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HS(11/12)17
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UNIVERSITY COURT
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1 February 2012
at 4.00pm in Room 2/04, Craiglockhart Campus

- PRESENT:** Ms M Ali (Court)(Convenor); Mr J Goodlet (Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Mr M Mackay (UNISON); Mr G McCarra (Court); Mr R Mason (EIS/ULA); Ms M Philip (UNISON); Ms P Woodburn (Court); Dr G Webber (University Safety Officer/University Secretary); Mr R Wright (Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences).
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs M Cook (Director, Human Resources); Mr P Hughes (Director, Property & Facilities Services); Ms L Young (Head of Health & Safety); Mr J McDermott (Governance Officer)(Clerk).
- APOLOGIES:** Ms L Addison (Occupational Health Advisor, Santia plc); Professor M Darlison (Biological Safety Officer); Professor J Ensor (Business School); Dr M Sanderson (EIS/ULA); Professor Dame Joan Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr T Zanelli (President NSA)(Court).

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed all participants to the meeting. The apologies were **noted**.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2011 (HS(11/12)08)

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

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) Traffic Management around Sighthill Campus (Minute 3 (b))

- 3.1 It was noted that representation continued to be made to the City Council, under whose jurisdiction the matter falls, with a view to gaining action on this matter. It was noted that the Council had yet to publicise the intended road markings. The six-week consultation period would follow before – all being well – the road would be marked and thus able to be policed by the authorities to ensure safe usage.
- 3.2 It was noted that temporary arrangements continued to be in place for the ‘turning circle’ and that the Director of Property & Facilities Services would explore other possible solutions to alleviate the problem, including the possibility of introducing a one-way system.
- 3.3 The report was **noted** and it was **agreed** that a further report would be given to the next meeting.
- b) Serious Accident : April-September 2011 (Minute 6.2)**
- 3.4 It was **noted** that there were no known repercussions regarding the serious incident discussed at the previous meeting.

4. ACCIDENT STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011 TO JANUARY 2012

a) Summary Statistics (HS(11/12)09)

4.1 The summary of accident statistics during the latest reporting period was **noted**.

b) Serious Accidents / Hazardous Incidents/Fire Incidents (HS(11/12)10)

4.2 The circumstances of the two serious accidents and one hazardous incident in the reporting period were reported.

4.3 It was noted that a RIDDOR report had been submitted with regard to one accident and that risk assessments had been conducted. Further training had been recommended for staff using kitchen equipment and the piece of equipment in question had now been withdrawn from use.

4.4 It was noted that the second accident had involved ceiling panels at Merchiston and that the Committee had previously been informed of problems with these. The Director of Property & Facilities Services undertook to investigate the issue, including whether the induction for contractors included the proper return of ceiling tiles after removal for work.

4.5 The Committee received reassurance that the circumstances surrounding the hazardous incident had resulted in procedures being reviewed and appropriate action taken. It was noted that the lifts at Merchiston would be replaced as part of works being undertaken at that campus in the coming months.

4.6 It was welcomed that there had been no fire incidents in the reporting period.

4.7 The paper was **noted**.

5. EMERGENCY EVACUATION REPORTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011 TO JANUARY 2012

a) Scheduled (HS(11/12)11)

5.1 The summary of emergency evacuation reports during the latest reporting period was discussed and **noted**. It was noted that the issues identified during each of the scheduled evacuations had been logged for action. Members requested that future reports contain an indication of how long evacuations of each site should take.

b) Unscheduled (HS(11/12)12)

5.2 It was reported that the issue that had been raised at the previous meeting regarding Merchiston Campus was being addressed. This related to safety doors and the public address system. The role of Fire Wardens was noted to be crucial to ensure the successful evacuation of buildings, particularly in the event that staff and/or students sought to remain in buildings or to re-enter them before being given the 'all-clear'.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICES SUMMARY FOR SEPTEMBER 2011 TO JANUARY 2012 (HS(11/12)13)

6.1 The report was received and it was **noted** that there had been no Health and Safety Notices issued during the reporting period.

7. MANAGEMENT OF FIRST AID & REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH SURVEILLANCE (HS(11/12)14)

- 7.1 The Committee received and **noted** the paper, which gave an update on the arrangements for First Aid provision within the University. It was reported that the paper had been subject to discussion with the recognised trade unions and that all parties had agreed the outcome.
- 7.2 in discussion it was noted that the suitability of the First Aid Room at Merchiston would be reviewed, especially since there were significant movements planned on that site during the campus refurbishment. It was also agreed to investigate the possibility of introducing “community access defibrillators” across the University.
- 7.3 It was noted that the arrangements as detailed took into account the moves to the Sighthill Campus and offered reassurance that steps were in place to ensure a suitable distribution of trained first-aiders across the University. It was further noted that guidance from the Health & Safety Executive had been followed where appropriate. The Committee welcomed the paper.

8. SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS 8 DECEMBER 2011 – UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS (HS(11/12)15)

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the concerns expressed by the UNISON representatives regarding the actions of University management on the specific date in December. It was noted that Edinburgh – along with the rest of central Scotland – had experienced severe winds on that day and that many public bodies, including the other universities, had closed for at least part of the day. Edinburgh Napier had not closed and had endeavoured to operate as normal, including to run the examinations that had been scheduled for that day. A number of line-managers had exercised their discretion and had permitted staff to go home – particularly those with far to travel and/or with childcare responsibilities.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the Post-Incident Report (Annex A of the paper), which highlighted the management actions in the course of the day, along with the risks considered and the decisions made. It was emphasised that communications with staff and students had included the consistent message to not take unnecessary risks when travelling. It had been made clear to students that procedures for mitigating factors would apply should they be unable to attend their examinations.
- 8.3 It was noted that police advice had been for the public not to travel during certain periods. It was further noted that University management had taken into account other factors, such as the regular reports from the Met Office and local and national travel operators.
- 8.4 In discussion, the implications of the management actions were considered and the Committee was keen to focus on the lessons to be learnt in order to inform future practice. It was noted that there would always be judgement required from senior management and that it was very difficult to legislate for extreme / unusual circumstances.
- 8.5 In guiding future actions, the Committee agreed that a key factor was the frequency and consistency of communications. In particular it was suggested that during any

future incident, management should issue regular reports, even when the advice had not changed and there was nothing further to say, as otherwise this could be seen as an absence of reports. It was agreed that in future each update should state that there would be a further update by a certain time, so that people were aware that they were getting the very latest information.

8.6 It was further **agreed** that the list of risks/issues considered in the Post-Incident Report provided a useful template to inform future practice. It was **agreed** to check the view of the student body on this list. The Committee agreed that the operation of exams should not be an over-riding factor in future decisions over whether to close or not. It was noted that the Risk Committee would also consider the Post-Incident Report and any further lessons to be learnt from the experience.

8.7 In summary, it was agreed to **note**:

- the concerns raised in the paper and ensuing discussion;
- the actions taken by management on the day and subsequently;
- the learning points (especially around frequency and consistency of communication; that all appropriate advice would continue to be taken; and that key factors would be taken into account).

9. HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE PLAN TO INTRODUCE A RECHARGING SCHEME (HS(11/12)16)

9.1 The Committee was informed of the potential implications of the proposed new practice by the Health & Safety Executive. The information was **noted** and it was agreed to keep a weather eye on this and any other developments from the HSE.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 9th May 2012 at 4.00pm in Room 7.B.14, Sighthill