

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Minutes of the University Health and Safety Committee
held on 20 May 2010**

- Present: Prof M Whitby (Chair), Mr N Sanders, Mr R Buckle, Mrs C Quinney, Mr A Twiss, Ms M Barwick, Ms C Allender, Ms P Collins, Mr E Ryan, Mr L Cartwright, Mr K Stokes, Ms C Ayres
- In attendance: Dr I MacKirdy, Ms J Rawlinson, Mr M Stacey, Ms J Poole, Ms C Beament, Mr A Wyss
- Apologies: Mr S Bedder, Ms L McCarthy, Ms S Matthews, Mr M Joy, Dr D Mitchell, Ms S Foy, Ms A Pulford, Ms K Drakeley, Ms L Burton, Mr A Bastable, Mr F Aitken, Ms K Hughes

17/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2010 be approved.

18/09-10 Driving on business (minute UHSC 10/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

An update from the Director of Health and Safety that the revision of health and safety guidance for driving on business would be undertaken over the summer and that the document would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

19/09-10 Annual Health and Safety Report for 2009 (minute UHSC 13/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

- a) An update from Claire Beament that a benchmarking exercise with other similar campus based universities had confirmed that the incidence of reportable injuries to staff at Warwick was above the average for this group, and that this would continue to be monitored.
- b) An update from Julie Rawlinson, HR Manager on the guidance that Human Resources and Occupational Health had produced for Heads of Department and staff on the implementation of 'fit notes' and the communication of associated information that had been rolled out across the University.
- c) An update from Julie Rawlinson, HR Manager that a provisional date of 15 February 2011 had been assigned for the Spring meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee (UHSC) to enable completion of the Health and Safety Annual Report prior to the Committee.

- d) An update from the Director of Health & Safety that the University Health and Safety Executive Committee (UHSEC) had approved the Annual Health and Safety Report 2009, and that the Report had been sent to Senate and Council.

20/09-10 Staff Attitude to Health and Safety

RECEIVED:

An update from the Chair that the question in the Pulse Survey 2010 that "I recognise the Health and Safety aspects of my job" had shown significant and consistent progress from the previous two years, and that this was a reflection of the good work of the Committee in developing awareness of health and safety.

21/09-10 Joint Inspections (minute UHSC 12/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

An update from Carolyn Quinney, Operations Manager, Sports Centre, who confirmed that the drinking fountain pressure had been resolved.

RECEIVED:

A report from Claire Beament, Health and Safety Advisor, on the findings of inspections carried out by members of the Committee of the Terry Price Building, WHRI (paper UHSC 10/09-10) and of areas of grounds in the central campus (paper UHSC 11/09-10).

- a) Terry Price Building (paper UHSC 10/09-10)

REPORTED:

(by Claire Beament, Health and Safety Advisor)

- i) That the laboratories were generally well-managed with good housekeeping and evidence in each laboratory that staff inductions had taken place.
- ii) That the main issues were lack of use of spill trays and segregation of different families of chemicals, however all necessary actions had been instigated and completed promptly following the inspection.

(by Charlotte Allender, ProspectTrade Union representative)

- iii) That health and safety compliance was good within Warwick HRI and that the union was pleased that management had actioned the issues that had been brought to their attention.

(by Nick Sanders)

- iv) That the report and response demonstrated a positive health and safety culture within WHRI which should be built upon with the establishment of the School of Life Sciences.

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- v) That the use of safety containers for highly inflammable substances was an example of good practice that the Health and Safety Department would promote to other departments.

b) Central Campus Grounds (paper UHSC 11/09-10)

REPORTED:

(by Claire Beament, Health and Safety Advisor)

- i) That the assessment was undertaken recently, was generally positive, and only a couple of issues had been raised for the department to review.

(by Head of Estates Maintenance)

- ii) That the Estates Department was fully supportive of the joint inspections process and would consider the report, provide a management response, and take appropriate remedial action.

(by Nick Sanders)

- iii) That these inspections should not be announced in advance so that the Committee obtain a true reflection of the health and safety issues.

RESOLVED:

- a) That a programme of unannounced joint inspections would continue with staff responsible for the area being invited to attend during the inspections.
- b) That a communication would be placed on Insite to remind staff to report trip hazards to the Estates Help Desk.

22/09-10

Health and Safety Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Health & Safety illustrating how use of a range of performance measures could be used to monitor progress on health and safety at the University (paper UHSC 12/09-10 refers).

REPORTED: (by Director of Health and Safety)

- a) That in addition to reviews of those departments with the greatest risks, consideration would be given to measures that could be applied to all departments.
- b) That WHRI had made excellent progress on issues raised by the inspection and audit that was carried out in September 2008, and that all high priority actions had been completed, 88% of medium priority actions had been completed, 79% of low priority actions had been completed, and that the remaining actions were in progress.

