

## Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee

**26 March 2025**

**Present:** Patrick Hackett (Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer) (Chair), Helen Brewis (Co-Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group), Ken Drury (Unite Representative), Kevin Gaskell-Clow (UNISON Safety Representative), Dr Nicola Hutchings (UCU Safety Representative), Alan Kniveton (Unite Representative – external), Dr Adam McMahon (Chair of the Radiation Safety Advisory Group), Dr Elizabeth Micakovic (Chair of the Resilience Advisory Group), Professor Nalin Thakkar (Chair of the Occupational Health, Safety and Training Advisory Group), Professor Simon Turner (Chair of the Genetic Modification and Biohazards Safety Advisory Group), and Dr Sergey Utyuzhnikov (Chair of the Fire Safety Advisory Group).

**In attendance for all items:** Jon Ashley (Director of Estates Support), Sylvester Boon (Compliance and Risk Manager (Faculty of Science and Engineering)), Julia Cheung (Acting Director of Safety Services), Peter Connolly (Head of Occupational Health Services), Paul Duggan (Principal Fire Officer), Dr Ian Haslam (Head of the Radiation Safety Unit and Secretary to the Radiation Safety Advisory Group), Anthony Hughes (University Safety Coordinator and Secretary to the Fire Safety Group), Fiona Keenan (Executive Director of People nominee), Emma Rose (Deputy Director of Faculty Operations (Faculty of Humanities)), Dr James Schofield (Secretary to the Rose Safety, Environment and Security Committee), Professor Andrew Sherry (Chair in Materials and Structures), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

**Apologies:** Sarah Littlejohn (Co-Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group), and Professor Martin Schröder (Chair of the Rose Safety, Environment and Security Committee).

### **1 Welcome**

**Noted:** The Chair welcomed Paul Duggan and Professor Andrew Sherry who were attending to provide contributions on fire safety and safety culture, respectively.

### **2 Minutes of the previous meeting**

**Agreed:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2024.

### **3 Matters Arising**

**Received:** the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee actions update.

**Noted:**

- a) Arising from minute 7b) of the 17 December 2024 meeting; a separate discussion about possible resource issues which could have an impact on health, safety and wellbeing across the University was being considered as part of the process to appoint a new Director of Safety Services. Discussions about resources had been raised at OHSTAG, in relation to capacity to carry out audits.
- b) Arising from minute 5b) of the 17 December 2024 meeting; there had been 1,446 working days lost due to musculoskeletal (MSK) issues during Quarter 2, which

represented 8% of all working days lost during the quarter. This figure was low, potentially due to the higher prevalence of respiratory infections during the winter. 56% of MSK working days lost were attributable to Back/Shoulder/Neck/Leg/Hand Pain or Back problems, with the majority occurring in Estates and Facilities in the manual/craft group. It was confirmed that sickness absence was broadly in line with the University's benchmark, however manual/craft groups were reporting higher than at other institutions. The Head of Colleague Wellbeing was working with the People Partner to identify underlying causes. User experience and feedback on sickness reporting through MyHR would be considered to identify what process and functionality improvements could be made. **Action: Executive Director of People nominee**

- c) Arising from minute 5b) of the 17 December 2024 meeting; the Executive Directors of Faculty Operations were working with Heads of Departments to help to ensure the processes were followed for reporting short-term sickness absence. The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health (FBMH) were piloting Management Essentials Training which incorporated guidance on managing and reporting sickness. This should be rolled out more extensively to the organisation. Heads of Division Leadership and Management training would be launched during March 2025 and a core component of this was health, safety, and wellbeing. The Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) were disseminating reminders through Heads of Department at their local health, safety and wellbeing committees supported by HSC Advisors, and Heads of School would raise at Senior Leadership Team meetings following discussion by the Faculty Leadership Team (FLT). This was on the agenda for the upcoming (FLT) and Professional Services Leadership Team (PSLT).
- d) Arising from minute 7a iv) of the 17 December 2024 meeting; this action had been superseded. Uniac had followed up on the actions from the audit and the results would be circulated when available. **Action: Chair of OHSTAG**
- e) Arising from minute 7a viii) of the 17 December 2024 meeting; an update had been provided on the Category B defects which were monitored and discussed at OHSTAG on a regular basis. However, clarity was required on whether Category B defects were being rectified or retained. It was confirmed that resolving Category B defects was in progress with Allianz and Estates colleagues, via a database, and this work was currently ongoing. In future, when the process had been fully developed, it would be possible to analyse all categories of defects.

#### 4 HSW Committee Forward Agenda 2024-25

**Received:** the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee Forward Agenda 2024-25.

#### 5 HSW Performance Monitoring – Q2 Report (1 November 2024 – 31 January 2025)

**Received and Endorsed:** the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Monitoring – Q2 Report (1 November 2024 – 31 January 2025).

**Noted:**

- a) OHS Metric LAG4 Graph 1 (accidents) and OHS Metric LAG5 Graph 2 (incidents) required correction and would be updated in the report before presentation to the University Executive (UE) and Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). **Action: Acting Director of Safety Services**
- b) An eye injury relating to a student on a joint programme in Bangalore had been discussed at OHSTAG. Information from the institute was not forthcoming. However, FSE colleagues continued to liaise with the institute. Safety Services were developing a safety checklist. A discussion had been held at University Executive about ensuring the safety of students and implementing due diligence.

