

Bangor University  
**MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting:** 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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

**Apologies:** Mr A Jones, Mr W Jones, Mr L Wiegand, Dr D Assinder, Mr I Evans, Mrs J Roberts

**Opening Note:** The Chair welcomed Mr E Hepburn as the new Council representative. Mr Hepburn joined Council in October 2020 and sits on the Audit & Risk and Remuneration Committee.

**596. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were confirmed and signed.

**597. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**598. Sub-Committee Reports**

**a) Radiation Health and Safety Sub-Committee Report**

The Sub-Committee met on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021 with the following key items noted:

- i. *Open Source Work:* Work is now increasing following the significant reduction caused by the pandemic. All recent and new radiation workers have received on-site, face to face training, this to ensure relevant information is conveyed and understood.
- ii. Restricted capacities presented challenges to enabling open-source radiation work to restart in the ECW Radiation Laboratory. This has led to a change in the way the laboratory is operated, with greater control over who is working and when. Weekend work is now being planned to enable more open-source work to take place, whilst having due regard to Covid-19 restrictions. The Radiation Protection Supervisor will be on-site during weekend work to ensure appropriate supervision.
- iii. *Radon - Halls:* 45 radon monitors were placed in University owned Halls in February 2020. As many students returned home early due to the pandemic, room use did not reflect normal occupancy, and it was agreed with the University Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) that the monitors would not be collected. Public Health England, where the monitors are sourced from, were informed. When normal room occupancy resumes the survey will be revisited. It was noted that this delay will not increase risk or risk exposure.
- iv. *Radiography Wrexham - School of Health Sciences:* No X-ray work has been carried out. Before exposures restart, a review of the Local Rules, Risk Assessments, Safe Operating Procedures, and the capacity limits is required.

- v. Nuclear Futures Institute (NFI): A summary of the NFI work was presented. The NFI's plan to increase its stock of uranium compounds will require notification to the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and assurance that all relevant regulatory requirements, including security arrangements, are met.
- vi. *Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) – Annual Visit*: As a result of the on-site RPA visit not happening due to Covid restrictions a virtual inspection is planned. This inspection will review radon arrangements, open source work and X-ray use. The RPO has maintained regular contact with the RPA throughout the pandemic.
- vii. *Natural Resources Wales (NRW)*: The annual inspection is slightly overdue with the last on-site NRW visit undertaken on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020. No issues were identified during this visit.
- viii. *Lasers*: It was noted the attendance of the University Laser Safety Officer has been invaluable to the sub-committee, ensuring arrangements are in place for laser work across the University.

A discussion ensued in which assurance was given that even though the annual RPA and NRW visits did not take place, in-house monitoring has been undertaken to ensure standards are maintained.

## **b) Chemical and Biological Health and Safety Sub-Committee Report**

The Sub-Committee met on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The following key items were noted:

- i. There has been limited work throughout the pandemic. However, as staff and students gradually return to site, for many after a long period of absence from campus, it has been identified that refresher training will be required for some higher risk activities and equipment. Work is ongoing to address this. Records will be kept of all training.
- ii. *Biological Safety Cabinets*: Interim documented air flow tests are now carried out. This to support the 12/14 monthly statutory tests and inspections arranged by Property & Campus Services (Campus Services).
- iii. *BREXIT: Importing / Exporting Scientific Samples*: It was noted that the blanket exemption regarding the import / export of scientific materials in Europe remains in place.
- iv. *Biohazards Review*: The annual review of Category II biological facilities was not possible in 2020 and will therefore be undertaken by April 2021. This will include a desktop review of all GMO Risk Assessments.
- v. *Notifiable (HSE) Projects*: There is currently only one notifiable Class II project, which uses a non-toxicogenic E-coli 0157 strain. This project has run for many years without incident or concern.
- vi. The work of Dr S Malham and Dr K Farkas to monitor wastewater to identify Covid-19 levels and spikes was praised. Thanks was given to the Technicians, Campus Services staff, contractors, and the H&S Team for their support in enabling this critical work to happen.

