

BANGOR UNIVERSITY

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 31st January 2018

Present: Prof. P Spencer (Chair), Mr S Barnard, Miss S Barnes, Mrs T Hibbert, Mr A Jones, Mrs M Lake, Dr J Latchford, Ms C Monks, Mr D Owen, Miss E Riches, Mr S Roberts, Prof. C Tully, Mrs E Parry Williams, Mr G W Jones (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr L Jones, Mr W Jones

527. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st November 2017 were confirmed and signed.

528. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising to be raised as Agenda items.

529. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

529(a) Radiation Health and Safety Sub-Committee Report

The Sub-Committee met on the 22nd January 2018 with the following key items noted:

- i. *Work with Open Sources:* In 2017, the radioactive element ¹²⁵I was not used and ³²P use decreased with only a single source purchased. This reduction is due to the predominant user groups identifying non-radioactive alternatives for their research.
- ii. The ECW laboratory continues to be the busiest radiation laboratory. As such, consideration is being given to future facilities, as part of the Science and Technology Quarter proposal.
- iii. *New / Revised Policy Standards:* The Safe Use of Artificial Optical Radiation Light Sources (excludes lasers), Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) and Safe Use of Laser Policy Standard, which fall under the remit of radiation, were discussed.
- iv. It was agreed that the University Laser Safety Officer would be invited to the next Sub-Committee.
- v. *Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017 (IRR 2017):* The significant changes that impact the University are:
 - Dependent on the type of radiation work and associated risks, organisations must now ‘notify’, ‘register’ or obtain the ‘consent’ of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The University will have to ‘Register’ its work and ‘Notify’ sites with radon levels above 300 Bq m⁻³ (averaged over a year).
 - A substantial reduction in the maximum permissible dose to the eye may require radiation workers to wear safety glasses to protect against splashes to the eye. The advice of the University’s external Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA) is being sought. Revised procedures and guidance are being

developed.

- The workplace radon action level has reduced from 400 Bq m⁻³ (measured as ‘worst case’ scenario i.e. winter) to 300 Bq m⁻³ (averaged over a year). A review of all previous radon results has been undertaken to identify radon measurements close to the new action level and in order to establish further actions.
- vi. *Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Counter Terrorism Wales Inspection:* The annual inspection of the ‘sealed source’ went well with a ‘0’ score received, indicating there were no issues.
- vii. *Radiography Wrexham – School of Healthcare Sciences:* Dr Darren Wood formally appointed as the new RPS for the facility.

529(b) Chemical and Biological Health and Safety Sub-Committee Report

The Sub-Committee met on the 18th January 2018. The following key items noted:

- i. *Work Involving Genetically Modified Organisms:* The Committee received a report from the Local Committee for Genetic Modifications held on 15th January 2018. Currently, there are 25 Projects involving GMO; with a further two Projects pending, dependent on successful funding. With the exception of one project, all GM projects are Class 1 or involve modifications that do not require notification to the HSE.
- ii. *Notification of Substances with Additional Controls:* The Biological Safety Officer is to write to relevant College staff asking them to declare what ‘relevant’ substances they hold, including ‘positively stating’ if they hold no notifiable substances.
- iii. *Health Surveillance:* The number of CNS staff receiving health surveillance is rising. This is due to increased animal work and the associated potential exposure to dander and other allergens, plus increased activity at Henfaes and Biocomposites facilities.
- iv. *Accidents and Incidents:* A supplier is currently undertaking an investigation after a special-gases cylinder was suspected to contain the ‘wrong’ gas (i.e. the gas was not oxygen-free, as displayed) during an experiment. It was agreed to contact other Universities for their own experiences with suppliers providing incorrect gases
- v. *Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visit:* The HSE GM Specialist Inspector, who undertakes inspections on behalf of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), is to visit on 27th February 2018. Trades Union officials are invited to meet with the Inspector if they wish. It was noted that a Senior HSE Inspector will accompany the GM Specialist.
- vi. *Fumehood Operation and Certification:* Concerns were expressed that the number of fumehoods were not operating efficiently and the time taken to resolve the issues was increasing.
- vii. *Property and Campus Services (PACS):* The reduction in the numbers of PACS staff, particularly within the mechanical and electrical services section was

discussed. It was noted that whilst plans are in place to recruit new staff there is a risk that some items and services may be delayed. Colleagues were encouraged to monitor services that may impact them and support PACS as much as possible through reporting omissions and concerns in a timely manner.

530. HEALTH AND SAFETY TASK GROUP

Since the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee the Task Group has met once. The following key items were noted:

- i. Dr Kevin Mundy, University Secretary, is the new chair of the Task Group.
- ii. *Resource Constraints, FSB: Implications on Property & Campus Services (PACS) and more widely.* It was noted that:
 - The PACS Task Group continues to oversee and support the department during this period of change. It was also noted that a Consultant has been appointed to evaluate and help restructure the department (PACS).
 - With regard to wider institutional impact of budget reductions and organisational change it was noted that the FSB has considered all responses to consultation and was reassured changes will not have an adverse impact on health and safety.
- iii. *Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy:* Since student issues are already addressed through Student Regulations this Policy will be reviewed and refocused so that it purely applies to staff and contractors.
- iv. *Membership of the Task Group:* It is likely that membership of the group will increase to reflect structural changes and to better utilise staff expertise.
- v. *Staff Sickness Absence:* The percentage of long-term sickness absences was above the national average, but the calculation methodology is dependent on short-term absences, which is below the sector average. If a more realistic view of short-term absences is taken the long-term averages are in line with the sector. Following implementation of the new College and Professional Services structure, a series of training sessions will be held for professional staff to support the implementation of the new HR Sickness Absence Policy, which will address absence reporting and recording.
- vi. *Staff Training, Record Keeping:* Difficulties persist in most Colleges and Professional Services with the recording of local Health and Safety Staff Inductions, and other safety-related training. The difficulty is primarily associated with ‘user restrictions’ with the electronic staff records system.
- vii. *PACS:* Assurances are being sought that staff departures together with the use of numerous different data management software, are not negatively impacting on compliance arrangements.

