

APPROVED
CIRCULATED

UNIVERSITY COURT
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 2 June 2010
at 4.00pm in the Castle Room, Craighouse Campus

PRESENT: Dr L Burley (Court)(Convenor); Ms M Ali (Court); Professor M Darlison (Biological Safety Officer)(Faculty of HLSS Representative); Mr J Goodlet (UNITE); Mr M Mackay (UNISON); Mr G McCarra (Court); Ms M Philip (UNISON); Dr M Sanderson (EIS/ULA); Dr G Webber (University Safety Officer); Mr R Wright (Faculty of HLSS Representative).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs M Cook (Director, Human Resources); Mr G Ferguson (Assistant Director, Property & Facilities Services); Mr P Hughes (Director, Property & Facilities Services); Ms L Young (Head of Health & Safety); Mr J McDermott (Governance Officer)(Clerk).

APOLOGIES: Ms K Bylinska (President NSA)(Court); Mr O Cruikshank (NSA)(Court); Mr D Davidson (Principal's Representative); Dr J Ensor (Principal's Representative); Professor J Kubie (Principal's Representative); Professor B Sloan (Court).

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed participants to the meeting, and especially welcomed Mr Wright, who had recently joined the Committee as a member drawn from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences. The Convenor also welcomed Mr Ferguson, Assistant Director of Facilities Services, who was attending to assist in particular with the item on Health & Safety Policies. The apologies were **noted**.
- 1.2 Members were thanked for agreeing to the rearranged date for this meeting, particularly since the meeting scheduled for February had been cancelled. Some papers had been circulated at that time in order to keep members abreast of issues and although these were referenced on the agenda, it was intended that discussion would focus on the more recent reports.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2009 (HS(09/10)12)

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

3. MATTER ARISING

- a) Update on Membership of Committee (Minute 2.3) (HS(09/10)19)**
- 3.1 A paper detailing some revisions to the membership of the Committee since the previous meeting was received and **noted**. It was reported that a member of the Occupational Health Service had not yet been nominated to attend the Committee, although a commitment had been received that a suitable nominee would be in place in time for the meetings in Session 2010/11.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (HS(09/10)20)

- 4.1 The Committee considered the draft Annual Report, prior to its submission to University Court. Congratulations were offered to the Health & Safety team and other colleagues concerned with the attainment of the various awards and other recognition gained in the reporting period. Of particular mention was the award of the prestigious RoSPA Gold Medal, which recognised the consistently high health and safety standards of the University over the last seven years. It was further noted that the University was working towards retaining the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award.
- 4.2 The Head of Health & Safety highlighted to members the key elements of the Report, noting that in the main, procedures were working well. In discussion it was noted that Edinburgh Napier had a low rate of incidents compared with UK universities as a whole. It was also noted that there was a plan for work over the next twelve months to seek to ensure that the position continued.
- 4.3 The Director of HR spoke to the section on the Occupational Health Service, which noted the change of provider in the autumn of 2009. In preparation for the new provider, the opportunity had been taken to overhaul the contract, with the outcome that a very different service was now being provided to the University. It was recognised that significant teething problems had been experienced in the initial months, but that the service now seemed to be as intended. The HR department would continue to monitor the situation closely and take remedial action if required. In discussion, some concern was raised regarding the use of telephone interviews for staff being referred to the OHS. It was emphasised, however, that this was intended to be for initial interviews and that any follow-up conversations would normally be conducted face-to-face. The Committee **agreed** to continue to monitor the provision.
- 4.4 The report also highlighted that the Care First counselling service had seen an increase in use over the past 12 months, which in part likely reflected the increased promotion to staff of the service. The opportunity had been taken to include a presence from Care First at the annual Health Promotion Day, which was a key component of the work of the Health & Well-Being group and which had again been very successful. It was noted that the on-going efforts to improve the health and well-being of the University's staff included a programme of on-campus lunchtime walks as well as 'healthy choice' options being available in all catering outlets. It was noted that a budget had been requested to support the activities for the next year, and that free advice and support would continue to be sought wherever possible.
- 4.5 Thanks were offered to all staff who had contributed to the creation of such a positive report and the Committee **approved** the Annual Report for submission to University Court.

5. ACCIDENT STATISTICS 11 JANUARY TO 4 APRIL 2010

a) Summary Statistics (HS(09/10)21)

5.1 The analysis of accident statistics during the latest reporting period was discussed and **noted**. The reports for the previous period (HS(09/10)13 & HS(09/10)14) had been issued to members in February.

b) Serious Accidents / Hazardous Incidents/Fire Incidents (HS(09/10)22)

5.2 The Committee considered the detail of the two serious accidents that had occurred and noted that they underlined the need for risk assessments to be conducted and for procedures to be followed properly. It was noted that a full investigation had been conducted in both cases and recommendations made accordingly. It was further noted that light fittings and other hanging objects were checked when possible, normally when other maintenance was being conducted.

5.3 The Committee considered the detail of the fire incidents had occurred during the period and it was again noted that a full investigation had been conducted in each case, with recommendations made accordingly. One instance of a fire-detection device not activating was now the subject of a detailed investigation.

5.4 The report was **noted**.

6. EMERGENCY EVACUATION REPORTS

a) Scheduled (HS(09/10)23)

6.1 The analysis of emergency evacuations during the latest reporting period was discussed and **noted**. The reports for the previous period (HS(09/10)15 & HS(09/10)16) had been issued to members in February.

