

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University Health & Safety Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee
held on 13 June 2013

Present: Mrs J Horsburgh (Chair), Ms N Cabral, Professor C Hughes, Ms R Loft, Mrs L McCarthy, Mrs R Roke, Mr N Sanders, Professor M Shipman, Mr M Stacey (vice Mr R Wilson)

In Attendance: Chris Mayfield, Fire Safety Advisor (for item 17/12-13), Mr Mark Potter, General Commercial Manager, Warwick Retail (for item 18/12-13), Mrs C Farren, Dr I MacKirdy

10/12-13 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2013 be approved as accurate.

11/12-13 Matters Arising from the Minutes

(a) Terms of Reference and Membership (minute 05/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That the Council on 15 May 2013 approved the amendment to the membership of the Committee as set out in paper UHSEC 01/12-13 (Revised 3).

(b) Effectiveness Review (minute 06/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That the Registrar was deliberating on the recommendations made by the Committee to the Effectiveness Review of Council.

(c) University Health and Safety Committee (minute 07(e)/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- i. That the member of staff who had been injured when the rear door of the compactor failed had returned to work.

(by Mr M Stacey)

- ii. That the compactor and another similar model had been withdrawn from operation while awaiting a report from a forensic engineer arranged by the University's Insurers.

12/12-13 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

REPORTED:

That no conflicts of interest were raised.

13/12-13 Annual Health and Safety Report and Way Forward

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2012 and the way forward for academic year 2012/13 (paper UHSC 07/12-13 Revised).

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

- (a) That the Annual Health and Safety Report and Forward Strategy had been considered by Steering Committee and by the University Health and Safety Committee, UHSC.
 - (b) That Steering Committee had noted and welcomed the sustained reduction in RIDDOR incidents.
- (by Mr N Sanders)
- (c) That a qualitative and quantitative analysis of accident/incidents into the future along with benchmarking against similar institutions would be helpful.
 - (d) That the information that the Audit and Assurance Committee may demand into the future (if approved) could impact on the deliverables outlined within the Forward Strategy.
 - (e) That inconsistency in relation to health and safety management across Departments highlighted from the auditing process could pose a significant management challenge to resolve.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (f) That the University was now reporting similar numbers of accidents as other campus universities with their own service staff, noting campus universities traditionally report more slips and trips.
- (g) That there were no incident 'hot spots', though noting staff were taking longer absence from work (more than 7 days) with fewer 4 to 7 day absences.
- (h) That Health and Safety advisors were taking a structured approach to reporting on the findings of inspections, requiring management responses to inspections similar to the way in which Internal Audit operate.

(by Professor C Hughes)

- (i) That systems and advice need to be available to Departments, particularly where they may not see health and safety as a priority.

(by Professor M Shipman)

- (j) That there were examples of arrangements, methodology and professional development of researchers and technical staff in laboratory-based departments by which Heads of Departments could be assured of compliance.

RECOMMENDED (to the Council):

That the Council approve the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2012 and the Forward Strategy for 2013 to 2015 as set out in UHSC 07/12-13, Revised.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee noted the year on year improvements in performance while recognising the importance of driving further improvements across the range of health and safety performance indicators particularly in departments with activities for which there are specific statutory compliance requirements.
- (b) That the Committee approved the shift in emphasis by the Health and Safety Department to a more structured approach to assurance involving a wider programme of formal reporting to managers regarding the findings of a range of measures including inspections and audits.

14/12-13 University Health and Safety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report from Caroline Farren, Senior Health and Safety Advisor on the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee held on 16 May 2013 (paper UHSEC 05/12-13).

REPORTED: (by Professor C Hughes)

- (a) That the UHSC had reflected on examples of good practice observed during a tour of the IIPSI Building and on the benefits perceived by staff nominated for the Campus and Commercial Services Group's Awards for Food Safety and Health and Safety.

(by Mr M Stacey)

- (b) That there was a recognised new and improved culture emerging within CCSG and the recent Estates Department re-structure would support this, with the introduction of a new compliance team.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (c) That there was a need for the UHSC to consider health issues, including awareness of complex issues such as stress.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee endorsed the proposal for UHSC at its next meeting to consider the Pulse 2013 staff survey results.
- (b) That the Committee endorsed the proposal for UHSC to establish a working group to consider how members could implement a Health and Safety Recognition scheme across the University.

