



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Health
&
Safety

The Council, 27 April 2020 Health and Safety Update

Date: 17 April 2020

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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.

There has been no meeting of the UEB Health and Safety Committee since the last Health & Safety report to Council.

2. Coronavirus (Covid-19) Management

The most significant risk to staff in the last 2 months and the primary focus of the Health & Safety Department since the previous report in February 2020 has been the University response to the threat from Covid-19.

The University response to Covid-19 has been timely and proportionate and this report focuses primarily on the health and safety aspects of that more general coordinated response.

Key actions to ensure the safety of our staff, students and visitors have been:

- **Purchase and use of Hand Sanitiser/Gel**

In mid-February the Health and Safety Department purchased 2000 x 500ml pump dispensers of hand sanitising gel. This gel was not purchased for general use, where regular hand washing was promoted as per Public Health England (PHE) guidance. The gel was purchased for use in specific locations where there was a heavy footfall and little opportunity for washing hands regularly e.g. Reception Desks; Information Counters; Library

Receptions; and Catering outlets. These key locations were identified on a risk basis and hand sanitising gel was allocated accordingly.

- **Participation in the Covid-19 Management Group**

The University convened a Covid-19 Management Group under the business continuity procedures. This group was co-chaired by Rob Sykes and Keith Lilley and has done an excellent job in integrating health and safety measures into the plethora of other management responses being implemented to mitigate the effect of Covid-19 on staff/student safety and business interruption.

The Covid-19 Management Group continues to convene several times per week through the medium of 'Hangout' meetings.

- **Supporting Heads of Department in risk assessing shutdown procedures**

Prior to the government announcement of a formal lockdown situation the University had already started an organised shutdown of the majority of teaching/research and support areas. It was essential for health and safety purposes that Heads of Department had identified all areas where equipment or processes could not be stopped without serious risk of damage to equipment or the premises.

The role of the Health & Safety Department was to support departments in assessing their multiple risks and ensuring these were being suitably addressed to prevent damage or injury, particularly in areas of reduced staffing levels.

- **Production of a 'Critical Workers List' following the announcement of 'lockdown'**

As stated above a number of University activities and processes could not be shut-down completely without the risk of damage to critical equipment or to injury/death of animal stocks. In addition there were some processes (e.g. research work on Covid-19 and production of PPE equipment for NHS staff) which was also deemed critical.

An initial 'critical staff list' of 774 individuals was reduced to 460 after review by the Health & Safety Department and discussions with Heads of Department.

The Health & Safety Department has taken on responsibility for maintaining the Critical Staff List to ensure it remains accurate and up to date as staff leave the list through illness and others join to replace them. Production and maintenance of this list is a formal Government requirement.

- **Guidance for staff working from home**

The University retains a duty of care for staff who are required to work from home and the Health & Safety Department produced guidance for staff to follow in a lockdown situation to reduce risks, particularly from use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use at home.

As the lockdown situation is extended this guidance has been reviewed to

include medium/longer term measures which can be taken to mitigate injury from home DSE work.

3. **Significant Accidents and Incidents and Trends**

There have been no significant accidents or HSE RIDDOR reports in this reporting period

