

HEALTH SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 10.00 am 14th October 2008

Venue Board Room 1, Gipsy Lane

Present:

Mr R Knight, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Chair	Mr S Clark, Head of Campus Services
Mr B Price, Director Human Resources	Mr A Glass, School of Built Environment
Ms C Rainbird, Senior Occ. Health Advisor	Mrs E Mitchell, School of Life Sciences
Mr T McGill, University Health and Safety Officer	Mrs K Brockington, Health and Social Care
Mr B Martin, UNISON, School of Life Sciences	Mr P Phillips, School of Technology
Mr A Friend, UNISON, Computer Services	Mr G Bailey, Safety Officer, Property Services
Miss D Tepper, Occupational Health Advisor	Ms H Waters, Environmental Co-ordinator
Mrs L Frances Head Student Disability Service	Mr G Langford, Assistant Safety Officer, Secretary

Present for item 4 Mr G Lambourne, Risk and Insurance Officer

ACTION 1. Membership and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from

Dr T Bradshaw, School of Life Sciences
Mr S Simpkins, Deputy Director, Property Services
Ms H West, Students' Union
Mr G Smith, General Manager, Catering Services
Mr R Beresford, UCU

TMcG

It was noted that since Sue Johnson now works for the Directorate of Estates and Facilities Management, there is a vacancy on the committee for representation from Westminster Institute of Education. Tim McGill agreed to invite the Dean of School to attend, or to send a representative.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th June 2008

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record.

ACTION 3. Matters Arising

3.1 (3.2) Progress of new signage for fire assembly points and

3.2 (3.3) Flashing lights at building entrances to indicate alarms sounding

SC

Stephen Clark, Head of Campus Services, confirmed that quotations had been sought for both assembly point signage and alarm indicator lights for the exterior of buildings. Additional funding will need to be found as the amounts exceeded the existing budgets for such projects.

3.3 (3.5) Action plan for instillation of safety signage in pooled rooms

Stephen Clark confirmed that a plan for the installation of safety signage in all pooled rooms is in place.

3.4 (4) Tree Safety. Policy for Tree Husbandry

Geoff Bailey, Property Health and Safety Officer, gave a briefing on the Tree Safety Policy which has recently been drawn up. The policy sets out a procedure for the monitoring and management of the University's trees, the assignment of a risk rating according to their condition and location and the procedures to be taken if high risks are identified. In the event of a tree needing to be felled for safety reasons, the intention would be to replace it with a new planting.

A survey of the University's tree stock by an arboriculturist is nearing completion.

A complementary set of procedures, aimed at protecting trees and their roots during building and excavation work has also been drawn up.

3.5 (5) Risk assessment of liquid nitrogen by the School of Technology

PP

Following the request for progress at the last meeting, Tim McGill, University Safety Officer, confirmed that he had recently received a risk assessment for the storage and handling of liquid nitrogen, at the School of Technology. Needs for improvement had been identified. Since the receipt of liquid nitrogen is a potentially high risk activity, Peter Phillips, Technical Resources Manager, School of Technology, agreed to obtain B.O.C.'s risk assessments for their delivery process. Peter will also seek the loan of an oxygen meter in order to carry out trials in its use.

3.6 (5) Ventilation and noise reduction within Print Unit

At the last meeting it was noted that the design for a proposed relocation of the Print Unit should provide for adequate ventilation and noise attenuation. Rex Knight indicated that the Unit may be relocated off site.

ACTION 4 UMAL Risk Management Inspection

Gary Lambourne, University Risk and Insurance Officer, gave a briefing of the recent survey carried out by a UMAL inspector. UMAL is an organisation which provides insurance exclusively for the UK's Higher Education and Further Education sector. Every 2-3 years UMAL carry out a survey to examine insurable risks. Two reports are produced, one for Property Risk, (fire, flood etc), and another for Safety and Health Risk Management (slips and trips etc).

The recent survey, the third in the current series, was the most positive to date. It identified no requirements for change, but did make a number of relatively minor recommendations, many of which have been, or are in the process of being, implemented.

Within the survey, scores are awarded for the various safety elements (e.g. emergency planning, fire detection systems and housekeeping standards). It was found that the scores for the University were generally above average compared to other institutions.

5 Business School Health and Safety Audit

Prior to the meeting, a summary of the recent Health and Safety Audit of the Business School had been distributed to committee members.

Tim McGill, University Safety Officer, explained that the University Safety and Health Association's HASMAP process had been utilised. This method, which is designed for the higher education sector, thoroughly examines the systems in place and measures how they are applied and understood by the School's staff and students.

It was noted that the audit had identified several areas in which there was a failure to reach satisfactory compliance; the School has produced an action plan to address this.

