



Minutes Health and Safety Committee

Date: 22 February 2008

Present: Dr David Fletcher in the Chair

Mr Ashman, Dr Bingle, Mr Cameron, Mr Foster, Mr King, Mr McKown, Dr Millington, Mr Mole, Mr Pedder, Dr Pitt, Mr Thomas

Secretary: Miss Dionne Edwards

In attendance: Miss K Southern

Apologies to: Miss Dionne Edwards

Dr Fletcher welcomed all the Members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from, Mr Crowe, Mrs Edwards-Holland, Mrs B Gouldsbrough, Prof Grayson, Mr Shepherd

Action by

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 November 2007, having been circulated were approved and signed.

2. Matters Arising

On Minute 2.0 – Assisted Evacuation Update – Paging System

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that the paging system is now operational and it is proposed to issue the pagers when the evacuation lift training is undertaken when the lifts are functional.

The Committee were informed that the reliability of the evacuation lifts is suspect due to the apparent incompatibility between the new controls and aging lift mechanisms. It was agreed that other procedures need to be put in place for assisted evacuation of those unable to evacuate under their own efforts.

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that Safety Services are working with Departments who have students with mobility problems and that personal evacuation plans are being developed for each person requiring them.

Dr Pitt asked about arrangements for dealing with staff or students with a temporary disability, e.g. a broken leg. Mr Thomas stated that Departments should be aware of the need to liaise with such persons to establish their needs following which a Personal Evacuation Plan could be developed, and if required Safety Services would assist. Dr Millington asked whether a register could be held for those suffering temporary disabilities. Mr Thomas to investigate this option and report to next Committee meeting

Mr Thomas

Action by

On Minute 2.0 – Health & Safety Committee Minutes on the Web

The Minutes from the previous meeting dated 1 November 2007 are now on the web under **Staff, General Information, Reference**. To gain access to these Minutes enter your University username and password.
(http://www.shef.ac.uk/staff/health_safety/)

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

Mr Thomas informed the Committee that the trial period for restricted access to the concourse was under way and at present running satisfactorily with only one day when problems occurred during an Open day when several coaches were in use and the Durham Road parking spaces were unavailable. A review meeting is to be held in March.

On Minute 2.0 Fire Drills Preliminary Report

Mr Thomas informed the Members that seven repeat fire drills were conducted satisfactorily during November at residences which had previously performed badly and one drill was undertaken at a newly occupied block of student flats at Endcliffe.

Mr Thomas also reported that Mrs Gouldsbrough had spoken to Ian Jones, Accommodation and Campus Services who agreed to review the information given to students at the beginning of the year with regards to emergency evacuation. He also agreed to highlight the information during the regular meetings for the residences which take place throughout the year.

On Minute 6.0 Significant Accidents and Incidents

Dr Bingle raised the issue of health and safety for “elective” medical student placements abroad. Mr Thomas informed the members that Ms Claire Brooke in the Careers Service has been working on this project and the Committee agreed that Ms Brooke should be invited to the next meeting.

Mr Thomas

Mr Mole stated he would be happy to talk to students before they participated in any placements.

Mr Thomas to update Departments regarding the forms and systems that are already in place.

Mr Thomas

On Minute 2.0 Use of Gases in Laboratories

Mr Thomas to discuss the options for eliminating compressed gas cylinders from laboratories at the next Departmental Managers Group and report back to the Committee

Mr Thomas

On Minute 9.0 Report of the Radiation Working Group

Mr King reported that the cost to the University for the financial provision will be £1,700 per annum and not £250 as informed at the last meeting.

Action by

3. Review of Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference

Mr Ashman presented the paper produced following discussion at the University's JUCC; however, Ms G Brown (UCU Representative) has indicated in an e-mail to Mr Thomas that further discussion is required about TU Representation on the Health and Safety Committee so the paper is to be taken back to JUCC for further discussion prior to submission to the next Health and Safety Committee.

**JUCC
Mr Thomas**

4. Health and Safety Executive Audits

Mr Thomas presented a paper updating the Committee on the results of the audits carried out up to January 2008 indicating that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are generally satisfied with the University's performance in the following areas: - managing sickness absence, slips and falls, violence in NHS and management of asbestos. All recommendations are being addressed.

A draft "report" had just been received by the University relating to the audit undertaken on Stress involving visits to eight departments. The document is a compilation of comments received, rather than a "report" and gives no recommendations. Dr Fletcher indicated that dialogue is being held with HSE in order to ensure that HSE take full account of the work being done, and initiatives being taken, by the University to manage stress and promote "wellbeing".

Mr Ashman commented that Trade Union Representatives met with Ms Woods, HSE Inspector, to discuss the audits and had made their views known on stress and causes of stress, in the University. He stated that Ms Woods had asked about risk assessments for managing stress.

