

University of Glasgow

Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 19 September 2012 at 10:00 AM in the Senate Room

Present:

Ms Mae Boyd, Dr Gordon Duckett, Mr Robert Kilpatrick, Ms Joanne Mcfadden, Mr David McLean, Mr John F Malcolm, Dr Catherine Martin, Mr David Newall, Dr John O'Dowd, Ms Julie Ommer, Mr Paul Phillips, Mr Deric Robinson, Ms Aileen Stewart, Ms Selina Woolcott, Ms Jessica McGrellis

In Attendance:

Dr Nick Elliott, Mr Gordon MacKenzie, Mr Andy MacKay, Mrs Portia Lamb, Mr John Lauwerys, Dr Ann Galbraith (Clerk)

Apologies:

Mr Ian Black, Mr James Gray, Mr David Somerville, Dr Robin Easton, Mrs Ann Allen, Ms Kirsty Main (SRC)

Convenor's business:

The Convenor welcomed Ms Mae Boyd (UCU), Ms Joanne Mcfadden (UNISON) and Ms Jessica McGrellis (SRC) as new members of the Committee and Mrs Portia Lamb (SEPS Safety Adviser), Mr Andy MacKay (SEPS Fire Safety Manager), Dr Nick Elliott (E&B Asbestos Manager) who were attending. In addition he welcomed Mr John Lauwerys, an independent consultant undertaking a review of governance at the University who was observing the working of the Committee.

HSWC/2012/1 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 30 May 2012

The Minute of the meeting of 30 May 2012 was approved.

HSWC/2012/2 Matters arising

The Convenor drew the attention of the Committee to the table of actions dated 30 May 2012 and in particular to those relating to portable appliance testing (PAT) in Social Sciences and to gas cylinder maintenance. It was agreed that Mr D MacLean and Mr J Malcolm would progress the action relating to PAT out with the Committee meeting. Mr D MacLean reported that the NHS did not have a contract for gas cylinder maintenance. A framework agreement for the purchase of compressed gases was under development for the H/FE sector at a national level and would be amended to incorporate the provision of maintenance services. This would be made available to the University when completed.

There were no matters arising from the Minute other than those to be dealt with through the Agenda.

HSWC/2012/2.1 Evacuation Chairs - practice and policy (verbal update DN)

Mr D Newall reported that he had discussed this with Mr D MacLean and Mr G MacKenzie and that these discussions were ongoing to clarify individual responsibilities.

HSWC/2012/2.2 Student safety, Kelvin Way (Paper 1)

Mr G Mackenzie reported that, following a recent serious assault in the area of 1 Lilybank Gardens, Central Services had been in contact with a number of relevant organisations, including the Police. A brief note on progress had been circulated to the Committee. Kelvin Way was confirmed as a potentially problematic area due to its proximity to the park. A number of potential remedies were discussed by those concerned but it had been agreed that there were no failsafe options. The University had now convened a group (The Personal Safety Co-ordination Group) comprising a number of agencies from within and outwith the University, Whilst it recognised that the University had a role to play in ensuring good management of its own areas, the Police and Local Authority were responsible for public areas where the University role could only be to support the production and promotion of messages around maintaining personal safety. One such message card was circulated at the meeting.

The Committee **noted** that the crime rate on campus was extremely low, relative to its population, and most reported crimes were thefts of bicycles. Outwith the campus the crime rates were also comparatively low in relation to the population. Non- the-less the University would continue to focus on the safety of students that were integrated into the wider community and to make any necessary changes that may support personal safety on the campus. The Committee **thanked** Mr G MacKenzie for his work on this.

HSWC/2012/2.3 SEQOHS accreditation (verbal update AS)

Ms A Stewart reported that the evidence in support of the application for accreditation had been submitted and an assessment visit scheduled for 9 October 2012. To date, the process had been very time consuming, particularly against the current background of their routine response to the influx of new students at this time of year. It was unknown when the outcome of the process would be notified.

HSWC/2012/3 Progress with programme of audits (Paper 2)

Ms S Woolcott reported that the 6 month programme of audits, undertaken by Marsh, were now complete and reports had been sent to Mr D McLean, Ms S Woolcott and the managers relevant to the areas audited.

The audits examined 38 factors for each of the 20 Colleges or Schools. The duration of each audit ranged from 1/2 to 1 day depending on the size of the unit being audited and was carried out by 2 consultants employed by Marsh. For each area audited, a score between 1 (best) and 5 (least good) was allocated for each factor. The outcome for the majority of these was a score of 2 (very good); however there were some areas/factors that scored 3 or 4 and a few where the score was 5. SEPS have been following up on how any scores of 5 have been responded to by the Management Unit.

For each Unit audited, the auditors gave a list of top 10 areas requiring attention. This grouping was based on a balanced view of the measures in place versus the actual risk. Some common themes had been identified in these shortcomings including lack of documentation, review procedures and other formalised procedures. It was agreed that whilst these shortcomings did not necessarily compromise safety, they may give the impression of a lack of managerial control and oversight in the event of litigation and so were of importance.

