



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

The Council, February 2020 Health and Safety Update

Date: 11 February 2020

Tom Fleming Director of Health & Safety

Key Issues of note

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the mechanisms in place to ensure the University of Sheffield is meeting health and safety requirements and to highlight the actions being taken where these standards fail to be met.

2. Stress Risk Management

HSC received a report from the Stress Risk Management Working Group. This collaborative 'Group is composed of representation from HR; TUs; and H&S.

The report covered the work carried out in the last year to embed stress risk management into existing processes across the University. Attention was given to the pilot scheme run between June 2019 and February 2020 and the support that was given to a number of departments in assessing risk levels; raising awareness of stress issues through focused 'Wellbeing and Resilience' training; and strategies to reduce risk levels where they are identified, at both personal and departmental level.

As a result of the pilot programme a number of departments are holding 'Wellbeing Meetings' and carrying out 'Pulse Surveys' to enable more regular assessment of staff wellbeing levels.

3. Disposal of Biological and Associated Waste

HSC received a detailed report from the Environmental Manager on the various biological waste streams generated through teaching and research. The report gave a high degree of assurance in how these various streams are segregated and

safely disposed of in line with all relevant legislation and of compliance with all internal safety and environmental policies.

4. **Significant Accidents and Incidents and Trends**

1. HSC were notified of two reports through to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR.

a. On 4 November 2019 a member of staff, who had completed manual handling training, took delivery of waste cardboard boxes and transferred them to a storage cage. This was a routine activity. The following day they were suffering from serious back pain which was later medically diagnosed as a slipped disc. This resulted in loss of more than 7 days from work.

Action: A review of the individual's manual handling capabilities to be carried out by OH.

b. On 20 November a member of staff who had been fully trained in manual handling moved a bag of confidential waste. The bag was described as 'overfull and heavy', yet the member of staff did not use the lifting aids available, nor split the load as per training. The member of staff suffered 'back pain and sciatica' resulting in more than 7 days lost from work.

Action: The individual's training has been reviewed and formal notice on potential consequences of failing to following training has been issued.

2. **Fire in NanoScience Building**

As noted in the last report to Council there was a fire on 28 October 2019 in a 'Clean Room' in Nanoscience. A technician had been tasked with safely disposing of carbon material containing residual hazardous material capable of spontaneous combustion in air.

The material was not disposed of in line with laboratory procedures and this led directly to a later ignition of the waste material in a bin inside a fume cupboard. Fire Services attended and put out the fire. Although the fire was mostly contained in the fume cupboard the smoke and soot generated caused significant damage to sensitive and expensive equipment used in the Clean Room.

Action taken: After a detailed investigation by Health & Safety staff and by the appointed insurance Loss Adjusters it was agreed that the laboratory risk assessment process required full review to clarify each critical step in the use and disposal methods of the materials used.

Safety in Sport – Health Check for High Risk Clubs

This item was covered briefly in the November 2019 Health & Safety report to Council and a request was received for a more detailed report on the matter. This report is attached as **Appendix 1**

Appendix 1 Safety in Sport – Health Check for High Risk Clubs

THE COUNCIL, 24 February 2020

REPORT OF HIGH RISK SPORTS CLUBS UPDATE

Date of Report 7 January 2020

Tom Fleming Director of Health and Safety
Dionne Edwards Health & Safety Manager

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD SPORT CLUBS

INTRODUCTION

Following a Sport Sheffield incident in March 2018, where five student members of the Sheffield University Caving Club had to be rescued from a well-known caving location, the Health & Safety Department carried out an investigation. The investigation brought to light issues that were not just relevant to the incident but to the management of all University Sports Clubs, particularly those that involved high-risk activities.

At the time of the investigation, it was identified that there were fifty-eight clubs, eighteen of which were considered high risk¹ (see appendix A), with just over four thousand student members across the fifty-eight clubs. The clubs are student led, with elected student Committees, however, they are ultimately overseen and managed by Sport Sheffield; the University's sports department, with the assistance at the time of the incident from an external consultant, the 'High Risk Clubs Safety Advisor'.

At the request of Rob Sykes, Director of Academic Services and following the health and safety investigation², the Health & Safety Department and Sport Sheffield have been committed to reviewing and where necessary improving the health and safety management of the sports clubs operated by the students. To assist Sport Sheffield a comprehensive health and safety audit³ was undertaken by the Health & Safety Department.

FINDINGS

The investigation and internal audit concluded that there was an insufficient management system in place and that the management of 'high risk' sports clubs required an overall review. This review would involve structures, roles and responsibilities to be documented; suitable

¹ A further review has since taken place and there are now only five clubs still identified as high risk

² A copy of the investigation report can be obtained by contacting the Health & Safety Department – safety@sheffield.ac.uk

³ A copy of the health and safety audit can be obtained by contacting the Health & Safety Department – safety@sheffield.ac.uk

and sufficient risk assessments and monitoring to be carried out; recognised competencies for participants to be agreed and implemented and for emergency procedures, trip forms and guidance to be reviewed. There was also a lack of knowledge and assurance on inspections/servicing/replacement and storage of 'high-risk' club equipment. It was requested that the competencies and responsibilities of the High Risk Clubs Safety Advisor were reviewed and it was recommended during the health and safety audit that Sport Sheffield should engage an external professional service to provide specialist advice for the high-risk clubs.

