

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Health and Safety Committee

Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 28 May 2020 at 09.30 via MS Teams.

Present: Dr Catherine Baxter (Chair) Mr Sam Wane
 Mrs Emma Osbourne Mrs Lavinia Moroz-Hale
 Mrs Helen Armishaw Mr David Nuttall
 Ms Annette Pascall Dr Victoria Talbot
 Mr Tom Leigh Mrs Lisa Plant
 Mrs Michelle Pryce Mr Jonathan Gill
 Prof Peter Mills Ms Carrie De Silva
 Dr Grace Milburn Mrs Rebecca Payne
 Dr Lynn McIntyre

Apologies: Mr Mark Vickers

19/23 Minutes

Approved: the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 5 March 2020 (19/12-19/22)

19/24 Matters Arising

Noted: that there were no significant matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

19/25 Risk Management

Received: i) a report from the University Secretary on risk areas monitored by the Committee

 ii) an oral report from the Chair on the University's current planning and response to the government's latest guidance on COVID-19. Professor Mills, Dr Talbot and Dr McIntyre will also be asked to update members at the meeting on the work of their group which is planning how best to support the return of a small number of researchers who need to access on-campus laboratory facilities. Professor Mills would also be asked to provide an update on developing plans on access to engineering, crop and animal facilities

Noted: i) that the University's Business Continuity Plan had been enacted in response to the COVID-19 situation. A COVID-19 Group had met daily and continued to meet at least 2 or 3 times a week to monitor the situation and agree next steps. The Weekly Newsletter had updated staff on the latest information and plans, and key documentation was made available on the staff portal and for students on the Learning Hub. Staff had also been provided with copies of student briefings to ensure they were aware of the contents when engaging with students.

 ii) that discussion of COVID-19 risks with respect to the work of the University had started in February when Chinese partner HEIs were affected by the initial outbreak. Support for remote teaching and for students currently studying at HAU were put in place. This initial response had then been developed and updated as the situation changed in the UK and as government guidance and requirements became known. The University continued to monitor advice and guidance on a daily basis and

to respond to the latest guidance both for the HE sector (where this exists) and the wider government guidance;

- iii) that thanks were due to all staff who had adapted rapidly and positively to the new situation and to working from home or on campus as a key worker. There were 86 staff who had been working in key worker roles on campus, often adapting to new rotas/work patterns or similar, looking after the health and safety of resident students, the maintenance of the campus infrastructure to ensure it remained safe and compliant with HSE legislation and to ensure the welfare of over 3,000 animals on campus. Appropriate safeguards, revised risk assessments and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) had been agreed with staff in key worker roles. Thanks were due to the Health and Safety team and to all staff who had supported this process;
- iv) that Student Services had been working hard to support the well-being of all students, including those on campus. IT support, learner support and had support for on-line delivery of teaching and assessments also been quickly put in place to assist students and staff working remotely or residing on campus. The catering team were providing a weekly collection system for a self-catering food box (ordered on line) for resident students and key workers on campus;
- v) that thanks were also due to UCU colleagues, including the UCU Health and Safety Representative, as well as to members of the Staff Consultative Group who had been meeting virtually with the Vice-Chancellor and senior staff to discuss the University's response and its plans for the emerging stages of emerging from "lockdown" as these unfolded. In addition to these discussions, all staff had been invited to email any queries or concerns about returning to campus working, so staff feedback could be considered as part of the required detailed planning and response to national guidance for employers and workplaces as well as that issued by DfE, OfS, CMA, QAA, UCAS and other HE sector bodies. Feedback had been useful and appreciated. A guidance document on returning to campus working would be issued shortly drawing on staff comments and on the latest government guidance. Where Departments or staff had made suggestions that needed an individual discussion, these were being arranged;
- v) that meetings with the Students' Union had also been taking place at least every two weeks, or more often if required, and during regular virtual committee meetings, the views of student representatives were also been sought and considered. As the University moved forward to the next phases of the UK government's "roadmap" for recovery from COVID-19 restrictions, consultation with staff and students would continue;
- vi) that the University has established a range of working groups involving key staff with expertise in the various areas to assist in planning for the re-opening of practical facilities for research as a first step to returning to campus working. Thanks were due to all staff involved in this detailed work for their help and support in developing risk assessments, SOPs and other guidance documents. Estates were also working very hard to ensure building management, signage and occupation arrangements were in place, along with management of washrooms and provision of 70% alcohol gel at key points as advised by the government. In discussion members agreed and noted that handwashing with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds remains the "gold standard" and this was to be

encouraged. Use of gel was really a secondary option. Social distancing was also fundamental, as were supporting arrangements for key workers and these would be emphasised to those returning to campus working;

