

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

**Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Committee
10am on Wednesday 11 May 2022
Meeting held in the Convent Parlour and remotely via MS Teams**

Present: Mark Allen (Chair), Adriana Allen*, Patrick Brady*, Frances Coleman, Andy Lamb, Donny McCormick, Oli Ottaway, Tom Rowson, Michael Toon*

In attendance: Nigel Dale

Secretary: Elaine Lentell

Apologies: Mike Hall, Mark Riley

Minutes and Business Matters

HSWC32.1 Welcomes, introductions, apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and no conflicts of interest were declared.

**HSWC32.2 Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting
(Paper HSWC32/1)**

Approved: The minutes of the 31st meeting of the Committee, held on Wednesday 2 February 2022.

HSWC32.3 Matters arising from the minutes

The Committee noted progress on matters arising as set out in Paper HSWC32/2 and the following actions were highlighted:

HSWC31.3 - that emergency cover options for the four college receptions had been reviewed and a cover rota put in place. To ensure daily cover at Southlands reception it had been agreed that employing additional resource would be considered.

HSWC31.4 - the follow-up actions are covered in HSWC32.8 below.

Items for Decision

HSWC32.4 Revisions to the Fire Safety Policy (Paper HSWC32/3)

* Adriana Allen and Patrick Brady attended remotely via MS Teams. Michael Toon attended part of the meeting remotely and part of the meeting in-person.

Approved The revisions made to the Fire Safety Policy around terminology, new job titles, and reporting a fire suspected of being started maliciously to the police.

HSWC32.5 Revisions to the Lone and Remote Working Policy
(Paper HSWC32/4)

Approved The revised Lone and Remote Working Policy. Updates included minor procedural amendments, new job titles, and additional risk assessment requirements.

HSWC32.6 Revisions to the Smoke-Free Policy (Paper HSWC32/5)

Approved The revised Smoke-Free Policy. Revisions included clarification on vaping and smoking in vehicles, and updated 'support to quit smoking' contact information.

It was confirmed that the proposed designated smoking shelters were not yet in place but were on the Estates' projects list.

Items for Discussion

HSWC32.7 UCU Stress Survey Report (Paper HSWC32/6)

The Committee received the UCU Stress Survey report. The UCU representative provided a summary of the main findings as noted below:

- That the UCU had conducted a stress survey of its members at Roehampton in February and March 2022. Relatively high levels of stress were reported among those staff who responded, with some staff on stress-related sick leave. The levels of stress however varied between the different schools and departments.
- That the COVID-19 pandemic has generally had a detrimental impact on staff workload and wellbeing.
- As a result, the UCU has asked the University to conduct a stress risk assessment, identifying hazards and corresponding measures to mitigate their impact. Further suggestions to address the issue are set out on page 13 of the report.

In response to the points raised in the report, the management team noted that it had been demonstrated that the University was working collaboratively on work-related stress. The formation of the Work-related Stress Working Group had been endorsed by the Committee on 2 February and a subsequent meeting between management and the UCU had taken place on 28 April, to discuss the survey and the group's Terms of Reference (considered under Item HSWC32.10).

UCU clarified that its concerns were about the broader health and safety process at the University, and were not personal criticisms of specific members of the Health and Safety Team.

To progress the issue, the Committee agreed the actions below:

- The Work-related Stress Working Group to be set up based on the revised Terms of Reference agreed by the Committee and detailed under **HSWC32.10**. This included agreement of the majority of the amendments proposed by UCU.
- The group would proceed with the membership detailed in the Terms of Reference but would continue to be reviewed as the work of the group was undertaken.
- A draft organisational stress risk assessment to be presented at the group's first meeting.
- Additional facility time to be offered to trade union members who are part of the group to allow them enough time to contribute to meetings.
- An additional Health, Safety and Welfare Committee meeting to be scheduled in late June/early July to consider an interim report and recommendations from the group.

Other Health and Safety matters - Union Representatives

The GMB representative raised the issue of security staff being unable to access information on fire safety systems in all buildings on-campus.

- It was confirmed that the Estates Projects team was working on up-to-date floor plans for buildings on campus and that the matter would be discussed at the upcoming Fire Safety Management meeting.
- A decision on recruiting an extra resource to support ongoing fire prevention work would also be made before the Committee meeting in October.

**Actions: COO, Exec. Director of HR, unions, Secretary
Fire, Health & Safety Adviser**

HSWC32.8 Anonymised historic data on student deaths (Paper HSWC32/7)

The Committee received the report, which provided data on student deaths over the past five years. The Committee considered the report and the following points were noted in particular:

- That the data had been reviewed and no discernible patterns had been identified.

- That while the University usually had some knowledge about the cause of death, the official cause tended to be difficult to confirm as the University was not privy to the formal inquest.
- One of the recent student deaths had been linked to them buying drugs online and there had been a previous incident. In response to a probable drug-related death, drug awareness-raising work had been undertaken at Southlands and the RSU had provided support for students affected by the deaths in collaboration with Wandsworth Community Drug and Alcohol Service.

The Committee noted the University's Student Death Procedure and that it was currently undergoing review in light of lessons learned from the student deaths earlier in the year, in particular when and how the next of kin should be informed. Comparable procedures from the HE sector, police and the NHS have been looked at, and although it would normally be the relevant authority's (police or NHS) responsibility, the University would make a judgement on whether to notify the next of kin in specific circumstances.

Once the Student Death Procedure has been revised it will be presented to the Committee for approval at a future meeting.

