

## HEALTH SAFETY AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 03 November 2020

**Present:** Prof Kieran Gibson (Chair), Department of Physics  
Mr Denis Fowler, Director of Health and Safety Services (HSS)  
Mr Stephen Talboys, Director of Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities  
Mr Kevin Whelan, Head of Estates Operations  
Ms Valerie Cotter, Deputy Academic Registrar and Director of Student Services  
Dr James Fox, Department of Biology  
Dr Gareth Perry, Department of Archaeology  
Ms Janet Haffegge, Human Resources  
Mr Jonathan Fanning, UCU Representative  
Ms Clara Garcia, Graduate Students' Association (GSA).

**In Attendance:** Ms Kate Williams, YUSU  
Mr Mick Elliott, University Fire Safety Officer (UFSO)  
Mr Chris Teeling, Health & Safety Services  
Mr Richard Walker, Head of Policy Assurance  
Ms Sarah Beeston, Secretary.

**Apologies:** Dr Wayne Campbell, Academic Registrar  
Ms Louise Johnston, Unity Health  
Dr Ben Flowerdew, International Pathway College (IPC)  
Mr Chris Fielding, UNISON Representative  
Mr Michael Walke, UNITE Representative  
Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President  
Carly Precious, YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer.

### CATEGORY I ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- M20-21/01: To welcome new members of the Committee, and to receive apologies for absence.**  
The Committee welcomed new members Gareth Perry and Kieran Gibson in his new role as Chair of the Committee.
- M20-21/02: Membership of the Committee and Declarations of Interest.**  
No declarations of interest were declared.
- M20-21/03: Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2020.**  
The minutes of the previous meeting dated 19 May 2020 were agreed as a true record.
- M20-21/04: Matters arising:**  
a) **Skills Matrix Competency Framework (M.19-20/51a refers):**

Denis Fowler (DF) confirmed the Skills Matrix Competency Framework was circulated to Departmental Safety Advisors (DSA) under the new meeting format for comment and feedback, DF will provide a verbal update at the next meeting.

**b) Smoking on Campus (M.19-20/51b refers):**

Mick Elliott (ME) reported meetings had previously taken place. Poster wraps had been designed and locations identified for installation to discourage smoking near entrances and walkways. The JBM Library and Exhibition Centre were the main locations selected. ME reported everything was in place to install them but due to the current Covid-19 pandemic progress had been delayed. ME also asked for an update following an earlier agreement from the Committee's previous Chair, requesting Heslington West Nisa Store would stop selling Tobacco products. The Chair confirmed he would take action to speak to the Director of Commercial Services Jon Greenwood (JG). JG responded it would not be financially viable for the store to cease trading cigarettes as other factors had to be considered and a decision would have to be made by the University's Executive Board (UEB).

**Action:**

**The Chair requested the item to be left on the agenda and he will follow this up with JG. He also requested ME to proceed with the signage.**

**c) Departmental Safety Advisor (DSA) Meeting arrangements (M.19-20/51c refers):**

Chris Teeling (CT) gave a verbal update on the DSA Meeting arrangements. He reported four of the five groups had met prior to the HSWC meeting with a very positive level of engagement and feedback from these meetings was very encouraging.

**d) Covid-19 Secure Arrangements (M.19-20/52a(i) refers):**

DF reported the original COVID Secure Arrangements were published in May 2020. **Item now closed.**

**e) Covid-19 Online Training Package (M.19-20/52b(ii) refers):**

DF reported the online training package was complete and available online for all users.

**Item now closed.**

**M20-21/05: Items raised at Departmental Safety Committee meetings for further consideration:**

The following documents were circulated with the agenda prior to the meeting.

**COVID-19 Secure arrangements and Contingency Groups**

**i. Policy for the Use of Face Coverings**

DF reported the Face Covering Policy had been updated with additional guidance and scenarios to underpin the policy.

**ii. Risk Assessment COVID-19 Secure**

DF reported the Institutional Risk Assessment had been revised and updated on a regular basis and remains reflective of Government Guidance.

**iii. COVID Tiers vs DfE Tiers; (Local Alert Level High)**

DF explained the alert levels, after the Government's announcement of a National lockdown, an all staff email will be circulated highlighting the Universities position.

**iv. Exercise Uruta (COVID-19 Secure)**

DF reported Exercise Urutā was undertaken to stress test the University's internal processes and protocols with respect to how we respond and manage a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 being received on Campus. The outcome of these scenario tests was to ensure that our internal arrangements and protocols were appropriate, resilient and operational. The desire here was to provide high levels of assurance to both staff and students at the University, of our ability to respond to cases in a timely and agile way.

It was agreed that the Health and Safety Progress Group supported by Trade Union (TU) colleagues, would exercise the scenarios once they have been developed and agreed. The date of the stress test/desktop exercise was Wednesday 16 September 2020 at 3pm.