SEPS would continue with a programme of follow up audits that would focus on specific topics and areas and would work to support Management Units by producing template documents and improving guidance where relevant.

Both Mr P Phillips and Mr D McLean noted that the process of audit was very time consuming for the Units being audited, Mr Phillips expressed concern that these activities were being required against a background of decreasing staff resource. Mr D Newall reported that this issue had been discussed by SMG and that Heads of College had indicated their full support to ensure that the necessary staff time was allocated.

Mr G Duckett thanked Mr D McLean and Ms S Woolcott for their help in addressing the issues raised in the audit and noted that the appointment of a Chief Technician in Chemistry would help them to address some of the issues that had been generated by that post being vacant for a period.

HSWC/2012/4 Management of Stress & Wellbeing Policy (Paper 3)

The University had carried out a staff attitude survey in March 2012. This was structured around a question set developed by Health & Safety Executive (HSE) that allowed organisations to benchmark outcomes. It used 35 questions to address 7 factors including stress, relationships and change. The response rate was similar to previous surveys that had been carried out, however the outcome demonstrated a general decline in scores compared with both the UK Employment Sector and Education Sector since the last survey in 2009. This effect was most noticeable in relation to manager and peer support (all Colleges) and, to a lesser extent, in demands (Research & Teaching and Clinical grades).

In the period between the recent surveys the absence management policy had been relaunched and Ms S Woolcott highlighted the following:

- Trends varied considerably between Colleges.
- In general, the number of absences related to mental health issues had reduced, but average duration of absences had increased.
- Overall, the numbers of referrals to Occupational Health for mental health issues had decreased, however self-referrals for mental health issues, particularly those that were work related, had increased.
- University wide, the average number of days lost through sickness absence was similar to that in the preceding year.

Ms S Woolcott also reported on the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Overall the use of EAP was low.

The Committee **noted** the following during discussion:

- The recent survey had taken place against a background of significant change in the University, principally organisational and systems change and staff reductions.
- The finding should inform good management for any future organisational change.
- The outcome allowed a clear focus on areas for improvement and this had begun with Ms S Woolcott working with SDS to ensure that appropriate training be delivered for team building, leadership development and support to managers.
- Training and development may be required by managers at all levels, including junior managers, and this should be available. It was agreed that that Mr D Newall, Ms S Woolcott and Mr I Black would progress this.

- Whilst there may be a range of measures in place to support staff, unless they were willing to allow the involvement of line managers, the ability to address concerns would be limited.
- Line managers needed to engage more with staff on a regular basis.
- Staff time/resource could be a significant constraint.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- The survey findings validated initiatives already underway to develop more resilient, resourceful and effective leaders of engaged, supportive teams.
- Colleges also needed to consider/continue local initiatives on enhanced engagement, supportive management and teamwork, and, in some areas, workload management.
- The availability of stress management training had not been as well promulgated as it may have been and it was important that this was made available, particularly to support managers of employees returning to work after absence.
- Figures for uptake/delivery of stress management training delivered would be made available to the Committee. Mr I Black and Ms S Woolcott would progress this.

HSWC/2012/5 Asbestos Management (Paper 4)

Dr N Elliott reported that:

- Mandatory training for staff in Estates & Buildings was complete.
- A central repository for asbestos had been established which would provide specialist advice in planning work activities.
- A number of resources, including guidance, was under development.
- A "term" contract for asbestos removal would be developed and a contractor appointed.
- The spend on asbestos removal for the period March to September 2012 had been £200K and the future areas targeted would include the Boyd Orr building, James Watt South building and Virology.

Dr Elliott thanked his colleagues in SEPS and elsewhere for the support he had received in making progress and Mr Newall complimented him on the extent of this progress during the short time since his appointment.

HSWC/2012/6 OH Report (Paper 5)

The Committee **noted** the comprehensive occupational health report and, in particular, the following issues that were highlighted by Ms A Stewart:

- Much of the activity within Occupational Health was seasonal.
- Overall, appointments peaked in the final quarter of the year and self referrals in the second quarter.
- There had been a large increase in the level of health screening reported. This reflected a change in the way these were recorded with "paper" screening activities now being included but also included an increase in appointments for screening.
- There had also been an increase in appointments associated with health surveillance. This resulted from the service having identified a wider need for surveillance in some Colleges/Schools that had not previously been addressed, The Committee **welcomed** this improvement.
- The service carried out external work (e.g. for the MRC and Beatson). This would decrease when MRC staff were incorporated into the University. There would be a resultant drop in income.

- The service had increasingly become involved in the issue of "research passports". This development reduced the requirement for repeat screenings in staff whose activities required them to work in different institutions.
- The vaccination requirement for some undergraduate groups had increased due to a reduction in some vaccination types being given to children at school.
- Overall University Services was the largest user of the appointment system.
- The total number of self referrals had decreased when the second quarter of 2012 was compared to the same period in 2011. However, management referrals had increased. This may be linked to the re-launch of the sickness absence policy and the Committee generally noted this as a desirable trend.