Action: Deputy Director of Student Support Services

HSWC32.9 Update from the COVID-19 Health and Safety sub-committee
(Paper HSWC32/8)

The Committee noted the update on COVID-19 measures from the sub-committee, presented by the Chief Operating Officer in the Director of Campus Operations' absence.

It was reported that cases were at a relatively low level, and that another lessons learned exercise on the University's response to COVID-19 would be carried out in due course.

Approved The disbanding of the COVID-19 Health & Safety sub-committee for the reasons noted in the report.

HSWC32.10 Report from Human Resources²
(Paper HSWC32/9)

The Committee received the report, which provided an update on how the University is supporting staff experiencing stress in the workplace.

² The Committee discussed the item after the UCU Stress Survey Report.

The Committee was invited to note and discuss the draft Terms of Reference for the Work-related Stress Working Group and the UCU's suggested amendments. The Committee considered the proposed amendments in turn as noted below:

- 1.3 (a) Add 'proposals', agreed.
- 1.3 (b) Add HSE Stress Management Standards, agreed.
- 1.3 (c) The wording was revised following discussion in the meeting (which reflected UCU's proposed changes except for the reference to data (in order to keep the ToRs broad): 'To discuss and explore the potential equality diversity and inclusion impact(s) of stress at the University'.
- 1.4. The proposed UCU extension to the timeframe for the group was agreed. However, the date was brought forward to mid-September to allow adequate time for the final report/ interim recommendations to be presented to the Health, Safety and Welfare on 5 October.

The revised Terms of Reference were **endorsed** by the Committee and members were invited to feedback any further suggestions for enhancing wellbeing at the University to the Executive Director of HR.

HSWC32.11 Report from Student Support Services (Paper HSWC32/10)

The Committee noted the report and the following points in particular:

- That the number of students seeking support continued to be high, in line with national NHS data. The measures implemented to reduce waiting list time were having a positive effect.
- That students discharged by the NHS without Student Support Services being notified continued to be a key risk. Steps to mitigate and identify acute cases had been introduced and work on the issue was ongoing.
- That Student Support was working with Academic Services on reviewing the University's mitigating circumstances procedure, to ensure that it enabled the effective support of students.

HSWC32.12 Period Report from the Head of Health & Safety (Paper HSWC32/11)

The Associate Director of Health and Safety tabled the H&S Dashboard, which was presented with the period report to provide an overview of health and safety matters in the reporting period (1 January to 31 March 2022). The following points were highlighted:

- That there had been a total of 11 Awaken reports during the reporting period, including 5 accidents and 6 near misses, none of which were reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR.
- There had been a significant number of mental health-related callouts in the period, largely repeat incidents where multiple callouts were made for the same student.
- The Committee noted the Technical Compliance periodic report and it was advised that any queries on the ECS Compliance dashboard should be directed to the Technical Compliance Manager.
- E-Learning mandatory H&S training completion rates were improving. However, it was requested that staff should attend manual handling/first aid courses when they were scheduled, as no shows had an impact on the training budget, which was limited.
- That the internal audit programme was back up and running following the easing of Covid restrictions.

HSWC32.13 Period Fire Safety Management Report (Paper HSWC32/12)

The Fire, Health and Safety Adviser tabled the Fire Risk Management Dashboard, which was presented with the period fire report to provide a summary of fire management matters during the reporting period (1 January to 31 March 2022).

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- That there had been one minor fire and one near miss on campus during the reporting period. While fire-related incidents were decreasing generally, cooking-related incidents were increasing, mostly involving cooking oil.
- That Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) actions had increased slightly over the period due to new actions received from recent FRAs. Under the FRA Standards of fire safety per building Fincham had been downgraded to 'poor'.
- Inspections of all fire escape routes in non-residential campus buildings were required to be completed at least weekly. A checklist on how to carry out regular checks had been circulated to senior academic and Professional Services staff. Staff only needed to report by exception.

The Committee received an update on the kitchen fire in student accommodation on 8 April at Elm Grove, which had been started by a student's visitor cooking in the Flat K32 kitchen.

Cooking oil in a pan had ignited causing fire and smoke to spread rapidly and resulting in major damage to the kitchen, although the compartmentation and fire door had worked effectively to contain the fire and smoke. The visitor sustained superficial burns which are healing well. Neither the student nor their visitor were aware of or followed the correct fire alarm and evacuation procedure. A number of lessons had been learned from the incident and are being followed up with actions. Thanks were also extended to Adriana Allen from Security for providing timely and effective first aid.

The Committee considered fire training for students living on campus and ways of ensuring that they had completed the training before moving into their accommodation, e.g. 'no training, no key'. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed further outside of the meeting.

Action: Fire, Health & Safety Adviser

HSWC32.14 Report from the Life and Health Sciences Sub-Committee
(Paper HSWC32/13)

The Committee noted the report and minutes from the School of Life and Health Sciences Health and Safety sub-committee.

HSWC32.15 Any Other Business

- 15.1 The Committee noted that an additional GMB member had attended the meeting and that the trade unions should only have one representative each at a meeting, as stated in the Terms of Reference. However, an exception was made on this occasion given that the GMB representative had been unsure whether they would be able to attend.

Date and time of the next Committee meeting

Monday 18 July 2022, 2:00 – 3:00 (additional meeting)

Wednesday 5 October 2022, 10:00 – 12:00

Minutes prepared by Elaine Lentell
Committee Secretary, May 2022