

**UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON
HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the 37th Meeting of the Committee
10am on Wednesday 18 October 2023
Meeting held in Howard 102, Digby Stuart College**

Present: Mark Allen (Chair), Patrick Brady, Frances Coleman, Richard Gerard-Sharp, Andy Lamb, Donny McCormick, Tom Rowson, Dr Gauti Sigthorsson

In attendance: Nigel Dale, Fire, Health and Safety Adviser
Melanie Duhig, Governance Coordinator ^(notes)

Secretary: Elaine Lentell

Apologies: Sharon Azams, Mike Hall, Mike Toon

Minutes and Business Matters

HSWC37.1 Welcomes, introductions, apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Gauti Sigthorsson, academic manager nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost, who was attending his first meeting.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

HSWC37.2 Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting
(Paper HSWC37/1)

Approved: The minutes of the 36th meeting of the Committee, held on 13 June 2023.

HSWC37.3 Matters arising from the minutes

The Committee noted progress on matters arising as set out in Paper HSWC37/2 and the following updates were provided:

HSWC36.5 – that new fencing had been installed in the Whitelands car park.

HSWC36.6 – that an update on the draft Wellbeing and Stress Policy would be provided later in the meeting.

HSWC36.9 – that the fencing around the Waste and Hazardous Substance Store adjacent to Parkstead House had been upgraded and a camera is now directed on this area. Initially the gate was being left open but the situation has now improved.

HSWC37.4 Confirmation of membership for 2023-24
(Paper HSWC37/3)

Noted: The membership of the Committee for 2023-24 as detailed in the paper and that an advert for a new member of the Committee had been published in several online locations.

Items for Decision

HSWC37.5 University of Roehampton Sexual Violence Working Group
(Paper HSWC37/4)

The Committee received a paper on the formation of the Sexual Violence Working Group and noted that the governance of the group, including which University committees would oversee its work, would be reviewed before approval was sought.

Action: Director of Student Support Services

Items for Discussion

HSWC37.6 Health and Safety Matters
(Paper HSWC37/5)

The Committee noted the issues raised by the UCU and GMB including the following:

- Storage of flammable materials: it was noted that some flammable items had been stored in inappropriate places. The Director of Estates had remedied this and had instructed various teams, including the Security team, to monitor the situation.
- Water ingress: attention was drawn to a water ingress which had occurred in Michaelis House and in some stairwells in Parkstead House which had warped certain floors and impacted the effectiveness of certain fire doors. It was confirmed that both the maintenance and cleaning teams had been instructed to deal with the water ingress and a programme of gutter clearance was now in place. It was noted that the repair of roofs generally was extremely expensive and the subject of a separate workstream but that the repair of the roof in Montefiore would likely be the priority.
- That an electrical cable had been hanging low in a classroom in Parkstead. It was noted that Estates were aware of this, and other instances, and that they would be looked into.
- Mould in accommodation: the UCU representative reported that there had been complaints about mould in some student

accommodation. It was noted that students were advised to raise a ticket to deal with individual cases and that the problem was thought to be limited. It was reported that the date on which the heating systems would be turned on had been brought forward due to recent cold weather and that student accommodation would be the priority.

- SETEC building: An update on the health and safety aspects associated with SETEC was provided to the Committee. Due to the substantial amount of infrastructure work required on Howard building, it had been removed from the scope of the SETEC project with the focus now being on the Jubilee building. Initial construction work would begin in January 2024 and external Health & Safety Consultants had been engaged. The University Health & Safety Team were already considering the health and safety risks which would arise from the day-to-day operations of the new school. A separate sub-committee may be required to deal with the health and safety aspects arising from SETEC and this was being kept under review.
- Fire door in Parkstead House: attention had previously been drawn to fire door which was covered by a secured shutter. The UCU representative confirmed that he had checked the door and that the situation had been resolved.

HSWC37.7 Report from Human Resources (Paper HSWC37/6)

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director of Human Resources and attention was drawn to the changes relating to the draft Work-related Wellbeing and Stress Policy. As a result of an independent legal review of the draft policy, advice had been given that part of the policy should be incorporated in a broader Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy rather than the current Health and Safety policy. The broader policy would then be co-owned by the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Associate Director, Health and Safety. Thanks were extended to Committee members and other stakeholders for the work undertaken on this policy to date, in particular the UCU and GMB representatives.

Approved: Amendments to the Health & Safety Policy to incorporate content relating to wellbeing and work-related stress, and for the policy to become the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing policy.

