

Bangor University
MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 6th July 2020

Present: Prof. G Roberts (Chair), Miss S Barnes, Mr H Ellis, Mr S Griffith, Mr A Jones, Mr W Jones, Prof P Mullins, Dr K Mundy, Mr G Parry, Mrs R Parry, Miss E Riches, Dr H Roberts, Mrs J Roberts, Dr G Robinson, Ms M Rowlands, Prof P Spencer, Mrs E Parry Williams, Mr M Williams, Mr G W Jones (Secretary)

Apologies: Mrs T Hibbert, Mr L Wiegand, Mr H Williams, Dr J Latchford, Mrs G Hine, Mr T Williams

581. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th March 2020 were confirmed and signed.

582. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

583. Report from the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Task Group (HSEMTG)

Since the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee, the Task Group has met once. The following key item was noted, with others to be raised as H&S Committee Agenda items:

- i. *Statistics:* Due to staff working from home and over 300 staff on 'furlough' there has been a significant decrease in the reporting of sickness absences, with no accidents or incidents reported following 'lockdown'. This is a University-sector wide issue. Following discussion, it was agreed the need to report sickness absence and work-related incidents would be reinforced through the Staff Bulletin and directly through the Heads of Schools / Professional Services.

584. Covid-19 Report

A summary of the current controls, mitigation, and developments with regards to the on-going pandemic and developing situation, was provided. It was noted that:

- i. The University Executive has established three primary Sub-Groups: The Return to Campus Group, The Return to Research Group and the Teaching & Learning Group. Consideration is being given by each Group to arrangements for the whole of the 2020/2021 Academic Year.
- ii. The Return to Campus Group consists of representatives from each Professional Service, the Students' Union and the UCU Trades Union, and is tasked with assessing and supporting how staff and students can safely return to campus and how the expectations of the Research Group and Teaching & Learning Group can be safely delivered.
- iii. The Research Group has, to date, identified a number of projects they wish to restart imminently. Once identified, collaboration takes place between Property & Campus Services (PACS), Health & Safety and the primary building users to ensure appropriate COVID-19 controls are in place in the form of a building risk assessment.

- iv. The Teaching & Learning Group is, amongst other aspects, identifying what teaching can be provided and how this can be achieved in accordance with COVID-19 requirements. This includes face to face teaching capability and how to enable placements / work experience for students.
- v. A Sub-group 'Test, Track & Protect and Face Coverings' which reports to the Return to Campus Group, has also been established. The Sub-group's work includes:
 - Ongoing discussions with BCUHB and Public Health Wales on how the University can support the Test, Track and Protect strategy for staff and students.
 - Establishing escalation and response protocols for, 'if and when', Individuals report they are COVID-19 positive.
 - Consideration of risks, benefits and aspects of recommending or requiring staff and students to wear face coverings in buildings, and when such may be appropriate.
- vi. 2nd & 3rd Year Nursing Placements have recommenced. Discussions are to take place regarding other 'required' placements such as School Placements for education students.

585. Risk Assessments

A summary of the 'University Re-opening Under COVID-19' Risk Assessment was provided.

The Risk Assessment is a statutory document every employer must prepare before activities restart. The Re-opening Risk Assessment will replace the 'University-level: Management arrangements in response to Coronavirus (Covid-19)' Risk Assessment, which was initiated on 14th February 2020 and has been updated regularly thereafter.

- i. The Re-opening Risk Assessment is supported by individual Building Risk Assessments. Specific Activity Risk Assessments must also be reviewed before an activity can recommence.
- ii. No building may reopen until PACS authorisation is given. This includes an assessment by PACS, H&S and the building user to ensure the building is safe to reoccupy and suitable COVID-19 controls are put in place.
- iii. The restriction on 'business travel' within the UK has been partially lifted. This will allow 'authorised' scientific fieldwork that can be undertaken safely, under COVID-19 controls to take place.
- iv. Overseas travel on University related business remains prohibited.

586. Home Working During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A summary of the paper submitted to the Committee on the potential health and safety risks to home working staff and the action taken by the University was provided.

The Government's advice at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the suspension of on-site (unless staff were providing essential services) working at the end of March 2020. This resulted in circa 1,300 staff working from their own homes rather than an on-site office.

The paper summarises actions taken to date and further actions required to address potential health and safety risks to home working staff, under the two categories of working with display screen equipment (DSE) and mental wellbeing.

The following key items were noted:

- i. Guidance for staff on home working and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and mental wellbeing related issues has been in place on the Coronavirus FAQ webpages since the first week of lockdown.
- ii. A Wellbeing Area has been established on the HR Website to provide information on mental wellbeing support and available resources. These include Care First, the University's Employee Assistance provider and resources from amongst the University's own mental wellbeing experts.
- iii. On lockdown, IT Services advised staff to take monitors home if needed and a PC for home working was also provided.
- iv. From 22nd June staff were allowed to book a slot to visit their office (or if unable, to explore options with their line manager) to retrieve items, such as chairs, and office peripherals.
- v. Communication has continued with furloughed staff.

Further Action:

- vi. The use of a temporary, lightweight cardboard desk, which can be delivered to a home address is being investigated.
- vii. All staff who work with computers, regardless of work location, will be asked to complete the DSE online self-assessment form in September 2020.
- viii. A Questionnaire Toolkit is being developed which will inform discussion between line managers and staff. This will assess if home working is practical in the longer term and identify how additional support can be provided.
- ix. A Working from Home Policy, to provide and formalise controls and support for home working is being developed.
- x. A Working from Home Risk Assessment is being developed, to direct line managers when discussing formal regular home working practice.

Following discussion, it was recommended available resources be communicated through the Staff Newsletter and direct from Colleges, Schools and Services.

587. Any Other Business

- i. It was noted that the Committee was assured by the work which has and is being undertaken to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

The next H&S Committees are scheduled as follows:

4th November 2020, 2pm, Terrace Conference Room 3

10th March 2021, 2pm, Terrace Conference Room 3

2nd June 2021, 2pm, Terrace Conference Room 3