The approach to exercise Urutā included a desktop style (virtual meeting) with a two phased approach comprising of the following:

- **Phase One**  
A relatively straightforward and simple 'ice-breaker' exercise to ease participants into the mindset and concepts of desktop exercising over a time limited period of 20 minutes, followed by a 10 minutes 'hot debrief and Q&A' for confirmation of learning outcomes, identification of development opportunities prior to the main exercise session.
- **Phase Two**  
The main event; a developing situation based upon an escalating series of incidents continuing the theme from the phase one scenario. This will be a more complex and challenging series of incidents requiring teamwork and a collective approach with key stakeholders from across the University including Professional Support Services (PSS), supported by clear and agile communications.

The exercise was a great success and provided much needed insights into our protocols and procedures at the time, including a number of now realised challenges moving towards the festive period, mass testing of students prior to them returning home and another full scale national lockdown.

**v. Stay, SMART, Supportive and SAFE**

DF reported the University Stay, SMART, Supportive and SAFE campaign was updated daily with information and advice to help support students who are required to self isolate. Links to the self-isolation notification form for both staff and students are linked on the web page. Members of the University community are expected to follow national and local public health and University guidelines. Follow test, track and trace procedures and request a test immediately if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Follow social distancing guidelines on campus, and the ability to report covid secure concerns whether

it's about social distancing, an unsafe room layout, or missing signage or sanitiser.

**vi. COVID Community Charter**

DF explained the **The Together York Community Declaration** and how it sets out our principles and expectations. Together, we are a community built on respect, fairness and compassion for all.

This COVID-19 Community Charter supplements the responsibilities and expectations set out in the Together York declaration, for both staff and students, and across University and college policies.

The charter outlines how we can work together to keep each other safe, what our community can expect from the University, and what the University expects from its staff and students. By taking responsibility to follow the guidelines as individuals, we are collectively helping to create a safe community for us all.

**vii. DSA Meeting Minutes (Art and Humanities/Social Sciences) DSA Awareness Training and COVID Secure Social Distancing**

Chris Teeling (CT) updated the group on the planned DSA Awareness Training requirements identified following DSA Faculty meetings. CT reported after working with colleagues within HSS, a training package has currently been developed with a view to delivery via a blended mixture of training. The Faculties of Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences will be the first to receive. DF commented once training commences, progress will be reported and captured using the Skills Matrix.

**a) Fire Safety Arrangements**

**i. Fire Risk Assessments – FRAs**

The University Fire Safety Officer (UFSO) reported on Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) procedure during lockdown. After speaking with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) they have confirmed that the University can evidence adequate FRAs are in plan. FRAs have been postponed until January 2021 to reduce the risk to staff undertaking the assessments and the students in accommodation from COVID-19. The UFSO confirmed all FRAs will be completed during Term 2 of 2021.

**ii. Fire Drills**

The UFSO reported that the fire drills must still take place. A training session will be carried out incorporating current social distancing guidelines. A full schedule is currently being planned with the assistance and support of the Senior Head of Colleges to identify and plan a more safe and suitable approach. The UFSO also highlighted since the Fire Safety Training had moved to an online delivery, they had only had a response of 21%. This is a very low number in comparison to last year's 96% attendance in the hosted sessions. If there were an incident, the University may be criticized for not doing more.

The UFO commented upon the issuing of penalties for any Fire Safety breaches; including non-completion of the Fire Safety Awareness Training. This follows the recent revision and introduction of new arrangements under the Regulation 7, whereas fines for breaches of Fire Safety have been removed. Any incidents reported under Regulation 7 would be managed by the College Managers/Teams. It was highlighted/felt that there were inconsistencies in the way Colleges dealt with students. A consistent approach is required. The University needs a deterrent to underpin the fact that inappropriate actions have consequences. Students found to be covering fire detectors had put other residents at risk and they should be dealt with accordingly.

The Director of (DTEF) Stephen Talboys (ST) commented the issue with completing the training was more important than issuing any fines at this time and that maybe an incentive would be appealing as suggested by Jonathan Fanning (JF) of offering a prize.

The Chair commented that the current number needs looking at as the majority of teaching is via zoom so it being online should not be a barrier.

