

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the University Health and Safety Committee
held on 14 October 2013

Present: Professor C Hughes (Chair), Ms L Burton, Mr R Buckle, Mr L Cartwright, Mr M Joy, Ms S Matthews, Ms L McCarthy, Mr D Mitchell, Mr N Sanders, Mr P Sweetman

Apologies: Ms C Allender, Mr A Bastable, Ms Z Buckland, Ms P Collins, Mrs S Foy, Ms H Green, Ms A Pulford, Ms C Quinney, Mr E Ryan

In attendance: Mrs C Farren, Dr I MacKirdy.

01/13-14 Apologies and welcome

The Chair welcomed back committee members.

02/13-14 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2013 be approved.

03/13-14 Matters arising from the minutes

REPORTED (by Chair):

That the Annual Health and Safety Report and Forward Strategy for Health and Safety were endorsed by the UHSEC.

That the effectiveness review had not progressed through Council, so there was no change to the UHSC or UHSEC.

04/13-14 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

REPORTED:

(a) That, should any members or attendees of the University Health and Safety Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared.

(by the Chair)

(b) That members of the University Health and Safety Committee were encouraged, wherever possible, to inform the Secretary prior to the meeting of any potential conflicts of interest, and were also invited to do so now if appropriate.

NOTE: No declarations were made.

05/13-14 Committee Business and Approach for 2013/14

REPORTED: (by Ms C Farren, Senior Health and Safety Advisor):

- (a) That as a result of the numbers of slips and trips occurring on campus, condition surveys of external areas and pathways and health and safety inspections of some of the more publicly accessible areas had been carried out, with others scheduled.

(by Chair):

- (b) That there would be a number of 'themes' for the forthcoming year with 'Health' being a main feature as well as tours, sharing of good practice and a recognition and promotion of health and safety scheme.

(by Dr I MacKirdy, Director of Health and Safety):

- (c) That the University Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy Statement was set out in the strategic health and safety goal in the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement which was also explicit in the requirements for health and safety risk management.
- (d) That there was guidance for Heads of Department on the range of approaches for improving health and safety.
- (e) That the Health and Safety Department programme involved focus on health, consolidating progress in the high hazard areas, developing common tools and processes to support departments, conducting inspections, auditing compliance with regulations, and providing health and safety management information.
- (f) That consideration was being given to supporting departments clarify their health and safety risk profile and action plans, noting this approach had already been piloted with the Estates Office.
- (g) That another Russell Group University was implementing the ISO 18001 health and safety standard which places emphasis on procedures and documentation.

(by Members):

- (h) That there were only a few references to 'wellbeing' within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement, and suggested consideration be given to the range of forums for addressing 'wellbeing'.
- (i) That the emphasis in the Policy Statement on engagement of staff was important, noting that the Strategic Goal emphasised the need to strive higher.
- (j) That the impact of any new initiatives requiring Departments to feedback information should be duly considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Senior Health and Safety Advisor investigate specific concerns raised by representatives about compliance on specific topics.

06/13-14 Terms of Reference & Membership

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the terms of reference and membership of the University Health and Safety Committee (paper UHSC 01/13-14, refers)

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Terms of Reference and membership be approved, noting that there should be a review considered at the meeting in May 2014 based on the developments in the Committee's role.
- (ii) That members should seek a suitable nominated replacement if they are unable to attend.

07/13-14 Staff Survey 2013

CONSIDERED:

The results of the Staff Survey and Stressor Questions for 2013 from the Director of Health and Safety (paper UHSC 02(a) and (b)/13-14, refers).

REPORTED: (by Dr I Mackirdy, Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the results overview had been published on the web and the Stressor Questions report was aligned with the HSE workplace stressors.

