

APPROVED

HS(12/13)17

**UNIVERSITY COURT
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 06 February 2013
at 4.00pm in Room F31, Merchiston Campus**

- PRESENT:** Ms M Ali (Court) (Convenor); Mr N Ballantyne (Court); Mr M Mackay (UNISON); Mr R Mason (EIS/ULA); Mr J Goodlet (Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Ms V Wood (Business School); Mr R Wright (Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Ms M Cook (Director, Human Resources); Mr P Hughes (Director, Property & Facilities Services); Ms L Young (Head of Health & Safety); Mrs H Mizen (Governance Officer)(Acting Clerk)
- APOLOGIES:** Dr V Ellis (Court); Professor M Darlison (Biological Safety Officer); Dr M Sanderson (EIS/ULA); Professor Dame Joan Stringer DBE (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Dr G Webber (University Safety Officer/University Secretary); Mr T Zanelli (President NSA)

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed all participants to the meeting. It was noted formally that Ms M Philip had retired from the University in December 2012 and thanks were expressed to Ms Philip for her valuable contributions to the Committee's business.
- 1.2 The apologies were **noted**.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2012

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- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) Traffic Management around Sighthill Campus (Minute 5 (a))

- 3.1 The Director, Property & Facilities reported that he had met with M Mackay on site to review the measures in place and consider the implementation of a one-way system. The Committee was advised that the installation of double yellow lines had considerably eased the traffic problems and having noted that installing a one way system would be very costly, it was **agreed** that no further action was required at this time. It was confirmed that the City of Edinburgh Council was responsible for policing the double yellow lines and the towing of vehicles which were illegally parked.

b) Control of Contractors (Minute 5 (b))

- 3.2 The Committee noted that despite concerted efforts made to improve compliance with health and safety requirements, there were still significant challenges in ensuring that contractors' working practices were compliant. The unprecedented

programme of works simultaneously undertaken for the Co-Location project, the major Library refurbishment and a range of other complementary works had compounded matters. The Committee was advised that in order to make further reasonable advances in compliance, Property & Facilities had offered a three month secondment for one of the direct labour force to assist with health and safety issues within Property & Facilities. It was noted that the Health and Safety Team already offered cross university training which was open to any member of staff and included the control of contractors.

- 3.3 The Committee noted that there were particular concerns about the delivery of furniture to the Merchiston campus with fire doors being used to access the campus and being wedged open with fire extinguishers and other objects. The Director, Property & Facilities agreed to remind the main contractor about compliance and informed members that in the most extreme cases if a contractor did not comply they could be excluded from undertaking further works. It was **agreed** that if this issue with contractors persisted it was to be brought back to the Committee.

(Action: **PH**)

- 3.4 The concern about deliveries generally to the Merchiston campus was raised and it was commented that this arose from the lack of central storage facilities.

c) Pedestrian Safety Issues around Craiglockhart Campus (Minute 6.3)

- 3.5 The Director, Property & Facilities reported that he had instructed the University's property advisers, Jones Lang LaSalle to investigate the feasibility of erecting iron fencing along a section of the footpath at the campus, which it was hoped would prevent students from seeking to take the shortest route to the bus stop across the main road. The Committee was advised that this option was considered preferable to closing the existing path which would have the effect of encouraging students to walk along the main internal roadway. It was commented that as students would potentially vault over the proposed fencing this might not be a sufficient deterrent and that the site of the bus stop was the problem to be addressed.

- 3.6 After discussion it was **agreed** that in addition to following up on the proposal to install fencing of an appropriate height and length, the Director, Property & Facilities was to:

- a) approach Lothian Buses to explore the possibility of removing altogether the bus stop opposite the gap in the campus wall; and
- b) consider the creation of a new path leading to the main exit at which there was a pedestrian controlled crossing

(Action: **PH**)

4. ACCIDENT STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2012 TO JANUARY 2013

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b) Serious Accidents/Hazardous Incidents/Fire Incidents

- 4.1 The two serious accidents involving a student and a member of Security staff and the measures taken in response were **noted**.
- 4.2 The three hazardous incidents reported and the remedial works carried out were **noted**. The Director, Property & Facilities advised that cost effective measures to

adapt the design of the railing at the atrium at Craiglockhart were being investigated, including the application of some form of bevelled nosing to prevent objects from being laid down on the railing.

- 4.3 In noting the two reported fire incidents, the Committee was advised that the motivation for the concerning arson attack at West Tollcross remained unknown whilst the outcome of Lothian and Borders police investigations, which included the studying of CCTV images, was pending. The Committee was advised that as a result of this incident, the University would ensure that the plans for the University's new student residences would include the installation of CCTV cameras wherever "break glass" alarm points were situated.

