

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2nd November 2021

Present: Mrs T Slaven (Convener), Dr A Arnason, Mrs L Benvie, Ms S Cooper, Mr M Cowie, Ms I DrdÁková (VP AUSA Welfare), Mr G Fisher, Mrs C Lawie, Professor I McEwan, Mr R Philp, Mr K Smith, Mrs K Smith, Mr E Stephen, Dr D Wall, Mrs J Walker, Mrs T White, Mrs D Wilson and Mrs V Amakiri (Clerk).

Apologies: Mr S Carle, Mrs D Dyker, Mr R Ebel, Professor P Fowler, and Dr A Petrie

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

1.2 The Committee was invited to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd August 2021. There was one comment – to amend ‘Datashred’ lorry incident to include the name ‘Restore Datashred’ lorry incident, and the minutes were approved.

1.3 Martin Cowie invited Committee to note that Susan Blaney, the School of Biological Sciences Representative has left the University and he will now be representing SBS.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 PROPOSAL FOR AUDIT STRATEGY (Minute 4.5. refers) AND HEALTH AND SAFETY WELLBEING PLAN (Minute 6.1. refers)

The Convener to write to Heads of School and Directors requesting copies of Terms of Reference (ToR) for the H&S Committees/forums in their areas and Risk Registers to be sent to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HS&W) Team by the end of the month.

In response to the request for clarification from Eddie Stephen regarding the ToR requested, the convener clarified that it ought to include the scope of the meeting and the make up and stated that it was good practice to review these regularly, and that the H&S Committee was looking to understand if there were any gaps. The convener confirmed that she would be contacting Heads of schools and Directors for the required information.

Robert Philp informed the Committee that Estates and Facilities were in the process of reviewing their local H&S Committee ToR and this will be sent to the H,S&W team once completed, at the latest by month end.

3 REINSTATEMENT OF E-LEARNING

3.1 Garry Fisher gave an overview of the current return to campus of staff, following the easing of Covid restrictions and the need to reinstate the BeOnline E-learning training, he requested that decisions be made on the following

- a. the option for reinstating the mandatory BeOnline E-learning training
- b. the process for increasing the completion rate of the mandatory BeOnline E-learning modules

3.2 Following discussions, it was agreed that for reinstating the mandatory BeOnline E-learning training, options 1 and 2 were not feasible. Options 3 and 4 were favourable, but option 4 was most appropriate. It was agreed to relaunch the introduction to H&S and Introduction to Fire Safety e-learning modules ASAP, but not relaunch the workstation assessment training until after Christmas.

Action: GF/AP

- 3.3 There were detailed discussions about the availability of workstation assessors in schools and departments, how referrals arising from Workstation Assessment training are being handled and how they were to be dealt with going forward. The Committee was asked to send names of local workstation assessors, already in place in their schools and departments, and also names of volunteers/ nominees to the H,S&W team via healthandsafety@abdn.ac.uk

Action: All

- 3.4 It was also agreed to organise training / refresher training for workstation assessors. There was a suggestion made to provide guidance to local workstation assessors, including equipment providers and the escalation process electronically and this was agreed by Committee.

2 Actions: GF/AP

- 3.5 Following discussions on how to achieve option 4, it was recommended that a plan was required with a timeline and target date set, so that the BeOnline Workstation Assessment Training is not triggered before local workstation assessors receive their training and proposed guidance. It was agreed that the plan was to be communicated before the next meeting.

Action: GF/AP

- 3.6 There were also detailed discussions around the process for increasing the completion rate of the mandatory BeOnline E-learning modules and how it was to be monitored. Option 2 was the preferred option, and it was agreed that Heads of schools and departments were expected to have visibility on compliance. They would be getting names of staff that have completed/not completed the modules before any actions are taken and this would also be sent to nominated people within the schools and departments. There was a recommendation that a suggestion be put to HR for the completion of mandatory H&S e-learning be included in the annual review process.

Action: TS

4 DRAFT HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1 Garry Fisher informed the Committee that the Wellbeing Strategy was now agreed. He stressed the importance of not duplicating plans, being clear on the allocation of responsibilities for the actions. This had led to the splitting of the Wellbeing plan from the HS&W plan. He acknowledged that some things were routine and that some other activities going on in the university could be included in the plan.

- 4.2 The reporting on the Wellbeing plan back to the H&S Committee was considered and also if there was a need for schools and departments to have a separate Committee for Wellbeing. Garry Fisher confirmed that Wellbeing was not statutory, and there were other Wellbeing forums in the University, and as such there was no need for schools to split and have a separate Committee. The expectation was to have a local H&S Committee which would include Wellbeing issues. It was agreed to add into the H&S Management Plan 2021-22 that the H&S Committee is to receive regular updates on progress against the Wellbeing Strategy, Annual Action plan.

Action: GF/AP

Post meeting note: This has been completed and the plan is circulated with these minutes.

- 4.3 It was also agreed to Issue key H&S messages comms following this meeting, including information on changes in policy.