HSWC/2012/7 Accident Statistics (Paper 6)

The Committee **noted** the report on accident statistics and in particular the following issues that were highlighted by Mr D McLean:

- There was a close similarity between the accident numbers recorded for the second quarter of 2011 and 2012.
- The number of accidents reported generally fluctuated in relation to the number of people on campus, with a decrease being seen during the summer period.
- The accident types reported fluctuated in relation to the work and study types being carried out at different times of year.
- The classifications of injury used by SEPS reflected those used by HSE. During the second quarter of 2012 there were 43 accidents reported to SEPS of which 2 resulted in an absence from work of more than 7 days and so required reporting to HSE.
- The HSE reporting criteria had changed and they now only wished to receive reports of absences greater than 7 days. To reflect this, future reports to the Committee would continue to record absences over 3 days but would also show absences of over 7 days.
- The principal causes of injury were animals, sporting activity and slips, trip and falls.

The Committee **thanked** Mr D McLean for his report.

HSWC/2012/8 Terms of Reference and Policy Statement (Paper 7)

The Committee is required to review its terms of reference annually. Mr D Newall and Ms S Woolcott had edited the remit to reflect recent changes, the major change being the incorporation of the role of the Radiation Safety Committee within the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee. The revised remit was available on the web at http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_239848_en.pdf and members were encouraged to review this and bring any issues to the Committee. The document would be reviewed again in 2014.

HSWC/2012/9 Employee Assistance Programme Report (Paper 8)

The Committee noted the report on the EAP and in particular the following issues that were highlighted by Ms S Woolcott:

- The service provider changed on 1 February 2012 and was now Positive People Company (PPC).
- Use of the new service was comparable to the use made of the previous provider during the same period.
- Total uptake of the service averaged 9 users per month and 78% of users received telephone counselling with the balance attending face to face sessions.

- Not all issues dealt with were work related. Of those that were, stress, bullying and disciplinary events were common features. Of the presenting problems during the report period only 6 were assessed as being work related.
- Service users were entitled to 6 sessions of counselling.
- One complaint was received during the report period. The provider had not identified that a service user would require support beyond the 6 sessions offered by them until the 5th session. The waiting time for this type of support through the NHS was 3 months thereby resulting in a significant gap. This would be further investigated. Although every effort was made to do so it was not always possible to make an appropriate diagnosis early on in the support, The Committee **noted** that, if issues around confidentiality could be overcome, it may be possible to provide interim support from within Occupational Health in these circumstances. Ms S Woolcott would investigate this possibility.
- The format of data and reports provided by PPC would change in future and the new format should be more useful to the University.
- PPC was negotiating a partnership agreement with other EAP providers and this may bring benefits to the University.
- Ms S Woolcott was pursuing the provision of targeted campaign information by PPC and this should raise the profile of the availability of the service.
- The University would not offer EAP support to staff family members as this was a taxable benefit in kind. A recent change to taxation had seen this liability extended to the provision of financial advice. At present the University provided financial information, but not advice, and care should be taken to note this change when developing future contracts.

Following discussion the Committee also **noted** that any increase in the current number of sessions would see a significant increase in cost and this could not be offset against the overall low use of the service. It was **agreed** that additional publicity of the availability of the service was required.

HSWC/2012/10 Employee Liability Report (Paper 9)

The Committee noted that there were currently 15 employee claims ongoing compared with 13 in September 2011.

HSWC/2012/11 Draft Fire Safety Policy (Paper 10)

Mr D McLean introduced the draft Policy that had been written by Mr A McKay and that had previously been made available to the Committee for comment. The Policy was an amalgamation of existing information that remained current with the addition of new information. Key amongst the new information was the addition of a description of the management structure relating to fire safety and also the duties of some key staff positions. The University approach to staff training was addressed in the Policy. With the reduction in the staff levels in SEPS fire safety section, an on-line approach to safety training was being considered and it was hoped that this change in approach might lead to a better management of training uptake by staff. The exception to this approach would be in training for Area Fire Officers and Fire Wardens where the intention was to increase the frequency of face to face training.

The Policy also set out target frequencies for the delivery of fire risk assessments with high risk areas (such as houses in multiple occupation and areas where there was a risk to sleeping occupants) undergoing 2 yearly reviews and other buildings being reviewed on a 3 or 4 yearly cycle depending on the risks associated with them. The Policy also included basic fire safety advice.

Mr A McKay also advised the Committee that there was a legal requirement for each building to have a fire action plan. It was not possible to make such documents entirely generic in nature due to the requirement to address disabled evacuation, the means for which had not been formally agreed by the University. In absence of suitable arrangements for evacuation it would be necessary to restrict the use of some buildings where special evacuation procedures would be required, but were not in place.

The Committee **approved** the terms of the Policy as drafted and agreed to ask Court for its approval to publicise the document. Subject to Court's agreement the Policy would be publicised to Heads of School and Area Fire Officers and would be made available on SEPS web site.

HSWC/2012/12 Health & Safety Risk Register progress report (Paper 11)

The Committee **noted** that the report on this was generally positive and that it would be reviewed at the end of the year.

HSWC/2012/13 Any Other Business

There was no AOB

HSWC/2012/14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday 13 December 2012 at 10:00AM in the Melville Room

Created by: Dr Ann Galbraith