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

The Task Group now meets monthly, highlighting the level of work specifically related to Covid-19. Since the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee, the Task Group has met three times. The following key items were noted:

- i. Campus Services continues to provide regular updates regarding compliance issues.
- ii. The Task Group's work has predominantly related to Covid-19 and the enabling, where possible, of activities at the University. Activities are placed into three risk categories 'green', 'amber' and 'red' which reflects Test, Trace and Protect guidance regarding contact with someone testing positive for Covid-19 and the subsequent self-isolation requirements. All 'red risk' level activities (e.g. fieldwork and close-contact activity) must be reviewed and approved at this level.
- iii. To date, only a small number of activities have been refused. This reflects the arrangements in place at College and Professional Services levels before an activity is considered by the Task Group.
- iv. It was noted that many staff and students will soon wish to travel overseas for their studies / work. It is hoped greater clarity will be given on overseas travel during the First Minister's speech on 12<sup>th</sup> March or in subsequent announcements.
- v. The Task Group received a Campus Services paper summarising the extent of the work required in some buildings to improve fire and smoke containment and compartmentation. A more detailed survey is currently underway, recommendations will be considered in accordance with potential risk.

**600 Covid-19 Report**

**a) University Covid-19 Risk Assessment**

It was noted that an institutional Covid-19 Risk Assessment was first produced on 14th February 2020 to prepare for the potential threat of Covid-19 and how it could impact on University activities.

During the summer 2020, this frequently updated Risk Assessment was developed into the 'Return to Campus Covid-19 Risk Assessment' which considered the specific risks arising from Covid-19 as the University re-opened and arrangements required to mitigate against these. This document is now the operational University Covid-19 Risk Assessment and is updated regularly (currently Version 8: 12th January 2021) to reflect changes in activities and to ensure compliance with any restrictions. The Risk Assessment will be further reviewed as Alert Level 4 restrictions are eased.

**b) Covid-19 Data**

A summary of the Covid-19 data available to the University was provided:

- i. The on-site Asymptomatic Test Centre opened on the 30th November 2020, initially to enable students to return safely home for Christmas. 553 tests were undertaken on the first day. To date over 8000 asymptomatic tests have been undertaken, with 17 testing Covid-19 positive.

- ii. The last Covid-19 positive test at an asymptomatic testing facility was on the 25th January 2021.
- iii. It is expected students will be strongly encouraged to get tested before returning home for the Easter break. Funding is currently in place for Asymptomatic Testing until 1st April 2021.
- iv. The University also has a PCR Test Facility, based in Canolfan Brailsford, for students with Covid-19 symptoms.
- v. To date a total of 372 positive Covid-19 tests have been notified to the University via the University's Covid-19 Portal or via local Test, Trace and Protect Teams.
- vi. Students self-isolating in Halls have been supported by Campus Services staff, with the provision of food etc. The Students' Union and student volunteers have supported students self-isolating in the local community.

Appreciation was expressed to the H&S Team in enabling activities to take place, whilst providing assurance to staff and students. It was also observed that positive feedback has been received for the Asymptomatic Test Centre regarding how organised the Centre is and how friendly and helpful Test Centre staff are. H Williams expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Students' Union.

**601. Accidents & Sickness Absence – 6 Month Report**

The following items, from the Half-Year statistical report on Accidents & Incidents and Sickness Absences were noted:

- i. The total number of injury-accidents was 8, with 7 of these to staff and students.
- ii. There were no RIDDOR reportable (as defined by the HSE) incidents in the period.
- iii. 2,310 working days were lost due to reported sickness absence. 333 working days lost, and 26 instances were attributed to Covid-19 symptoms.
- iv. Long term sickness absences have showed a marked decrease on the last two years from 2593.33 days lost in 17/18 to 1566.96 in 20/21. Three instances of long-term sickness absence were Covid-19 related.
- v. There have been only minor Environmental related incidents relating to fly tipping.

**602. Any Other Business**

There were no items to note.

**The next H&S Committee is scheduled as follows:**

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, 2pm, Terrace Conference Room 3