Joint Safety Advisory Committee

31st October 2013

Minutes

Present: Professor M Stringer (Chair), Ms S Chalder, Mr D Checkley,

Mr J Cochrane, Ms K Hall (Committee Secretary), Prof J Heath,

Mr M Hoare, Mrs C Jarvis, Prof J Preece, Mr M Tomlin, Mr L Wright.

In Attendance: Mr K Dickinson, Ms O Kew-Fickus

Apologies: Miss K East, Professor J Franklyn, Mr T Green, Mrs H Paver,   
 Mrs C Wellington

**13/22 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2013 (JSA 13.10.1) were held as an accurate record of the meeting.

**13/23 Chairperson’s Items**

*The Chair asked everyone at the meeting to introduce themselves for the benefit of new members. The ToR were circulated in advance of the meeting and were considered. If a Committee member could not attend a future meeting, they were encouraged to send a deputy.*

1. Apologies
2. Chemical and fuel oil spillage

*A briefing note on two spillage incidents which had occurred recently was tabled and considered.*

Reported: Releases/ spillages of this nature were a priority issue. Two incidents had occurred, one involving approximately 300 litres of hydraulic oil leaking and one where pungent vapours had been released into a laboratory. These incidents had caused disruption, cost and could have had significant environmental consequences. Although not hugely serious in isolation, they were important in showing the lack of preparedness for such occurrences and the lack of engagement researchers had with how to deal with such incidents. A proposal was put forward to ensure control measures were put in place for future spillages/releases and that guidance information was readily available and filtered down from Heads of College.

**Action:** Colleges and relevant departments within Corporate Services were required to develop specific risk assessments and status reports for JSAC relating to the potential sites and impacts for spills or other unplanned releases of harmful substances. Specific detail of this could be found in the attached briefing note.

Action also for the JSAC Executive Group to discuss this item and report to UEB.

**LW, MS and HoC.**

**13/24 Matters Arising**

1. Responsible Research

*This item would be considered as part of item 4iii, the Annual review of College Health and Safety Action Plans.*

1. Radiation Advisory Group

Reported: Dr Gus Zabierek was in the process of setting up this group, which would be similar to the other H&S advisory groups on biological and chemical hazardous substances.

**Action**: To confirm through a written report that the group had been established.

**GZ**

1. Draft working at height policy

**Action:** This would be discussed outside the meeting and brought to the next JSAC.

**KD and** **MH**

1. Report to UEB

Noted: The aim was to produce factual and meaningful reports for UEB to consider and respond to, which was a work in progress on the amendments already made to the format. A meeting of the Executive Group would take place after JSAC.

1. Draft radiation policy

Noted: A policy had been tabled at a previous meeting and comments were requested. The group felt this was a useful and well-written policy.

**Action**: The policy was to be implemented through the newly formed Radiation Advisory Group but implementation was also a shared responsibility across JSAC members.

**GZ and JSAC members**

1. Wellbeing Day

Discussed: A proposal to have a University-led Wellbeing Day and when it was best to hold this. The general consensus was to look at linking this to other related events (i.e. Environment Day).

**Action**: To be discussed outside JSAC by the Sustainability Communication Group and through any relevant HR- level discussions about communications.

**LW and SCG**

**13/25 Annual Assurance Report and Termly Reports**

1. Received: The Annual Assurance report dated 17th June 2013 was circulated in advance of the meeting. This had been submitted to UEB. No comments were made by the group.
2. Proposed new format for Report to U.E.B

*This item was dealt with under Matters Arising.*

1. Annual review of College Health and Safety Action Plans

Received: The Colleges’ and Corporate Services’ annual H&S plans, which were commented upon in turn. Particular attention was paid to any actions the Colleges felt would be best dealt with at University level.

Discussed: A general comment was made, relevant to all areas, regarding a proposal from the Committee for an increased focus on the senior management role in implementing H&S improvements.

Noted:

LES – Further information about inspection programmes was requested.

**Action**: The College to send copies of laboratory inspection reports to Mr Wright.

**College representative**

MDS – The College felt that engagement of PIs would be best sought through a specific personal objective being agreed within the annual PDR process.

**Action:** This would be progressed through HR by the Executive Group.

**MS and LW**

CAL – The Committee agreed the principal of routine housekeeping inspection was established. It was agreed however Colleges and departments should determine the frequency and nature of these inspections.

