

# BANGOR UNIVERSITY

## HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**Meeting:** 5<sup>th</sup> November 2010

**Present:** Dr D Assinder, Ms J Caulfield, Mr R Dart, Mr J East, Mr D Fordham, Ms L Fowlie, Ms D Giles, Dr J Latchford, Ms C Monks, Dr L Murphy, Mr G Parry, Mr J Patton, Ms E Riches, Dr G Roberts, Mr S Roberts, Mr G W Jones (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Miss S Barnes, Dr G Clarke, Mr E Evans, Mr M Goodwin, Mrs L Meadows, Dr D M Roberts, Mr E Roberts.

**NOTE:** The Deputy Registrar congratulated Dr D Assinder on his appointment as Chair of the Committee and welcomed him to the meeting. The Chair gave a brief description of his relevant experience and emphasised the need to ensure financial pressures within the University do not result in any decline of health and safety resource.

### 358. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting, held on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

### 359. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Minute 351(b) Radon Policy Standard:

It was confirmed that the final stage of the Radon Survey would commence at the beginning of December 2010 and that the full report would be available by Easter 2011.

(b) Minute 352(iii) Centrally Timetabled Spaces:

It was confirmed progress has been made in terms of defining the technical and general ownership of spaces such as lecture theatres, but there was less clarity on specialist areas such as laboratories.

Concern was expressed about how Security could be maintained where, for example, facilities were used out of hours by groups not associated with the predominant occupier of a building. It was noted the Executive had established a Room Management Group and discussions were ongoing with a report expected in early 2011.

(c) Minute 354 Health and Safety Policy:

It was confirmed the University Council had approved the Health and Safety Policy which would be signed by the Vice-Chancellor on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

(d) Minute 356 Chairmanship of Sub-Committees:

It was noted Dr D Assinder would chair the Radiation Health and Safety Sub-Committee and the Chemical and Biological Health and Safety Sub-Committee.

### 360. REPORT OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Chemical and Biological Health and Safety Sub-Committee met on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The primary focus of the Sub-Committee's discussions concerned the University-wide Review of the Management and Control of Biological Hazards.

### **361. BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS REVIEW**

The Biological Safety Officer presented a summary of the aims, methodology and findings of the Review of the Management and Control of Biological Hazards. In particular it was noted that:

- i. Following identification of a lack of training as a key weakness in the control of biological hazards, the review was suspended to enable the development of suitable training courses. Key staff have now received appropriate training and Blackboard based training will soon be available for students. Appreciation was expressed to the Health and Safety Support Officer for the development of the training material.
- ii. The Review found the control of biological hazards associated with University-related activities was generally good with recommended improvements relating to the formalisation of existing controls and the need to maintain facilities and infrastructure in a suitable condition.
- iii. Concern was expressed as to the future sources of funding available to maintain and upgrade facilities. The Chair indicated that a proportion of the overheads awarded under the Full Economic Cost (FEC) system of research grant awards are intended as 'infrastructure' funds and should be set aside for such purposes.
- iv. Assurances were given that the venomous snakes owned by the University were held securely and in accordance with all relevant legislation. In addition, the Home Office regularly inspects the animals and their associated holding facilities.
- v. It was confirmed that courses to train domestics, contractors and direct labour staff on how to work safely in laboratories where chemical and biological hazards exist have been available for some time. It is expected that training will begin before Christmas.

It was noted that University-tailored advice on Weils disease (Leptospirosis) was not currently available. The Occupational Health Practitioner confirmed individuals at most risk were made aware of the hazard when attending health surveillance checks. The Biological Safety Officer agreed to work with HSS to produce University-tailored Weils Disease guidance.

