Bangor University

MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

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| Meeting: | 29th October 2021 |
| Present: | Prof. G Roberts (Chair), Miss S Barnes, Ms T Bowden, Mrs T Hibbert, Prof P Mullins, Dr K Mundy, Mr G Parry, Mrs R Parry, Miss E Riches, Dr G Robinson, Mr A Williams, Mr M Williams, Mr G W Jones (Secretary) |
| Apologies: | Prof P Spencer, Dr D Assinder, Mr W Jones, Dr H Roberts, Mr T Williams, Mr L Weigand, Mrs J Roberts, Ms M Rowlands, Dr J Latchford, Mr A Jones |
| Pre-Meeting Note | The Chair informed the Committee of the following:   1. Mr E Hepburn, Council representative, will chair the University Audit & Risk Committee and as such will be relieved from his attendance at the H&S Committee. Council has nominated another member to the Committee, Professor Jean White, whose background is in health, and who will take their position at the next meeting. 2. Mr Tudur Williams, Staff Representative on Council and Council Representative on the Committee, is leaving the University. The Chair expressed his thanks to Mr Williams for his support of the H&S Committee. 3. The Chair gave condolences to Mr L Weigand following a family bereavement. |
| 610. | Minutes  The Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd June 2021 were confirmed and signed. |
| 611. | Matters Arising  Any matters arising to be discussed as agenda items. |
| 612. | Report from the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Task Group (HSEMTG)  The Task Group continues to meet regularly and since the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee has met four times. The following key items were noted:  July Meeting:   1. The Task Group reviewed the Welsh Government’s written statement on opening for the Autumn term and supporting documents. Although guidance did change it provided useful guidance regarding student contact groups, supporting the planning for on-campus teaching and learning process. 2. Approval was given to re-open the Pontio cinema.   August Meeting:   1. In response to clearer Government and Sector guidance, decisions were made regarding the provision of in-person teaching. A decision was also taken that face coverings would continue to be required in all University buildings. 2. It was agreed that multiple contact student groups would be set up in large teaching and learning spaces with 2m social distancing between each contact group. Overall capacity was initially capped at 100. 3. A 50% capacity for minibus and coach use and external bookings was set. This to enable participants to physically distance from others if they wished.   September Meeting:   1. It was agreed from October, to increase maximum teaching capacity to 200; whilst following existing contact group controls and distancing arrangements. 2. A decision on allowing more staff to return to campus will be made following the Welsh Government’s next announcement on 29th October. 3. Guidance has been produced to help staff assess large offices for a return to multi occupancy use. Their use will be further guided on the information provided in the Welsh Government’s announcement on 29th October. |
| 613 | Covid-19 |
| 613(a) | Statistical Update  A summary of Covid-19 information and data was provided. It was noted that:   1. As of 29th October, there are 2 staff members and 9 students with Covid-19. It is noted one staff member (as a PhD Student) is also included on the student data. 2. Since 1st September 2021 there have been 67 Covid-19 positive cases amongst the University staff and student population. 3. For the 20 – 29 age range demographic the student Covid positive case rate is equal to / slightly above the staff ratio. 4. Student cases reflects regional information for their age demographic. 5. The 19 – 25 age group have the lowest cases per 100,000 in Gwynedd. 6. Only 267 staff and students responded to the Vaccination Survey. A further survey will be undertaken to compare vaccination rates amongst the University staff and student population against other regions, Wales, and the UK. 7. Further investigation is being carried out into the low number of LFD Test results being submitted. Possibly this is associated with people only uploading test results if Covid-19 positive. |
| 613(b) | Mitigation Arrangements, Summary  The following key items were noted:   1. Even though Wales moved to Alert Level 0 on 7th August 2021, many, very clear requirements remained in place for employers. 2. The University Executive remains the lead body for decision making, with the Task Group advising on covid mitigation arrangements and decisions. In addition, an Academic Review Group has been set up to consider impacts and opportunities to amend University Covid control measures for teaching and learning. 3. The University Covid 19 Risk Assessment (version 12), the production of which is a legal requirement, remains the core document for recording how the University manages and mitigates against coronavirus risks. The Risk Assessment is regularly reviewed and is updated in-line with significant Government and Sector Guidance changes. 4. A range of procedures, protocols and documents for specific activities support the overarching Covid-19 Risk Assessment. The Academi Nightclub, Halls and Sports operate under their own Risk Assessments and specific industry guidance. 5. A 50% capacity has been set for minibuses and coaches used as part of educational activities. For social activities, evidence of a negative LFD Test can be insisted upon before boarding the vehicle. This approach has enabled the Students’ Union to increase capacity up to 100% for SU activities. 