

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2013

Present: Professor P Morgan (Convener), Dr G Bewick, Mr A Donaldson, Dr R Ebel, Mrs A Innes, Dr S Lawrie, Professor P McCaffery, Miss D MacKinnon, Ms D Massie, Mrs E Robertson, Dr C Sands, Mr E Stephen with Mr I Cowe, M S Napier, Mr R Philp, Mr G Robertson, Ms J Tuckwell and Mr N Corby (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms A Deseilligny, Mrs S Lodge, Ms C McWilliams, Professor C Secombes, Ms J Sewel, Ms A Shipley, Mr B Snelling and Ms P Williams.

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2012 were received and approved as a true record (*HSC12:22 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) but with an addition to the third paragraph of minute 6 so that it reads:

"The Committee asked if it could receive data on work-related ill health and absences from work due to ill health as part of the regular reports on accidents and near misses with a view to monitoring the effectiveness of the University's return to work programmes."
Action Mr N Corby

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee considered the list of actions taken in respect of matters referred for action at the last meeting and not considered elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting (*HSC12:23 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Committee agreed that

- a) A means of accepting Drivers Declaration Forms needs to be developed as a matter of urgency;
- b) There should be a means of making sure that contractors brought into the University by Schools and Support Services work in accordance with University procedures when working on the fixed electrical installation or on equipment connected to the fixed installation;
- c) The next newsletter should include details of how incidents of work-related ill health should be reported;
- d) The next newsletter should include details of the incident in which there had been an explosion in a fume cupboard in the Meston Building.
- e) At its next meeting, the Committee should consider details of where gas cylinders are located in University laboratories so it could take a view as to whether any of them should be replaced by piped gas supplies.
Action: Mr N Corby

3 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered the current and proposed entries in the corporate risk register for Risk 2011-06: "Risk of death or serious injury while undertaking University-related activities (staff and students)" (*HSC12:24 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Committee, for its part, approved the proposed entry and agreed that the risk scorings should remain unchanged but that the action "Other areas of potential exposure to be explored (e.g. related trusts, external contractors)" should be assigned a priority of high.
Action: Mr N Corby

4 HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered the proposals for the Group D entries in the health and safety risk register (*HSC12:25 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Committee asked that all the entries in Group D of the register be expanded to provide more detailed descriptions of the risks and the risk controls and that the entries should be considered again at its next meeting. The Committee also agreed that

- a) Risk 21 - Printing and Binding Operations: The initial risk assessment should be scored Impact 4 and Likelihood 4;
- b) Risk 23 - Halls of Residence: The initial risk assessment should be scored Impact 5 and Likelihood 4 and that consideration should be given to the risks from accommodating students in halls owned and operated by external organisations such as Unite;
- c) Risks 24 and 27 - Sports Facilities and Student Association: These risks should be considered again once the review of health and safety in arm's-length organisations had been completed;
- d) Guidance should be produced for Schools and Support Services on the circumstances under which children are allowed to be brought into University buildings;
Action: Mr N Corby

5 REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE BIOLOGICAL AGENTS INSPECTION

The Committee considered the report on the biological safety inspection carried out in November 2012 by the Health and Safety Executive (*HSC12:26 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) and noted the generally positive impression which the inspectors had gained of the University's biosafety arrangements. The Committee also noted that the inspectors had identified a number of problems which needed to be addressed and that progress with the remedial actions was being monitored by the University Safety Adviser.
Action: Mr N Corby

The Committee noted the actions which had been taken to address the concerns detailed in the letter from the Health and Safety Executive dated 15 December 2012 regarding training for those who packed infectious materials for shipment off-site and the response to the letter which had been sent to the Health and Safety Executive. It was agreed that selected staff from Chemistry should also be provided with training as they could be involved in the shipment of infectious materials.
Action: Mr N Corby

6 ANNUAL REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Committee considered the summary of the annual reports from Schools and Support Services (*HSC12:27 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Committee noted that the University Safety Adviser was in contact with the College of Life Sciences and Medicine regarding the submission of a report from the Dental School. The Committee also noted that a report had now been received from the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy.

It was noted that the problems regarding handrails on stairwells in the Polwarth Building were being addressed.

The concerns from the School of Geosciences regarding smoking at the rear of the Machar Bar and at the north entrance to the Meston Building were noted. It was agreed that the Convener, the Director of Estates and the University Safety Adviser would discuss the matter again outside the meeting.
Action: Mr N Corby

7 FIELDWORK SAFETY

The Committee noted the plan of work to provide further assurances that arrangements for safety in fieldwork were being fully implemented (*HSC12:28 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) and that it would receive a further report in November 2013.

Action Mrs S Lodge

8 PROGRESS WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee considered the report on progress with the implementation of health and safety audit recommendations (*HSC12:29 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Committee asked that it should receive a timeline for full implementation of the outstanding recommendation from the audit of the School of Biological Sciences.

Action: Ms D MacKinnon

9 PROGRESS WITH PRIORITIES FOR 2012/13

The Committee noted the report on progress with the health and safety priorities for 2012/13 (*HSC12:30 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

10 ACCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES IN THE UNIVERSITY

The Committee considered the report on accidents and near misses for the calendar year 2012 (*HSC12:31 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) and noted that that there had been no further accidents which were reportable to the Health and Safety Executive since its last meeting in November 2012.

11 REPORT TO THE OPERATING BOARD

The Committee noted the December 2012 report to the Operating Board (*HSC12:32 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Convener informed the Committee that he had attended the meeting of the Board earlier in the week to speak to the report and that there had been considerable interest and some concern from members of the Board regarding some of the matters raised in the report. In particular, there had been interest in and concern regarding the case of Occupational Asthma recorded at the Rowett and the OB wanted reassurance that the incident did not reflect wider weaknesses in our H & S systems. The Convener indicated that the H & S Committee had recently reviewed the inspections and monitoring procedures at the University. On this basis and together with the low accident rates, the Convener had been satisfied that University's systems are robust and the Rowett incident was an isolated case. The OB also discussed the relationship between the Students' Association and the University, the "cradle" incident at the Library and the incident at the swimming pool in August 2012.

12 NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 2 pm on Thursday 9th May 2013.