previous year. SEPS were supported by the Digital Learning Team to develop an in-house digital learning resource for DSE safety and SW extended warm thanks to Neeraj Bhardwaj for his help. SW finished by thanking the HSW professional and

administrative staff for all their hard work over the year, as well as all those colleagues who provided much appreciated support and collaboration.

MW asked what circumstances might render Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) training mandatory and whether a payment for MHFAs should be considered. SW indicated that whilst MHFA training is increasingly being included as desired training for certain roles with personal support aspects, in most cases it was considered a more general personal development for attendees.

Courses are currently over-subscribed with a 40-strong waiting list and no more available spaces until courses, which take up to 15 attendees, begin again in the Autumn. SW would be concerned at incentivising when there is already a backlog requesting training and no shortage of volunteers. HB also stressed that the focus should be on ensuring the best people for the MHFA role are identified and that a payment could be an obstacle to this. SW also explained that efforts are taken to keep the list of registered MHFAs up to date, but this is challenging with increasing staff movement and turnover.

On the subject of general first aid, GS noted that the soon to be implemented Martyn's Law – a response to the Manchester Arena Bombing – will require some first aiders to be trained in trauma first aid and for trauma first aid kits to be made available and that his team is considering best way of achieving this.

HSWC/2023/8 E Scooters fire risk

SW noted that there is increasing concern on HE safety networks related to potential risk of serious fires involving e-bike lithium-ion batteries. Increasing purchase and use of e-bikes is a contributory factor but the main issue is the difficulties associated with extinguishing lithium-ion battery fires because they generate oxygen, making them extremely challenging to put out with conventional extinguishers. New extinguisher materials are under development to try to address this but not yet widely available. A growing number of HEIs have banned e-scooters, and in some cases e-bikes, from campus, or from being taken into campus buildings in response to this concern.

E-bikes are a more established product, but e-scooters still have low consistency of manufacturing quality leading to lower confidence in their safety. As e-scooters are designed to be portable, generally being supplied with a carrying case to facilitate this, owners are inclined to bring them into accommodation and other buildings for security, as they are difficult to make secure outside, and for charging purposes. It is fair to point out that in general the public will be routinely taking this equipment indoors for the same reasons. UofG currently does not have external charging points suitable for e-scooters, which are designed to be chargeable from a standard domestic power socket.

Whilst the University is keen to promote lower-carbon means of travel, it is important to recognise that, currently, only e-scooters that are provided through a government scheme are legal to be used on a public or private road, and no e-scooter is permitted to be ridden on a pavement. It is understood that there is currently no government scheme in place in Glasgow. It is understood that this situation may change in the course of 2023 with new legislation permitting use of a wider range of e-scooters on the road under development.

The Committee agreed that for now a holding statement should be issued and the issue kept under review. Managers of certain UofG buildings have already issued bans on e-scooters indoors, such as the Library, over concerns in relation to fire safety and obstruction of escape routes. SW suggested any approach should be risk-based.

It was agreed that GS would issue a statement regarding legality of e-scooters and take forward the issue in the existing Logistics Hub working group, consulting with colleagues in relevant units

including SEPS, town planning, transport and accommodation services. DD offered to raise the matter with peers in other institutions.

HSWC/2023/9 Covid (verbal update)

There were no updates to advise currently at this time. This issue will remain on the agenda in the meantime.

HSWC/2023/10 Any Other Business

CK noted that there are issues with external gas lines corroding, and pipes in basements where leaks and/or environmental conditions may be causing corrosion. CK enquired about the University policy on monitoring and examining such facilities and ensuring suitable facilities are provided in new builds. DD suggested this should be considered by relevant parties, including SEPS, and a paper submitted to the next meeting.

PM noted there is an escalating problem with more children coming onto campus and being left to their own devices. A family study room is available in the Library and signage has been updated to ensure it is correctly used. GS noted that abandoned children should be reported to security who will involve external agencies as appropriate. DD observed that international students may not always be aware of UK/Scottish legislation regarding children being left unattended.

Paul Fairie advised that he is moving on from the University in May. Jenna Millar will attend the Committee in his place. The Committee thanked PF for his contribution.

HSWC/2023/10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the HSWC will take place on Friday 10 June 2023 at 10am in the Melville Room.

Created by: Karen Biggins/Selina Woolcott