**Action:**

**The Chair will speak with the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Life and Wellbeing (SLaW).**

**M20-21/06:**

**a) The Health, Safety and Welfare Committee received the HSS Quarterly Report for Period 3 (July - September 2020).**

The Director of Health and Safety Services presented to the group the Quarterly Report for the period and highlighted the following:

- A staff member of the Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities (DTEF, Campus Services) was cleaning a glass shelf from a fridge when it hit a nearby table and a shard of glass caused personal injury. The wound was cleaned however; this prevented the individual from performing their normal duties for a period exceeding 7 days. The Enforcing Authority was notified in accordance with the regulations.
- A contractor engaged in routine maintenance activities by colleagues within DTEF had been servicing and maintaining a commercial boiler within the Department of Biology when following a build-up of gas within the combustion chamber ignited, resulting in a contained explosion within the boiler. Due to the nature of the contained gas explosion, this incident was notified by the Principal Contractor to the Enforcing Authority in accordance with their reporting responsibilities under RIDDOR as a Dangerous Occurrence.
- There had been 33 fire alarm activations received within the Security Centre this reporting period, five of these activations resulted in the attendance of North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (NYFRS). A number of repeat alarm

activations were recorded at the York Sport Village due to corroded terminals of devices within the pool area. These have been replaced and no additional alarm activations recorded.

- No Employers Liability (EL) claims have been received this quarter. Seven Public Liability claims have been received from solicitors in relation to the Blackbaud data incident July 2020. The insurance team is working with the University Head of Legal Services and a panel of solicitors who are acting on behalf of Insurers in response to these claims.
- Planning for the 2021 insurance portfolio has commenced. Regular meetings are taking place with the Procurement Office and Head of Legal Services to implement the procurement strategy.

**b) The Prevent Duty Annual Report (01 August 2019 – 31 July 2020)**

The Director of Health and Safety Services gave an update on the Prevent Duty Annual report highlighting the following:

- During this reporting period the University had seen unprecedented restrictions and upheaval during the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Office for Students (OfS) circulated revised guidance for monitoring requirements during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. This means the OfS will prioritise regulatory activity and engagement where they have significant compliance concerns.
- Responsibility for ensuring compliance with this legal duty sits with the governing body and proprietor, the Chair of Council. The University's Secretary has been appointed as the nominated Prevent Lead on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and President for the University.
- The University Risk and Self Assessment and Action Plan was recently reviewed in October 2020. There were no outstanding actions or recommendations from previous monitoring reviews.
- Currently there are no identified areas requiring additional support or guidance however, the University's Prevent Lead and the Head of Governance and Assurance Officer maintains regular contact with the G7 Prevent Regional HE/FE Co-ordinator for the North East as a statement of good practice and horizon scanning. There is regular consultation with respect to security updates and any concerns that are identified or raised.

**M20-21/07: To receive for consideration and information progress updates from the Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities (DTEF) - (ST/KW):**

**a) Independent COVID-19 Secure Review**

**i. COVID Secure Review Summary**

Richard Walker (RW) presented the COVID Secure Review Summary to the committee. He explained over three weeks in October an independent review was undertaken by Teeds Business Continuity Ltd. The review covered four key areas including policy and documentation, procedural issues, physical control measures and staff and student wellbeing. The review consisted of

review discussions with stakeholders from across the organisation, accompanied by a site visit to assess control measures documented in policies, procedures and guidance discussed through the interviews. The review provided a number of opportunities to further improve the response the University is taking to the pandemic. The report provided a positive summary of the action taken by the University in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is representative of the open, collaborative approach that has been fostered.

**Action:**

**RW and DF will review and provide an executive summary of monitoring progress moving forward.**

**ii. COVID Secure Supporting Papers**

The outcome report and supporting papers were circulated with the agenda for information.

**b) Governance Arrangements - Managing Contractors**

Richard Walker (RW) presented to the group new and updated policies for ratification by the Committee. The document shared covered the initial group of DECS/DTEF Policies and Management Procedures that had recently been drafted or updated to reflect recent changes to guidance and arrangements. They are to demonstrate appropriate University systems for the management of the defined activities and compliance with HSE requirements. The policies are:

- Code of Conduct for Contractors – Newly drafted intended primarily for those contractors engaged to undertake ‘Estates Works’ affecting building fabric, grounds and any associated service infrastructure.
- Roof Access – Newly drafted setting out responsibilities, precautions and general guidance for good practice relevant to all roof access/work, building on recent work to improve assessments and controls.
- Excavating and Breaking into Surfaces – This update removes the sanction to breach building fabric, to be included in the DECS Policy for Breaching Building Fabric.
- Breaching Building Fabric – This update includes the Sanction to Breach Building Fabric with the primary purpose of controlling work to ensure that passive fire arrangements are maintained and managed as part of any physical changes to the Estate.
- Asbestos in Soils and Construction Waste – Updated to reflect guidance changes in CL:AIRE CAR-SOIL Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. These changes incorporate improved guidance around site investigation and sampling.

DF commented from a Health & Safety point of view he was happy to support and endorse. **The Committee agreed to endorse all policies submitted.**

**c) Major Projects and the Built Estates Progress Report (including Campus East Fire Stopping); ST gave a progress report on the following:**

- The Refurbishment of the old Smith & Nephew building was on track to be completed by December 2020
- Guy and Eleanor Dobson building is near completion.
- Campus East residencies are taking place with 340 beds available September 2021 and the remaining due for completion September 2022.
- Physics substation works still ongoing.
- Busy creating pop up venues in partnership with YUSU.

