

HEALTH SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 10.00 am 13th October 2010

Venue Board Room 1, Gipsy Lane

Present:

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| Mr B Price, Director of Human Resources, Chair | Mr M Holder, UNISON |
| Mr T McGill, University Health and Safety Officer | Mr A Glass, School of Built Environment |
| Ms C Rainbird, Occupational Health Advisor | Mrs K Brockington, Health and Social Care |
| Mr A Rowles, School of Technology | Mr S Simpkins, Deputy Director, Property Services |
| Mrs L Cox, Westminster Institute of Education | Mrs A Hissey, Social Sciences and Law |
| Mr J Carter, Catering Services | Mrs E Mitchell, School of Life Sciences |
| Mr E Granger, Hospitality Services | Miss A Winsley, Business School |
| Ms T Cox, Corporate Affairs | Mr G Langford, Assistant Safety Officer, Secretary |

ACTION

1. Membership and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from

Mr P Large, Registrar
Mr A Friend, UNISON Safety Representative
Mr R Beresford, UCU Safety Representative
Mr G Bailey, Safety Officer, Property Services
Miss G Almond, Deputy Director, Hospitality Services
Mr B Martin, UNISON Safety Representative
Mrs J Salisbury, Social Sciences & Law
Mrs J Richards, School of Arts and Humanities

Anna Winsley was welcomed as the representative from Business School, replacing Claire Morris

TMcG

Dr Helen Packer has succeeded Dr Shirley McCready as the School of Life Science's Genetic Modification Officer. It was noted that the Committee had not received a report on genetic modification activities for some time. Tim McGill agreed to ask Helen for a report.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th June 2010

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

ACTION 3. Matters Arising

3.1 (3.1)

Update to the Travelling and Working Overseas Safety Notice

Christie Rainbird, Occupational Health Advisor, gave a summary of the progress made on updating of the Safety Notice for Travelling and Working Overseas. A pilot group, consisting of representatives of Oxford Brookes International (OBI), the Business School and the School of the Built Environment, had agreed to try out the revised procedures, which have been posted on the OBI intranet site, <https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/international/travellers/travelriskass>. The pilot group made recommendations for modifications to the forms that would simplify them considerably. For example, where a number of members of staff are visiting the same event, in most cases, a single assessment may be made.

Once the procedures are finally agreed, the Director of Human Resources would discuss the need for engagement at School/Directorate level with Deans and Directors and would seek their proposals for the names of emergency contact persons within each School and Directorate.

BP

CR

It was agreed that, following the modifications as described above, the updated Safety Notice would be launched, initially as a paper version; the aim that, very quickly, would be to move to an online version.

3.2 (3.2) Draft Safety Notice for Placement Students

Tim McGill, University Health and Safety Officer, confirmed that a draft Safety Notice for Placement Students, based on the UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) model, had been evaluated, by the Schools of, Life Sciences, the Built Environment and Social Sciences and Law. Their feedback had been positive. In line with previous committee recommendations, modifications have been made to include a definition of student placements.

The meeting reviewed a questionnaire which has been drawn up to help managers to decide whether a student has any health conditions that may put them at risk whilst carrying out a placement. Linda Cox, Westminster Institute of Education and Karen Brockington, School of Health and Social Care, confirmed that a health assessment was included in the placement process for students within their Schools. Concern was raised that relevant staff in other schools may not have the experience or background information to enable them to carry out health assessments. It was also noted that care must be taken to ensure that the information given by the student remains confidential and is held securely. Christie Rainbird, Occupational Health Advisor, agreed to give guidance in the wording of the questionnaire and the procedures for its use. It was agreed that once these modifications have been made, the Safety Notice should be launched.

**CR &
TMcG**

ACTION

3.3 (3.4) Status of Yellow Brick Path, Headington

Steve Simpkins, Deputy Director, Property Services, confirmed that the yellow brick foot path, near the entrance to Headington Campus, which was often quite slippery, has been taken up and relayed with strengthened sides.

3.4 (6) Questionnaire – Effectiveness of Stress Management Training

In response to a topic raised at the last meeting, Christie Rainbird, Occupational Health Advisor, confirmed that she is trying to determine best methods to assess the effectiveness of the stress management training which has been given to line managers, and so far has been unable to find a model from other institutions or industries.

BP

Bob Price, Director of Human Recourses, believed that the topic of stress did not usually come up in the meetings that the HR Business Partners have with Schools and Directorates. He agreed to suggest to the Business Partners that they might occasionally include stress on the agenda of these meetings.

4 UCEA Health and Safety Plan for 2011-2015

Prior to the meeting, the UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) draft Health and Safety Plan for 2011-2015 had been circulated to the committee. This draft plan had been sent to universities for consultation. Bob Price, Director of Human Recourses, gave details of the reply which he made to UCEA, in which he confirmed that we also have an aim to reduce the number of slip trip and fall, and manual handling accidents, and to resolve issues of work related stress. It was noted that the University rarely send its staff to UCEA safety events, it was agreed that, when appropriate, relevant staff should attend. In relation to section 5 of the draft plan, referring to healthier, safer institutions, which highlights the need for adequate Occupational Health provision, it was noted that we, unlike other institutions, have an in house Occupational Health service.