6.2 Concern was expressed at the reported instance of fire wardens being subjected to abusive language from students when trying to evacuate the Merchiston Campus. It was intended to follow up such instances in future. The evacuation of students with Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) was discussed and it was noted the Health & Safety team relied on individual schools to highlight the requirement of individuals. It was noted that the Student Affairs Special Needs and Diversity Team could perhaps be requested to supply the information directly.

6.3 It was noted that the smaller campuses that had not been included for scheduled evacuations in the current round would be tested at an early stage of the next cycle. It was noted that this would include the Forum and other rented buildings. In further discussion, it was emphasised that the Campus Principals, supported as appropriate by the Campus User Groups, had responsibility for ensuring that areas of buildings remained clear of debris. The issue of using only enclosed skips when adjacent to buildings would be taken up by Facilities Services.

b) Unscheduled (HS(09/10)24)

6.4 The paper detailing the unscheduled evacuations during the period was received and the key points **noted**. In particular, although overall the instances had reduced, the number of instances of evacuations being triggered in student residences by malicious acts remained a concern.

7. FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS INITIATIVES IN STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (HS(09/10)25)

7.1 The Committee was informed of the fire safety awareness initiatives that were underway to try to ensure safe and responsible behaviour among students in residential accommodation. It was noted that the residences could be considered a high risk. Lessons had been drawn from experience and information re-packaged into 'student-friendly' format to seek to maximise the impact. The packs included information on cooking tips and healthy eating as well as safety and codes of conduct. The combined initiatives would particularly seek to target the new intake of students in the autumn. It was noted that the information had been prepared in liaison with the NSA and that the Fire & Rescue Service were content with the steps being taken. The assistance of NSA in reinforcing the messages was recognised as valuable and the Convenor undertook to write to the President to convey the spirit of the discussion. Thanks were offered to the Health & Safety team and the others involved in preparing the information.

DECISION:

7.2 The Convenor to write to the NSA President in the terms described above.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICES SUMMARY (HS(09/10)26)

8.1 It was reported that no Health and Safety Notices had been issued during the current period. This was recognised as reflecting in positive manner the control of contractors. The previous report (HS(09/10)17) had been issued in February. The report was **noted**.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES (HS(09/10)27)

9.1 The University Safety Officer introduced the pack of updated policies on Health & Safety matters for the information and comment of the Committee. It was noted that on receipt of comments from the Committee, the Safety Officer would approve the policies on behalf of the Principal and they would be disseminated around the University and implemented. It was noted that the various policies had been prepared in conjunction with trade union representatives, whose input had been invaluable. Specialist advice had also been taken wherever necessary.

9.2 The Assistant Director of Property & Facilities Services, who had led the exercise, reported that the suite of refreshed policies had been prepared by building on existing policies and procedures, identifying gaps and updating where necessary, especially in instances where legislation or Government regulations had changed. It was also reported that there was a comprehensive suite of guidance notes and codes of practice in place as well as a full training programme to support the operational implementation of the policies. The refreshed policies were listed as relating to: Asbestos; Abrasive Wheels; Control of Vibration; Electrical Portable Appliance Testing; Control of Legionella Bacteria within Water Systems; Working at Heights; and Working Safely in Confined Spaces.

9.3 Some comments were offered on the policies and members were invited to pass any further comments directly to the Safety Officer within the next ten days, after which they would be approved. The Policies were commended and thanks offered for the significant work put in by all concerned, and in particular Mr Ferguson, Mr Mackay and the Health & Safety Team.

10. THE MANAGEMENT OF FIRST AID & REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

10.1 The Committee received an oral report that the needs analyses were still being conducted by the OHS provider and that a report would be prepared ahead of the next meeting.

DECISION:

10.2 To receive a report at the next meeting informed by the outcome of the needs analyses into the management of first aid across the University and the requirements of health surveillance.

**11. RISK MANAGEMENT – UNIVERSITY ‘TOP RISKS’ EXCEPTIONS REPORT
(HS(09/10)28)**

11.1 The Committee received and **noted** the monitoring report of the academic year regarding the top risk which relates to preparing for a major incident. The ‘Winter’ report (HS(09/10)18) had been issued to members in February. It was noted that there was again no change in the status of the risk and that the mitigating actions continued to be carried out. It was further noted that the pandemic flu project had now been closed. The Committee was informed that the revised matrix for 2010/11 would be considered by Court at its forthcoming meeting and that reports would be provided accordingly in the coming Session.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

12.1 Members were requested to confirm their availability for the provisional dates of meetings for 2010-11, which were noted as:

Wednesday 13 October 2010
Wednesday 02 February 2011
Wednesday 11 May 2011

12.2 All meetings would commence at 4.00 pm. Members would be notified of venues once the dates are confirmed.

13. VALEDICTION

13.1 The Committee noted that Mr Cruickshank, whose term of office at NSA would conclude in the summer, would therefore cease to be a member of the Committee. Good wishes were expressed to Mr Cruickshank in his future career.

13.2 The Convenor noted that this would be her final meeting of the Committee, as she would demit office as a member of Court at the end of the Session. She expressed thanks to all members who had assisted with the work of the Committee during her eight-year convenorship, making particular mention of the Head of Health & Safety and the Trade Union representatives, who had made significant contribution to the Committee and to the safety of the University.

13.3 The University Secretary expressed appreciation on behalf of the Committee to the Convenor, who had led the Committee in excellent fashion over the years, setting a constructive tone that was replicated throughout this important aspect of the University’s work. Members concurred unanimously.