It was agreed to explore the use of the software platform Canvas, to share good practice, along with other media.

**Action**: To facilitate these explorations.

**LW**

The Committee heard that POD were currently reviewing all aspects of induction.

**Action**: Committee members were encouraged to engage with the review and ensure relevant H&S needs were incorporated.

**JSAC members**

CoSS – This report was praised for emphasising the importance of health as well as safety. The College felt that a University-led Wellbeing Day would assist with focussing on the health of their staff.

EPS – The report emphasised the need for a cultural review around H&S issues. Staff attendance on training courses was something the College felt would be best addressed at University level.

A discussion took place around the continued progress in improving LEVs.

**Action**: Mr Wright would update UEB on progress regarding LEVs.

**LW**

Discussed: In relation to the specific action requested of the Colleges in the sector guidance, the Committee repeated the importance of the concept of Responsible Research. Confirmation was required that PIs were actively engaging in safety, with evidence being provided to this effect.

**Action**: College Representatives should report back to their College boards the importance of Responsible Research and ensure that further detail on how they were implementing Responsible Research was reported to the February meeting of JSAC.

**College Representatives**

Corporate Services – The report was praised for its succinctness. Mr Wright suggested that this could serve as a model for other H&S plans.

Noted: Actions relating to Responsible Research did not apply to Corporate Services.

**Action**: To upload College and Corporate Service plans on the staff intranet. This would be available at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/committees/annualhsplans.aspx>

**MH**

Reported: Mr Checkley introduced the concept of the University somehow assessing the competence and safety of the performance of external contractors. The Committee saw a key role here for Procurement.

**Action**: To discuss contractor performance monitoring and review with Estates and Procurement.

**LW**

**13/26 New Policy and Guidance Documents**

There was nothing to report under this item.

**13/27  Trade Union Matters** Ms Chalder on behalf of Mr Green raised the issue of JSAC membership and requested that two members of Unison join the Committee. This was approved.  **Action**: To liaise with Mr Green over arranging invitations to the next JSAC meetings and TU pre-meetings.

**KH**

**13/28 Standard Reports**

Received: Standard Health and Safety reports from various H&S teams and advisory groups were submitted to JSAC and commented upon.

Noted:

i) Fire Safety – The Chairman requested a reformatted report for future meetings to show trends, as well as commentary on more significant incidents. There was also a request for further details on the causes of alarm activations.

Reported: LW reported that a University Fire Strategy Group was being developed to facilitate discussions between senior managers and the West Midlands Fire Service.

**Action**: To report progress on this group at future JSAC meetings

**LW**

ii) Hazardous Agents

a) Radiation safety – The report was noted.

b) Biological safety – A HSE inspection had taken place of CL3 facilities and this had gone well, with very good feedback given. A future HSE inspection would take place of transgenic animal and plant facilities across campus.

c) Hazardous substances – The leadership of this group would be changing as Prof K Chipman was no longer the able to chair the group.

iii) Physical workplace and work equipment – There was no report for this item.

A discussion took place regarding an ongoing review by the Teaching Laboratories Appraisal Group which would positively contribute to safety in these areas. Professor Preece was involved in this initiative.

An audit of the Priestley Centre had taken place and the results were satisfactory.

iv) Transport and Pedestrian Safety – The membership of the Transport Safety Group was clarified. Mr Hoare and Ms Radnor would continue to be active in discussing issues which were relevant to both the Sustainability Task Group and the Transport Safety Group and to continue to include the Guild representatives.

A lengthy discussion took place around signage in areas which were in use by both cars and people, as it was felt that many near misses were not reported.

Various groups around the University were actively looking into matters of transport safety, including collecting data, but there were issues around identifying resources for this, which was a limiting factor.

**Action**: To exchange speed humps for rumble strips outside the Guild of Students and the Barber Institute, as it was reported that humps posed a significant H&S risk to forklift users.

**KD**

v) Accident statistics: The reports were considered but no comments were made.

vi) Wellbeing Advisory Group: A review had taken place of Occupational Health, the results of which had been submitted to the Director of HR. It was noted that further information would be produced for the Committee in due course. The WAG report was noted, particularly the absence of any data.

**13/29 Any other business**

There was no other business to discuss.

**Next Meeting: 13th February 2014 – Seminar Room at 54 Pritchatts Road.**