UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2020

Present: Mr A Donaldson (Convener), Mr A Acheampong, Mrs L Benvie, Ms S Blaney, Mr S Carle, Ms S Cooper, Mr R Ebel, Mr G Fisher, Mrs C Lawie, Mr D Malcolm, Mr R Philp, Dr S Pugh, Mr K Smith, Mr E Stephen, Mrs J Walker, Mrs D Wilson and Mrs V Amakiri (Clerk).

Apologies: Professor D Anderson, Dr N Curtis, Mrs D Dyker, Mr N Edwards, Professor P Fowler, Professor I McEwan, Ms I Scott, Mrs K Smith, Mrs T White and Dr A Petrie.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1.1 The Committee was invited to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2019. It was noted that Mrs J Walker’s Apologies were not recorded. The minutes were considered accurate and approved, with this amendment.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 FIRE SAFETY UPDATE (Minute 4.2 refers)

New Fire Safety Adviser to review fire signages in lecture theatres when in post on 3/2/2020 (see also Item 4 below).

2.2 REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE (Minute 6.4 refers)

Develop Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. This had been completed and was on the agenda of the meeting (see Item 10 below).

2.3 REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY FORUMS (Minute 7.2 refers)

To agree the optimal reporting structure, in relation to the Workload Review Group, in consultation with Dr S Pugh. Mr Fisher stated that it would be discussed this afternoon at the Workload Review Group.

Post meeting note: It was agreed that recommendations from the Workload Review Group which would potentially change University Policy would be reported back to the Health and Safety Committee. Where scheduling permitted, or where there was a need to discuss in a wider wellbeing context, this might take place via the Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group.

2.4 UNIVERSITY OVERSEAS TRAVEL POLICY (Minute 8.3 refers)

Review University Overseas Travel Policy. This would be considered at today’s meeting (see Minute 6 below)

2.5 UNIVERSITY SMOKING POLICY (Minute 9.2 refers)

Review the University Smoking Policy. This would be considered at today’s meeting (see Minute 6 below)

3 BEONLINE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

3.1 The Committee discussed the paper produced by Dr A Petrie (HSC19:07, copy filed with principal copy of minutes) which was presented by Mr Fisher. Mr Fisher provided information about the training currently being delivered and advised that uptake should be reported regularly to Committee, so that it could be ensured that statutory duties were complied with.
3.2 There followed a discussion about how to deliver the course to staff without a University IT login, the best way being through toolbox talks. Mrs. Wilson asked if the BeOnline training module(s) could also be rolled out to PhD students. Mr Fisher agreed to investigate how to accommodate PhD students (although they might not require refresher as they were here for only 3 years) and circulate the outcome to members of the committee. Mr Fisher to also flag up to Heads of Schools when their staff were due to complete their refresher courses.

Action: Mr G Fisher

3.3 Mr Smith enquired about the competence of Local Workstation Assessors (LWAs) and how movement of staff was dealt with. Mrs Amakiri stated that the HSW team were currently reviewing the DSE/Workstation Assessment Procedure and will be reviewing the training provided to LWAs to ensure they felt competent to deal with straight forward problems. She also said that where staff move location managers needed to inform the health, safety and wellbeing team of the change, so that the assessment can be redone, as the system will not be able to detect that change.

4 FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

4.1 Mr Fisher outlined the fire safety paper (HSC19:08, copy filed with principal copy of minutes) and indicated that the information contained was self-explanatory. He provided an update on the fire incidents that took place in the University.

4.2 Mr Fisher stated that the new Fire Safety Adviser, Elaine Cassidy, would review the fire signage in lecture theatres after she takes up her post on 3rd February 2020. He also informed Committee that Mr Napier’s last day as Fire Safety Adviser was Thursday, although he would come in one day next week to formally hand over to Ms Cassidy.

Action: Ms Cassidy

5 PROGRESS WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Mr Fisher informed committee that all audit recommendations were now closed out (HSC19:09, copy filed with principal copy of minutes). He also stated that a new audit plan was being developed for completion over an estimated 3-year cycle.

6 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY REVIEW PROGRAM

6.1 Mr Fisher gave an overview of the paper (HSC19:10, copy filed with principal copy of minutes), from his review of the University Health and Safety Management System. He highlighted that the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy required a review and signing by the Principal urgently. He invited the Committee to approve the change in name from “Health, Wellbeing and Safety” to “Health Safety and Wellbeing” to reflect his team and post title. The Committee approved the change. He invited the Committee to approve the changes he made including post titles, names of forums in the governance arrangements, Occupational Health arrangements and links requiring updating. He also referred to the summary of the policy arrangements which the University required, prioritised as High, Medium and Low and explained that the document was intended to be used to track progress against that schedule at future Committee meetings.

