

Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2025

Meeting Attendance

Members present:

Ex Officio Members:

The Chief Financial and Operating Officer (**Chair**): Nigel Alcock
The Director of Health and Safety: Dev Agarwal
The Director of Estates and Campus Development: Roger Ward
The Director of Accommodation, Campus and Commercial Services:
Lisa Woods

Faculty Representatives

Professor Duncan Petrie (Dean, Arts & Humanities)
Professor Karen Rowlingson (Dean, Social Sciences)

Trade Union Representatives:

Dr Christopher Crispin-Bailey (UCU)
Chris Fielding (UNISON)

Other Members

Student Wellbeing representative: Martin Crosby (Interim Deputy
Director of Student Life and Wellbeing)

In attendance:

Dr Philip Evans (**Secretary**)
Carolyn Jackson (WHSO)
Andrew Johnstone (WHSO)
Paul Mullins (WHSO)

Apologies for absence:

Professor Andy Dougill (Dean, Sciences)
HR Representative: Suzy Shelton
YSU representative: Geoff Ward
UNITE representative: Michael Walker

Declarations of Interest

24-25/48 Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting.
None were declared.

Minutes of Last Meeting (WHSC.24-25/33)

24-25/49 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2025 were **approved**.

Action Schedule (WHSC.24-25/34)

24-25/50 The Committee **noted** its action-tracking schedule and the Chair requested that henceforth action-owners should confirm specific deadline dates for the actions assigned to them [**ACTION: All action-owners**].

Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report (WHSC.24-25/35)

24-25/51 The Committee **considered** the second triannual Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing report covering the period January-May 2025.

24-25/52 The H&S Director (Dev Agarwal) and the H&S Business Partner (Carolyn Jackson) **reported** that:

1. the new H&S governance structure approved by UEB in December 2024 would include the submission of triannual reports to the Committee and UEB;
2. H&S walkarounds on campus had proved useful and would be continued with a walkaround in Biology in July 2025 (with the participation of the Vice-Chancellor);

3. the Chair had approved updated Terms of Reference for the Committee (attached to the report as Annex 3);
4. there had been good take-up of externally facilitated Senior Leadership Safety Training which was specifically designed for university managers;
5. the HR Leadership Team (HRLT) had allocated team resources to several H&S priorities including development of a Work-related Stress Risk Management Strategy (in anticipation of new sectoral guidance on this matter shortly to be published by USHA/UCEA);
6. as the current in-house online accident reporting system would expire in mid-2026, the Director was currently scoping out a possible replacement system via consultation across the sector and would provide a further update to the next meeting including confirmation of the timeline for implementation **[ACTION: Director of H&S]**;
7. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
8. during the reporting period there had been no confirmed fires, one external compliance visit (Environment Agency) and two relatively minor RIDDOR incidents reported to the HSE;
9. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
10. the report covered aspects of Biological Safety (including investigation of two relatively minor biosafety incidents) and Radiation Protection Safety (including implementation of new requirements issued by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office);
11. the WHSO had supported an unplanned/unannounced audit by the Royal Society in respect of researcher safety, with provision of further documentation requested by the auditor currently ongoing;
12. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
13. the WHSO had stepped up its communications via a monthly H&S roundup in the Staff Digest and the issue of specific Safety Alerts (e.g. in respect of electrical safety and bird flu);
14. H&S training programmes were now bookable via the Learning Management System (LMS) and the report provided specific details in respect of first-aider and DSA training initiatives (including the planned establishment of a new DSA Forum).

24-25/53 Members of the Committee **observed** that:

1. discussion in the Arts and Humanities H&S Committee about gas alarms in the Environment & Geography building had raised the issue of the overarching responsibility for, and communication about, such matters in multi-use buildings containing units from different Faculties/PS Departments; it was agreed that in the first instance the Director of Estates would raise the matter with the relevant Campus Zone Manager **[ACTION: Director of Estates]** while in the longer term it was suggested that establishing user groups for multi-use/occupancy buildings might be advisable **[ACTION: WHSO to explore further]**;
2. it would be useful if going forward the accident/incident data could be weighted/sub-divided to reflect the fact that there were more students than staff on campus but staff were probably more likely to report accidents **[ACTION: WHSO to explore further]**;
3. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
4. as regards being able to confirm that H&S training was being completed by the frontline staff groups for whom it was most relevant (e.g. maintenance teams), it was suggested that if this data was not available it might be possible to map it to staff working locations and the risk assessments for different buildings **[ACTION: WHSO to explore further]**.

Overseas Travel Process (WHSC.24-25/35: ANNEX 1)

24-25/54 The Committee **considered** a revised proposal for the Overseas Travel Risk Assessment Group (OTRAG).

