

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 07 MAY 2015**

Present: Mrs C Inglis (Convener), Mr A Anagboso, Ms E Beever, Dr R Ebel, Mr A Donaldson, Dr C Harrington, Dr S Lawrie, Miss D MacKinnon, Professor P McCaffery, Dr C Sands, Ms A Shipley, Mr P Fitz-George, Mr S Napier, Mr R Philp, Mrs E Robertson, Ms J Sewel, Mr E Stephen, Ms J Tuckwell, Ms J Walker, and Ms A Powell (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms G Clarke, Mrs A Innes, Mr M McCorkell, Ms J McKay, Professor C Secombes, Mrs P Williams.

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 February 2015 were received and approved subject to one correction:

- The final action under Minute 3, Safety Culture, would be amended as follows:  
The Committee asked that consideration be given to the provision of health and safety training for newly appointed Heads of School and heads of Support Service.  
**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee noted the actions taken in respect of matters referred for action at the last meeting and not considered elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting (*HSC14:27 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

The Committee considered the provision of health and safety training for Heads of School and Heads of Service, and agreed that a paper outlining induction and ongoing training options would be received at the next meeting.  
**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

The Committee discussed the use of safety videos, and agreed that Central Safety would work with Estates, IT, and Safety Advisers to consider the types of videos required and whether these could be developed in-house. Committee members were invited to contact Central Safety if interested in providing input to the project. It was agreed that an update would be received by the Committee at its next meeting.  
**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

3 SAFETY CULTURE

The Committee received an update on progress with the review of the safety culture within the University (*HSC14:28 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

The Committee discussed the feedback received from Campus Services focus groups, noting that these meetings did not produce any additional information than what was originally noted in the reports produced by the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL). A debrief had been held following these meetings to consider why they had not been as productive as other sessions. In moving forward, consideration would be given to the size and composition of groups, as well as the order in which feedback was received from middle management and front line staff.

Two of the four members of staff who had been trained as facilitators by HSL had left the University. The Committee agreed that additional staff should be identified and trained.

**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

The Committee noted that the update proposed a different approach to taking forward health and safety culture than that which was originally proposed by HSL. It was agreed that the University should continue with the original approach of focussing attention on individual Schools and Professional Services. After additional facilitators were available, it was agreed that other sections should be identified to participate in focus groups.

**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

The Committee noted that following focus group meetings with Estates and the Institute of Medical Sciences, action plans had been developed that were being implemented. An update would be received at the next meeting.

**Action: Mr A Donaldson/Dr C Harrington**

The Committee discussed the proposal regarding Central Safety working with Business Improvement to progress changes in safety culture. The Committee supported the proposal, but agreed that it should not delay the implementation of actions proposed by HSL.

#### 4 SICKNESS ABSENCE DATA

The Committee noted that sickness absence data had not been received. It was agreed that this data would be obtained from Human Resources for the next meeting.

**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

#### 5 ACCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES IN THE UNIVERSITY

The Committee received a paper detailing the number of accidents and near misses at the University (*HSC14:30 copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*), and noted that the near miss figure for 2014/15 appeared low. The Committee agreed that it was likely that there were many near misses occurring which were not being reported.

The Committee agreed that staff should be actively encouraged to report accidents and near misses using the online form. It was agreed that Central Safety would liaise with Communications to include a message about incident reporting in the Staff Ezine.

**Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

The Committee discussed an accident involving an undergraduate student cycling outside the Sir Duncan Rice Library, and considered if cycling should be prohibited in the plaza. The Committee agreed that the area was a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists. The Committee assessed the risk of incidents involving cyclists and pedestrians, and with the exception of Dr S Lawrie and Dr C Sands, agreed that the risk would be accepted.

The Committee discussed an incident where an overhead projector fell in University Office, and noted that there had been no injuries. The projector had been recently installed by a contractor in a manner that did not follow standard operating procedures. Following the incident staff responsible for installing such items were briefed as to how this work should be undertaken to ensure that installations followed recommended practice.

#### 6 FIRE SAFETY

The Committee received an update on fire safety (*HSC14:31 copy filed with principal copy of minutes*), and noted that significant progress had been made to complete actions arising from fire risk assessments.

It was noted that the detector heads in one block of residential accommodation (Grant Court) required upgrading, and this was scheduled to be completed by June 2015. The number of malicious fire alarm activations in the Halls of Residence had greatly reduced and this was the result of good management and availability of equipment to monitor and prevent activations.

