

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee

16 December 2025

Present: Patrick Hackett (Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer) (Chair), Helen Brewis (Co-Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group), Kevin Gaskell-Clow (UNISON Safety Representative), Dr Nicola Hutchings (UCU Safety Representative), Dr Robert Jones (Chair of Radiation Safety Advisory Group), Anneessa Mahmood (Member nominated by the Students' Union Council), Dr Elizabeth Micakovic (Chair of Resilience Advisory Group), Professor Simon Turner (Chair of the Genetic Modification and Biohazards Safety Advisory Group), and Dr Sergey Utyuzhnikov (Chair of Fire Safety Advisory Group).

In attendance for all items: Martin Blake (Chief Property Officer's nominee), Sylvester Boon (Compliance and Risk Manager (Faculty of Science and Engineering)), Julia Cheung (Deputy Director of Safety Services), Peter Connolly (Interim Director of Campus Life), Dr Ian Haslam (Head of Radiation Safety Unit and Secretary to Radiation Safety Advisory Group), Maizy Jenner (Wellbeing Manager), Osen Kilic-Yildirim (Compliance, Safety and Estates Manager (Faculty of Humanities)), Dr Simon Merrywest (Executive Director for the Student Experience), Sonal Patel (Executive Director of People's nominee), Dr James Schofield (Secretary to the Rose Safety, Environment and Security Committee), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

Apologies: Dr David Barker (Chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Group), Ken Drury (Unite Safety Representative), Chris Goodwin (Unite Safety Representative), Sarah Littlejohn (Co-Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group), Sarah Sharples (Chair of ROSE Safety, Environment and Security Committee), and Professor Nalin Thakkar (Vice-President for Social Responsibility and Chair of the Occupational Health, Safety and Training Advisory Group).

1 Welcome and Introductions

Noted:

- a) The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- b) Sonal Patel was attending her first meeting as the Executive Director of People's nominee.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

Noted:

- a) A meeting of the Deputy Director of Safety Services, the Chair of Radiation Safety Advisory Group and the Trade Union Safety Representatives to discuss a process for informing the Trade Unions of HSE notifications, including radiation consents, had not yet been held (Minute 4 b)). **Action: Deputy Director of Safety Services**
- b) Minute 6 i) would be updated to 'There had been a ~~positive~~ increase in academic reporting of sickness absence.' The sickness absence reasons for the increase had been shared.

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2025, subject to minor amendment.

3 Matters Arising

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

Noted:

- a) A review of annual sickness data for academic year 2024-2025 for anxiety, depression and stress/stress-related sickness.
- b) There were a number of outstanding actions which would need to be resolved. A date for reporting or completing the action would be added to the action table. **Action: Governance Manager**
- c) Arising from minute 4 h); the importance of ensuring staff training was taking place was recognised, particularly for staff with musculoskeletal injuries, regardless of whether the absence was work-related or non-work related.
- d) The largest increases in sickness absence reporting for academics included 241 working days lost due to investigations. The Associate Director of Experience, Engagement and Culture had met with the People Policy Manager to discuss the streamlining of the sickness absence categories as part of the transition to Oracle. Benchmarking against best practices at other institutions was underway, with a view to reducing complexity and ensuring that the system was user-friendly

4 HSW Committee Forward Agenda 2025-26

Received: the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee Forward Agenda 2025-26.

5 HSW Performance Monitoring – Q1 Report (1 August – 31 October 2025)

Received and Endorsed: the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Monitoring - Q1 Report (1 August – 31 October 2025) to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Noted:

- a) The wellbeing data was presented in a clear format to allow comparison with the equivalent quarter of the previous year.
- b) The short-term and long-term data trends for stress-related absence had been shared with the relevant People Partners for the provision of follow-up support. The People Partners linked with the Heads of Schools to provide the data and ensure they were properly equipped to respond. An example would be shared with the Executive Director of Faculty Operations (Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health). **Action: Associate Director of Experience, Engagement and Culture**
- c) The Leadership Development Team were providing a learning offering for managers. The People Leader Induction would provide focus sessions for managers, including managing stress, absence, and wellbeing. Additional sessions would be added to Canvas in January. People Partners would recommend training courses to staff, who could alternatively book directly through Canvas. Recruitment of additional talent development specialists was in progress.
- d) The Associate Director of Experience, Engagement and Culture and the Executive Director of Faculty Operations (Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health) would discuss the high FTE staff data specifically for Professional Services staff in the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health. **Action: Associate Director of Experience, Engagement and Culture/Executive Director of Faculty Operations (Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health)**
- e) It was acknowledged that the manual and craft staff category had a higher level of sickness absence than other staff groupings.
- f) It was difficult to capture the number of staff who worked from home when unwell. University guidance advised staff not to work when unwell. The Interim Director of Campus Life was working with the Communications Team to emphasise this guidance.

- g) The University was continuing to work with local partners, including the NHS and Manchester City Council, on health matters, including the current upward trend in 'flu cases which had been classed as a medium level threat.
- h) There had been an increase in working days lost in quarter 1 in the Professional Services miscellaneous personal/sensitive reasons category, 41% of which were attributed to House Services (Estates and Facilities). This data had been shared with the relevant People Partner. Further work would be undertaken with the People Partner to improve this area of reporting. **Action: Head of Estates Health and Safety**
- i) Technical staff had experienced a significant increase of 478 days absence compared to quarter 4, 79% of which was an increase in in the mental health category. This would be raised with People Partner teams to explore with leaders locally. **Action: Interim Director of Campus Life**
- j) The improvement in the sickness absence reporting data presented at the Faculty Committee (FHums) was commended.
- k) It was confirmed that where the miscellaneous category was absent from the data graphs, these occurrences had been re-categorized.
- l) There had been no significant increases in safety incidents at the University during quarter 1.
- m) An update was provided on the five RIDDORs which had occurred during the reporting period. Three of the occurrences related to students, and two related to staff. All RIDDORs had been investigated and further actions taken.

6 Strategic Theme: Wellbeing

Noted: A PowerPoint presentation on the strategic theme of wellbeing, which focused on student and staff wellbeing, key focus areas during 2025, and a forward look to 2026. The discussion also included a deep dive into anxiety, depression and stress/stress-related sickness absence for 2024-25.

- a) Colleagues were thanked for their excellent work to support student and staff wellbeing at the University, and for the improvements made over recent years.
- b) The Executive Director of EDI was working on a proposal to develop new wellbeing spaces, including multi-faith and contemplation spaces.
- c) Stress risk assessment process mapping had not been shared with all staff. Opportunities to discuss clarity on roles and responsibilities with colleagues would be identified. **Action: Associate Director of Experience, Engagement and Culture**
- d) There was discussion around the average working days lost per FTE for manual/craft PS staff relating to anxiety, depression and stress. The working days lost data had been shared with academic leaders.

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

Received and Noted:

- a) The Occupational Health, Safety and Training Advisory Group Compliance Report.
- b) The Prevent Annual 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: the Radiation Safety Advisory Group Compliance Report.

Noted: An update was provided the industrial irradiation consent progress, following the temporary consent granted in summer 2025. The recent submission would provide safety consent moving forwards from early 2026. It was confirmed that safety assessments and control systems were now in place. Colleagues in the Radiation Safety Unit were thanked for their dedication in successfully coordinating this important work.

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

14 Report from the Resilience Advisory Group

Received and Noted: the Resilience Advisory Group Report.

15 Any other business

Noted: Highway Design and Traffic on Campus

- a) There was discussion about pedestrian flows on Oxford Road and the effect of increased traffic on current students and staff on campus.
- b) The potential risks of the use of e-scooters and e-bikes on campus were included in Safety Essentials on StaffNet. This process and campaign would be re-visited.
Action: Deputy Director of Safety Services/Head of Estates Health and Safety
- c) There would be further discussion about traffic flow at a future meeting of the committee. **Action: Deputy Director of Safety Services/Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering** Discussion would need to be arranged with colleagues at Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

16 Date of next meeting

Noted: The next meeting would be held on 24 March 2026 at 10.30am-12.00pm, via MS Teams.