**d) Progress Report of the Department of Biology**

KW gave a verbal update on the Boiler incident in Biology. A contractor engaged in routine maintenance activities within the Department of Biology. A build-up of gas within the combustion chamber; ignited resulting in a contained explosion within the boiler. This resulted in some internal damage to the commercial boiler and flue pipework, no injuries or external damage was sustained. The incident was contained to boiler number two only. Boilers three and four were out of commission due to maintenance activities pending pre-commissioning and boiler number one was unaffected by the incident. As a precaution, a temporary boiler was installed and commissioned and boiler number one was taken out of use pending further investigation by the Principal Contractor and colleagues within DTEF. A full investigation is ongoing.

**e) Assurance Methodologies (Key Service Meetings).**

KW reported that fewer meetings had taken place due to the COVID Pandemic. A huge amount of work had been carried out on ventilating buildings. It was agreed to postpone Fire Stopping works on Heslington East after discussion between NYFRS and the UFSO. The majority of works are near completion with the Student Hubs works programmed to start in December when the seasonal break begins.

**CATEGORY II ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

**The Health, Safety and Welfare Committee received the following Committee minutes for information:**

- Departmental Safety Advisory Group:
  - a)** Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences Meeting Minutes
  - b)** Colleges (Student Activities) Meeting Minutes
  - c)** Professional Support Services Meeting Minutes
- Biological Agents Safety Committee once the meeting is convened.
- Resilience and Risk Management Group once the meeting is convened.
- Ionising Radiation Safety Group once the meeting is convened.
- Laser Safety Subgroup once the meeting is convened.

**M20-21/08: Date and Time of Next Meeting:**  
14:00 hrs on Tuesday 23 February 2021.



## HEALTH SAFETY AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 23 February 2021

**Present:** Prof Kieran Gibson (Chair), Department of Physics  
Mr Denis Fowler, Director of Health and Safety Services (HSS)  
Mr Stephen Talboys, Director of Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities  
Ms Valerie Cotter, Deputy Academic Registrar and Director of Student Services  
Dr James Fox, Department of Biology  
Dr Gareth Perry, Department of Archaeology  
Mr Jonathan Fanning, UCU Representative  
Mr Michael Walker, UNITE Representative  
Mr Chris Fielding, UNISON Representative  
Dr Ben Flowerdew, International Pathway College (IPC)  
Carly Precious, YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer.

**In Attendance:** Ms Gemma Lowe, Head of Legal Services  
Ms Kate Williams, YUSU  
Mr Mick Elliott, University Fire Safety Officer (UFSO)  
Mr Richard Walker, Head of Policy Assurance  
Mr Ian Morgan, Minutes.

**Apologies:** Dr Joss Ivory, Chief Operating Office (COO)  
Dr Wayne Campbell, Academic Registrar  
Mr Chris Teeling, Health & Safety Services  
Colin Jobber, Human Resources  
Mr Kevin Whelan, Head of Estates Operations  
Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President.

### CATEGORY I ITEMS OF BUSINESS

**M20-21/08: To welcome new members of the Committee, and to receive apologies for absence.**  
The Committee welcomed Gemma Lowe as an attendee and received the above listed apologies for absence.

**M20-21/09: Membership of the Committee and Declarations of Interest.**  
No declarations of interest were declared.

**M20-21/10: Minutes of the meeting held on 03 November 2020.**  
The minutes of the previous meeting dated 03 November 2020 were agreed as a true record.

**M20-21/11: Matters arising:**  
a) **Skills Matrix - Competency Framework (M.20-21/04a refers):**  
Denis Fowler (DF) confirmed the Skills Matrix Competency Framework, that captures the experience and qualifications of staff, has been shared with Departmental Safety

Advisors (DSA) and will be circulated to all as a template from which to work from. Following the Audit and Risk Committee in May 2021, DF will provide a verbal update at the next meeting to include any comment from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) the University's internal auditors.

**b) Smoking on Campus (M.19-20/51b refers):**

Mick Elliott (ME) reported that the signage agreed upon at the last meeting has been ordered but not delivered yet due to Covid circumstances. Signage will be installed on receipt, including at the Piazza and LMB buildings as reminded by BF and JF; smoking "hotspots" will continue to be monitored by ME and his team.

**c) Covid-19 Secure Review (M.20-21/07a(i) refers):**

Richard Walker (RW) referred to the dashboard in the review document to highlight the progress being made, for example 93% completion on the "Immediate Action" issues and 77% completion overall across all issues. Though there obviously remain actions to be completed, Stephen Talboys (ST) and Denis Fowler (DF) joined the Chair in recognising the hard work and guidance provided by RW in that a significant number had been completed, despite the impact of Christmas and Covid on the project.