531. REPORT ON PACS MATTERS

A Paper was tabled, with the following key items noted:

- a. *Radon Mitigation Measures, Arduwy:* A meeting has been held with the contractor and specialist sub-contractor responsible for the radon mitigation

system and an action plan had been agreed.

- b. Derwyn Owen is Acting Director for the next 12 months, as well as deputising as Head of Property and Head of Capital.
- c. The University has appointed Mr John Stevens as a Transformation and Performance Consultant to work with the PACS team to roll out a programme of transformation: coaching, mentoring, training and recruitment.
- d. Alwyn Jones is departing as Asset and Space Manager, which also includes the role of Fire Officer. The responsibilities for fire management will be shared between existing team members in the short term.
- e. Asbestos re-inspections are ongoing – this is taking longer than planned as PLANON specific asset numbers are now required as part of the re-inspection report. The Asbestos Consultant has appointed another surveyor with plans to complete all re-inspections by the end of February 2018.
- f. Compliance Management Meetings are ongoing with a new and improved central database for compliance records and reports introduced to the team.
- g. PLANON integration and development continues to be a focus along with utilisation of the PDA/Handheld Devices.

A discussion ensued. It was noted the Health and Safety Task Group will continue to support PACS as much as possible during the transition period, and will convey the message of the importance of recruiting within the PACS team in a timely manner to Council.

ACTION: Chair

532. HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES (HSS) REPORT

A summary of planned HSS work was given, the following key points noted:

- i. **New Policy Standards;** there will be two new Policy Standards, namely:
 - *Electromagnetic Fields (Non-ionising radiation)*
Will state the requirements for the safe use and management of equipment that produces significant electromagnetic fields (EMF), in compliance with the Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulations.
 - *Safe Use of Hazardous Artificial Optical Radiation Light Sources (Non-ionising radiation)*
Will state the requirements for the safe use of potentially hazardous artificial optical radiation light sources, in compliance with the Control of Artificial Optical Radiation at Work Regulations. The Policy specifically excludes “lasers”, which will be addressed by a specific Policy Standard.
- ii. **Revised/Revoked Policy Standards:**
 - *Laser Safety (non-ionising radiation) – Revision*
It is proposed to undertake a major review of the current Laser Safety Code of Practice and simplify the Policy Standard to suitably reflect the requirements of the Control of Artificial Optical Radiation at Work Regulations.

- *Children on University Property - Revoke*
The 2016 University H&S Policy includes a section specifically on responsibility for safeguarding children who visit or participate in University activities (Section 14). As such, it is proposed the current Policy for safety of children on University property be revoked.

iii. **Health and Safety Management Systems Audits:**

- *Students' Union (SU)*
The general health and safety management audit of the SU has commenced. The audit will utilise fewer 'detailed' assessments of risk activities, reflecting the work carried out with the SU in recent years to assess and manage risk.
- *The Management Centre (MDC)*
An audit of the general processes of the MDC will commence once the SU audit is nearing completion/completed. This will include a selection of more 'detailed' assessments. For example, kitchen and event safety.

iv. **New Colleges and Directorates:**

- *Initial Control Document*
A draft document has been produced to recognise activities and staff positions that will need to be identified during the initial stages of new Colleges and Professional Services. These relate primarily to key aspects of health and safety management and control during organisational change, and seek to ensure that where appropriate there continues to be a focal / contact point for key risk-subject areas.
- *Health and Safety Management Documentation*
Draft template Policy and Procedures documents are being developed to simplify and match across to relevant duties specified by Section 7 of the University's H&S Policy. The documents will provide clearer guidance on responsibilities assigned to Heads of Schools and other staff.

- v. **Corporate H&S Risk Assessment:** Some 50% of the core University-level Risk Assessment requires updating. A notable element will involve assessing legal compliance of certain University infrastructure and building systems managed by/through PACS.

- i. **Environmental:** HSS has adopted a notable proportion of the previous Environment Manager's role for environmental legal compliance. This includes overseeing compliance with the ISO14001 Environmental Management System (EMS). It was noted the EMS is to be externally audited in October 2018.

533. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Items raised under Any Other Business.

534. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were noted:

- i. Due to resource implications within PACS, it was reported some Maintenance Requests are taking many weeks to be resolved, resulting in items, including rubbish accumulating in communal areas, creating a potential hazard. The Acting Director of PACS agreed to raise the matter within the PACS Team. The Chair requested DO report back at the next H&S Committee.

ACTION: DO

- ii. A concern was expressed regarding the Financial Sustainability Board's (FSB) decision that a dedicated H&S Adviser is no longer required for the Colleges of Arts & Humanities and Human Sciences, with the current H&S Officer's role and responsibilities incorporated into the already busy roles of the College Manager and Deputy College Manager. The Chair agreed to raise this with the Health and Safety Task Group.

ACTION: Chair

- iii. The Chair thanked Michele Lake, Occupational Health Practitioner, for her support of the H&S Committee.
In addition, the Committee gave special thanks to Mr David Fordham for his support of the University's health and safety agenda and the Committee's work.

The next Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 23rd May 2018, 10am in The Council Chamber.