24-25/55 The H&S Business Partner (Carolyn Jackson) **reported** that:

1. following revision of the overseas travel risk assessment process in December 2024, UEB had requested that it be further streamlined to be less onerous for applicants and assessors;
2. the proposed updated process was set out in detail in the report and included initial assessment by the WHSO and University Insurance team who would agree a risk level and then submit a recommendation to the Faculty Deans for consideration/approval;
3. it was expected that the number of high- or severe-risk cases would be ca. 1-3 per year.

24-25/56 Members of the Committee **observed** that:

1. the updated process was welcome and achieved the right balance between efficiency and appropriate scrutiny;
2. the Faculties would continue to encourage colleagues to submit their applications in a timely manner to ensure due consideration;

3. positive feedback had been received on the new process and the acceleration of decision-making via the routine weekly meetings of the Deans.

24-25/57 **RESOLVED: to recommend to UEB that the updated overseas travel process be approved.**

Fire Safety Update (WHSC.24-25/35: paras 18-36)

24-25/58 The Committee **considered** the elements of the overarching H&S report relating to Fire Safety.

24-25/59 The Fire and Infrastructure Safety Business Partner **reported** that:

1. 38 fire risk assessments (FRAs) had had been completed in the reporting period including a full occupational capacity review for the Ian Wand Building and Heslington Hall;
2. NYFRS had conducted three audits ("broadly compliant") with a fourth shortly to take place in the Piazza Building;
3. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
4. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
5. closing down of incomplete FRA actions would be assigned to the relevant colleagues in Faculties, Estates and Commercial Services as identified in the original FRAs;
6. the University's internal auditors (PwC) would also be undertaking a review of fire safety as part of the current year's Internal Audit Plan; the recommendations from this review would inform further developments in this area;
7. liaison with Zone Managers and other relevant colleagues was currently underway to plan for the scheduling of fire drills in 2025-26; creation of user-groups for multi-use/departments buildings might also support this activity with collaboration among all stakeholders (including the Space Planning Team) being key to the success of the fire drill process;
8. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**.

24-25/60 Members of the Committee **observed** that:

1. TU representatives had requested from senior management impact assessments in relation to safety-critical staff such as the fire safety team being in scope/approved for VS, but no documentation had been provided;
2. to clarify accountability and support progress monitoring, the plan for closing down incomplete FRA actions should be submitted to the next meeting together with identification of the relevant action-owners **[ACTION: Fire & Infrastructure Safety Business Partner]**.

Statutory Compliance Audits by WHSO (WHSC.24-25/35: paras 54-56)

24-25/61 The Committee **considered** the elements of the overarching H&S report relating to planned internal H&S audits by the WHSO.

24-25/62 The H&S Business Partner (Andrew Johnstone) **reported** that:

1. the audits would be undertaken using HSE methodology over two phases: the first would focus on statutory compliance in Estates and the second on Faculties, PS Departments and subsidiary companies;
2. summaries of the audit outcomes would be circulated to relevant committees and groups within the University.

24-25/63 A member of the Committee **observed** that it might be useful if the planned audit process could also include consideration of emergency evacuation measures (M24-25/64-66 below also refer).

Emergency Evacuation (WHSC.24-25/35: ANNEX 2)

24-25/64 The Committee **considered** a report on the emergency evacuation of disabled individuals on University premises.

24-25/65 The Fire and Infrastructure Safety Business Partner **reported** that:

1. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
2. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
3. there were ca. 10 members of staff with a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) which might require them to use a disabled refuge point;
4. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**.

24-25/66 Members of the Committee **observed** that:

1. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
2. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**;
3. **[**MATERIAL REDACTED**]**.

Staff Wellbeing Report (WHSC.24-25/36)

24-25/67 The Committee **considered** a report from the HR Department on staff wellbeing.

24-25/68 In the absence of the HR representative, the Director of H&S **reported** that:

1. he would be collaborating with HR colleagues to develop a new Occupational Health & Wellbeing Strategy and also a Work-related Stress Risk Management Strategy;
2. the report provided some data in respect of occupational health and wellbeing (e.g. in respect of the types of OH appointment types through manager referral), and this data would be further enhanced;
3. a decision had been made to replace the employee assistance programme previously provided by *Health Assured* with a new service provided by *PAM Wellbeing* from 1 July 2025.

24-25/69 The Interim Deputy Director of Student Life & Wellbeing **observed** that, as regards the plans to reactivate the mental health first aider network for staff, the HR Department might usefully consult with colleagues responsible for student mental health support in order to share best practice in this area.

Faculty/DTEF Health and Safety Committees (WHSC.24-25/37)

24-25/70 The Committee **received** the IDA logs from the meetings of the Faculty and DTEF H&S Committees held since its own last meeting.

Date Of Next Meeting

24-25/71 The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 6 October 2025 (1500-1770 via Zoom).