5. Health and Safety 'Self-Audit' of Departments 2007

Mr Thomas reported to the Committee that he had received 17 returns from Type 1 departments and 46 returns from Type 2 departments. The results for Type 1 departments demonstrate a high and stable level of compliance across the board, whereas Type 2 Departments exhibited a slight decrease in level of compliance due to fewer departments undertaking inspections during the year. It was evident that PAT testing compliance was significantly improved across Type 1 and 2 Departments. Sufficiency of First Aid appears to be more of a problem in the Arts Tower, Mr Thomas to contact Departments again within the Arts Tower to address the problem.

Mr Thomas

The Committee discussed how the University could encourage more people to become First Aiders. The Committee asked whether incentives should be introduced to encourage more participation and asked what other universities do as an inducement. Mr Thomas to look into this and report back to the Committee at the next meeting. Mr Foster suggested that first year students be informed about First Aid courses.

Mr Thomas

**Action by
Mr Thomas**

Compliance on portable electrical appliance testing has improved. PAT testing is a legal requirement and a reminder is to go out to all Departments via Safetyline.

Overall the indications are encouraging and most departments believe that they have a high level of compliance for the aspects measured and this is largely borne out by the audits that have been carried out by Safety Services staff

6. Health and Safety Code of Practice – Addendum to Electrical Safety Section and Procedures

Mr Thomas presented a proposal following a report from the Portable Appliance Testing team that they are coming across increasing numbers of electrical equipment in use in Departments that have 'continental' plugs, or plugs from other parts of the world. The paper was accepted by the Committee.

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 November 2007. Mr Thomas stated that a fourth incident would be discussed under Agenda item 10.

With regard to the power outage incident, Dr Bingle raised concerns about the emergency lights being non-operational at the rear of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. There had been problems with the generators at the Hospital during the power outage but emergency lighting systems should have functioned for up to 3 hours in the event of power failure. Mr Thomas to take this matter up with NHS Estates at the next Co-ordination meeting. Dr Fletcher also updated the Committee on his intention to establish a standing Business Continuity Group to look at all aspects of business continuity in the University.

Mr Thomas

Mr Cameron informed the Committee that an arrest had been made in respect of the arson incidents around the University and Hospitals.

8. 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. Fire alarm upgrades have been made at the following buildings: - Octagon Centre, Psychology Annexe and 65 Wilkinson Street.

There had been a further decrease in emergency incidents (compared to 2006) helped by the reduction in fire calls which exceeded the 5% target that had previously been agreed with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and the University's standing with the Fire Service has improved considerably as a result. The University suffered 20 actual fires in 2007 compared to 19 in 2006.

Action by

2007 saw a further reduction in the number of total accidents reported maintaining the downward trend over the past 5 years, and which now sees the University of Sheffield compare favourably against the average for the sector. Mr Thomas to distribute the Accident Statistics for the full year as soon as they are available.

Mr Thomas

Mr Pedder suggested that some sections of the Report be re-organised.

Mr Thomas

9. Annual Report – Security Services

Mr Mole presented his annual report and reported that there had been 301 criminal offences reported which compared favourably with previous years. The trend of criminal activity and sneak thief offending has continued in academic and residential buildings; however, offences of violence remain low.

Dr Millington mentioned lighting at the new student village; Mr Mole reported that discussions with Sheffield City Council are ongoing regarding this matter. Mrs Southern informed the Committee that the North Campus area was improving.

Disciplinary measures appear effective and during the past year there were 46 hearings, 14 fewer than in 2006.

10. Report of the Legionella Control Steering Group

Mr Thomas presented the report indicating that during 2007 progress on Legionella Control was effective, risk assessments are being undertaken and risks being addressed.

Mr Thomas distributed an additional paper relating to an incident on the 7 February 2008 at Tipton Halls of Residence. Three samples taken during the regular sampling programme tested positive for Legionella bacteria. The system was emptied, cleaned and sterilised prior to refilling and resampling. Information and bottled drinking water was supplied to students. The test results will not be known until 23 February 2008.

[Post meeting note:- Subsequent testing has shown the presence of low levels of Legionella. The tank is to be re-lined and a Chlorine Dioxide dosing system installed over the Easter vacation to eliminate the Legionella risk.

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

Since the last meeting in November 2007 there have been two Class 1 proposals approved. The Local Genetic Modification Safety Committee cancelled their meeting due to be held on 16 January due to insufficient business.

12. Report of the Radiation Working Group

Mr King presented the report of the Radiation Working Group and informed the Committee that Mr Moseley, Safety Services had been made an Honorary Life member of the Association of University Radiation Protection Officers (AURPO) due to his work for the wider university community.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was forthcoming

[Post meeting note: - Item 9 - Annual Report – Security Services was discussed after Item 5 - Health and Safety 'Self-Audit' of Departments 2007. Mr Mole and Mr Ashman left the meeting at this point]

14. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday, 15 May 2008 at 9:30 am in the Tapestry Room. Please note, this date replaces the meeting that was originally scheduled for 23 April 2008.