- c) Members were asked for feedback on the Lifecycle Surveys, which were disseminated to 1) new starters, 2) colleagues completing year 1 of employment, and 3) leavers. The surveys were promoted by the Head of Colleague Experience, although the response rates continued to be low. It was not currently within the scope of the survey to record colleagues transferring roles within the University, as the survey was currently in its first phase of implementation. After one year, the survey would be reviewed and this would be considered. The graphs would be provided in a clearer format prior to transmission to UE and ARC. **Action: Head of Colleague Wellbeing**
- d) The Lifecycle Survey responses after 12 months indicated that 53.9% of academic staff considered they had a manageable workload. Prioritising weekly line manager meetings was important, and the survey results indicated that a lack of regular conversations with a line manager led to low scores across the survey. The 12 month survey had a 7% completion rate.
- e) The Chair requested additional information to be provided to explain the data at WB LAG1,2&3. **Action: Governance Manager**
- f) OHS KPI LEAD3 indicated that 100% of inspections of non-ionising radiation equipment had been completed. It was suggested that useful data would indicate how many inspections were planned and how many had been completed to-date. The KPI would be re-visited to ensure it continued to provide useful data. **Action: Head of Radiation Safety Unit**
- g) It was acknowledged that there was a range of training data within the faculties which would help with accountability. However, these were not accessible to all colleagues. It was agreed that an audit of tools would be undertaken and an access pack would be developed. **Action: Executive Director of Faculty Operations (FBMH)**
- h) Working days lost due to respiratory conditions had increased significantly compared to Quarter 2 2023-24. It was confirmed that respiratory cases in the UK had been much higher in 2024-25 compared to 2023-24.
- i) A breakdown of musculoskeletal disorders between DSE and E&F staff could be provided. **Action: Head of Colleague Wellbeing**
- j) Whilst data reports in the paper were useful, there was scope for more effective analysis and narrative to enable the Committee greater insight into relevant trends. An example cited was the recent increase in stress related sickness absence for those in the manual and craft occupancy group, and further analysis of absence on mental health and stress related grounds would also be helpful. **Action: Head of Colleague Wellbeing**

## 6 Meeting Strategic Theme: Safety

**Noted:** A presentation on the strategic theme of safety which included the specialist disciplines of biological safety, radiation safety, Project Rose, fire safety, and safety culture at the university.

- a) Safety Culture: the ENSURE programme received significant support from the Committee. The roll-out of the programme would be reliant on the steering group and participation with the faculties and Safety Services. The Committee supported the proposals to develop the ENSURE programme, the survey tool and sessions around case studies. The programme would be implemented in areas of hazard areas initially and would be provided to other universities and industry (following IP). A separate discussion would be held on how to include FBMH Heads of Division and how to develop a culture of enquiry. **Action: Professor Andrew Sherry/Executive Director of Faculty Operations (FBMH)**
- b) Project Rose: there was a request for a definition of what information the Committee would like to receive as part of the Endorsement of Active Commissioning stages, to ensure an understanding of the scope and commencement of work in this area. The Chair of OHSTAG and the Head of Radiation Unit would facilitate a group and

Committee members could have input by contacting the Governance Manager.

**Action: HSW Committee members**

- c) Biological Safety: it was recognised that there would be gap in expertise in terms of biological safety at the University. This was an example of a high risk area and could be applied as a general model across other teams of expertise.
- d) Fire Safety: support was required in relation to hybrid working and identifying voluntary roles for staff first aiders and fire marshals. This work was being undertaken with the Directorate of People colleagues. **Action: Acting Head of Safety Services/Principal Estates Health and Safety Manager/Principal Fire Officer** There was no clear model around building management, including accountability, and this would need to be developed. It was suggested that consideration be given to whether it would be feasible for all colleagues to be trained as fire marshals. **Action: Chief Property Officer**

**7 Report from the Occupational Health, Safety and Training Advisory Group (OHSTAG)**

**Received and Noted:** the Occupational Health, Safety and Training Advisory Group Compliance Report.

**8 Report from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group**

**Received and Noted:** the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group Report.

**9 Report from the Safeguarding Advisory Group**

**Received and Noted:** the Safeguarding Advisory Group Report.

**10 Report from the Radiation Safety Advisory Group**

**Received and Noted:** the Radiation Safety Advisory Group Compliance Report.

**11 Report from the Rose Safety, Environment and Security Committee**

**Received and Noted:** the Rose Safety, Environment and Security Committee Compliance Report.

**12 Report from the Fire Safety Advisory Group**

**Received and Noted:** the Fire Safety Advisory Group Compliance Report.

**13 Report from the Genetic Modification and Biohazards Safety Advisory Group**

**Received:** the Genetic Modification and Biohazards Safety Advisory Group Compliance Report.

**Noted:** That concerns were raised about the increasing risk profile and the reducing number of specialist biological safety staff at the University. Serious thought would be given to arrangements going forward in this potential high risk area.

**14 Report from the Resilience Advisory Group**

**Received and Noted:** the Resilience Advisory Group Report.

**15 Any other business**

**Noted:**

- a) There was incongruence in pest control measures. The methods used to dispose of mice were inconsistent with the humane methods used in biological research in FBMH. The Estates team would work with colleagues in FBMH to resolve. **Action: Director of Estates Support**
- b) Concern was raised about contractors' access to laboratories and ensuring technical teams were made aware of contractors' presence in advance. The Estates team would work with colleagues in FBMH to resolve. **Action: Director of Estates Support**
- c) The Chair thanked Adam McMahon for his contributions and wished him well for his retirement.
- d) On behalf of the Committee, the Chair raised thanks to Patrick Seechurn, in his absence, on occasion of his forthcoming retirement, for his work to support health and safety and for his service to the University.

**16 Date of next meeting**

**Noted:** The next meeting would be held on 30 June 2025 at 10.30am-12.00pm, in-person.