### **362. REPORT FROM THE SAFETY EXECUTIVE TASK GROUP (SEG)**

The following summary was given:

- i. Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan: In response to a specific request from the HSE Inspector the majority of SEG's efforts have been directed at producing a University Health and Safety Action Plan. It was noted the Action Plan was a significant piece of work and that the HSE Inspector is citing Bangor University to other Public bodies as exemplifying 'good practice' in this area.
- ii. Estates Related Health and Safety Capital and Strategic Items: The size, age and nature of the estate continues to provide a significant challenge, especially given the current pressures on resources. To ensure compliance with relevant legislation in a variety of areas a new test and inspection regime is being implemented by Estates and Facilities; these will complement and form part of the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan.
- iii. Non-Smoking Policy Review Group: The Group's preliminary Report indicated people do not always obey the 5 metre rule and suggested establishing designated smoking areas or a smoking ban for certain areas of the estate. SEG's initial view was that the 5 metre rule should be publicised again to reinforce the rule but agreed in principle to look at a complete smoking ban in some areas of the academic estate.

### **363. HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AUDIT**

A summary of the Health and Safety Management Systems Audit package was given. This initial benchmark audit had been developed in conjunction with the College of Natural Sciences and it was noted that audits of all other Colleges would be complete by April 2011.

It was also noted that the Audit was structured in such a way that it enabled different levels of health and safety leadership within Colleges to be identified.

The Head of CoPAS expressed concern that Colleges should not be seen as at fault when the audit identified areas of weakness that were beyond their control. It was also noted that there was a need to ensure that all Colleges and Departments were made aware of their responsibilities to address problem areas identified by the Audit which fall under their control.

### **364. HEALTH INITIATIVES REPORT**

A summary of health support and enhancement initiatives was given. In particular it was noted that:

- i. Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS): The HSE visited Bangor following a report of HAVS (reportable under RIDDOR). The HSE were satisfied with the University's response to the illness and subsequently the Chair of the HSE has cited Bangor's response to the problem as an example of best practice.
- ii. Fit Notes: The primary aim of the Fit Note System introduced in April 2010 is to support people back into work. The Occupational Health Practitioner has worked with local GPs to facilitate this process and to ensure individuals receive the necessary support. In addition, the Occupational Health Practitioner has formally reviewed and reported on the process and the impact of the Fit Note. The Report is available on-line and will be distributed to stakeholders.
- iii. Healthy Living Week – October 2010: Organised jointly with the Students' Union and HSS it facilitated the cross-over of ideas between staff and students. A petition requesting free chlamydia screening for under 25's in Wales to match that available in England was also completed and subsequently presented to the relevant authorities.
- iv. Ty Gobaith: A variety of activities, including sponsored walks, abseil and lottery, have so far raised £6,500 in 2010 for the Charity.
- v. Health Interventions – the Business Case: Data was presented indicating direct costs to the University on staff sickness absence due to back pain. The Back Care initiative has not been entirely successful in reducing lost time associated with back pain and sufferers indicated that access to physiotherapy via the NHS involved waiting times of up to 40 weeks. In light of this situation it was agreed that a small Working Group (in cooperation with the Business Development Manager, Estates and Facilities) should investigate the business case for University support for the provision or facilitation of physiotherapy.

Appreciation was again expressed for the work and continued dedication of the Occupational Health Practitioner and Health and Safety Assistant.

### **365. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following items were raised:

- a) The HSE is currently offering free courses to Trades Unions Representatives on Health and Safety Management.
- b) Extensive problems associated with car parking on the Normal Site were experienced during the first week of term as a result of students not being able to pre-purchase car parking permits and car parking restrictions not being enforced. This item will be taken forward to Estates and Facilities.

- c) Concern was expressed regarding control of Contractors working within academic buildings and in relation to outstanding estate-related actions reported following College and Departmental Health and Safety Inspections. It was agreed that these items would be referred to the Estates & Facilities Department and a means of bringing forward estate-related items to the Committee would be considered.
- d) It was noted Fire Assembly Points across the University are not fully signed and that details of Call Point locations are not being provided by Estates and Facilities to Colleges / Departments. It was agreed the matter would be raised with Estates and Facilities.