**M20-21/12: To receive for consideration any item(s) raised at other Departmental Safety Committee or Consultation group meetings:**

**a) COVID-19 Secure arrangements and Contingency Groups, Exercise Tuhinga (DF):** DF

confirmed the focus post-Christmas had been to update the Covid secure arrangements and the supporting raft of risk assessments. This review is complete but new government and Department of Education (DfE) guidance is now due again in light of the changing lockdown conditions and what a return to campus will mean in practical terms. Exercise Tuhinga concerns stress testing in a controlled environment (namely the Library), but will be followed by exercises in academic departments too where there has been less experience of dealing with Covid cases. Kate Williams commented that YUSU requires a COVID Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to ensure consistency with the rest of the University and to facilitate learning.

**b) DSA Meeting arrangements:** in Chris Teeling's absence DF reported that the meetings were working well, had greater engagement and generated more positive feedback than in their previous format.

**c) Fire Safety Arrangements (ME)**

**i. Fire Safety Awareness Training (online):** take up is currently only 58% despite previous efforts to encourage participation. This is a very low number in comparison to previous years 96% attendance in the face-to-face hosted sessions. For next year, the feeling was that completion of the training would be required prior to a student's room being released.

**ACTION**

**ME to meet with appropriate colleagues and draft a firm proposal to achieve this and to increase uptake for this current year also.**

**ii. Fire Safety - Penalty Procedures:** the increasing number of fire safety breaches leaves us vulnerable as an organisation. Though an appeal for good conduct is a sensible route, the issues in play can endanger lives and so letters of warning

are not perhaps a sufficient deterrent to change behaviours. Stephen Talboys (ST) reiterated the seriousness of these offences and agreed the use of Regulation 7 concerning misconduct was a possible route to raise the profile of the problem. Valerie Cotter (VC) agreed to facilitate a small group discussion outside of the committee to gather incident data, cover the points raised in discussion and report back with a proposal that takes account of overall University regulations. Carly Precious (CP) commented that the majority of students would not necessarily be aware of Regulation 7 at all and given that it also covers sexual as well as academic misconduct, (for example), would need to be made aware of it in clear detail.

**ACTION**

**VC to facilitate a small working group taking into consideration of University Regulation 7, gather relevant data and provide an update at the next meeting.**

**iii. Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) and Fire drills**

Mick Elliott (ME) reported that, in agreement with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS), the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) schedule has been restarted for Academic buildings but that residences are still on hold. Fire drills are still taking place.

- d) Health and Safety good practice within the Department of Computing Science (JF):** as context, Jonathan Fanning (JF) commented that the quality of Health and Safety practices vary across departments but that [this current initiative](#) in Computer Science, emphasising a collaborative approach, may be generalisable to wider areas. DF agreed this was good practice and the Chair suggested this could be added to DSA meeting agendas

**ACTION**

**DF to arrange to include this collaborative good practice to future DSA meeting agendas.**

**M20-21/13: The Committee received the revised University Policy and Management Procedure - Audit and Monitoring - (DF):**

(subject to an amendment to the wording at point 7 on page 8 for clarity as suggested by JF). DF highlighted the more risk-based approach of four levels of audit over a maximum three year cycle and this revision of the procedure was simply to include this update.

RW observed generally, rather than specifically to this item, that a systematic action tracking tool was required to ameliorate the risk associated with individuals keeping track of all current actions. DF responded that in the March Audit and Risk Committee meeting, a PWC audit tracking tool was being considered and that he would keep this Committee informed of any decisions taken.

**M20-21/14 To receive for information and assurances the Health and Safety Services Report(s) for the periods:**

- a) October - December 2020 (Period 4)
- b) HSS Annual Report (01 January - 31 December 2020) Executive Summary
- c) Health and Safety Services Annual Report (01 January - 31 December 2020) Full version

DF commented that there were no standout trends in incidents to note, other than a modest increase in slips, trips or falls caused by the icy weather . There had been no RIDDOR reportable events:

- With the University facing unprecedented challenges with respect to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the need to maintain and expand our incident and emergency response capabilities, a 'Gold Team (Commenders)' group was established with a number of 'Gold Team Chairs' supported by dedicated and specialist advisors and administrative support, including trained loggists.
- Key stakeholders also formed a number of Major Incident Response Teams (MIRT - Silver Teams) with synergy to Contingency Groups.
- Each department has appointed a Covid Secure Lead, who is a first point of contact for any issues with covid-secure measures. They are responsible for the covid-secure measures of their department and can investigate any concerns and make adjustments if necessary.
- Following revised arrangements to consider how to better engage and involve Departmental Safety Advisors (DSA) a reformatted set of DSA Meetings were held and conducted. Now hosted by their respective Head of Faculty Operations, Head of Professional Services Operations and a Health and Safety Officer at each meeting.
- The residential accommodation Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) programme was suspended due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Government restrictions. The FRAs for 2019 have all been reviewed and remain valid.
- Remedial project work in the residential accommodation at Heslington East was completed in 2020 with virtually no disruption to the occupants, this was a well run and managed project by colleagues within the Estates Department Team, who should be congratulated for their efforts.
- Following an Independent Review of COVID-19 Secure arrangements it was identified that the University clearly takes its responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of staff and students extremely seriously. Managers and their staff have put in a significant effort over and above their normal duties to implement their aspect of the university function in a way that maximises the student experience, student health and wellbeing and that of staff members too. There has been an impressive