6.2 Mr Fisher also recommended that in order to avoid duplication, H&S policies be consulted on via either the Health and Safety Committee or PNCC prior to approval by PaRC. There followed a discussion on which Committees to be consulted for different policies and the importance of not duplicating efforts during consultation on policies. Mr Fisher to define, in the tracker document, which policies would be consulted on at PNCC or the Health and Safety Committee. It was agreed that progress would be a standing item at future meetings.

Action: Mr Fisher

6.3 There was a short discussion on the remit of Local Safety Coordinators (LSCs). Mr Fisher asserted that there would be full consultation with relevant schools, departments and LSCs and he stressed the need for efficient working and avoiding duplication of effort. He advised that LSCs
would not be required to perform wellbeing tasks but also stated that while differentiating, Mental Health should not be separated from Health and Safety.

6.4 There was a discussion on the proposed changes to the overarching policy document and agreement for the following amendments in:
6.7 – remove ‘wellbeing’ from functions of LSCs;
6.9 – to include the proposed change with respect to the terms of reference, but not remove the bullet points with respect to the composition of the Committee;
8.2.2 – to cross reference this section to the Fire Safety Policy (thus avoiding an inconsistency in terminology with respect to floor checkers and fire wardens)
8.2.3 – discussions around number of first aiders required for schools/ departments
8.7 – substitute ‘collaborative approach’ with another word/phrase as it doesn’t quite reflect what is meant. (Note: The proposed PUWER policy would provide more detail later);
8.9 – change ‘without prejudice’
Substitute ‘Estates’ with ‘Estates and Facilities’ wherever it was mentioned

Mr Fisher asked that all additional comments be returned to him by Friday 21st February 2020

Action: All

6.5 Mr Fisher to make the changes before taking to PaRC for approval.  
Action: Mr G Fisher

6.6 A recommendation was made by Dr Rainer to include names of people in the Incident recording form to enable investigations be carried out and training be given to the individuals if required to prevent further incidents or an accident occurring which could have been picked up and corrected. Mr Fisher to look into including names on the form.

Action: Mr G Fisher

7. ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING PLAN

7.1 Mr Fisher presented a paper (HSC19:11, copy filed with principal copy of minutes) with Health and Safety priorities laid out according to the HSG65 ‘Plan, Do, Check, Act’ management system; to be reviewed regularly. He proposed its adoption as a standing item to aid decision making and reflect the management of Health and Safety proactively, rather than reactively. He stated that this plan would be useful if there ever was a Health and Safety Executive intervention, as it showed that health and safety was being managed according to HSE guidance. He stated that some rows were intentionally left blank and could be populated by schools or departments where tasks were being undertaken which assisted in mitigating risks to the University as a whole or there were issues which needed addressing. These could be included in this year or next year’s plan.

7.2 Mr Fisher asked that all additional requests to add actions to the plan be sent to him in time to incorporate into the updated version for the next meeting.

Action: All

7.3 Mr Donaldson asserted that ownership of the plan will be the Committee as a whole, not individual schools or departments. Following discussions, it was decided that for each cycle or academic year, a plan would be agreed. Mr Fisher to prepare a draft every year/cycle, including updates from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group, and progress against this would be a standing item.

Action: Mr G Fisher

7.4 There was a discussion about Senior Management Health and Safety tours. It was revealed that Senior Management were not given the adequate guidance on Health and Safety tours in the past. There were suggestions for Head of Schools to carry out safety tours instead. Mr Fisher to review the policy and implementation of Health and Safety tours.

Action: Mr G Fisher

7.5 Following questions from Dr Pugh, Mr Fisher provided an update to Committee on the Implementation of Occupational Health as recorded in the annual plan. This led to discussions on the Occupational Health contract.
8. **AOCB**

8.1 No AOCB was raised.

9  **ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS UPDATE**

9.1 The Committee took note of the incidents in the report (HSC19:12, *copy filed with principal copy of minutes*) and actions taken in response to them.

10  **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

10.1 Mr Fisher invited the Committee to note the contents of the mental health and wellbeing action plan. He informed committee that this is a standing agenda item at the Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group.

11  **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

11.1 The Committee noted the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 6th May 2020.