

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

**Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee  
10am on Thursday 2 March 2023  
Meeting held in the Terrace Room, Grove House**

**Present:** Mark Allen (Chair), Sharon Azams\*, Patrick Brady, Frances Coleman, Andy Lamb, Donny McCormick, Tom Rowson, Michael Toon

**In attendance:** Nigel Dale, Fire, Health and Safety Adviser  
Richard Gerard-Sharp, Deputy Director of Estates

**Secretary:** Elaine Lentell

**Apologies:** Mike Hall

**Minutes and Business Matters**

**HSWC35.1 Welcomes, introductions, apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Richard Gerard-Sharp, Deputy Director of Estates and Campus Services, to his first meeting on campus.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**HSWC35.2 Confirmation of the minute of the last meeting  
(Paper HSWC35/1)**

**Approved:** The minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee, held on 19 October 2022.

**HSWC35.3 Matters arising from the minutes**

The Committee noted progress on matters arising as set out in Paper HSWC35/2.

**Items for Decision**

**HSWC35.4 Revisions to the Lone and Remote Working Policy  
(Paper HSWC35/3)**

**Approved** The revised Lone and Remote Working Policy. Updates addressed concerns around staff working alone or outside of office hours and included:

- advice for line managers when team members feel isolated or vulnerable working alone in certain areas of the campus;

- the issuing of safety and security alerts and advice by the Health and Safety Team in collaboration with Campus Security and Human Resources.

It was advised that there was also guidance for line managers in the Health and Safety section on the staff portal.

The Union H&S representatives thanked the Health and Safety team for the enhanced guidance on lone working in light of recent security issues on campus.

### **Items for Discussion**

#### **HSWC35.5 Health and Safety Matters**

The Committee noted the issues raised by the UCU in Paper HSWC35/4. The following points were highlighted:

**Training of Union Health and Safety officers:** it was agreed that a second UCU and GMB local Health and Safety representative would be permitted to attend up to two Committee meetings in an observer capacity to see how the Committee functioned, as part of the training process for new UCU and GMB local Health and Safety representatives.

**Security provision on campus:** the UCU noted the excellent work the security staff did at Roehampton. There were, however, still security issues at Whitelands College (although this had reduced since measures were implemented), along with other concerns as detailed in the paper.

Both the UCU and GMB Trade Unions suggested that staffing levels for security were not high enough and agency staff were not familiar with the campus, although Management noted that regular agency staff were employed where possible. There had also been a recent recruitment drive for security staff, but it had proved difficult to recruit permanent staff. While acknowledging this, both Unions requested that there should be a minimum of four permanent security staff with the option of overtime.

The Committee agreed that the matter should be discussed further following the meeting and that an update on security staffing would be provided at the next meeting in June.

**Responsibility for Student Pregnancy Risk Assessments:** the Committee noted the points raised in the paper and it was agreed that further discussion would be postponed until the next meeting, to give the Unions the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the issue to the Associate Director of Health and Safety.

**Room temperatures in Dance spaces:** it was reported that four studios were not meeting minimum heating requirements as not all of the heaters were working in the dance suite. Management confirmed that the contractors, T Squared, had surveyed the rooms affected and agreed to flush out all the underfloor heating and ceiling heaters, which should fix the problem.

The GMB H&S representative raised a concern regarding a possible rat infestation on campus and asked for the matter to be looked into urgently. The Associate Director of Health and Safety assured the Committee that if potential exposure to an individual is identified, a full review is conducted and a personal exposure risk assessment completed. The Deputy Director of Estates gave an update on the University's Pest Control Programme with Ecolab. There is no evidence to believe that the University has or has had an infestation. However, to address the issue the following actions were agreed:

- baiting will be reviewed and, where necessary, increased across the campus.
- the GMB representative to liaise with the Deputy Director of Estates outside of the meeting.
- communication on pest control to be published to remind staff and students of the procedure to follow if they encounter vermin.

**Actions: COO/Union reps, Associate Director of H&S, Deputy Director of Estates**

**HSWC35.6 Occupational Health and Wellness Space (the Horizon Room) and other Wellbeing spaces on campus**  
(Paper HSWC35/5)

The Committee received an update on the wellbeing space, which was due to launch on 3 March 2023 with a news item on the Staff Portal.

The Committee noted that there had been very positive feedback on the pilot project, and that other areas were in the process of being refurbished to offer further wellbeing spaces.

**HSWC35.7 Report from Human Resources**  
(Paper HSWC35/6)

The Committee received a report from Human Resources and the following points were highlighted:

- The Committee considered the draft Work-related Wellbeing & Stress Policy (Appendix A), which had been revised following Union feedback on the first draft. A final version of the policy

will be presented to members at the next meeting for approval, before going to UEB for final approval.

