



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Health
&
Safety

The Council, July 2020 Health and Safety Update

Date: 24 June 2020

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Key Issues of note

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.

The last meeting of the UEB Health and Safety Committee was held on 28 May 2020 and below follows an update for Council.

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 April 2020 has been the University response to the threat from Covid-19.

The University response to Covid-19 has continued to be timely and proportionate. This report focuses primarily on the health and safety aspects of that more general coordinated response, which includes preparations for research personnel to return to campus.

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

- **Development and Implementation of Guidance and Subsequent Risk Assessment**

The Health & Safety Department have developed detailed guidance and a risk assessment process to support the return to campus of University personnel working in the research area. This will entail research facilities being re-opened on a staggered basis, in order of priority. The prioritisation

will be determined by the Vice-President and Head of Faculty/Executive Director using a prioritisation framework agreed by the University Executive Board.

In order for a facility to be re-opened, confirmation is required from EFM that the building is safe to re-open, and from campus services that the necessary security, facilities and cleaning support can be put in place.

Once agreement for a building to re-open has been provided by the Vice-President and Head of Faculty, and EFM, then the risk assessment and checklist will require formal sign off by the Vice-President and Head of Faculty/Executive Director before staff are permitted to return.

The Director, Head of Department or Manager will prepare a risk assessment and checklist for the Vice-President and Head of Faculty/Executive Director to sign off as soon as they have confirmed the facilities are able to re-open. These documents will be kept under frequent review to ensure that they incorporate any changes current in information around COVID-19 that may impact a Department/Service. Personnel will only be allowed to return to campus with the express authorisation of their Head of Department.

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

Although the University supplied thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment to the NHS it retained its stock of hand sanitizer gel, which will be used in specific locations where it is anticipated there will be a heavy footfall and little opportunity for washing hands regularly.

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

Although the Covid-19 Management Group which did an excellent job has been closed out, Health & Safety still continue to give expert professional advice to a number of other groups which have been established to support the University's return to campus.

- **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.

It is now apparent that a large number of staff will continue to work from home for some time. To support this Health & Safety are developing additional online training and guidance to support work from home moving from a temporary to a more permanent state. This new training and guidance will be available online in the very near future.

- **Significant Accidents and Incidents and Trends**

Since March 2020 the University has been virtually closed to all other than critical staff required to maintain the estate. During this period there have been no significant accidents or HSE RIDDOR reports in this reporting period.

- **Briefing Item on the Recent Awareness Raising Campaign**
The Health & Safety Committee received an update on the hazard spotting campaign. Since its launch, the campaign had received a total of 33 responses. The closure of the University in March 2020 meant that it was too early to review the success of the campaign. HSC would receive a further update at its next meeting.
- **Health and Safety Annual Report 2019/20**
The Health and Safety Annual Report 2019/20 will cover the period 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020. This report will be submitted to the October 2020 meeting of the UEB Health and Safety Committee and subsequently on to Council.