23/09-10

Update on Accidents and Reportable Incidents

RECEIVED:

A report from Claire Beament, Health and Safety Advisor, on accidents and reportable incidents since the last Committee meeting (paper UHSC 13/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Claire Beament, Health and Safety Advisor)

- a) That there had been a downward trend in reportable injuries since January 2010.

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- b) That unsafe behaviour continued to be an underlying issue to many of the incidents.

(by the Chair)

- c) That the Committee should note that the University's record on reportable injuries to students had been lower than the national average in each of the last 5 years.

24/09-10

Health and Safety Culture and Planning

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Health & Safety on achieving an effective health and safety culture (paper UHSC 14/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- a) That the University Health and Safety Executive Committee (UHSEC) had endorsed the paper while recognising that culture change would take time and had instructed the Director of Health and Safety to proceed to plan and implement the proposals.

(by Nick Sanders)

- b) That whilst the paper demonstrated a significant commitment to health and safety there was a concern that the health and safety team was small and could not achieve everything at once, therefore a clear action plan would need to be devised that took into account learning experiences from other organisations and training tools that currently exist.
- c) That when a new Department or School was established, the aim should be to instil the desired culture and approach to health and safety at its design and inception.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee was supportive of the approach and proposals contained in the paper and in particular of the proposal to replace “Safety in the University” with more accessible and understandable health and safety guidance.

25/09-10

University Health and Safety Policy Statement

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Director of Health & Safety to replace the current Health and Safety Policy Statement (paper UHSC 15/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Roger Buckle)

- a) That it was a positive document compared to the previous Policy Statement.

(by Nick Sanders)

- b) That the Policy Statement should include more detail on the commitment to a just, learning, and flexible culture that delivers continuous improvement.

(by Eddie Ryan, Trade Union Representative)

- c) That the Policy Statement emphasised that health and safety was inclusive and that everyone had a role to play.

RECOMMENDED:

That the University Health and Safety Executive Committee approve the replacement of the current statement with the proposed Policy Statement taking account of the points raised by members.

26/09-10 Student Placements Health and Safety Policy and Guidance (minute UHSC 07/09-10 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health & Safety on University Health and Safety Policy and Guidance on Student Placements (paper UHSC 16/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- a) That the document was currently out for consultation and that the final draft was to be submitted to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and to the University Health and Safety Executive Committee during June for approval to enable training on the new risk based approach to be undertaken prior to placements starting in October 2010.

(by Nick Sanders)

- b) That the essential requirements of the Policy were clarity of understanding by all parties, preparation of the student, processes for enabling problems to be raised and resolved, and contingency plans.

(by the Chair)

- c) That the placement of students was taken seriously to ensure that students were not placed in danger and that this Policy provided helpful guidance to what practices should be happening.

RECOMMENDED:

That the University Health and Safety Executive Committee approve the Health and Safety Policy and Guidance on Student Placements.

27/09-10 Interim Fire Safety Policy

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health & Safety on the revision of the University's Fire Safety Policy (paper UHSC 17/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- a) That the University Health and Safety Executive Committee and Council had endorsed the removal of the Fire Control Policy in SITU Part 22 as it no longer reflected the current practice in the University, and had approved the interim policy which was subject to further consultation and the development of relevant appendices.

(by Head of Estates Maintenance)

- b) That reference to the responsibilities associated with specific posts should be reviewed.

(by Nick Sanders)

- c) That the style of the document should be reviewed with the Communications Department and that Heads of Department would need to be informed that they have these responsibilities.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supported the Interim Fire Safety Policy.

28/09-10

Occupational Health Surveillance

CONSIDERED:

A paper from Jane Poole, Senior Occupational Health Advisor, on the proposed text on Occupational Health Surveillance for inclusion in the University's health, safety and well-being arrangements (paper UHSC 18/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Jane Poole, Senior Occupational Health Adviser)

- a) That health surveillance requirements were set out in legislation, that the University had an obligation to undertake these in certain areas, that there appeared to be a lack of understanding among staff as to the purpose and benefits of health surveillance, and that the guidance had been developed to give clarity to these issues.

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- b) That UNITE had questioned the implications for staff who had negative results from health surveillance and what measures the University would put in place to assist such staff; and had expressed concern about the scale and nature of questions used in the health surveillance questionnaires.
- c) That the University was committed through the revised Sickness Management Policy to make reasonable adjustments where it could to support employees with injuries or ill health to remain at work or to return to work.

(by Eddie Ryan, Trade Union Representative)

- d) That another concern of Trade Union representatives related to apparent differences in application across the campus.

RECOMMENDED:

That the University Health and Safety Executive Committee approve the Occupational Health Surveillance document.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Health and Safety and Senior Occupational Health Advisor would review the health surveillance questionnaires and discuss these with Trade Union representatives of the Committee.

29/09-10

Dates of future meetings

REPORTED:

That dates of future meetings would be announced when the Committee Calendar for 2010/11 was finalised.