Tim McGill, University Health and Safety Officer, drew attention to the potential difficulty of comparing accident statistics across the membership of UCEA, as some institutions will only record an accident when the institution itself was the cause of the accident, where as at Oxford Brookes University all accidents which occur on its premises are recorded, regardless of the cause.

5 University Health and Safety Annual Report 2009-10

Tim McGill, University Health and Safety Officer, presented the University Health and Safety Annual Report, 2009-10, which had been distributed to the committee prior to the meeting. Tim reported that there had been a large amount of activity in relation to the demolition and building work at Gypsy Lane campus and Clive Booth Hall, but that so far no accidents or incidents had occurred for either students or staff.

ACTION

The reduction in the total number of accidents was noted, with fewer accidents for both students and visitors. Disappointingly the number of RIDDOR reportable accidents had risen from 6 (in the previous year) to 11. Although a significant increase, the total was brought back to a more typical level, 2008-09 having an unusually low occurrence. All of these accidents were reportable due to three or more days away from work, rather than being due to serious injuries (such as fractures). As indicated in Appendix 7 of the report, the RIDDOR reporting rates for this and previous years are close to the targets set by UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association).

It was noted that, in order to be able to make a comparison of data from year to year, redundant department names are still in use in the report. It was agreed that from August 2011 the Faculty/department names which are agreed for the new structure will be used.

The committee thanked the Health and Safety team for their work during the year

6 University Occupational Health Annual Report 2009-10

Christie Rainbird, University Occupational Health Advisor, presented the University Occupational Health Annual Report, 2009-10, which had been distributed to the committee prior to the meeting.

It was noted that since Charlotte Lowi joined the team as an administrator, there has been a significant improvement to the speed of response to enquiries.

The Occupational Health Team have installed a new database system, EOPAS and are in the process of reviewing the processes for health surveillance of staff, to ensure that surveillance is being carried out for all staff who do require it.

First aid training, which cost £12000 in the previous year, has been brought in house. It is intended that the University's current first aiders will be offered refresher training and networking sessions on an annual basis. Christie confirmed that a review is taking place to determine gaps in first aid cover according to both location and time of day. The Director of Human Resources stated that a remedy for significant lack of first aid cover may be to review the job description of key roles, making a first aid qualification a requirement for certain posts.

CR

Compared to the previous year there has been a 26% increase in service delivery and including 42 workplace visits, compared to only 9 last year.

The rate of sickness absence within the university is less than the national average, 80% of which is short term (1-4) days. The current recommendation is that a management referral to Occupational Health be made for absences of four or more weeks due to ill health, there is evidence that a sooner intervention may be in the best interest individual and their department.

The target to see most referrals in three weeks is generally being met, urgent cases are dealt with within a week. The target is for case reports to be issued within 24hrs. It was noted that a significant proportion (41%) of referrals presented with a mental health issue. It is felt likely that persons with mental health issues are more likely to report these to the Occupational Health service than to their own general practitioner. Evidence was given that positive feedback from staff who have had support from the Occupational Health team has led to others seeking support with mental health issues.

The committee thanked the Occupational Health team for their work during the year.

7 Safety Inspection, Media Centre

Prior to the meeting, the committee were circulated with the report of the Health and Safety Inspection of The Print Unit, Gipsy Lane, which occurred in August 2010. Tim McGill, University Health and Safety Officer, reported that he found the unit was being run in a safe manner and was abiding by the University's safety rules. He found a need to update a number of the existing COSHH assessments, to ensure that the latest versions of safety data sheets were being utilised, otherwise the inspection was found to be satisfactory.

8 Any Other Business

Steve Simpkins, Deputy Director, Property Services, reported that, contrary to the statement made at the last meeting, a smoking shelter will no longer be installed at the Marston Road, School of Health and Social Care campus.

**MH
TMcG**

Michael Holder, UNISON representative, raised a number of issues relating to activities at Clive Booth Hall. He raised concerns about modifications to a number of the kitchen doors, in which locks had been removed in such a way that may adversely affect the fire protection offered by these doors. He agreed to send further details to Tim McGill, University Health and Safety Officer.

MH

Michael reported that he and his porter colleagues find that halls of residence rubbish bags often contain broken glass, and sharp opened food cans, despite the opportunity for students to use recycling routes for these items. These items have led to staff cutting themselves or their clothing, whilst moving the bags. Michael agreed to raise this issue with the Hall's management team, with the objective that residents be encouraged to use the recycling facilities.

MH

Michael gave details of the difficulties that he and his colleagues have in transporting fridge freezers up and down stairs when they need to be replaced. It is often very difficult for four persons to participate in the lift as the stairs are quite narrow. Michael agreed to raise this issue with the Hall's management team, with the objective of finding a solution to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries. It was noted that in most cases, new halls of residence will be equipped with lifts, which should address this issue.

9 Date of next meetings

Forthcoming meetings will take place at 10am on the following dates, 6th December 2010 and 23rd February 2011