Approved: The introduction of the Management of Work-Related Stress and Mental Wellness standard operating procedure.

Action: Exec. Director of HR

HSWC37.8 Report from Student Support Services (Paper HSWC37/7)

The Committee received the report from the Director of Student Support Services and noted the following points in particular:

- That 6022 students engaged with Student Support Services across 2022/23, which is an all-time high. This is partly as a result of additional services now being offered, such as support on money matters. The plan is for this number to be reduced through earlier intervention strategies.
- The student satisfaction rates with the service had increased and the waiting time for services was extremely low.
- A number of policies had been approved by Senate in September 2023 including the Procedures regarding Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Infant Care. It was reported that there was a high number of student pregnancies, in particular in the business school.
- The number of students seeking mental health advice was expected to continue to grow due to NHS constraints.
- Three quarters of students who engage with Student Support Services continue with their studies.
- A new Head of Wellbeing has just started and progress was being made in appointing College Warden vacancies. Thanks were extended to College Wardens for the work they undertake.

Action: Director of Support Services

HSWC37.9 Report from Estates on compliance (Paper HSWC37/8A)

The Committee received the report from the Director of Estates, and noted the following points:

- That an external audit was in process and a final report was expected in the next 2-3 weeks. In connection with the audit, it was proposed that the University's use of the INVIDA system be extended to include the compliance module.

Report from Estates on RAAC (Paper HSWC37/8B)

- That a visual inspection has taken place and did not reveal the existence of any RAAC. Quotes for an intrusive inspection are currently being obtained.

Action: Director of Estates

HSWC37.10 Period Health and Safety Report (Paper HSWC37/9)

The Committee received the report from the Associate Director of Health and Safety, and noted the following points:

- There were 15 Awaken reports of which 1 was a RIDDOR.
- Since the date of the report a cleaner had been injured by a needle discarded in a sink in the library. Communications with students around the safe disposal of needles are being rolled out.
- There was one student case of TB requiring information to be provided to Public Health England.
- Mental health/welfare continues to be the greatest reason for a First Aid Call Out.
- There have been significant improvements in training this year and training plans are in place with those departments which have additional training requirements such as Security and Maintenance.
- The new Event Safety Checklist will be launched on the H&S portal shortly.
- A template for risk assessing young persons is now available on the H&S portal.
- Audits with contracted services such as Elinor were carried out over the summer and RSU audits are now taking place.

HSWC37.11 Fire Safety Management Period Report (Paper HSWC37/10)

The Committee received a report from the Fire, Health and Safety Adviser, and the following points were highlighted:

- Weekly inspections of escape routes: the intention is for the weekly inspection of escape routes to be undertaken by the Security team in the future. College Wardens will resume the checks in the interim.
- Personal electric vehicles with large lithium batteries: these are now banned inside University buildings due to the high fire risk they pose.
- Safe cooking videos: the possibility of producing safe cooking videos with the University and London Fire Brigade is being explored.
- Fire alarm activations: as neither fire alarm nor intruder activations are being automatically routed to the Security team, a more robust system is being investigated.
- Fire doors: a survey will be carried out in October to establish the remedial works required of fire doors.

HSWC37.12 Annual Health and Safety Report (Paper HSWC37/11)

The Committee received a report from the Associate Director of Health and Safety and the following points were highlighted:

- An update on the KPIs from the Health and Safety Strategy was provided.
- As per one of the KPIs, Mental Health First Aid Training has been added to the learning plans for the Security team. This is progressing but not yet complete.
- The decrease in the level of First Aid Call-Outs is probably attributable to Covid.
- There were 3 RIDDORs in the preceding year.

HSWC37.13 Annual Fire Safety Report (Paper HSWC37/12)

The Committee received a report from the Fire, Health and Safety Adviser, and the following points were highlighted:

- The number of fire risk assessments being carried out had increased substantially.
- Following the Elm Grove fire, it was recommended that Building Fire Safety Manuals be created and implemented for all University buildings.
- Compliance and upgrade work is progressing, in relation to fire doors and fire stopping.
- The proposed extension of the INVIDA system for compliance and asset management was welcomed and the need to train super-users on the system was emphasised.

HSWC37.14 Report from the Life and Health Sciences Sub-Committee

The Committee noted that a report from the Life and Health Sciences Sub-Committee would be provided at the next meeting.

Action: Secretary

HSWC37.15 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7 February 2024

*Minutes prepared by Melanie Duhig
Governance and Legal Office
October 2023*