15/12-13 University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report from Neil Hawthorne, Health and Safety (Biological Safety) on the meeting of the University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee held on 23 May 2013 (paper UHSEC 06/12-13).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (a) That the pool of readers for project assessments would be increased to support the volume of risk assessments being considered by the GMBSC whilst ensuring continued standards in quality of the peer review.
- (b) That the effectiveness of the GMBSC would be considered in detail at the meeting of GMBSC in July based on feedback provided by members and noting there was scope for improvement in attendance by members at meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee approved the inclusion of activities licensed by the Human Tissues Authority within the remit of the GMBSC and the revised terms of reference and membership for the GMBSC as set out in UHSEC 06/12-13, Appendix, attached.

16/12-13 Evacuation Strategy Options

CONSIDERED:

A paper from Mr C Mayfield, Fire Safety Advisor, which reviewed options and recommendations to the University's approach to fire evacuation (paper UHSEC 07/12-13).

REPORTED: (by Mr C Mayfield)

- (a) That the prime benefit of the proposed 'Tag sweep' system was that it overcame the difficulties in ensuring that there were sufficient trained fire wardens allocated and present at the time of an evacuation.

- (b) That all staff would require approximately 20 minutes training to support this initiative.
- (c) That it was proposed that Emergency Information Cards be developed for each building and these would be held by Security Services for emergency responders, replacing information currently held in 'red boxes' around campus.
- (d) That the tag-system was of less benefit in situations where doors could not be opened to check the area was clear, as in the case of student bedrooms.

(by Professor M Shipman)

- (e) That the 'Tag sweep' system seemed very sensible and would be welcomed by the Department of Chemistry.

(by the Chair)

- (f) That a Residential Life Warden considered that the 'Tag sweep' system could improve the speed and reliability of information gathering during evacuation of residential accommodation.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (g) That Wellesbourne had been working successfully with a 'Tag system' and a local emergency response team for many years.
- (h) That discussions were in progress with Estates to consider whether phased evacuation could be introduced within larger buildings, including larger residential blocks.

(by Mr M Stacey)

- (i) That Departmental input to the Emergency Information Card was essential to ensure the validity of the information prior to their issue to Security staff.

(by Mrs C Farren)

- (j) That the Hazard Management System currently under development would be able to hold building and room level emergency response information for direct access by relevant staff.

(by Mrs R Roke)

- (k) That the Operational Risk Management Group, ORMG, recognised that a 'Tag sweep' system could add valuable support to the Security staff during evacuations of premises.
- (l) That the ORMG endorsed these proposals for the provision of relevant, up to date, building and room level information for emergency responders including the Fire Service, noting information would need to be stored securely and a process for keeping it up-to-date agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee endorsed the wider introduction of a 'Tag sweep' system for academic (non-residential) premises with all staff receiving basic training, starting with Gibbet Hill.
- (b) That instructions to transient personnel on campus such as contractors be reviewed in light of changes to evacuation arrangements.
- (c) That options for improving the evacuation of the range of different types of residential accommodation including access to rooms to ensure they were vacated be reviewed by the Fire Safety Advisor for consideration by the Operational Risk Management Group.
- (d) That the Committee endorsed the use of Emergency Information Cards for each building for emergency responders.

17/12-13

Health and Safety Audits

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the health and safety audit of the Commercial Group carried out in July 2012 (paper UHSEC 08/12-13) and the forward plan for auditing for 2013/14.

REPORTED: (by Mr M Potter)

- (a) That the Commercial Group used the report to help improve their way of working which involved staff engagement at all levels.
- (b) That teams used the report to establish targeted objectives in relation to food safety and health and safety which had helped to drive change.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (c) That there should be mechanisms in place to report on and tackle Departments which do not indicate the necessary level of health and safety management.
- (d) That significant progress had been made but there was a need to consider how the Committee should receive audit reports and assurance that matters were being closed out, particularly on compliance related issues.
- (e) That a move to a more recognised process that Departments were familiar with may support this new approach, with defined stages and timeframes for sign off and issue of the report including statements of management action, followed by review of completion of management action.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee approved the forward plan of audits.

- (b) That the Director of Health and Safety review the audit process, aligning with good practice methodologies established by Internal Audit and accepted by Departments.

18/12-13 Dates of future meetings

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary arrange and notify members of dates of meetings for 2013/14.