



Minutes Health and Safety Committee

Date: 15 May 2008

Present: Dr David Fletcher in the Chair

Ms Annandale, Mr Ashman, Mrs Basford, Mr Bramall, Mr Cameron,
Mrs Edwards-Holland, Professor Grayson, Mr Hallam, Mr Hewitt, Mr King, Mr
McKown, Dr Millington, Mr Pedder, Mr Thomas

Secretary: Miss Dionne Edwards

In attendance: Ms Brown, Mrs Gouldsbrough, Miss O'Brien, Mr T Shepherd

Apologies to: Miss Dionne Edwards

Dr Fletcher welcomed all the Members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr Mole

Action by

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 February 2008, having been circulated were approved and signed.

2. Matters Arising

On Minute 2.0 – Assisted Evacuation Update

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that the lifts in Information Commons and Chemistry buildings are operational for evacuation procedures. Alternative evacuation procedures and personal emergency evacuation plans have been arranged with individuals requiring assistance and the key members of departments concerned in other buildings.

Discussions have taken place with Human Resources and Student Services which have indicated that it is virtually impossible to obtain a comprehensive list of staff and students with temporary disabilities and that the most appropriate means of dealing with those with temporary disabilities is via Departmental Disability Coordinators. However, Human Resources are to consider altering employment contracts to ask staff to report temporary disabilities to them in the event such disabilities result in staff requiring assistance to evacuate buildings.

Action by

On Minute 2.0 - Concourse Vehicular Access and Coaches for Open Days

Mrs Gouldsbrough informed the Committee that there had been a marked reduction in the number of vehicles using the Concourse for vehicular access and this has improved pedestrian safety in the area greatly. Safety Services and the Committee would like to thank the user departments for assessing and amending their usual working patterns to alleviate the need for the Concourse to be used by vehicles at the busiest times of the day.

Due to a number of significant adverse reports with regard to coaches using Tower Court car park for open days, it has been agreed that the trial be extended and the location for coaches to wait for loading purposes has been moved to Durham Road.

On Minute 2.0 - Significant Accidents and Incidents – Elective Medical Students Placements

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that the “Elective” medical placements are short-term (7 week) work placements and should attract the same level of attention by the University as all other work placements to determine their suitability and safety for students. It was agreed by the Committee that the way in which the University manages ‘Elective’ work placements should be consistent with other placements and Mr Thomas to work with the Medical School to ensure appropriate guidelines, protocols and checks are made.

Mr Thomas

On Minute 2.0 - Use of Gases in Laboratories

Mr Thomas updated the Committee and informed the Members that discussions are continuing with departments using compressed gas cylinders to identify means to reduce risks where possible by relocation, or replacement as appropriate. However, many departments use gases which cannot be replaced (i.e. special mixtures) or relocated externally where alternative means will need to be designed / provided to reduce the potential risks. The Committee were informed that there will be costs associated with this work.

On Minute 4.0 - Health and Safety Executive Audits

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that the Health and Safety Executive have completed their audits in the University and a report is awaited relating to their audit on the Management of Stress. A copy of this report will be provided to the Trade Unions and then discussed at the Health and Safety Committee.

Mr Thomas

On Minute 5.0 - Sufficiency of First Aiders – Arts Tower

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that at the last Arts Tower User Group, all departments were asked to review their first aid provision to ensure compliance with the University’s requirements both now and for the future when several will be relocated to other buildings and mutual arrangements may no longer be available. Discussions are also being held with Accommodation and Campus Services about first aid training for portering staff.

Action by

On Minute 5.0 - PAT Testing Reminder – Safetyline

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that he had included a reminder of the importance of PAT testing in May's issue of Safetyline which emphasised the significance of removing equipment which had become "out-of-date" from the workplace until they are tested and deemed safe. The Committee requested that Mr Thomas send frequent reminders out due to Heads of Departments changing on a regular basis. The question was asked "If a piece of electrical equipment was only just out-of-date could it still be used?" Mr Thomas informed the Committee that the University would be liable should an incident occur whilst using out-of-date equipment.

Mr Thomas

On Minute 7.0 - Emergency Lighting Systems at Royal Hallamshire Hospital

The Committee were informed that no coordination meeting had been held since the last Committee meeting. The next coordination meeting is scheduled for 12th June 2008.