level of collaboration, teamwork, and dedication to deliver a competent response to the pandemic.

- Top level direction and support has focused upon safeguarding welfare, reputation, service quality, student experience and finances. Appropriate responsibilities and contingency groups have been established to allow the effective allocation of resources and budget to allow impacts upon the University to be minimised.

**M20-21/15: To receive for consideration and information progress updates from the Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities (DTEF) - (ST/KW):**

- a) Estates Development/Capital Works/Projects Update; ST gave a progress report on the following:
  - The Physics substation is under construction which, on completion, not only upgrades the power supply for the department but also for Central Hall.
  - The Ann Lister residencies on Campus East are on schedule to open with 348 beds by September 2021 and a further 1100 by September 2022.
  - The Forest outdoor space, developed with the Student Union, will be available in Summer term, possibly for a social meeting place / teaching area. (JF was directed to Professor Tracy Lightfoot for any queries)
- b) **Department of Biology - Boiler incident findings (KW)** KW gave a verbal update on Kevin Whelan's report on the Boiler incident in Biology. In summary, there were no injuries as a result of the incident but there are key learning points that should be incorporated into university practices for the future. One element of ensuring clear and unambiguous communication was echoed in the technical report which attributed the root cause of this incident to a lack of communication between individual (competent) Hoval engineers and an apparent lack of oversight by Airco of their subcontractors during the post project remediation phase. The boiler should have been made inoperable once a fault had been identified and a reason for the isolation made clearly visible on the boiler itself. The University would also have been advised of the isolated equipment.
- c) **Assurance Methodologies** - Operating a compliant and secure Estate (RW). RW's presentation outlined the methodologies in place, including the use of Planon for reactive and planned maintenance, the weekly report in Estates that monitors statutory maintenance, the monthly Compliance Review Group and the additional levels of compliance reporting afforded by the Key Service Meetings (KSMs) that can escalate serious non-compliance issues to the DTEF Risk Register. The Chair queried whether any KPI were used to inform where additional resources / focus may be needed. RW responded that the overall thrust of the approach was to "drive down the red and amber issues" on the Compliance maturity scale. The Chair joined DF in agreeing that, given the complexity of the University estate, this work represented a great achievement and thanks should be recorded for RW.

## **CATEGORY II ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

**The Health, Safety and Welfare Committee received the following Committee minutes for information:**

- Departmental Safety Advisory Group:
  - a) Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences Meeting Minutes
  - b) Colleges (Student Activities) Meeting Minutes
  - c) Professional Support Services Meeting Minutes
- Biological Agents Safety Committee once the meeting is convened.
- Resilience and Risk Management Group once the meeting is convened.
- Ionising Radiation Safety Group once the meeting is convened.
- Laser Safety Subgroup once the meeting is convened.

**M20-21/08: Date and Time of Next Meeting:**  
14:00 hrs on Tuesday 18 May 2021.

## HEALTH SAFETY AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 18 May 2021

**Present:** Prof Kieran Gibson (Chair), Department of Physics  
Mr Denis Fowler, Director of Health and Safety Services (HSS)  
Mr Stephen Talboys, Director of Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities  
Dr James Fox, Department of Biology  
Dr Gareth Perry, Department of Archaeology  
Mr Jonathan Fanning, UCU Representative  
Mr Michael Walker, UNITE Representative  
Mr Chris Fielding, UNISON Representative  
Dr Ben Flowerdew, International Pathway College (IPC)  
Ms Carly Precious, YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer  
Dr Wayne Campbell, Academic Registrar  
Mr Colin Jobber, Human Resources  
Mr Kevin Whelan, Head of Estates Operations (DTEF)  
Mr Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President.

**In Attendance:** Ms Gemma Lowe, Head of Legal Services  
Ms Kate Williams, YUSU  
Mr Mick Elliott, University Fire Safety Officer (UFSO)  
Mr Richard Walker, Head of Policy Assurance (DTEF)  
Mr Andrew Johnstone, HSS  
Mr Ian Morgan, Minutes.

**Apologies:** Dr Joss Ivory, Chief Operating Office (COO).

### CATEGORY I ITEMS OF BUSINESS

**M20-21/16: To welcome new members of the Committee, and to receive apologies for absence.**  
The Committee received the above listed apologies for absence.

