

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University Health & Safety Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee
held on 5 November 2013

Present: Ms J Horsburgh (Chair), Miss Z Buckland, Professor L Green,
Professor C Hughes, Mrs L McCarthy, Ms G McGrattan, Mrs R Roke,
Mr N Sanders, Mr R Wilson

In Attendance: Mrs C Farren, Dr I MacKirdy, Mr C Mayfield, Fire Safety Advisor (for
item 10/13-14)

01/13-14 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee.

02/13-14 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2013 be approved as accurate.

03/13-14 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

(a) That, should any members or attendees of the Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared.

(by the Chair)

(b) That members of the Committee were encouraged, wherever possible, to inform the Secretary prior to the meeting of any potential conflicts of interest, and were also invited to do so now if appropriate.

NOTE: No declarations were made.

04/13-14 Effectiveness Review of Council (minute 11(b)/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That the Effectiveness Review of Council was ongoing.

05/13-14 Terms of Reference and Membership 2013/14

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the Committee's Terms of Reference and membership for the academic year 2013/14 (UHSEC.01/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That the Terms of Reference had not changed.

RECOMMENDED (to the Council):

That the membership of the Committee be amended as set out in UHSEC.01/13-14 (Revised) so that the Council has the flexibility to appoint to the Committee a Deputy Head of a Science Department.

06/13-14 Annual Health and Safety Report and Way Forward (minute 13/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That the Council had approved the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2012 and Forward Strategy for 2013 to 2015.

07/13-14 Audit of the University's Health, Safety and Well-being webpages

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the findings of an audit of the University's Health, Safety and Well-being webpages by a third party (external) auditor (UHSEC.02/13-14)

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (a) That an important element of a health and safety management system was the institutional framework of standards which must be applied by staff and others.
- (b) That the external audit had been carried out by a health and safety professional experienced in providing consultancy and auditing of health and safety management systems who had conducted and reported on other health and safety audits received by the Committee since 2008.
- (c) That the auditor had examined the University's institutional framework of health and safety standards from the perspectives as to the extent to which they were fit for purpose, reflected statutory requirements and were easy to access by managers and staff, noting the audit had not assessed the views of staff nor the use of the standards by departments.

(by Mrs C Farren)

- (d) That the auditor was of the opinion that the webpages generally provided a good framework for providing managers and staff with necessary, relevant information.
- (e) That the auditor had recommended additional specification on seven priority topics and rationalisation of the documentation hierarchy and structure to clarify whether material was instruction or guidance.
- (f) That useful guidance currently on some departmental health and safety intranet pages would also be incorporated into the University webpages.
- (g) That consideration would be given to further signposting of information and to training and briefings for staff based on the content of the webpages.

(by Ms G McGrattan)

- (h) That the Learning and Development Centre had explored the use of 'Moodle' and this could contribute to the creative development of compliance based training.

RESOLVED:

- (a) The Committee endorsed the audit of the University's formal health and safety webpages by an external auditor, noting that the audit had highlighted that the webpages generally provided a good framework for providing managers and staff with necessary, relevant information.
- (b) That the Director of Health and Safety consult with other senior staff regarding terminology and specification of framework and infrastructure issues relating to policies, procedures, instructions and guidance.

08/13-14 Demonstrating Compliance

CONSIDERED:

A paper by the Director of Health and Safety on the essential elements for demonstration of compliance with legislation, an update on the Health and Safety Department's general approach and plan for 2013/14 based on the Forward Strategy submitted in June 2013, and proposals for the Committee's programme for 2013/14 (UHSEC.06/13/14).

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

- (a) That the Committee recognised the need to comply with the range of statutory topics listed on the University website as discussed in minute 07/13-14, noting that the webpages contain guidance and tools to support departments to manage health and safety risks.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (b) That the Requirements for Practical Research Departments on the University website set out the range of methods for demonstrating compliance and mitigation of health and safety risk, and these could be adapted for other Departments with significant hazards.
- (c) That the launch early in 2014 of the Hazard Management System based on the Hazard Categories Grid set out in Appendix 1 to UHSEC.06/13/14 would provide staff in Departments with laboratories and workshops with a tool to record their hazards, risk assessments and local rules.
- (d) That there was a need to consolidate on progress by Departments in recent years and this would best be achieved by engaging Departments in the process of reviewing and auditing their hazardous activities, with emphasis on clarification of local organisation, processes and forward planning.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (e) That the Director of Health and Safety should refine the methodology for summarising health and safety risks and their mitigation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee approved the Committee's programme for 2013/14 as set out in UHSEC.06/13-14, including at the next meeting of the Committee:
 - i. Discussion of health topics based on a presentation by the Senior Occupational Health Advisor.
 - ii. Proposals for revision to Ordinance 18 and Safety Regulations 26.
- (b) That the Committee approved proposals from the Director of Health and Safety for the programme of audits for 2013/14 to include a utilising mechanism for peer review and utilising an external professional with the aim of engaging staff and students and consolidating progress to date.
- (c) That the Committee schedule the annual reporting of health and safety performance to the June 2014 meeting of the Committee since it provided a natural end point in the University's calendar of business and time for reporting on findings and conclusions arising from the audit programme.

