

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the University Health and Safety Committee held on 21 February 2012

- Present: Professor S Croft (Chair), Mr F Aitken, Mr R Buckle, Ms P Collins, Ms L McCarthy, Mr C Moody, Ms C Quinney, Mr E Ryan, Mr N Sanders, Mr P Sweetman
- Apologies: Ms C Allender, Mr A Bastable, Ms L Burton, Mr L Cartwright, Mrs S Foy, Mr M Gluhovic, Ms H Green, Dr M Joy, Ms S Matthews, Dr D Mitchell, Mrs A Pulford, Mr C Sury
- In attendance: Ms M Barwick, Mrs E Brown, Dr I MacKirdy, Mr C Mayfield (item 19/11-12)

14/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2011 be approved.

15/11-12. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

REPORTED:

That no conflicts of interest were raised.

16/11-12 Driving on Business (minute 05/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

That a meeting had been convened to review the University's risk assessment for driving for work regarding current practice and the development of a consistent, risk-based approach for monitoring driving mileage and hours.

17/11-12 Annual Review of Incidents

CONSIDERED:

A report from Claire Beament, Health and Safety Adviser, on incidents during 2011 (paper UHSC 08/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

(a) That bullet 5 should read:

- 5. Two Departments, the Estates Office (7 RIDDORs) and the Commercial Group (4 RIDDORs) accounted for 79% of staff reportable incidents.*

- (b) That the number of incidents and the staff incidence rate reportable to the Health and Safety Executive were at their lowest since recording began 13 years ago and the incidence rate was close to the average for the Higher Education sector.
- (c) That 'slips and trips' and 'lifting and handling' were the most frequent causes particularly of serious injuries and cleaning staff continued to be the most at risk group.
- (d) That continuing to learn from incidents with specific focus on where serious incidents occur would deliver further reductions in these incidents.

(by Ms P Collins)

- (e) That in the Commercial Group, general managers now participated in the monthly Directors' Health and Safety meetings and had agreed to roll out practices developed within the Group to encourage staff participation in the review of incidents, procedures, risk assessments and sharing of learning.
- (f) That the Commercial Group following their award in 2011 for food safety would be presenting an award to recognise best health and safety practice at their annual awards evening in 2012.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (g) That the positive progress achieved by the Commercial Group was commendable though improvement must continue.

18/11-12 Annual Review of Fire Incidents

CONSIDERED:

A report from Chris Mayfield, Fire Safety Adviser, on fire incidents during 2011 including suggestions on measures that could be taken to reduce the incidence of fire alarms in residential premises (paper UHSC 09/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Mr C Mayfield)

- (a) That the incidence of fires per 1000 study bedrooms was significantly better than the average for the Higher Education sector
- (b) That the management of call out of the Fire and Rescue Services for non-residential premises was significantly better than that of many Higher Education institutions with the incidence of false alarms being deemed 'acceptable' when benchmarked against the relevant British Standard (BS 5839-1).
- (c) That the incidence of false alarms in residential accommodation was high when compared to the relevant British Standard (BS 5839-1) and close to the point where ways of reducing the incidence rate should be investigated.

- i. That options to reduce the incidence of fire alarms in corridors due to smoke from cooking were being reviewed including technical solutions such as 'door screamers' since other Higher Education institutions had adopted similar products and had seen a reduction in the incidence.
 - ii. That more detailed analysis of false alarm incidents would be carried out to identify clusters that could be targeted specifically.
- (d) That the University participated in various networks in order to learn from the experiences of other institutions and organisations.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (e) That the report and benchmarking information was very helpful.
- (f) That options which encourage positive behaviour in residences would have the greatest impact.

RESOLVED:

That consultation should take place with student representatives before options to reduce the incidence of fire alarms in residences were finalised.

RECOMMENDED:

That a benchmark (as opposed to a target) figure of less than 20 alarms per 1,000 detector heads for residential premises be adopted by the University Health and Safety Executive Committee.

19/11-12 Annual Health and Safety Report, 2011

CONSIDERED:

A report from Iain MacKirdy, Director of Health and Safety, on health and safety performance during 2011 (paper UHSC 10/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the works required by property insurers in catering kitchens had been completed.
- (b) That the categorisation of the severity potential for significant hazards provided a basis for review and clarification of the extent of significant hazards and for training and development of staff.
- (c) That work had been undertaken in the Commercial Group and Estates to review working practices to reduce musculoskeletal injuries.
- (d) That the purpose of the review of health and safety across the University being led by the Health and Safety Department was to help the institution and departments understand progress and areas requiring further work and would involve an assessment of key hazards and of management issues.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Report should include an update on health and further details on the review of health and safety.
- (b) That the Report Summary should reflect the need to continue to improve health and safety performance.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2011 be recommended to the University Health and Safety Executive Committee for approval subject to its amendment as resolved by the Committee.

20/11-12 UCEA Annual H&S Report and Action Plan

RECEIVED:

The Annual H&S Report (paper UHSC 11/11-12) and Action Plan (paper UHSC 12/11-12) for the Higher Education sector

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

That the health and safety team had regular dialogue with UCEA and sector associations.

21/11-12 National Perspective

RECEIVED:

A paper from Iain MacKirdy, Director of Health and Safety, summarising the action that the Government was taking in response to the Lofstedt Report on Health and Safety Legislation (paper UHSEC 06/11-12).

22/11-12 Electronic Cigarettes

CONSIDERED:

A paper from Claire Beament, Health and Safety Advisor, on the implications of electronic cigarettes (paper UHSC 13/11-12).

REPORTED:

That electronic cigarettes did not help smokers stop the habit of smoking, were indistinguishable from regular cigarettes and inhibited people from challenging smoking activities, and activated smoke detectors.

RESOLVED:

That student representatives should be consulted over this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

That, subject to consultation with student representatives, the Smoking Policy be extended to prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes wherever smoking is prohibited in the Smoking Policy.

23/11-12

Dates of future meetings

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 17 May 2012 at 11:00 in the Council Chamber, University House.