INITIAL ACTIONS TAKEN

The University's Sport Clubs form an integral part of the "student offer" from the University so it is essential that the management support the University provides to the clubs, is appropriate to the risks involved. Any such support and involvement must acknowledge that the clubs are student run and as such the arrangements should remain proportionate with a focus on providing reassurance to the University that undue risks are not being taken.

Sport Sheffield have worked extremely hard to put systems in place and have taken a systematic approach to identify club activities and to manage them on a risk basis along with identifying equipment and premises used. There has also been a draft Health & Safety Policy for club sport documented. Sport Sheffield no longer employs the services of the High Risk Clubs Safety Advisor, but has since procured the Services of North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) specialists who have been able to provide an objective health check⁴ for selected high-risk clubs. The Health & Safety Department have recommended that Sport Sheffield continue to procure the services of NYCC to assist them with providing specialist advice and monitoring of the high risk clubs on an ongoing basis.

LIABILITY

The status of participants concerning University's health and safety liability whether criminal or personal injury is complex and as such, specific cases are likely to be judged depending on the individual circumstances following an incident. Consequently, it is essential that the auspices under which each club operates are clear, as should be the support and facilitation provided by the University. Whilst the University facilitates these clubs they are formally constituted clubs with adult volunteer members. The clubs are supported by both students and alumni, who organise and run events for the benefit of their members.

As far as criminal liability is concerned the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASWA) applies in particular section 3, (*"places general duties on employers and the self-employed to conduct their undertakings in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons other than themselves or their employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety"* - HSE). Other subsidiary legislation such as the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also applies. The main consideration for the University is not necessarily criminal but the common law duty of care, which is much wider in scope as it considers the foreseeability of risk. The fact that the sport clubs are run under the auspices of Sport Sheffield the University would lead the Courts to regard the University as the responsible body for ensuring appropriate safety management systems were in place.

The focus of the University should, therefore, be to ensure they facilitate the clubs operations by providing oversight and reassurance through monitoring, training where appropriate and guidance, whilst recognising these are independent clubs run and operated by consenting adults. Where the University is not satisfied that clubs are being run and operated in a safe manner, they must be clearly removed from the University's auspices.

⁴ A copy of North Yorkshire County Council's health check report can be obtained by contacting the Health & Safety Department – safety@sheffield.ac.uk

There has historically been a significant level of confusion on the management of sports clubs and the management for them. This historical situation will not continue moving forward. Reliance on legal grey areas is not a satisfactory position and there must be at all times clarity on the status of and the association with any individual 'high-risk' club.

ADDITIONAL ACTION ALREADY TAKEN

1. As of Summer 2019, all officers of high-risk sport clubs have been required to complete risk assessment training;
2. Comprehensive risk assessments are required to be completed for each high-risk activity;
3. The Health & Safety Department will meet regularly with Sport Sheffield managers to ensure the above actions are being carried out;
4. The Health & Safety Department will carry out spot checks on the quality of risk assessments being produced for high-risk activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sport Sheffield must ensure that the recommendations made within the investigation report and the health and safety audit, which were carried out by the Health & Safety Department as well as the health check carried out by NYCC are fully implemented. Competent and objective advice must be sought by Sport Sheffield to support them in providing specialist advice and monitoring for the high-risk clubs.

STUDENT UNION SOCIETIES

The liability for Students' Union (SU) societies eg. Allotment Society and Chess Society sits clearly with SU, along with a number of sporting activities eg. medics women's football and ice skating society. Any incident arising out of a society may attract reputational damage to the University. To this end, the Health & Safety Department offered to carry out an external audit for SU management systems, but this was declined, therefore, no comment can be made on the management systems in place for the Union run societies. This was noted at the UEB Health and Safety Committee on 23 October 2019; the Chair agreed to write to the Chief Executive of the SU that its Health and Safety Committee reconsider accepting the external audit.

SPORT CLUBS

The following 58 Sports Club currently operate under Sport Sheffield: (High Risk clubs highlighted)
Sport Sheffield must approve any Club additions or dissolutions.

Sheffield Aikido Club	Korfball Club
American Football - Sheffield Sabres	Lacrosse Club
Archery Club	Lifesaving Club
Athletics Club	*Mountaineering Club
Badminton Club	Muay Thai Club
Baseball Club	Netball Club
Men's Basketball Club	Orienteering Club
Women's Basketball Club	Parkour Club
Boxing Club	Pool & Snooker Club
*Canoe Club	Rowing Club
*Caving Club	Men's Rugby League Club
Cheer Stunt (cheerleading)	Men's Rugby Union Club
Cheer Pom (cheerleading)	Women's Rugby Union Club
Men's Cricket	Sailing & Windsurfing Club
Women's Cricket	Ski Club
Cycling Club	Snowboard Club
Dodgeball Club	Strength Sports Club
Equestrian Club	Squash Club
Fencing Club	*Sub Aqua Club
Futsal Club	Swimming and Waterpolo Club
Men's Football Club	Table Tennis Club
Women's Football Club	Taekwondo Club
Golf Club	Tennis Club
Gymnastics Club*	Trampolining Club
Men's Hockey Club	Triathlon Club
Women's Hockey Club	Ultimate Frisbee Club
Ice Hockey Club - Sheffield Bears	Volleyball Club
Jiu Jitsu Club	Wakeboard Club
Judo Club	*Walking Club

* Following a further review, only these activities are identified as high-risk