

MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 2nd June 2021

Present: Prof. G Roberts (Chair), Miss S Barnes, Mr E Hepburn, Mr A Jones, Prof P Mullins, Miss E Riches, Mrs J Roberts, Dr H Roberts, Prof P Spencer, Mr A Williams, Mr M Williams, Mr L Weigand, Mr G W Jones (Secretary)

Apologies: Dr J Latchford, Dr K Mundy, Mrs R Parry, Mrs T Hibbert, Mr H Riley, Mr H Ellis, Dr G Robinson, Mr W Jones, Mr H Williams, Mr I Evans, Mr G Parry, Ms M Rowlands

603. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th March 2021 were confirmed and signed.

604. Matters Arising

Any matters arising to be discussed as agenda items.

605. 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 three times. The following key items were noted:

- i. Initial approval of 'red risk' level activities continues. Protocols have been developed so processes that have been approved once by the Task Group can now, providing the protocols have not changed, be approved at a local level by the Dean/Head of College or Head of Service, following consultation with Health & Safety.
- ii. A protocol to enable car sharing for essential journeys on University related business has been approved.
- iii. Initially, during the early stages of the pandemic, First Aid certificate expiry dates were extended. This extension has now ended and now there are issues with arranging first aid training, resulting in First Aid certificates lapsing. Work is ongoing to address this.
- iv. The Return of Staff to Campus is now a standing agenda item. As such is dependent on Welsh Government guidance and legislative requirements it is still unclear what form any return would take and what timescales are envisaged. It is similarly unclear at this stage what September and the start of the 21/22 Academic year, will also look like.
- v. Several Policies have been updated (no substantial changes) and approved on behalf of the Health & Safety Committee: X-Rays, Radon, Ionising Radiation (Open Sources).
- vi. Ventilation is an ongoing theme at Task Group meetings, with significant work already undertaken and planned ahead of the next academic year.

- vii. The move to Welsh Government Alert Level 2 meant indoor activities of up to 30 and outdoor activities of up to 50 could re-start. This has also enabled the Student's Union to provide students with some Club and Society activities before the end of term.
- viii. As the Welsh Government's advice on 'working from home' wherever possible, hosting on-campus University staff meetings are still not supported, when such may be undertaken on-line.
- ix. Two detailed papers were received and considered at the last meeting:
 - o Return to Campus: Current guidance is still to work from home where possible. A Welsh Government announcement regarding changes to coronavirus controls and Alert Levels is not expected until later in June or early July when it is hoped more clarity on staff returning to campus may be provided.
 - o International Travel: Limited overseas travel has been approved on an individual basis. An overarching return to overseas travel cannot be given as travel is extremely problematic and complicated due to the changing requirements on a country-by-country basis, e.g., country risk levels, testing requirements, quarantine, and the significant additional costs this brings.
- x. The Task Group's role includes Emergency Management and pertinent to this it has considered two updated procedures:
 - o Building and Site 'Emergency Lockdown' Procedures
 - o Death of Member of Staff Protocols and Procedures

A discussion ensued regarding the testing of Emergency Lockdown Procedures and **it was agreed** to try and utilise the experience and knowledge of Council member Eric Hepburn to discuss how such procedures can be tested.

Action: GWJ

606 Covid-19 Health and Safety Report

A paper was considered, and it was highlighted that the University Health, Safety and Emergency Management Task Group continues to oversee day to day aspects of implementing coronavirus legislation at the University, and in turn safeguarding staff, students, and the community.

A summary of Covid-19 information and data was provided, and it was noted that:

- i. The requirement for 2m social distancing remains in place, with no indication when this will change.
- ii. **On-site Activity:** Provided social distancing is maintained, on-site academic activity can continue with no limit on maximum numbers. For non-academic activity, the University is now able to host up to 30 people indoors and up to 50 outdoors (employing social distancing).
- iii. **Ventilation:** Extensive work was undertaken in 2020, particularly to facilitate lab practicals and in person teaching. Additional assessments are now to be carried out to enable more activities to take place and to support the eventual return of staff and students to campus. For problematic areas and rooms, the University is investigation

options such as the use of HEPA filtration and UVC (Ultraviolet C-range) germicidal purification systems.