The Committee received an update on the investigation of the fire in the Meston Building on 20 November 2014. It was noted that the loss adjusters confirmed that following investigation, it was not possible to identify the precise cause of the fire. A full report from the loss adjuster was expected. The Committee asked that, when received, the report be brought to a future meeting for consideration. **Action: Mr S Napier**

The Committee noted that an incident had occurred in the Institute of Medical Sciences where during a fire alarm activation a number of occupants did not evacuate the building. Following the incident an email was circulated to staff to remind them of the actions to be taken in the event of a fire alarm. The Fire Safety Adviser also reviewed the fire plans and availability of fire safety information and confirmed that all of this was regularly reviewed and available for staff. It was noted that this incident had not been reported to Senior Management, and the Committee agreed that in the future all incidents should be reported and investigated. It was also noted that this incident ought to be recorded as a 'near miss'. **Action: Mr S Napier**

The Committee discussed the provision of fire safety training, and noted that annual fire drills were undertaken. The date and time of fire drills was communicated to a select number of staff only to ensure staff availability and to prevent major disruption to laboratory work. It was agreed that the current practice regarding drills was suitable and should continue.

The Committee considered the provision of additional fire safety training, and agreed that a paper outlining legislative requirements would be received at the next meeting.

**Action: Mr S Napier**

## 7 HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT REPORTS

The Committee received a number of reports on health and safety audits undertaken across the University (*HSC14:32-38 copies filed with principal copy of minute*).

The audits demonstrated that there were considerable fire hazards which were easily visible to those without any health and safety training. It was agreed that greater awareness and reporting of these issues would assist in improving the health and safety culture.

The Committee noted that audit reports were received by the Heads of School and local Safety Advisers. Local Safety Advisers were asked to contact Estates if support was required to take forward actions.

It was noted that the reports contained some actions which were incorrectly assigned to Estates. It was agreed that these would be reviewed and amended. **Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

An update on the actions arising from audits would be received by the Committee at the next meeting. **Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

## 8 PROGRESS WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee received an update on progress with implementation of health and safety audit recommendations (*HSC14:39 copy filed with principal copy of minute*).

## 9 RADIATION HAZARDS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received the minutes from the meetings of the Radiation Hazards Sub-Committee and Radiation Hazards Sub-Committee laser meeting on 27 February 2015 (*HSC14:40 copy filed with principal copy of minute*).

The Committee discussed the Decommissioning at the Rowett and noted that a Consultant had been employed to review the waste burial sites. Some testing had been undertaken, the results of which were now with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. The Consultant would also carry out a geophysical survey to determine the exact location of the pits, with the view of then undertaking a controlled removal of the waste.

## 10 RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

The Committee received, for approval, a draft risk assessment template based on Health and Safety Executive guidance. The template would assist local Safety Advisers in reviewing health and safety issues in low risk areas. It would not replace specialist risk assessment tools used in laboratories, and it was agreed that Safety Advisers could continue to use their own templates if preferred.

It was agreed that the template would be adopted and uploaded onto the Central Safety website. Central Safety would liaise with Communications to promote the new template in a forthcoming issue of the Staff Ezine. **Action: Mr P Fitz-George**

The Committee queried the formal inspection of centrally timetabled space, noting that there was a responsibility on users to report faults. It was agreed that responsibility for formally inspecting these areas should be assigned. **Action: Mr A Donaldson/Mr P Fitz-George**

## 11 AOCB

The Committee noted that a decision had been made by the Senior Management Team (SMT) to circulate committee papers in electronic format only. Committee members requiring hard copies of papers may request these by contacting Policy, Planning & Governance (PPG). Members were encouraged not to print papers locally, but to request a hard copy if required as it was more economical to print papers centrally.

In light of SMT's decision, the Committee noted that PPG was reviewing the formatting of committee papers to ensure that these were easy to review electronically.

A query was received regarding the standard font style and size used for committee papers, as it was reported that all papers for students were required to be printed in Arial 12. The Committee noted that the standard font used in institutional committees was Arial 10, and asked that this issue be raised with Equality and Diversity. **Action: Ms J Sewel**

## 12 DATES OF FURTHER MEETINGS

The Committee noted that further meetings are scheduled for:

Monday 2 November 2015

Thursday 28 January 2016

Thursday 5 May 2016