UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2019

Present: Mrs C Inglis (Convener), Dr A Anagboso, Professor D Anderson, Ms S Blaney, Mr N Curtis, Mr A Donaldson, Mrs D Dyker, Mr R Ebel, Mrs A Innes, Mrs C Lawie, Mr D Malcolm, Professor I McEwan, Mr S Napier, Mr R Philip, Dr S Pugh, Professor C Secombes, Mr K Smith, Mr E Stephen, Mr J Urquhart, Ms J Walker; Mrs D Wilson, Dr A Petrie (Clerk).

Apologies: Ms N Barrie, Dr E Compatangelo, Mr D Dawson, Professor P Fowler, Dr C Harrington, Ms S Hay, Mr L Ogubie, Ms M Paterson, Mrs E Robertson and Mrs K Smith

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1.1 The Committee was invited to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2018. The minutes were considered accurate and approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY (Minute 2.3 refers)

This would be considered at today’s meeting (see Minute 5 below).

2.2 COMPOSITION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (Minute 2.5 refers)

Mr Urquhart will now attend the Committee to represent the School of Psychology.

2.3 FIRE SAFETY REPORT (Minute 4.2 refers)

This would be considered at today’s meeting (see Minute 3 below).

2.4 ACCESS TO LABORATORIES AND LABORATORY WASTE POLICY (Minute 4.5 refers)

Dr Petrie confirmed that the Policy had been distributed to Heads of Schools by Mr Qamar. Mr Stephen highlighted that there had been a meeting with the University Waste Manager to clarify several points in relation to waste disposal.

2.5 STRESS-RELATED ABSENCE (Minute 7.2 refers)

It was highlighted that Mr Anagboso was reviewing stress-related absence. Mrs Inglis requested that an update is presented at the next committee meeting.

Action: A Anagboso

2.6 LIGHTING AND SAFE ROUTES AT OLD ABERDEEN CAMPUS (Minute 8.1 refers)

Mr Donaldson presented to the Committee an overview of the proposed preferred route to traverse the Old Aberdeen campus from west to east. The issues with accessibility and access for those with mobility difficulties were highlighted and difficulties over ownership of parts of the route were noted. It was proposed that suitable lighting would be part of the preferred safe route. It was noted that the Community Council were supportive of the plans, but some concerns were raised by the Heritage Society. It was noted that a planning application would be lodged with the Council and that works were expected to begin by September. Mrs Inglis requested that the Committee be informed of progress at its next meeting.

Action: A Donaldson
3 FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

3.1 Mr Napier presented a report (HSC18:07, copy filed with principal copy of minutes) which was an updated review of the lessons learned presented at the Committee in November. There were no additional comments from the Committee members on the paper.

3.2 Mr Napier indicated to the Committee that, as result of feedback following the fire in the MacRobert building, if people were in their office when the fire alarm was activated, he was comfortable that people could collect their personal belongings. Mrs Inglis queried whether there would be a requirement for an update to the Fire Policy, however Mr Napier suggested that this be included in School’s local Fire Policy.

3.3 Mr Donaldson questioned whether there would be any changes required to University buildings in light of the Grenfell Inquiry. Mr Napier considered it was unlikely that there would be changes required. There followed a discussion on if any changes were required, would there be more stringent requirements and if this was not retrospective, there could be differences in fire protection between older and new buildings. This was an area which required constant consideration.

4 PROGRESS WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Committee received an update on the progress of Audit Recommendations (HSC18:08, copy filed with principal copy of minutes). In discussion the Committee was updated on a number of points including:

- Natural and Computing Science: The open recommendation was still in progress and was waiting on the new Head of School agreeing to the proposed changes. Mr Donaldson raised concerns that this action was still outstanding.
- School of Biological Sciences: Mrs Blaney informed the Committee that there were only 2 recommendations outstanding.
- Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health (RINH): Only 2 recommendations were outstanding, these relating to updating the website and the magnahelic gauges.

5 STAFF STRESS SURVEY

5.1 The Committee received a report on the Staff Satisfaction Survey (HSC18:09, copy filed with principal copy of minutes). Dr Anagboso presented an overview of the background to the survey and also to the additional stress survey questions. Dr Anagboso highlighted that there had been improvements in some areas (e.g. understanding roles and responsibilities), but also some areas of concern (e.g. workloads). Dr Anagboso explained that the next steps included focus groups and the development and implementation of an action plan to address the results.

5.2 The Committee discussed the paper at length and the following key points were raised:

- Clarification on response rates in the Schools and particularly within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition;
- Clarifying the staff survey is biennial and not bi-annual;
- Changes in the re-worded questions changes the perception of the question, therefore not possible to make a comparison between 2014 survey and recent survey;
- Different opinions in the perception of the significant findings;
- The use of focus groups to undertake further analysis of the survey results;
- Difficulty in identifying how significant the level of stress being exhibited as there are no comparisons to other Universities or similar organisations.

5.3 Several actions arose during the discussions, these being:

- An interpretative commentary on the stress survey results to be produced with assistance from Dr Allen as the advisor on this matter
  
  **Action: A Anagboso**

- Addition of the response rate for the various areas in Appendix 2
Action: A Anagboso

- Reconvene the Stress Working Group to review the survey results and conduct a debrief to group members

Action: D Dyker

6 UPDATE ON VACANT POSITION OF HSW DIRECTOR

6.1 Mrs Walker queried the current vacant position of the Health, Safety and Welfare Director. Mrs Dyker informed that an interim manager would be brought in soon and that the structure of the department would be reviewed. Mrs Walker raised concerns about the previous interim manager and also noted that other Universities seemed to have larger safety departments. Unite the Union noted their thanks for the support received from Dr Petrie.

6.2 Mrs Inglis informed the Committee that the provision of additional support for the Central Safety Team was under consideration.

7 AOCB

7.1 Mr Urquhart highlighted that the vacuum toilets installed as part of the project works in the William Guild Building were not being used due to the perceived cleanliness of the seals. There were also concerns with the noise from the hand driers. Estates would look into these issues.

Action: R Philp

7.2 Dr Pugh highlighted that she had been informed by a colleague that there had been issues with heating in certain areas of the MacRobert Building and wondered if there had been a resolution. Mr Donaldson stated that if there was a fault number then this could be traced. It was emphasised that faults need to be reported to the Estates fault desk to enable them to be repaired.

8 ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS UPDATE

8.1 The Committee took note of the two incidents in the report (HSC18:10, copy filed with principal copy of minutes) and actions taken in response to them.

9 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

9.1 The Committee noted the next meeting would be held on Thursday 9 May 2019.