Action: GF/AP

5 COVID UPDATE

- 5.1 The Convener informed the Committee that the number of cases in Scotland is static with a bit of a bump on Saturday, which was as a result of the delay in inputting cases. There is no significant or concerning impact from this.
- 5.2 The Scottish government is trying to mitigate the potential for reduced immunity for individuals that have been double vaccinated by introducing the booster jab to include over-50s by mid-November. Walk-ins to be available after a significant number have received booster jabs
- 5.3 The Committee was advised that even though cases among students were not high, there was still cause for concern as the flu season is approaching. Another cause for concern is the imminent winter break, which will involve movement of students around the country. Comms have been sent out around guidance and support for students, including carrying out a lateral flow test 3 days prior to travel
- 5.4 There were discussions about COP26, green zone and blue zone regs and guidance. The Convener informed the Committee that NHSG has requested that staff not rush to return to work. She also advised that the University was working in close contact with NHSG and that no further relaxation was put in place by the Scottish Government, but mitigation was in place to avoid increase in cases.

6 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING PLAN (2020-21)

- 6.1 Garry Fisher updated Committee members on the action plan end of year position statements. This is to be fed into yearly action for the following year. Mr Fisher was requested to pass thanks back to all who have done so much work to progress the H,S & W Action Plan during the last academic year.

Action: GF

7 MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN

- 7.1 Garry Fisher was requested to pass thanks back to all who have done so much work to progress the H,S & W Action Plan during the last academic year.

Action: GF

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW PROGRAM

- 8.1 Garry Fisher advised the Committee that the Management of Work-Related Stress and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policies had been passed on to PaRC, agreed and published in the Policy Zone. He also informed the Committee that the Policy on Health and Safety Consultation had missed a PNCC meeting but would go to PNCC in November and will be agreed soon after. A review of the priority categories on the Policy Review Program is to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: VA

9 FIRE SAFETY REPORT

- 9.1 Garry Fisher advised the Committee that audits have been carried out by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Estates and Facilities participated in the audits. The audits were not completed, but the SFRS would be back to complete them. He also advised the Committee that another audit which was scheduled to take place in November had been rescheduled for early December. (This

had occurred after the paper was written). Garry Fisher to provide feedback to the Committee on the outcomes of the SF&RS Audits of the University's Halls of Residence at the next meeting.

Action: GF

- 9.2 Garry Fisher informed the Committee that 2 training sessions were scheduled, one was for evac chair operators and the other was a train-the-trainer session, so a trained trainer can carry out new or refresher trainings for University staff. He requested that Committee members should inform staff who would be interested in evac chair training to contact the H,S&W team, so it can be programmed in, but priority would be given to Schools or Departments who require it more than others or are lacking evac chair operators.

Action: All

- 9.3 A query was raised about the full building evacuation in Chemistry which was not notified to Security due to a fault with the BOLD system. Garry Fisher confirmed that he had been made aware of the issue and it was resolved after a few days. He apologised if this was not communicated but requested that Committee members ask for clarification as sometimes, things might be missed out or not be communicated to everyone concerned.

10 ACCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES UPDATE

- 10.1 Vivienne Amakiri explained to the Committee that the comparison was between the 3rd quarter of this calendar year and the same period for last year and 2019. She highlighted that the increase in this year's incidents is as a result of more staff members and students returning to campus this year as opposed to the same time last year.

- 10.2 Vivienne Amakiri informed the Committee that the annual statistics were undertaken by the Scottish Universities Safety Advisers Group (SUSAG), for accidents and dangerous occurrences in Scottish Higher Educational Institutions, but the last one undertaken was for 2019 and 2020 due to Covid. From the statistics, the University was not doing too bad and was about average with other Scottish Higher Institutions.

- 10.3 Robert Philp raised the fact that there were very few near misses in relation to the number of accidents on record. It was suggested that stories about near misses to be communicated to staff along with a reminder of staff to report near misses and not just accidents.

Action: GF/AP

11 REPORT FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

- 11.1 Garry Fisher informed the Committee that this paper was for information and invited comments or questions for Allan Petrie to respond to, but nothing was raised and there were no concerns regarding the report.

12 HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING UPDATE

- 12.1 Garry Fisher stated that this was referred to earlier in the meetings and lack of completion is reflected in the Covid Conditions and that we would soon be sharing non-compliances with Heads of Schools and Departments. It was agreed that information on previous completion rates will be shared with Heads of Departments or Directors when relaunching the mandatory training e-learning modules, to reference against future completion rates.

Action: AP

- 12.2 There was a request to review training for staff such as Local Workstation Assessors, Local Safety Coordinators and if there was an opportunity for staff to undertake this training. It was

agreed that Committee members to provide the H,S&W team with information on the training that they undertake themselves and they would wish to see included in the H&S training report to the Committee.

13. A.O.B

None.

14. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

14.1 The Schedule of the Committee meetings for this session has been identified - 3rd February 2022, 4th May 2022, 3rd August 2022 and 1st November 2022.