

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2016

Present: Mrs C Inglis (Convener), Mr A Anagboso, Mr A Donaldson, Dr C Harrington, Dr S Lawrie, Mr R Macfarlane, Ms J McKay, Mr D Malcolm, Ms A Murray, Mr S Napier, Mr R Philp, Mr N Qamar, Mrs E Robertson, Professor C Secombes, Mrs J Tuckwell, Ms J Walker, and Dr A Petrie (Clerk).

In attendance: Mrs J Taylor

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S Blaney, Ms M Burgoyne, Ms G Clarke, Dr R Ebel, Mrs A Innes, Professor P McCaffery, Ms A Shipley, Mr E Stephen and Mrs P Williams.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 Revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Minute 4.3 refers)
The Committee's concerns have been addressed and the revised policy is to be considered at today's meeting (see Minute 3 below).

2.2 First aid cover within multi-user buildings and student residences (Minute 4.4 refers)
It was made clear that the responsibility for adequate first aid provision lies with the School or Directorate, further discussion followed (see Minute 3 below).

2.3 Composition of the Committee (Minute 4.5 refers)
The composition of the Committee has been confirmed and is available on StaffNet and also the Central Safety webpages: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/safety/committee/>.

2.4 Revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Minute 4.6 refers)
Comments from the Committee were received and incorporated into the revised policy to be considered at today's meeting (see Minute 3 below).

2.5 Fire Notices (Minute 5.3 refers)
Due to circumstance, no progress had been made. Mr S Napier will follow this up and the item is to be included on the agenda for next meeting of the Committee. **Action SN**

2.6 Process for Policy (Minutes 5.4 refers)
Mr N Qamar reported that actions relating to this were complete.

2.7 Progress with Audit Recommendations (Minute 6.1 refers)
Dr A Petrie stated that progress had been made but he had encountered longer term issues which are to be considered at today's meeting (see Minute 5 below).

2.8 Additional columns to indicate status of recommendations (Minute 6.3 refers)
Dr A Petrie confirmed that actions relating to this were complete.

3. REVISED HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY

3.1 The Committee received, for consideration, a revised draft of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (*HSC15:19 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). Changes to the Policy include the re-titling of Local Safety Advisers to the more accurate term of Local Safety Coordinators; the clarification of roles and responsibilities; the inclusion of a definitions sections; and formatting in the new standardised template.

- 3.2 In relation to First Aid, Section 7.2.3 (p12), the Committee considered first aid cover within multi-user buildings and student residences. Provision is adequate although difficult to provide at times and often reliant on University Security and Portering staff. It was suggested that the reluctance of staff to undertake first aid training could be addressed by making it a contractual obligation. However, the existing contracts already stipulate that employees may need to undertake training to fulfil their role. With no obvious conclusion, it was agreed that provision of first aid cover in these locations would be discussed by Mr N Qamar and Ms J Tuckwell outwith the Committee. **Action NQ/JT**
- 3.3 Clarification was sought whether all members of University Security and Portering staff receive first aid training. **Action AD**
- 3.4 Committee members were informed that there is limited funding available for first aid training during the remaining part of this financial year but no certificates will lapse.
- 3.5 Committee members offered comments and suggestions on wording in various sections, the main points of which are summarised below.
- With regards to Section 5, paragraph 4 (p5), it was suggested the term 'University' could be amended to 'University Court'. However, it was agreed that in this context 'University' reflected the collective responsibility of the Institution and should remain.
 - There was discussion around the remit of the Committee as described in Section 6.9, paragraph 1 (p9). A proposal that 'decide upon and review' could be modified to 'advise, recommend and decide upon' was well received.
 - In relation to Section 7.2.2 (p11), it was highlighted that Floor Checkers are not always 'appointed by Heads of Schools or Directors'. In some instances there is a pool of responsible persons who perform the duty as required. The Committee agreed the wording could be revised to allow for circumstances such as these.
 - Section 7.2.3 (p12) Schools and Directorates are responsible for 'adequate provision' for first aid staff but it was advised that 'must' could be changed to 'are required to'.
 - With reference to Section 7.7 (p14) a suggestion was made to remove 'unless defined otherwise' and modify the text to include inspections as well as alterations.
 - With reference to Section 7.11 (p16) Occupational Health Service, the Committee advocated a refinement of 'fitness' to 'fitness to work'. Additionally there was discussion about the provision of counselling for staff by Occupational Health and the anticipated unburdening of the Counselling Service. It was noted that other arrangements are being explored by Human Resources.
 - Corrections to typographical errors were recommended (all sections). **Action NQ/AP**
4. FIRE SAFETY
- 4.1 Fire Safety was discussed as part of the Health Safety and Wellbeing Report (see Minute 7 below).
5. PROGRESS WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS
- 5.1 The Committee received an update on School progress with the audit recommendations (*HSC15:20 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). The Committee noted a number of recommendations were now closed or in the process of being resolved. However, concerns were raised about the limited progress of one priority 1 recommendation and the excessive length of time that it had been outstanding. The Committee supported further action through line management structure. **Action NQ**