(by Ms McCarthy, on behalf of the UCU):

- (b) That in her opinion it was good practice for an institution to have a statement of policy that staff had the right to raise concerns if they felt their work-life balance or their 'wellbeing' was being unduly affected by their work.
- (c) That it was the view of the UCU that there had been differences in the way that Heads of Department had handled meetings with academics about their performance against the Research Excellence Framework, 'REF', and there should be clearer guidance to Heads of Department before REF 2018/19.
- (d) That the UCU considered staff morale had been adversely affected by a Times Higher Education article which indicated an 11% redundancy figure for the University of Warwick.

(by Members):

- (e) That further clarification of processes and guidelines for dealing with the range of policies associated with Dignity at Work, Stress, Sickness Absence, and Performance Management may reduce misunderstanding and misinterpretation.
- (f) That support was available to Departments and their staff from Learning and Development, Human Resources and from Student Support which also provides services to staff.
- (g) That consideration should be given to seeking information other universities incorporate into their staff surveys.
- (h) That there could be benefit in sharing of 'good practice' by Departments which scored well in the Pulse survey.

(by the Chair):

- (i) That the Times Higher Education article was factually inaccurate.
- (j) That Human Resources were reviewing the Dignity at Work and Study Policy and the role of Dignity contacts.

08/13-14 Health and Safety Incidents

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor on incidents for the period October 2012 to September 2013 (paper UHSC 03/13-14, refers).

REPORTED (by Ms C Farren):

- (a) That slips, trips and falls (on the level) continued to be the most regularly reported incident category with a number resulting in time lost.
- (b) That over a 12 month period 6 accidents to staff, students and members of the public and a further 7 incidents resulting in staff taking more than 8 days off work had been reported to the HSE.
- (c) That there had generally been fewer days taken off as a consequence of a work related incident than reported last year.
- (d) That changes in the way the Health and Safety Department record incident categories had enabled greater interpretation of data and more valuable information being passed to departments.
- (e) That 18 road traffic incidents (not involving injury) and 6 incidents involving bicycles had been reported through the online reporting system in the last year. These were drawn out of the data as concern had been raised at the numbers of incidents occurring.

(by Members):

- (f) That the start of term had brought about an increase in students found to be walking in the road or crossing at inappropriate locations; leading in one case to a road traffic accident on Gibbet Hill Road with the student taken to hospital and subsequently being released.
- (g) That concern was raised regarding the speed of vehicles on University Road.

(by the Director of Health and Safety):

- (h) That traffic management was on the Estates master plan and that new builds such as the NAIC had already considered the implications of pedestrians and existing pavement width.
- (i) That the crossing route between University House and Scarman was already being progressed by the Estates Office in consultation with the Highways authority.

RESOLVED:

That the Students Union should be consulted in relation to a number of issues to target student behaviour.

09/13-14 Fire Safety

RECEIVED:

Three papers from Chris Mayfield, University Fire Safety Advisor on:

- a. The most significant fire risks and contingency planning regarding strike action by members of the Fire & Rescue Services (paper UHSC 04/13-14, refers).
- b. Fire activity since January 2013 and plans for 2013/2014 (paper UHSC 05/13-14, refers).
- c. Information on fire incidents for the period January to September 2013 (paper UHSC 06/13-14, refers).

10/13-14 Committee Plan for the Year

CONSIDERED:

Proposals for the Committee's programme of business for 2013/14 were discussed which include Recognition and Promotion of Health and Safety and future tours.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the working group for the Recognition and Promotion of Health and Safety scheme working group would include Ms C Quinney, Mr R Buckle, Ms A Pulford, Ms L Burton and representatives from the Health and Safety Department.
- (ii) That two tours would be scheduled for 2013/14 to include the Sports Centre, led by Ms C Quinney and the MAS Building led by Mr R Buckle with the tours to take place out of term time and between committee meetings.

11/13-14 Any other business

Items raised to be discussed at next meeting.

12/13-14 Dates of future meetings

11 th February 2014	14:00 to 16:00 in CMR.1.0
15 th May 2014	11:30 to 13:30 in CMR.1.0