09/13-14 University Health and Safety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee held on 14 October 2013 (UHSEC.03/13-14) including appendices on the results of the 2013 PULSE Staff Survey and the PULSE Stressor Questions.

REPORTED: (by Professor C Hughes)

- (a) That the UHSC's programme for 2013/14 included stress and wellbeing, health, the sharing of good practice, and a recognition and promotion scheme for health and safety.
- (b) That the October meeting had focussed on the 2013 PULSE Staff Survey.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (c) That the Stressor Questions in the Pulse Staff Survey were based on the six management standards specified by the Health and Safety Executive.
- (d) That the company that had conducted the survey had been approached for benchmarking purposes.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (e) That the Terms of Reference of the University's Health and Safety Committees did not include 'wellbeing' and, while mechanisms were in place for provision of support for the wellbeing of students, consideration should be given to clarification by the Council of delegation of authority for support to the 'wellbeing' of staff.
- (f) That variations between Departments could provide opportunity to identify and share good practice.

(by Ms G McGrattan)

- (g) That many of the questions in the 2013 PULSE Staff Survey were the same as those used in the Civil Service where at least 8 to 10% of staff would express disaffection with their work and engagement scores were generally significantly lower than at the University.
- (h) That there were a range of indicators on which the University and Departments scored positively.

(by the Chair)

- (i) That the benefit of departmental engagement in action planning could be seen to have positive impact on the PULSE survey results.

(by Professor C Hughes)

- (j) That work with Departments prior to substantive organisational change should lessen staff anxiety about periods of change and transition.

10/13-14 Review of Fire Safety

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Fire Safety Advisor on progress and planning on fire safety activities including an overview of contingency planning for periods of industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union, the newly developed University register of significant fire risks, and a summary of fires on campus for the period January to June 2013 (UHSEC.04/13-14)

REPORTED: (by Mr C Mayfield, Fire Safety Advisor)

- (a) That further strike action was planned by the Fire Brigade Union.
- (b) That consultation with Residential Life and student groups was planned to tackle the number of false activations in residences.
- (c) That to date the majority of items identified by the fire risk assessment process were attributable to wear and tear rather than defects arising from the design or build of premises.

(by Mrs R Roke)

- (d) That the Operational Risk Management Group would be considering implementing arrangements for moving staff and students to an appropriate area during fire evacuations.

(by the Chair)

- (e) That progress on fire safety initiatives including the coordinated in-depth risk assessment and implementation of control measures in response to industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union was commendable.

RESOLVED:

That the Students Union be involved in supporting the reduction in fire alarm activations in residences.

11/13-14 University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee

RECEIVED:

A report of the meeting of the University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee held on 11 July 2013 (UHSEC.05/13-14).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (a) That the GMBSC had agreed changes to the Hazard Grid and to the biological risk assessment form and guidance in order to raise awareness of researchers to the requirements of the Human Tissue Act and direct them to the Designated Individual.
- (b) That the GMBSC had approved actions to address issues raised by members with the objective of improving its effectiveness.

- (c) That a recent Biosafety Briefing for Researchers had resulted in a positive increase in the number of submissions of risk assessments for new biological research.
- (d) That the Enforcing Authorities had commended the University for its management of the transport of restricted substances from another university and across national borders. This had been necessary to maintain the research capability of a highly recognised researcher recruited by Warwick Medical School.
- (e) That the University's Containment Level 3 laboratories would be inspected by the Health and Safety Executive in December 2013.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (f) That the effectiveness of the GMBSC relied upon engagement by its members supported by their Departments.

RESOLVED:

That the effectiveness of the GMBSC be monitored and reported to the Committee.

13/13-14 Flu Vaccinations for Staff

REPORTED: (by Ms G McGrattan)

- (a) That subsidised flu vaccinations were being offered to staff this winter for the first time.
- (b) That consideration had been given to extending the offer to students, but there were legal restrictions which would be explored in preparation for 2014/15.

14/13-14 Road Safety Awareness

REPORTED: (by Miss Z Buckland)

- (a) That the Students' Union was embarking on a road safety campaign targeted at improving the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (b) That consideration be given to establishing an annual campaign on road safety for the new intake at the start of each academic year.

15/13-14 Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 10:00 in CMR 1.2
Thursday 12 June 2014 at 10:30 in CMR1.2