6. Overseas travel has now recommenced. 7. The Academi Nightclub implemented the NHS Covid Pass before it became a legal requirement in Wales. The Covid Pass has also been adopted by three University music groups to enable them to rehearse and perform. It is anticipated the NHS Covid Pass may be adopted by other University groups to support their activities. A Welsh Government announcement is awaited regarding further activities which will legally require the NHS Covid Pass before entry e.g., theatre, cinema. 8. A Guide to help staff assess large office spaces in preparation for multi occupancy use and a return of more staff to campus is to be distributed. 9. 500 HEPA Air Purification Units have been purchased. To date, over 300 units have been set up in timetabled teaching spaces with further units to be set up to support multi occupancy use in offices. It is noted windows should remain open to promote air ventilation. |
| 613(c) | Report from UCU Representative  The UCU Health and Safety Representative provided the following report:   1. It was observed that the Union is supportive of the approach and work done by the University in managing Covid-19 risk to help protect the health, safety and well-being of staff, students, and the local community. 2. A recently published rapid evidence review academic paper, recently shared with colleagues, has shown that Bangor University pre-empted many of the control measures that are now recommended, and the Union has also been able to positively highlight to other Branches the work that has been undertaken here. 3. Appreciation was given to the thoughtful approach the University is taking. 4. Thanks was given to the work Mr G W Jones has made to keep the Union informed of the work the University is doing to mitigate against Covid-19. 5. It was noted Prof P Mullin’s appointment to the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Task Group has been extremely beneficial and has enabled constructive discussions, with the same collegiate goal. 6. The Union has undertaken several inspections and audits, which have confirmed Covid-19 arrangements are being implemented and procedures followed.   Overall, it was reported that the Union is appreciative of being involved in the decision-making process and is generally supportive of the approach taken. |
| 614 | Students’ Union Report  The Vice-President (Sports and Healthy Living) provided a report, and the following key items were noted:   1. The return to 100% capacity on minibuses and coaches has been extremely beneficial for Students’ Union activities, and the requirement to undertake an LFD Test prior to travel is clearly supported by the participating students. 2. Spot checks are undertaken of minibuses and coaches to ensure students have presented a negative LFD Test before boarding and to confirm other arrangements such as the wearing of face coverings is followed. 3. The Check-in-App is used for all Students’ Union events, this to support Test, Trace and Protect efforts, if needed. 4. The roll-out of the requirement for a negative LFD Test to be presented before participation in an activity has enabled other high-risk groups, such as singing and performing arts to recommence. This has also permitted students to start planning future events. Students are extremely positive towards this approach. 5. To help assure the personal safety of students, any person entering Academi must provide evidence they are a Bangor University student or a guest of a student. 6. Appreciation was given to Academi who implemented the NHS Covid Pass before it was a legal requirement. This has made students feel safe when in the nightclub. 7. Two ‘Girls Night In’ events have taken place. This campaign is in response to recent ‘spiking’ incidents across the UK. It was noted the campaign is proactive and not a reaction with no spiking incidents reported in Academi.   Overall, it was reported that students have generally supported the efforts to keep them safe and understand why some covid restrictions remain in place. The fact that they are now able to participate in events, Societies and Clubs is welcomed. |
| 615. | Accidents & Sickness Absence – 12 Month Report  The following items, from the 12-month statistical report on Accidents & Incidents and Sickness Absences, were noted:   1. The total number of injury-accidents was 29, with 26 of these to staff and students. 2. There were two RIDDOR reportable (as defined by the HSE) incidents in the period. A student with a cut to the finger which required gluing at A&E, the second to a member of staff who took over 7 days off work because of a bang to the head. 3. There were two lost-time accidents to members of staff. 4. 5,975 working days were lost due to reported sickness absence, a rate of circa 3.85 days per employee (FTE) for the reporting year. 765 of these working days and 86 instances were Covid-19 related. 5. An increase in long term psychological sickness absences has been noted. Human Resources, the Occupational Health Practitioner and Health & Safety will maintain a watching brief on this. 6. There were no significant Environmental related incidents reported during this period. |
| 616. | Any Other Business  No items were noted:  The next H&S Committees (TO BE CONFIRMED) are scheduled as follows:  4th March 2022, 2pm  27th May 2022, 2pm |
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