- iv. **Remote Working:** Working from home remains the preference for all staff who do not have to undertake their work on-site. The future 'landscape and opportunity' for home working and the necessary controls associated with providing a safe work environment, are being considered by the Human Resources Task Group and the developing Dynamic Working Toolkit.
- v. **International Travel:** Travel overseas remains problematic and has primarily been limited to authorised work-placement/international-experience, and to a very small number of Post Graduate Research students.
- vi. **Covid Testing:** The asymptomatic testing facility, utilising Lateral Flow Devices, is closing on 4th June, and is replaced by the use of home test kits. Test kits are available for all staff and students from several collection points at Bangor and Wrexham. There is a 'planning assumption' there will be a need for on-site Covid testing at the start of term, possibly for Student Arrival Testing and to facilitate Surge Testing if there were an outbreak.
- vii. **University Covid-19 Risk Assessment:** The University Risk Assessment for the management and mitigation of coronavirus risks in the workplace is currently in its 9th version since the start of the 2020/21 academic year. It will be again be revised following the closure of the on-site Asymptomatic Test Facility.
- viii. **Rates of Infection:** Currently there are two Covid positive students; one based in Italy, the other in Saudi Arabia. There have been no Covid positive students in Bangor or Wrexham for some weeks. Between 15th September 2020 and 28th May 2021 there have been 386 confirmed staff and student Covid-19 reports.

In total, asymptomatic testing has only identified 17 positive cases since its introduction in November 2020, out of a total of over 10,000 tests. A positivity rate of just 0.2%.

- ix. **21/22 Academic Year:** It is currently unclear and unlikely to be clear until closer to the start of term, what the University will be able to do on campus in-person and how it will function. This will necessitate several scenario plans by all.

607 University Estate Report

The following key items were noted:

- i. Work continues to bring a range of services under the one Campus Services umbrella.
- ii. In response to the Sarah Everard murder in London in March 2021, a 'Safe Place – Safe Environment Paper' was produced that was aimed at Campus Services' role in providing a safe place and to highlight where enhancements can be made. For example, surveying walking routes, further assessing lighting levels, the removal of arboreal incursions, reviewing CCTV placement and making Campus Services staff more visible and known as a safe point of contact and support.

- iii. A College Park enhancement review has commenced. The aim of this to improve the park significantly and to then encourage staff, students, and the wider community to utilise the park as a thriving destination point, as well as safe walking route.
- iv. Significant work continues to ensure statutory compliance across a range of estates related areas. This work remains difficult but equally is essential to the smooth running of the University.
- v. The decommissioning of Ysbyty Enfys has commenced and it is anticipated that a fully functioning Sports Centre will be 'returned' to the University ahead of the next academic year.
- vi. The following projects are currently active or in more advanced stages of preparation:
 - o The development of a Students' Union activity hub in the Ffriddoedd building.
 - o The demolition of the Alun Roberts Tower to enable a future development site or car parking.
 - o The development of the Deiniol / Science Innovation Centre, which will involve significant refurbishment work and several new buildings.
 - o The creation of a new focal University entrance at the Pontio building. This will include alterations to the current Main Arts entrance and the relocation of Security and other student facing support services to Pontio.
 - o A review of ventilation, especially in smaller meeting places and shared office spaces is underway.

608. Accidents & Sickness Absence – 9 Month Report

The following items, from the 9-month statistical report on Accidents & Incidents and Sickness Absences were noted:

- i. The total number of injury-accidents was 19, with 17 of these to staff and students.
- ii. There were no RIDDOR reportable (as defined by the HSE) incidents in the period.
- iii. 4,613 working days were lost due to reported sickness absence, a rate of circa 1.35 days per employee (FTE) for the first 9 months of the year. 593 of these working days and 49 instances, were due to Covid-19 related symptoms.
- iv. There were no significant Environmental related incidents reported during this period.

609. Any Other Business

The following items were noted:

- i. Information was provided on an all-Wales Protocol 'HE – review end of summer term' agreed between Universities Wales and the Trades Unions.
- ii. All staff now need to complete the on-line Covid-19 Induction. It is noted this is to be reviewed prior to the 21/22 Academic year and the support of Marketing and Communications is requested to film and enhance the Induction.

The next H&S Committees (TO BE CONFIRMED) are scheduled as follows:

29th October 2021, 10am

4th March 2022, 2pm, TBC

27th May 2022, 2pm, TBC