The Committee otherwise **noted** the report.

5. EMERGENCY EVACUATION REPORTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2012 TO JANUARY 2013

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a) Scheduled

- 5.1 The Committee **noted** the criteria applied to scheduled evacuations which had been carried out at all University facilities except Merchiston (due to the current programme of works) and that these had been assessed as satisfactory except for the Craiglockhart campus. The Committee noted the reasons for the latter and the proposed remedial action to be taken.
- 5.2 After discussion, the Committee agreed that a) the weekly testing of the tannoy systems should be extended to include deploying staff around the external perimeters to ensure announcements could be heard; and b) it should be checked whether the use of flashing beacons in the recently vacated computer labs at the Craighouse Campus to alert students wearing noise cancelling headphones to fire evacuations, was now being applied at Merchiston. (Action: **PH**)
- 5.2 The Committee noted that the scheduled evacuations carried out at student residential accommodation were all assessed as unsatisfactory and that this was a recurring problem at the beginning of every new academic session; an improvement was expected after the importance of observing emergency evacuation procedures had been reinforced.

b) Unscheduled

- 5.2 The details of unscheduled evacuations during the period were received and **noted**. The Director, Property & Facilities advised the Committee that the new student residences at Fountainbridge would have automatic timers installed on cooking appliances to cut down the risk of pan and other cooking related fires.

The Committee otherwise **noted** the report.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICES SUMMARY: SEPTEMBER 2012 to JANUARY 2013

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- 6.1 The summary of Health and Safety Notices issued during the reporting period was received and **noted**. The Committee was advised that the bag with asbestos markings found at the Merchiston campus was unlikely to belong to the University, given the very tightly controlled procedures in place for the handling and disposal of asbestos.

7. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT

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- 7.1 The Director, Human Resources introduced the new report, which had been prepared by Santia, and the Convenor sought members' comments on its presentation and format. The Committee **agreed** that it was content with both.
- 7.2 In response to a comment about the sharp rise in the number of "Mental and Behavioural Disorders" reported, the Committee was advised that this trend was being seen across other HEIs (in both staff and students) and by other employers and was widely considered to be the result of a greater confidence in reporting such disorders, rather than an actual increase in the numbers. It was **agreed** that some narrative to explain rises or decreases in the statistics should be included in future reports.
(Action: **MC**)

The Committee otherwise **noted** the report.

8. CONCERNS REGARDING THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

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- 8.1 M Mackay spoke to his paper and highlighted the Trade Union concerns and in particular the frustrations arising from the poor service delivery by the current provider. In response to these concerns and the comment that several other HEIs had reverted to an in-house OHS provision, the Director, Human Resources advised the Committee that University management shared the concerns expressed about service delivery and that a disproportionate amount of time was spent on managing the current OHS contract and its administrative failings. However, comparisons could not be made with other HEIs as some e.g. had their own health centres and/or delivered an academic Occupational Health programme and it was not feasible to establish an in-house service at Edinburgh Napier on these and cost grounds.
- 8.2 The Director sought to re-assure the Committee that the lessons learned from the current difficulties were being fed into the tender process but that expectations about service delivery would have to be managed since the University could not have a full time service provision. It was commented that the majority of referrals were made by management and depending on the individual circumstances and the urgency of the presenting health problem, it was expected that referrals would be assessed and managed by phone and/or face to face consultations as appropriate.
- 8.3 The Director outlined the tender process and in response to questions advised the Committee that:
- the tender would go through the OJEU process;
 - there may be scope with APUC's preferred providers to share facilities and provision but they may choose not to bid under the OJEU process;
 - the Trade Unions could have a representative on the panel convened to consider the tender bids

The Director agreed to check whether the tender documentation contained a requirement for the new provider to appoint a representative to attend Committee meetings.
(Action: **MC**)

9. INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY ACCESS DEFIBRILLATORS HS (12/13) 15

- 9.1 The Director, Human Resources spoke to her paper and added that the order for the three community defibrillators from the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) had been processed, delivery was imminent and the requisite training by the SAS would be offered thereafter. The Committee **noted** the paper and welcomed this very good news.

10. ASBESTOS IN THE WORKPLACE HS (12/13) 16

- 10.1 The Director, Human Resources spoke to the paper and confirmed that the University's Asbestos policy had been updated in line with the comments made by the Committee at its previous meeting. Subject to some grammatical and textual revisions to the wording, the Committee **agreed** that it was satisfied with these amendments to the policy. (Action: **Acting Clerk** to pass revisions to Assistant Director, Property & Facilities)

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8 May 2013 at 4.00pm in Room 7.B.14, Sighthill