- Feedback on the draft Work-related Wellbeing & Stress Policy was welcomed from Committee members and UCU and GMB representatives.
- The definition of stress was discussed and whether 'stress', 'anxiety' and other psychiatric illnesses should be listed separately when staff report sickness absence or whether the broader definition should be retained as the symptoms tend to overlap. It was agreed that the discussion would be continued outside of the meeting and an update would be brought to the next meeting.
- The Committee noted a report from the University's health partner, Cordell Health, which was provided for information.
- The new eLearning platform was launched in February 2023. HR will look at what can be provided for managers and staff in relation to wellness and stress-related training programmes and a progress update will come to a future meeting.

Thanks were extended to the Associate Director of Health and Safety and the Deputy Director of Human Resources for their input on the draft policy.

**Action: Exec. Director of HR, Union reps**

#### **HSWC35.8 Report from Student Support Services (Paper HSWC35/7)**

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

- The revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (Appendix 1) and Student Death Procedure (Appendix 2), which had been approved by UEB, were provided to the Committee with the changes highlighted for reference. Members were invited to feedback any queries to the Interim Director of Student Support Services.
- That although the number of students seeking support continued to be high, in line with national NHS data, the measures introduced to reduce waiting list time ensured the waiting list was manageable.
- That that Risk Review Group currently had 22 students registered for continued risk assessment, which was in line with the sector for the time of year.
- That Student Support Services was seeing the benefit of the work implemented on triaging.

The Committee noted that student satisfaction had risen due to the initiatives implemented by Student Support Services, which in turn was enabling more students to continue with their studies.

#### **HSWC35.9 Period Health and Safety Report** (Paper HSWC35/8)

Members received a report from the Associate Director of Health and Safety, and noted the following points in particular:

- A total of 10 Awaken reports were received during the period from 1 September to 31 December 2022, including seven accidents and three near misses. Seven incidents involved staff and three involved students.
- That there were no reportable accidents during the nine-month construction and fit-out of the Mary Seacole Health Innovation Centre.
- There had been a significant rise in the number of first aid cases, primarily due to wellbeing and mental health call outs.
- That the Associate Director of Health & Safety and the Technical Compliance Manager met with the University's legal team twice a year to review technical compliance from a legal perspective. The Committee agreed that, going forward, the minutes from this meeting should go to the Estates Management (Legal & Technical Compliance) meetings for information.
- That there were new eLearning visuals which provided course progress/completion details for all mandatory training (Appendix E).

**Action: Associate Director of Health and Safety**

#### **HSWC35.10 Elm Grove Fire update** (Verbal update)

The Committee received a verbal update on the Elm Grove fire and the following points were noted in particular:

- The fire took place in the early hours of Saturday morning on 11 February 2023 in Elm Grove accommodation. The fire was contained to one of the riser shafts, which house the cables for the building, in N block. The LFB and University Security Team responded quickly and extinguished the fire within 15 minutes, all students were evacuated safely and accounted for, and T Squared dealt with the loose cables on the same day.
- Over the weekend some students were moved to temporary accommodation elsewhere on campus while a thorough investigation of the damage and cause was carried out, and

while the affected area was cleaned (all students have now returned to their rooms).

- In the immediate aftermath of the fire, counselling sessions and wellbeing support were offered to the affected students and the University's Gold and Silver emergency teams were activated to coordinate the University's response.
- The LFB was impressed generally with the University's fire management system and the response to the fire, although there were some evacuation issues owing to when the fire happened. There will be a further update in the fire safety report in June.

The Committee noted its sincere thanks to the Fire, Health and Safety Adviser, Deputy Director of Estates, and Interim Director of Student Support for all their significant work in response to the fire.

#### **HSWC35.11 Fire Safety Management Report** (Paper HSWC35/9)

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

- That the University hosted a London Fire Brigade training exercise at Elm Grove on Monday 28 November 2022 as detailed in the report. The exercise was well-received and the LFB were grateful to Roehampton for being allowed to use the premises.
- That although more fire wardens have been recruited throughout the year, because of hybrid working more are still required. Therefore, the Executive Director of HR sent an email to all Professional Services staff with line management responsibilities to inform them that they are now required to be Fire Wardens.
- Work on implementing regular inspections of all fire escape routes on campus was progressing. A simple fire, health and safety for escape routes and common areas checklist, process and guidance have been developed by the Health and Safety Team and circulated to senior academic and professional services staff.

#### **HSWC35.12 Report from the Life and Health Sciences Sub-Committee** (Paper HSWC35/10)

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

### **HSWC35.13 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

*Minutes prepared by Elaine Lentell  
Secretary to HSWC  
March 2023*