



College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (Edinburgh bioQuarter Campus)

Annual Report on Health & Safety (2023)

Summary: This is the eighteenth annual report concerning health and safety (H&S) activities pertaining to The University of Edinburgh's College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CM&VM) operations on the Edinburgh bioQuarter (EbQ) campus.

The H&S Manager remains grateful to all who, throughout the year, have contributed so substantially to the quality of and compliance with health, safety and welfare arrangements.

Campus Development Activities: The new Institute of Regeneration and Repair (IRR-S) building is being gradually occupied, and research activities have commenced. The new Usher Institute building on the EbQ campus is nearing practical completion, and occupation is anticipated during 2024. Health and safety and operations meetings have been a regular feature of progress throughout the construction phases of these buildings and also in respect of reconfiguration works within the Queen's Medical Research Institute. Works are anticipated also in respect of an extension of the Anne Rowling Regenerative neurology Clinic.

Plans and Policies: Numbers of amendments (some substantial) have been made during the year to Sections of (and Appendices to) the Safety Manual for UofE buildings on the EbQ campus; notification of these was made to colleagues through the medium of Safety Bulletins sent electronically to everyone on the campus who is registered on one of our various email distribution lists. The Manual is scheduled for its next triennial "root and branch" review during 2025, although periodic updates to specific Sections of the Manual can still be expected on an occasional basis as circumstances dictate.

Safety Audits: The momentum of campus-internal safety audits was maintained during the year (at whole-building and individual Centre

levels, or focusing on specific laboratories and areas, including a derogated CL3 laboratory in Chancellor's Building and a laboratory suite within QMRI currently being prepared for use as a CL3 facility. These took the form of visits and safety tours, and scrutiny of samples of paperwork such as risk assessments, training records and self-inspection reports. Although the standard remains generally very high, for which managers and all teams are to be commended, recommendations were made regarding means to achieve some further improvements to arrangements.

Fire drills were carried out for all UofE (and UofE-occupied) buildings on the EbQ campus during 2023, with arrangements to complete the programme having been agreed with the University's Fire Safety Unit; where conducted, these all were assessed as satisfactory. A number of operational intelligence visits to the campus were undertaken by the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service during the year.

Certain specific aspects of CM&VM operations on the EbQ campus were audited during 2023 by the HSE, SEPA, Police Scotland, and Turner and Townsend, all of which ultimately resulted in satisfactory outcomes.

Training: Once again, something well in excess of one hundred hours of general induction and subject-specific training sessions were delivered by the H&S Manager during 2023 (mainly through the medium of on-line meeting platforms, though some in-person training has resumed).

By continuing to deliver some specific training courses directly from within our own resources, which were previously procured from external providers (*e.g.* compressed and laboratory gas safety, and liquid nitrogen safety), it is estimated that the CM&VM, and some areas of the larger UofE campus, the College has been able to avoid spending many thousands of pounds per year, and also to disseminate training to a greater number of people across the wider UofE campus

Numerous self-paced, self-taught training presentations, prepared by the H&S Manager, and published on H&S pages of the CM&VM's web site, were updated during the year.

Training was delivered also to colleagues in partner organisations based on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus, elsewhere within the University upon invitation, and occasionally more widely afield.

During the year, the H&S Manager was, once again, an invited trainer at a number sessions arranged by the Royal Society of Biology.

Committees: The H&S Manager participated in numerous Committee meeting throughout the year (mostly *via* on-line meeting platforms), including the EbQ Campus H&S Committee, Centre/Building and individual Centre/Floor-level H&S Committees, GM and Biological Safety Committees, the EbQ Campus Management Team, and the University's Biological Safety Committee.

H&S Plan: All other targets set out in H&S Plan were successfully delivered to the satisfaction of the Edinburgh bioQuarter Buildings H&S Committee.

Business Continuity Planning: Pending expected changes to the corporate approach to business continuity planning, no further exercises were held during 2023, although some related training was provided during 2023.

Accidents and Incidents: Of the 41 occurrences of accidents and incidents reported during 2023 (to be compared with 18 occurrences during 2022, 21 occurrences during 2021, 22 during 2020, 28 during 2019, 43 during 2018, 32 during 2017, 37 during 2016, and 44 during 2015), none dictated formal notification to the HSE in the context of the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

The increased rate of occurrences during 2023 must be taken in the context of there being something in excess of 1,500 whole-time staff and post-graduate students and several hundred undergraduates based on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus, some engaged in the handling of substances of high consequence and involved in hazardous procedures.

Injuries caused by medical sharps, glassware and tools (14 during 2022) remain the most frequently occurring source of injury year-after-year within UofE premises on the bioQuarter campus, albeit in low total numbers, and continued attention is directed to the sharps injury avoidance training package contained within the CM&V web site. A more detailed analysis of all incidents reported during the year is published on the College's web site.

Waste Management: During 2023, in addition to routine uplifts of waste electrical and electronic items and domestic waste throughout the year,

there were two substantial uplifts of chemical waste (with a further uplift being planned for early 2024), and monthly reports were submitted throughout the year to the University's Radiation Protection Unit detailing acquisition, holdings and disposal of unsealed sources of radioactivity.

Sustainability: The H&S Manager continues to actively promote a sustainability agenda for CM&VM operations on the EbQ campus, including through publication of sustainability tips using the medium of periodic Safety Bulletins.

Professional Development: The H&S Manager has continued throughout the year to complete all necessary continuous professional development programmes and self-directed learning activities (directed variously by the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Institute for Safety in Technology and Research, the Society for Radiological Protection, the Health Research Authority, and the Royal Society of Biology) to the satisfaction of all relevant authorities.

Support for Other Areas: The H&S Manager has been providing some degree of professional support for the College's central area, but that commitment is anticipated to reduce subsequent to appointment in late 2023 of a replacement for a post that became vacant during 2019/20. Nevertheless, in anticipation of the relocation of substantial numbers of colleagues from the central area to the EbQ campus over the next few years, a close relationship between H&S practitioners on both campuses will be maintained.

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31st December 2023