TMcG

Tim McGill agreed to review the progress of the School's action plan and report on the progress at the next meeting.

6 Clive Booth Hall Safety Inspection

Prior to the meeting, a report of a recent Health and Safety inspection of the Clive Booth Hall had been distributed to committee members.

The committee expressed their congratulations to hall managers and staff for having achieved such a positive report.

Of most major concern was the potential failure of the door latches on blocks R-X which are prone to fail, resulting in residents being locked in the building. More reliable latches are being sought.

ACTION 7 School of Health and Social Care Safety Inspection

Prior to the meeting, a report of a recent Health and Safety inspection of the Marston Road campus of the School of Health and Social Care had been distributed to committee members.

Tim McGill, University Safety Officer, who carried out the inspection, reported that during his visit he found the School to be clean and tidy and very well organised. Recommendations for improvements were mostly related to issues in the control of the Directorate of Estates and Facilities Management rather than directly with the School.

The committee expressed their congratulations to the School for having achieved such a positive report.

8 Revision / Updating of Health and Safety Notices

The University's Health and Safety Notices are currently going through the process of updating. Minor alterations are being made to reflect changes to legislation or relevant guidance notes, without affecting their overall intention.

The proposed changes are consistent with the recommendation made in the UMAL reports (see section 4)

It was agreed that these modifications may be made without further consultation with the committee.

9 Summary of fire drills

Prior to the meeting, a summary of the cross campus fire drills, which had taken place during weeks 2 and 3, had been distributed to committee members.

On the whole the performance was found to be satisfactory. The average and maximum evacuation times were less than the previous two years, the majority were less than three minutes.

Some concerns were expressed about the Gibbs Building, in which it was reported that the majority of those leaving the building were using one of the two sets of staircases, the other set being under utilised. Despite this the building was evacuated in 4.5 minutes. This building is a relatively low risk, composed of pooled teaching rooms and offices, and absent of highly flammable materials.

ACTION 10 Annual Occupational Health Report

Christie Rainbird, Senior Occupational Health Advisor, presented the Annual Occupational Health Report, which had been distributed to the committee prior to the meeting.

The report gives information relating to numbers of people utilising the service, the activity levels and the reasons for referrals, together with case studies. It was noted that there has been a significant increase in the number of return to work referrals and in the number of cases closed.

Several Occupational Health policies and procedures have been updated, and a case conference approach has been adopted in which Occupational Health, line managers and Human Resources work together as appropriate.

The Occupational Health Team are in the process of obtaining a new computerised record keeping system which is expected to improve the quality of management information.

The Occupational Health Team are in the process of setting up a systematic system for health screening, which will involve setting up a risk matrix for various types of job roles, in order to determine the level and type of health monitoring which is required at pre-employment and throughout a person's employment with the University.

A question was raised regarding a significant increase in the number of musculoskeletal referrals, (six in 2006-07 compared with forty-four in 2007-08). Christie Rainbird reported that the most likely reason for the increase was the improvement in the process for reporting and diagnosis.

CR Christie Rainbird agreed to investigate if there were any patterns in the cases of musculoskeletal illness, for example in relation to Schools or Directorates or types of activities, in order that any appropriate actions could be taken to reduce their frequency.

11 Progress of Stress Management Action Plan

Bob Price, Director of Human Resources, reported on developments relating to the Stress Management Action Plan, which had been presented to the committee at the meeting on 11th April 2008.

The majority of the actions are due for completion in December 2008 or later. The progress of those which were currently due was clarified.

With the exception of the School of Technology and the School of Arts and Humanities, Schools had reported that they have reviewed their teaching timetables in order to smooth workloads as much as possible and have modified tariffs in order to reflect class sizes.

ACTION A review will be made of the impact of these changes at the end of the semester.

Eighty two, approximately a quarter, of line managers have undertaken stress management training. The target is that all managers undergo this training by the end of the current academic year. It was confirmed that such training will be delivered on an ongoing basis to inform all those who take up line management roles.

There is also a target to have programme in place during 2009-2010 to inform all staff of how they can alleviate the effects of stressful situations in the workplace.

13 Any Other Business

RK Alex Friend, UNISON, raised the topic of a recent publication issued by the Universities Safety and Health Association, entitled 'Leading Health and Safety at Work, leadership actions for Vice Chancellors and members of university Governing Bodies' and asked if this had been considered by the University's Senior Management Team. Rex Knight confirmed that it had and agreed to issue a report to the committee prior to the next meeting.

14 Date of future meetings

10 am Wednesday 25th February 2009, Venue to be confirmed
10 am Wednesday 17th June 2009, Venue to be confirmed