



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Safety
Services.

Minutes Health and Safety Committee

Date: 15 March 2010

Present: Dr Philip K Harvey, Registrar and Secretary in the Chair

Mr Ashman, Dr Bingle, Ms Cresswell, Mrs Edwards-Holland, Mr Hallam, Mr King,
Dr Pitt, Ms Rickard, Mrs Stephenson, Mr Thomas, Mrs Woods

Secretary: Miss Dionne Edwards

In attendance: Mr Lowe

Apologies to: Miss Dionne Edwards

Dr Harvey welcomed all the Members to the meeting and new Member – Yvonne Stephenson (UNITE/AMICUS) was introduced.

Apologies were received from Mrs Basford, Ms Brown, Prof Burnett, Mr Cameron, Mr Hewitt, Dr Millington, Mr Pedder, Ms Robson

Action by

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 November 2009, having been circulated were approved and signed.

2. Matters Arising

On Minute 2.0 – Movement of Liquid Nitrogen Dewars.

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that with regard to concerns raised by the School of Medicine relating to the movement of dewars over the rough tarmac surfaces, C Road had been resurfaced by NHS so the instability problems are no longer as serious as previously reported. The Medical School is also reviewing the replacement of trolleys.

On Minute 4.0 – Health and Safety Inspection Update on Outstanding Issues.

Mr Thomas informed the Members of the outstanding items at Jessop West which had been confirmed by Estates:-

- Fire signage concerns - all fire signage has been securely fixed to the concrete soffits.
- Tea points - shelving by sink units have been installed in all locations.
- Noise levels – a budget cost for the provision of carpet to the corridor areas has been provided. Estates intend to provide costs for individually-identified areas.

- Solar film to reduce glare in the SOMLAL 1st floor reception area will not be installed due to concerns by the M&E Consultant. In addition, all but 2 staff have relocated from the reception area into an adjacent office and no concerns have been expressed by those remaining in the reception area.

On Minute 4.0 – Health and Safety Inspection – Workload Allocation.

Mrs Edwards-Holland informed the Committee that at present no discussions have taken place between Human Resources and the Trade Unions. The Faculty has been contacted and workload allocation arrangements are to be resolved on an individual basis. It was agreed that generic workload concerns should be raised via appropriate channels, including the Joint Unions Campus Committee (JUCC). Any health and safety implications would be reported to the Health and Safety Committee.

On Minute 7.0 – Work Related Driving Policy.

At the last Health and Safety Committee meeting Ms Woods requested that reference to 'working hours' be included in the Policy (Point 3.6). This had not been included in the policy as it is too lengthy. The relevant information had been posted on the Transport Services web site alongside the policy and a copy sent to Ms Woods.

3. Annual Report – Safety Services

Mr Thomas presented the Annual Report for Safety Services and reported that the current position on health and safety in the University continues to be very positive with good progress on most fronts. The response to the fire drills showed a distinct improvement on residential properties; academic properties were again good. New automatic fire detection and warning systems have been installed in Portobello and the Kroto Institute.

The number of emergency incidents has fallen by 15% compared to 2008 and there has been a significant reduction in false fire alarms on academic campus. The total number of accidents and incidents was up 12%, 54 higher than recorded in 2008 but that still indicated a 14% reduction over the past 5 years. Increases in 2009 were mainly in the "Slips and Falls" and "Collisions and Obstructions" categories, although no specific causes could be determined from the data.

Following the health and safety training review in early 2009 there has been an increase of around 10% in training provided. Three new online training courses had been introduced and three new practical courses – Biological Safety Adviser, Radiation Awareness and Legionella Awareness. Also web presentations on "Lone Working", "Introduction to CoSHH" and "Material Safety Data Sheets" had been added.

Overall the volume of work using radiation sources continues to be fairly stable. Review of Personnel Doses again shows that we are achieving excellent protection of radiation workers.

The Local Genetic Modification Safety Committee are reviewing their remit and membership in light of forthcoming legislation later this year when work with all biological agents will come under one new set of Regulations.

The performance of the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Service dropped due to one of the four Testers being on long-term absence. This resulted in the programme "slipping" and equipment in departments awaiting the Testers getting out of date. Income has also reduced. A temporary Tester had been employed to address the backlog while current resource levels and workload are being assessed to determine the required resources to achieve compliance. A revised policy on Portable Appliance Testing had been developed and introduced to address inconsistencies across campus.

Dr Pitt raised a concern with regard to first aid issues following the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS). Mr Thomas will circulate information to Departments asking that they review the adequacy of their current arrangements for First Aid.

Mr Thomas

Ms Cresswell asked what the current position was with regard to the air quality at Jessop West. Mr Thomas responded that the Department of Estates, Human Resources, the Faculty Office, Occupational Health and Safety Services are currently working cooperatively to identify and address the problems reported by staff in the building.