- vii) that Risk assessments would be published on the portal for staff to read and would be subject to equality and diversity impact assessment. Individual risk assessments for research projects were also being checked and permission to return would not be granted unless these were approved. Particular thanks were expressed to Lynn McIntyre, Victoria Talbot and the group who were working with Peter Mills on arrangements for laboratory use by researchers who needed to return to campus to undertake urgent and essential practical work. Thanks were also expressed to Grace Milburn and the CERC team for undertaking detailed work to enable researchers to return to use CERC facilities where these were essential at this point. Similar work has also taken place to review use of the AEIC and thanks were expressed to Sam Wane and his colleagues. There was also a group being led by John Donaldson on use of animal facilities and a further one being led by Richard Hooper on outside working looking at the government guidance issued on this and other workplaces (the new guidance on working safely during COVID-19 in offices and research facilities, outdoor working and transport were particularly relevant to HAU as well as the guidance on working in research facilities) during mid- May. As and when the anticipated DfE guidance for HEIs was published, this would also be reviewed and any further changes to emerging arrangements would be made and communicated as necessary;
- viii) that staff or PhD students returning to campus would receive an induction. The Housekeeping and Laundry staff who had returned to join key workers who has remained on campus had been provided with copies of all risk assessments, a briefing and an induction to revised working arrangements, social distancing and SOPs for their roles and a follow up with the Health and Safety Officer would also take place. Induction would be arranged by line managers and supported by the Health and Safety Officer as required for staff and PhD students returning to campus working. In discussion members confirmed that the use of gloves should be discouraged except for practical work that required these as genuine PPE. Handwashing remained the key to managing the spread, and wearing unwashed gloves generally around the campus was more likely to pass on risks on to others. Use of PPE was also important to note, especially the difference between workplace PPE required for certain tasks, and face coverings which, while not recommended by the government for workplaces in general, could be worn by staff as a personal choice, provided employers ensure staff making this choice understand the appropriate way to ensure face coverings are clean and that staff understand they are not a substitute for social distancing and hand washing regularly while at work;
- ix) that the work of the labs group had been progressing well and risk assessments and plans for use of the building were in hand. Thanks were expressed to all involved. Professor Mills confirmed that all researchers would need to do their own RA for returning to campus, and secure approval before returning. Facilities managers would be able to review these as well as the Health and Safety Manager. Work to review arrangements at CERC and AEIC were also in hand and thanks were expressed to Grace Milburn and Sam Wane for their help with

these areas. Professor Mills would continue to oversee the work of all of the groups;

- x) that in due course, further work would continue to prepare other buildings for re-opening on a phased basis in discussion with line managers and their staff, including where appropriate ensuring a detailed review of the office-based risk assessment which had been drafted to meet government guidance, together with other such risk assessments such as use of transport. Where adjustments might be needed to the risk assessments drafted so far to meet the needs of individual teams these would be made;
- xi) that the University continued to ensure it is meeting government guidance with respect to staff who may have been notified that they are clinically vulnerable and need to shield, and those who may have conditions that indicate they are vulnerable in the context of COVID-19. Government guidance and advice from GPs and/or Occupational Health would be sought as required to support working arrangements for staff whose own health or that of those they live with may need further consideration when returning to campus working. In the meantime, the Vice-Chancellor had advised staff other than key workers and those supporting researchers returning to campus to continue to work from home where this was possible. The University's Occupational Health and 24/7 EAP continued to be available to staff with a view to supporting well-being including mental health. The Student Services team were also continuing to provide mental health support to students whether they are on campus or studying at home.
- xii) that arrangements for the autumn term would be confirmed in due course and in light of any further sector wide guidance that may emerge in the next few weeks;
- xiii) that detailed plans were being put in place to allow residential students who had left campus during lockdown to return to campus to collect their belongings;
- xiv) that very positive feedback had been received from staff and students in terms of IT and academic support;
- xv) that thanks were due to the Laboratory staff for producing a hand sanitiser for use on campus. Further supplies were on order and would be monitored closely. Staff would be provided with access to sanitiser and other suitable cleaning materials to enable them to clean surfaces in their own work areas as necessary as this has been a query raised by staff in their feedback to the Vice-Chancellor. Staff would be asked to bring their own non- perishable food and hot drinks using a flask if they wished as staff kitchens and catering outlets would remain closed at this time. There would be a focus on staff washrooms being regularly cleaned, and staff would have access to alcohol rub and blue paper roll if they wished to use it to wipe surfaces when entering common areas. Again, this had been requested by staff to help them feel confident that as well as washing their own hands and maintaining social distancing, they could take extra precautions if they wished to do so;

19/29 Report by the Laser Safety Officer

Received: a report from the Laser Safety, Mr Sam Wane

Noted: that as the laser diode system would be decommissioned and stored as the PhD student using the laser had completed her work and had now submitted her PhD;

19/30 Report by the UAV/Drone Safety Officer

Received: an oral report on behalf of the UAV/Drone Safety Officer, Jonathan Gill

Noted: that there had been little recent activity apart from Hands Free Farm work managed by the UAV/Drone Safety Officer himself. In light of future CAA requirements, updates to the policy were being made with the Health & Safety Officer and would be sent to the Committee for agreement via circulation.

JG/EO

19/31 Items raised by the UCU Health and Safety Representative

Noted: that following queries from members it was confirmed that any requests from staff identifying as vulnerable on health grounds would be considered on an individual basis with appropriate medical advice a noted above

19/32 Minutes of the Bio Safety Committee held on 30 April 2020

Noted: that the notes had been omitted in error from the agenda. Apologies were expressed to all concerned. Dr McIntyre as Chair noted that the Committee had considered arrangements for general use and for dealing with emergencies in containment lab 2 and had agreed training materials would be useful. HRP specific training videos had also been suggested and would be taken forward. Legionella Testing had been discussed with estates. DI auditing would re-start after lockdown. Updated arrangements for extraction/milling of animal feed that could contain faecal matter were being explored. Plans to further raise awareness of Bio Safety would be progressed as the return to campus working gains pace. Clarification on the arrangements for returning to lab working raised by the Committee had either now been addressed or would be addressed by the Labs working group referred to earlier in the meeting.

Agreed: that the notes of the Bio Safety Committee would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting

SV

19/33 Any Other Business

Noted: that the University would continue to follow the advice of Public Health England (PHE) and the Government in relation to the COVID-19 virus and this would be communicated to staff by email, in the weekly Newsletter and via the web page and the Portal. The group overseeing contingency planning would continue to meet.

1934 Dates of Next Meeting

15 October 2020