**M20-21/17: Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021.**  
The minutes of the previous meeting dated 23 February 2021 were agreed as a true record.

**M20-21/18: Membership of the Committee and Declarations of Interest.**  
No declarations of interest were declared.

**M20-21/19: Matters arising:**

a) **Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) progress update (M.20-21/11a refers). (M.20-21/21 b & c refers) (DF/AJ)**  
Denis Fowler (DF) confirmed that following the HSS Governance Review and Audit by internal auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) the two audit observations had been accepted and closed, in that the Department Safety Advisory Group (DSAG) meetings have been organised and the audit programme details requested by PWC have been submitted via their online portal.

Andy Johnstone (AJ) Health and Safety Office HSS, outlined the details of the University of York Health and Safety Management Audit Programme, based in part on the ISO 45001 standard and the HSG 65 guidelines of “Plan, Do, Check, Act” and how this demonstrates we have recognised management systems in place.

A desk top exercise was undertaken to enable the University of York Health and Safety Management Audit Program to be developed. The audit program sets out a three-year plan to undertake audits across all University departments and services.

- High risk (Type 1) will be audited annually,
- Medium risk (Type 2) every two years
- Low risk (Type 3) every 3 years.

The program will be continually monitored, and a full review undertaken at the end of the 3-year period. Each audit gathers evidence based upon staff feedback and documentary evidence to produce a draft report with prioritised recommendations for the Head of Department (HoD). There is a 14 day period for responses before a final report is prepared for the Dean of the Faculty and onward transmission to other relevant committees.

There was a short discussion concerning how actions were tracked and though there is currently no formal system for this, it was accepted they are picked up in team discussions and the ongoing cycle of audits described above. Richard Walker (RW) commented upon an inhouse system and approach used within DTEF and agreed to share this with AJ.

**ACTION:**

**RW to arrange to share the DTEF Action Tracking methodology with AJ.**

**b) Smoking on Campus (M.20-21/11b refers):**

Signage will be installed on receipt, including at the Campus East, Piazza and LMB buildings as reminded by BF and JF; smoking “hotspots” will continue to be monitored by ME and HSS.

**c) DSA Meeting Arrangements (M.20-21/12c refers):**

DF was able to provide assurance that DSA meetings were showing greater engagement and that actions arising are reported here for the Committee’s attention.

**M20-21/20: To receive for consideration any item(s) raised at other Departmental Safety Committee or Consultation Group meetings:**

**a) Covid-19 Secure Arrangements (M.20-21/12a refers):**

DF outlined the practical guidance for the use of office space, teaching space, and bookable space on campus from April 2021 onwards given the imminent return of students to campus and how this is in line with government guidance.



**COVID Secure Review (M.20-21/07a (ii) refers):**

RW summarised the COVID Secure Independent Review - Action Plan and the continuing progress being made. The Chair and DF recorded their formal thanks for the continuing drive to close the outstanding actions in this area.

**b) Fire Safety Awareness Training (M.20-21/12c i refers):**

(i) Staff Annual Refresher Training:

ME highlighted the potential significant gaps in both trained Fire Sweepers and in Practical Fire Extinguisher training for staff. Stephen Talboys (ST) commented that this was likely to be a problem that extends beyond the time of Covid restriction given that the University Executive Board (UEB) has formally approved the "Hybrid Working" policy recently meaning less staff on campus on a more permanent basis.

The proposal from the UFSO suggesting that all staff become sweepers within their own work environments was met with some reluctance from the Committee in that such a change in policy may require a significant amount of communication/change in delivery of training as well as an assessment of staff abilities to carry out these roles, for example in higher risk areas such as laboratories.

**ACTION:**

**ME to review the proposal and consider all other options and update the Committee at the next meeting in November 2021.**

(ii) Residential Fire Safety Awareness Training:

It had previously been agreed that the issuing of residential accommodation room keys to students should be made conditional on this training being completed. The recent poor take up of the online version of the training (approx. 56% of maximum occupancy, noting that actual occupancy was reduced due to Covid-19), when compared to previous face-to-face delivery (97%), may have been influenced by the fact the module was not made available to students in good time. Wayne Campbell (WLC) suggested that this Committee should be in a position to understand the data and the possible influences of reduced occupancy rates, less students being on campus than normal, etc.

**c) Fire Safety Penalty Procedure/Regulation 7 Working Group (M.20-21/12c ii refers) (WLC).**

The University considers this to be an extremely serious issue and as well as having the ability to fine students under the above regulation, also retains the right to terminate accommodation contracts for students and deny them future access to such contracts. In practice, warning letters are first issued before a fine is imposed and while current available data shows there only to have been one repeat incident, WLC wants to acquire a body of evidence to see if this remains the case.