4. Annual Report of the Security Advisor

Mrs Woods presented her Report which was tabled at the meeting and was pleased to inform the Committee of the reduction in criminal activity which was down by 29 offences during 2009. (It was brought to the Members' attention that the crime figures in the Report had been transposed and should have read 'down from 277 to 248 offences in 2009'). An Internal Audit of Personal Property and Security was undertaken in 2009 and the report and recommendations submitted through the formal Audit Committee. The Chairman requested that any recommendations should be followed through and thanked the Security Services for their hard work in reducing crime throughout the University.

Mrs Woods also informed the Committee that a small number of student demonstrations relating to various issues had taken place during 2009 primarily associated with Careers Fairs and events in Firth Hall. Additional Residences security staff were recruited in September 2009 to support the opening of the new Ranmoor Student Village.

5. Health and Safety 'Self-Audit' of Departments 2009

Mr Thomas reported to the Committee that he had received 15 returns from Type 1 departments and 39 returns from Type 2 departments. The results for Type 1 departments was slightly down (2%) on that achieved 2007/08 at 90%. Overall the percentage of staff undertaking fire training had decreased significantly. Attendance on Out of Hours courses had also decreased slightly, but it is anticipated an increase next year due to introduction of the online training. Type 2 departments indicated that the overall level of compliance was the same as that achieved in 2007/08. First Aid provision continues to be a problem area but changes to the requirements for first aid cover should have an impact of improving compliance. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) compliance has improved, the online training package should see an increase in this aspect at the next self audit.

6. Significant Accidents and Incidents

Mr Thomas presented his paper and informed the Committee that thirteen incidents of note had occurred since the last meeting in November 2009: seven were RIDDOR reportable and six were non-RIDDOR reportable. Six of the reportable accidents involved workers being unable to carry out their normal work duties for over three days.

Mr Thomas also updated the Committee on a previous incident that occurred in May 2009 which involved the potential exposure of two contractors to dangerous pathogens at the School of Medicine. A further investigation concluded that the contractors were not at risk of exposure as previously reported. The Safety Manual for the Containment Level 3 facility had since been updated. A copy of the report from Professor Dockrell had been circulated to Members.

With regard to the incident involving a gate falling onto a Porter, Mr Thomas was asked to check whether the welds on other similar gates were adequate. Mr Thomas to arrange an inspection. **Mr Thomas**

7. Health and Safety Training Review

Mr Thomas presented his paper and updated the Committee on actions taken against the 'key recommendations' of the Review Group. As recommended, external training providers are being trialled for First Aid at Work courses; online options have been introduced for Display Screen Equipment training and assessment, "Out of Hours" training and for General Health and Safety induction for new starters. Mr Thomas to provide feedback on the courses run by external training providers. **Mr Thomas**

Dr Pitt asked whether the Sheffield Graduate Programme should include first aid training as an intrinsic part of the course. Mr Thomas to discuss with the relevant section. **Mr Thomas**

8. Health and Safety Executive Audits and Staff Wellbeing Group

The Committee received the Report submitted to University Executive Board (UEB). Mr Ashman asked if the Wellbeing Risk Assessment Tools are being used and thought they should be communicated to all staff not just University Managers. Mrs Edwards-Holland said they were being used and they are available on the web.

Ms Cresswell expressed her disappointment that a University Wellbeing Group would not be progressed. The Chairman informed Ms Cresswell that the University will continue to progress its wellbeing work through existing mechanisms.

Mrs Edwards-Holland informed the Members that there will be a review of all forms of absence by the end of April 2010.

The Committee asked that Human Resources communicate information relating to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to the University when introduced. **Mrs Edwards-Holland**

9. Report of the Legionella Control Steering Group

The Committee accepted the paper and no comments were raised.

10. Report of the Local Genetic Modification Safety Committee

The Committee accepted the paper and no comments were raised.

11. Report of the Radiation Working Group

The Committee accepted the paper and no comments were raised.

12. Report on Health and Safety Executive Audit – School of Medicine

Mr Thomas presented his paper and informed the Committee that following the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) audit of the Medical School, the HSE were reasonably satisfied with their findings. The Chairman requested that a copy of the HSE's letter of recommendations and the University's letter of response be **Miss Edwards** circulated to all Health and Safety Committee Members.

[Post meeting note: The above letters were distributed to Members on 15 March 2010].

13. Update on Significant Incident at the School of Medicine – April 2009

The Committee accepted the paper and no comments were raised. This item was discussed under Item 6.

14. Any Other Business

Dr Pitt raised concerns with regard to sudden student illness in lecture theatres. Due to the increasing number of students and the movement between numerous locations where they may be unfamiliar to buildings and local arrangements for first aid, Dr Pitt believes there is a need to develop systems to assist both the lecturer and the student. Dr Pitt produced a paper with a number of ideas for the Committee to consider and discuss further at the next meeting. The paper is to **Miss Edwards** be distributed to the Members.

[Post meeting note: The paper was distributed to the Members on 15 March 2010].

15. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 13 May 2010, 9:30am (Tapestry Room)