

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2017**

Present: Mrs C Inglis (Convener), Mr A Anagboso, Mr A Donaldson, Mr S Carle, Dr E Compatangelo, Mr N Curtis, Dr R Ebel, Mrs A Innes, Mr D Malcolm, Dr A Petrie, Mr R Philp, Dr S Pugh, Mr N Qamar, Mrs E Robertson, Professor C Secombes, Mr E Stephen, Mr K Smith, Dr G Waiter and Ms J Walker.

In attendance: Mrs J Taylor.

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S Blaney, Professor P Fowler, Mrs S Hay, Dr C Harrington, Mr S Napier and Mrs J Tuckwell.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2017 were approved with a minor amendment to Minute 10.1.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 AOCB (Minute 2.2 refers)  
Aberdeen City Council had agreed to improve signage on Elphinstone Road in principle.

2.2 AOCB (Minute 2.3 refers)  
Aberdeen City Council would be approached regarding hatched road markings on Tillydrone Avenue to improve safety for drivers exiting Zoology Building car park. **Action AD**

2.3 Fire Safety (Minute 3.2 refers)  
A list of floor checkers was being compiled in preparation for the rollout of online training. An update would be provided at the next meeting on 30 January 2018. **Action SN**

3. FIRE SAFETY

3.1 In Mr Napier's absence, Mr Qamar led the update on fire safety (*HSC17:01 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). The Committee identified two incidents of problematic fire drills in centrally timetabled teaching facilities where there was no permanent staff base.

3.2 The Committee proposed a suite of measures to address the lack of leadership in these areas including more distinctive signage at the lectern, prominent displays of fire assembly point notices at entrances and fire evacuation details on display before the start of lectures. Mr Qamar would discuss these further with Mr Napier. **Action NQ and SN**

4. PROGRESS WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Committee received an update on progress with the audit recommendations (*HSC17:02 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). One Priority 2 recommendation remained outstanding pending a scheduled meeting with the Fire Safety Advisor.

4.2 Members of the Committee queried the possibility of future audits. Mr Qamar agreed to provide a draft programme of audits for the next meeting. **Action NQ**

5. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT

5.1 The Committee received the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report which provided an update on annual safety statistics (*HSC17:03 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). The attention of the Committee was drawn to the issues as follows:

- The University took part in the Britain's Healthiest Workplace Survey for the second year. The survey identified lifestyle health and mental health as two key areas to focus on for

improvement. The Committee were content with the actions proposed at 3.2.6 and requested a timeline for completion and an update on progress against that timeline at the next meeting.

**Action NQ**

- The Committee discussed the annual safety statistics, in particular, the decrease in near miss reports and potential reasons for this. There was brief discussion concerning the culture around, and perception of, near miss reporting.
- Going forward, members of the Committee thought it would be helpful to see long term data broken down by unit.

**Action NQ**

## 6. COMPOSITION OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The membership of the Committee would be amended to reflect the disbandment of Colleges and review of Professional Services. Mr Qamar agreed to consult stakeholders and provide a draft composition for discussion at the next meeting.

**Action NQ**

## 7. STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper detailing the University's legal obligation to address and control potential causes of work-related stress (*HSC17:04 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). It was suggested by Dr Syrithe Pugh that the University's Policy on Work Related Stress was robust but the implementation of the Policy was inadequate.

- 7.2 In discussion, the Committee commented on a number of points including:

- Sickness absence at the University for 2016/17 was similar to 2015/16 and comparable with other institutions within the HE sector according to Universities and Colleges Employers Association data. Mental health conditions accounted for 16.2% of sickness absence at the University, and 21.2% across the sector.
- Excessive workload and working hours, especially among academic staff, emerged as a key cause for concern from the Staff Satisfaction Survey 2014. There has not been a staff survey since 2014 survey.
- Members of the Committee were informed that previously the Staff Satisfaction Survey was accepted by the staff Unions and supported by the Health and Safety Executive as a Stress Risk Assessment. In response to the Surveys and findings, the University has acted to address concerns and has provided support to staff and raised awareness of issues relating to stress in the workplace. The actions taken have not always been reported back to the Committee. The Committee considered the implementation of Stress Risk Assessments in future and approved the proposal of establishing a Steering Group to review the Stress Management Policy and its implementation.

**Action NQ**

- 7.3 Following an extended discussion, the Committee agreed to revisit this at the next meeting.

**Action Clerk**

## 8. EYE PROTECTION POLICY

- 8.1 An amendment to the wording in Section 5.2 of the Eye Protection Policy was requested to enable staff and students to confidently address and challenge non-compliance.

**Action NQ**

## 9. AOCB

- 9.1 Clarification was sought regarding the progression of policies through the University's committee structure. The Committee agreed that where substantive changes were proposed, policies should be reviewed by the Committee before submission to the University Management Group or Operating Board.

## 10. ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS UPDATE

- 11.1 There were no comments on the Accidents and Incidents Update (*HSC17:05 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*) which provided the details of sixteen incidents since the last meeting.

11 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

- 11.1 The Committee noted the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 30 January 2018 at 2.00 pm in Court Room, University Office.