The Chair agreed with our unity of purpose on the issue and wanted to investigate the possibility of anonymised data being made available to the Committee to inform future decisions. ST agreed on the need for this data but also queried students' overall perception of the University's stance on this issue. Is the position set out

above known to students or is the university perceived to be less strict such that this is a reputational issue too?

Carly Precious (CP) suggested the policy should be more accessible to reach students. WLC confirmed a more “user-friendly” version is underway.

The Chair concluded the issue had received a good airing and summarised that the anonymised data was required plus that Rachel Barson in the Communications Office would be a suitable contact for any student communications required.

**ACTION:**

**WLC to arrange to provide anonymised information and data in the form of regular reports to future Committee meetings.**

**d) Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) and Fire Drills (M.20-21/12c iii refers):**

This item was postponed to the November 2021 meeting.

**e) Management and Safe Use of Lithium Batteries for information.(ME)**

ME provided the Committee with an overview of safely related concerns concerning Lithium batteries in a range of mobile devices including mobile phones, laptops and e-cigarettes, the increased usage of electric scooters may introduce an additional fire safety hazard to the Campus. Tests done by competent investigators clearly show that physical damage to battery packs might start a thermal runaway in the battery and consequently a fire. Standard Portable Appliance (PA) Testing will not resolve this as incidents are most likely to occur when the battery itself has been damaged, hence regular physical checks are required.

**ACTION:**

**The Chair requested ME to draft a paper outlining what could be included in a Policy to address this risk.**

**f) Multi Use Outdoor Spaces. (DF)**

DF provided for information and reference a paper drawing the Committee’s attention to the guidance on the above. The current position is that the facilities are viable with no major concerns over their use. Jonathan Fanning (JF) agreed with this summary. ST stated the spaces are not technically buildings but there is an expectation that users will not smoke in them. He also confirmed 3 out of the 4 proposed spaces are proceeding, while the 4th remains under review due to contractor delays.

**g) Working Safely Publication (DTEF) RW**

RW confirmed the publication of the first edition of “Working Safely”, intended to provide an update on all matters Health and Safety within DTEF and to raise awareness of the importance of reporting accidents/incidents/near misses etc.

**M20-21/21: To receive for information and assurances the Health and Safety Services and Management Audit Report(s):**

**i) HSS Quarterly Report January - March 2021 (Period 1)**

DF referred Committee members to the incident statistics and Covid-secure arrangements detailed in the Period 1 Report. In addition, the Annual Insurance Questionnaires (AIQ) was issued in February 2021 with a 100% completion rate from departments within the specified timeframe. The Invitation to Tender was issued on 12 April 2021. The annual site inspection by the Environment Agency (EA) Inspector for Radiation, to check compliance with the conditions of our Environment Agency Permits was held virtually on the 27 January 2021 and passed without major concern or observations.

In response to questions from Committee members, DF confirmed the Hybrid Working Policy was due imminently. Colin Jobber (CJ) took the action to circulate the Policy as soon as available such that it could be included in these Minutes.

**ACTION:**

**CJ to arrange to circulate the Hybrid Working Policy once finalised and approved.**

**ii) Department of Chemistry, Health and Safety Management Audit Summary.**

The Chair agreed that the audit summaries had been covered sufficiently earlier in the Agenda.

**M20-21/22 To receive for consideration and information progress updates from the Directorate of Technology, Estates and Facilities (DTEF):**

**a) Estates Development/Capital Works/Projects Update. October - December 2020 (Period 4).**

KW provided a brief overview confirming that the Physics substation nears completion and the construction of the new residences remains on target.

**b) Key Service Meetings (KSM) Progress Update.**

KW confirmed that while there is less activity on campus, buildings are still being checked and maintained, including lifts etc. Building Regulations stipulate the universal fitting of window restrictors and, according to our Asset Register, there are approx. 55,000 required across campus.

**c) Fire Safety in University Residential Accommodation (Minister of State for Universities).**

The letter from Michelle Donelan specifies action relating to the cladding on high rise buildings over 18 m. The University has no buildings in that category but supports the Vice-Chancellor and President's view that we should still respond to this data collection exercise. KW confirmed that his team are working with connected builders and undertaking surveys to this end but that this is to provide examples of cladding and not that there is any identified risk to our buildings.

**ACTION:**

DF agreed to respond to the Minister of State for Universities letter and request stating that the University would be willing to participate in the data collection exercise.

**M20-21/23:** Members of the Committee are requested to consider and review in preparation for the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, the Terms of Reference (ToR).

DF invited members to prepare comments [on the existing ToR](#) and forward to him ahead of the next meeting of the Committee.

**ACTION:**

All committee members are requested to review the current ToR and provide comments and feedback to DF prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

**M20-21/28:** Date and Time of Next Meeting:

14:00 hrs on Tuesday 02 November 2021.