6. AUDIT REPORTS

6.1 CLINICAL SKILLS CENTRE

6.1.1 The Committee received a report on the audit conducted on the Clinical Skills Centre (CSC) on behalf of the Committee (*HSC15:21 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). The Committee were informed that the CSC was largely compliant with the University's Health and Safety Policy but implemented this informally without effectively documenting their safety practices. On the whole, it was felt their arrangements were suitable given the size of the team and their close working relationship.

6.2 ASSISTED REPRODUCTION UNIT

6.2.1 The Committee received a report on the audit conducted on the Assisted Reproduction Unit (ARU) on behalf of the Committee (*HSC15:22 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). Although the report identified areas for improvement, ARU evidenced a strong focus on the management of health and safety. The ARU has external accreditation to ISO 9001 and as a result there is a Quality Management System, Quality Manual and associated documentation to ensure accreditation to this standard.

6.3 ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

6.3.1 The Committee received a report on the audit conducted on behalf of the Committee of the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) (*HSC15:23 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). AUSA performed well in some areas such as risk assessments for field trips and volunteering but overall the safety management system is weak. The report made three priority one recommendations and identified several areas where practices could be improved.

6.3.2 AUSA's Student President and interim CEO are composing the management responses for submission commencing 6 June 2016.

7. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT TO APRIL 2016

7.1 The Committee received, for consideration, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report to April 2016 (*HSC15:24 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*). The report detailed the activities undertaken since last meeting as part of the Because We Care campaign which included a Health and Wellbeing event on Foresterhill campus; smoking cessation sessions facilitated by NHS Grampian; and the promotion of mental wellbeing through displays at Sir Duncan Rice Library.

7.2 Guidance on use of electrical extensions and on occupational health, safety and wellbeing aspects of pregnancy have been issued. A table has been created listing existing Policies and Guidance documents with a schedule for review.

7.3 Mr N Qamar was pleased to report a 24% reduction in accidents for the period of January-April compared to the period last year. It was noted this figure does not factor in near miss data.

7.4 Be Online, the online health and safety training and accident reporting system, has been purchased and is being prepared for launch in October 2016.

7.5 The Committee discussed the accidents and incidents report with focus on a research technician who became ill whilst working abroad due to severe drought conditions. In light of this an Overseas Travel Policy has been issued (see Minute 8 below). It is hoped this will standardise assessment of this type of risk and promote a culture of risk assessment as an ongoing process.

- 7.6 The Committee discussed two deliberate fire incidents which took place in the Chaplaincy and St Mary's. In both cases there were no injuries or structural damage; both incidents are under investigation by the Police. As a result of these incidents a reminder was issued to all staff through Communications stressing the importance of the University's emergency evacuation procedures.
- 7.7 A Committee member expressed concerns about access to St Mary's Building – swipe access is not in place, it is not always possible to secure the doors and outside of office hours access is via a passageway. **Action AD**
8. AOCB
- 8.1 The Committee considered the Overseas Travel Policy which was circulated separately to the agenda and papers. Mr N Qamar invited feedback by 7th June. **Action Committee Members**
- 8.2 A Committee member inquired if the University is insured against kidnapping and whether there was guidance on information security whilst travelling on University Business. The Committee were made aware that a draft policy on Information Technology for travelling is in existence.
- Clerk's note** – an email was circulated to Committee members following the meeting clarifying the University's Insurance cover against kidnapping.*
- 8.3 Committee members were reminded to read policies before meetings to enable focus on final questions and recommendations.
9. NEW GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS
- 9.1 GUIDANCE ON ELECTRICAL EXTENSIONS
- 9.1.1 The Committee received a copy of the Guidance on Electrical Extensions (*HSC15:25 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). It was suggested that all items in the 'Notes on Available Extension Types' table (p2) should be clearly marked for indoor use only.
- 9.2 GUIDANCE ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ASPECTS OF PREGNANCY
- 9.2.1 The Committee received a copy of the Guidance on Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Aspects of Pregnancy (*HSC15:26 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).
10. DATES OF FURTHER MEETING
- 10.1 The next meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee will be held on Thursday, 10th November 2016 at 2.00 pm. Venue to be confirmed.