Mr Thomas

3. Presentation on Remuneration for First Aid by Stephanie O'Brien

Miss O'Brien, Senior Human Resources Adviser gave a presentation to the Committee on Remuneration for First Aid. Miss O'Brien informed the Committee that practice was moving away from paying allowances. This information was based on a survey taken by the IRS Employment Review which illustrated:-

- 46% of organisations responding to survey in 2005 paid a first aid allowance
- In 2007 survey, this had dropped to 31.5%

The survey also revealed that the remuneration was nominal amounts:-

- Median = c.£135, £11 p/m
- Average = c.£169, £14 p/m

Members discussed alternative ways to encourage more volunteers, suggestions raised included:- to show appreciation by holding away days or arranging social networking events. Another idea was to raise a campaign to recruit first aiders.

Mr Thomas

Concern was also raised about the liability of first aiders when treating casualties – The Chairman informed the Committee that should a situation arise where a claim was brought against the University for negligence in this respect, then the employee concerned would be covered by the university's insurance provided that they had acted responsibly and in good faith.

4. Review of Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference

Mr Thomas presented a paper updating the Members on revisions to the membership and Terms of Reference of the Committee. The revision advocates equality of representation by Management and Trade / Student Unions. It was agreed that the revised Terms of Reference be recommended to Council for approval.

Dr Fletcher

Action by

5. Health and Safety Inspection Report for Samuel Fox House

Mr Thomas reported to the Committee that a meeting is scheduled to take place with Estates Services on Monday, 19 May 2008 to discuss the report. The progress of the meeting and remedial works undertaken will be reported at the next Health and Safety Committee meeting. A few issues were raised with regards to the Inspection Report and these will be dealt with during the meeting on the 19 May 2008.

Mr Thomas

6. Accident Statistics

Mr Thomas presented the Accident Statistics that were missing from Safety Services Annual Report which was presented in February 2008. The statistics show a 14% reduction in total Accidents reported from the previous year. Mr Ashman enquired if it would be possible to report on locations, Mr Thomas to look into this.

Mr Thomas

7. Significant Accidents and Incidents

A report was presented to the Committee detailing three significant accidents/incidents which had occurred since the last meeting in February 2008.

With regard to the lift control cable failure in the Hadfield Building the Committee were informed that the control cable for the lift car had broken but that the lift car was never out of control. The control cable was repaired immediately.

The Legionnella failures at Tipton Hall of Residence have now been rectified following relining of the water tank and installation of Chlorine Dioxide dosing equipment.

Concerns about the refilling of Liquid Nitrogen dewars on Back Lane were discussed and a solution identified. Funding has been allocated.

8. City of Bristol College – Nitric Acid Explosion

Mr Thomas presented the Committee with a Press Release concerning a prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive of the City of Bristol College following a serious incident involving a mixture of Concentrated Nitric Acid and Ethanol (Nitals). Mr Thomas has contacted all Science and Engineering Departments enquiring if Nital is used and the responses so far indicate that this substance is not used within the University.

9. Health and Safety Induction Training

Mr Thomas presented his paper and informed the Committee that over the past few months, Safety Services have been working with the Staff Development Unit to identify an electronic web-based Health and Safety Induction Training package that would be suitable for new starters. It is intended that the programme will be available for the 2008/09 academic year. There is a cost implication which will be coming from the Health and Safety Capital Expenditure Budget. This package is intended for staff and post-graduates; the actual number of licences needs to be determined.

Mr Thomas

10. Report of the Legionella Control Steering Group

No meeting has taken place since the last Health and Safety Committee meeting.

11. Report of the Local Genetic Modification Safety Committee (LGMSC)

Since the last meeting in February 2008 there have been two Class 2 amendments, one Class 2 proposal and three Class 1 proposals considered and approved.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have informed the University that the notification fees for 2008/09 will remain at the same rate as 2007/08.

12. Report of the Radiation Working Group

Mr King presented the report of the Radiation Working Group and informed the Committee that the review of personnel doses was satisfactory with no significant exposures to report on.

Mr Moseley from Safety Services will be completing a Radon Survey over the next 3 months and the results should be available for the next Health and Safety Committee Meeting.

Mr King

13. Any Other Business

Dave McKown raised concerns regarding inadequate performance of the goods lift in University House. Mr Cameron informed the Committee that the lift will be closed for one week commencing the 2nd June 2008 for maintenance.

14. Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged.

