

University of Glasgow

Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 10:00 AM in the Senate Room

Present:

Mrs Ann Allen, Mrs Christine Barr, Ms Mae Boyd, Dr Gordon Duckett, Mr James Gray, 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 Louise Graham, Ms Nicky McComb

In Attendance:

Miss Debbie Beales, Mrs Linda MacDonald

Apologies:

Mr David Somerville

HSWC/2013/1 Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 12 December 2013

The Minute of the meeting of Thursday 12 December 2013 was approved.

HSWC/2013/2 Matters arising

HSWC/2013/2.1 Staff Survey Review (verbal update Ms S Woolcott)

Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that the publicity for the new staff survey had commenced with an article in Campus e-news. The staff survey would launch on the 24th March 2014 and would be live for 5 weeks. For the first time, the survey would be conducted by an independent company in the hope that staff would be reassured that their responses were confidential. Ms Woolcott **asked** that the Committee publicise and encourage their staff to complete the survey. Early results were expected mid to late May and it was hoped that an early report would be ready for the Committee meeting in May. The Committee **thanked** everyone involved in the process and appreciated the fact that each completed survey would lead to a charitable donation to one of three charities.

HSWC/2013/3 OH Report (Paper 1)

The Committee **noted** the Paper that was circulated. Ms Stewart **informed** the Committee about the various tables and graphs within the report highlighting the fact that elective consults and fitness to practice for students would continue to rise. The Committee **agreed** that the layout of the OH report was most helpful and should remain unchanged. Ms Stewart also **provided** the Committee with a handout consisting of sickness absence statistics. These stats highlighted that the top 2 reasons for sickness absence were infections (colds/flu etc) and abdominal (tummy upset/pain etc). The Committee **agreed** that the absence stats were useful and asked that they be supplied at future meetings and that, where possible, benchmark data be produced. Finally Ms Stewart **informed** the Committee that the Occupational Health Unit had received SEQOHS accreditation for its 2nd year in a

row. The University would have to reapply every year with a formal visit from SEQOHS every 5 years.

HSWC/2013/4 Mechanisms for Addressing Health and Safety Issues Identified by Staff (verbal report Dr J O'Dowd)

Dr O'Dowd **informed** the Committee that he wished to raise awareness of his concern that the operation of the grievance procedure could result in staff being discouraged from raising health and safety issues. The Committee **discussed** the importance of staff being encouraged to raise health and safety issues appropriately, and **noted** that many such issues would be raised and responded to without recourse to the grievance process. Staff should try to resolve issues of health and safety in terms of the existing guidelines on the SEPS website, raising them with their line manager initially. Line managers could look to their local safety adviser for advice as well as working with SEPS who were on hand to give advice. In relation to Dr O'Dowd's concerns regarding the operation of the grievance procedure, the Committee **noted** that discussion was taking place between the Director of HR and UCU officers. The Committee would be updated on this issue at the next meeting.

Dr O'Dowd asked it to be noted that the advice to him from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was that a functioning Grievance Process was a crucial component of a functioning and lawful Health and Safety regime, and where this was absent the final recourse was to the HSE complaints procedure.

HSWC/2013/5 Draft Vibration Policy and Guidance (Paper 2)

The Committee **noted** the Paper that was circulated. Mr McLean **explained** that the Policy and accompanying guidance had been created after a visit from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in June 2013. HSE had made various visits since then, interviewing staff that were exposed to vibration at work, and had asked the University to further develop its procedures on managing vibration risk. SEPS had worked with Estates & Buildings on reducing equipment usage time as well as changing equipment where possible such as petrol hedge trimmers being replaced by electric ones which had much less vibration. E&B would also be introducing vibration dosimeters to assist in controlling exposure.

The Committee **noted** that the recent focus on this area had identified that manufacturers' statements regarding vibration were in some cases highly misleading. It also **noted** that action was being taken to identify and assess the position of all employees who might be exposed to significant risk in relation to vibration. Mr McLean **informed** the Committee that HSE had also raised the issue of noise management and the Director of E&B advised that a proposal had been made to appoint an external occupational hygiene consultant to review existing noise measurements for accuracy to establish the suitability of current hearing protection provisions. The Committee **thanked** Mr McLean for his work producing the Policy and **endorsed** the Policy with immediate effect.

HSWC/2013/6 SEPS Report (Paper 3)

The Committee **noted** the Paper that was circulated. Mr McLean **informed** the Committee that there were no unusual anomalies within the report.

HSWC/2013/7 EAP Report (Paper 4)

The Committee **noted** the Paper that was circulated. Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that the proportion of employees contacting PPC was similar to the previous year. The uptake of the service remained disappointingly low despite high profile advertising

campaigns using both posters and Campus E-News. A group had been tasked with looking into delivering an in-house service which could attract a higher service uptake and this would be trialled alongside the final year of the PPC contract. The Committee would be kept informed of the outcome of this trial which aimed to see which option would be preferred by staff, and what their views would be of the in-house service. The progress of the pilot would be revisited at the December 2014 and March 2015 HSWC meetings, with the March meeting considering the best approach to the future delivery of the counselling service. Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that, following a merger exercise, PPC were currently going through a rebranding process which would affect the look but not the content of their web pages.

HSWC/2013/8 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Annual Report (Paper 5)

The Committee **noted** the Paper that was circulated. Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that the Department of Health, Safety & Wellbeing had enjoyed a stable year in terms of staff turnover compared to recent years. There had been one new addition to SEPS in the form of Andy Kerr as Fire Safety Officer. Sadly Ann Galbraith, SEPS Environmental Adviser had given notice for her retirement and would leave the University at the end of this month. Dr Galbraith had been an employee at the University for many years and her expertise would be sadly missed. Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that within SEPS training numbers had continued to increase with e-courses in fire safety awareness and health & safety freeing up staff to concentrate on various key activities, including reviews of fire risk assessments. SEPS had also made a concerted effort to follow up the series of audits conducted by Marsh UK Ltd and continued to work with Units to fine tune health and safety systems. SEPS had developed an internal audit programme which was now underway and had conducted around 10 audits in areas not covered by Marsh UK Ltd within University Services.

Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that within Radiation Protection Service there had been a large, complex and time consuming project at Garscube which had involved the decommissioning of the Cobalt 60 isotope there. The ongoing management of the Soddy Box was another large project which involved giving advice and supervision on the safe use of the isotopes for research purposes.

Ms Woolcott **informed** the Committee that within Occupational Health there had been a four-fold increase in health surveillance interviews for staff which included review examinations for noise, vibration, respiratory, skin screening and wet workers. The Committee **thanked** the Health, Safety & Wellbeing team for their hard work in the last 12 months.

HSWC/2013/9 Any Other Business

There was no other Committee business.

HSWC/2013/10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the HSWC will take place on Wednesday 28th May 2014 at 10am in the Senate Room.

Created by: Miss Debbie Beales