

# ASTON UNIVERSITY

## HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE (HSC)

Minutes of the Health & Safety Committee held on  
Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 at 10.00am in the Council Room

<b>Present</b>	Mr Gareth Evans (Chair) Miss Darnette Cowan Dr George Drahun Mr Jim Finucane Dr Mike Green Dr Ann Hartley Mr Alan Hawkesworth Mr Kevin Hughes Ms Rose Hunt Ms Di Lacey Mr Adrian Lowe	Mr Steve Ludlow Ms Michele McGrath Ms Karen Newman-Brown Dr Nick Smith Ms Kerstin Taylor Mr Andrew Vickers Mr Cliff Vidgeon Mrs Elaena Wells Mr David White Mr Andrew Williams
<b>Apologies</b>	Mr Garry East Ms Jane Filby Dr Joanne Gough Mr Ian Harrison Mr Richard Middleton	Mr Gary Moulder Mr Keith Munday Dr Matthew Nye Mr Malcolm Tonks
<b>By Invitation</b>	Prof Peter Lambert Prof Andrew Sutherland	(in connection with timed item 09/056)
<b>In Attendance</b>	Mrs Megan Jones	

### APOLOGIES

09/048 Noted: 1. Apologies had been received from a number of members in advance of the meeting.

### MEMBERSHIP

09/049 Noted: 1. A warm welcome was extended to Mr Cliff Vidgeon, Acting Director of Human Resources, who had joined the Committee in place of the retiring HR Director, Mr Keith Thomas.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2009

09/050 Resolved: 1. The Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009 meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### Waste Skips

- 09/051 Noted: 1. The non-smoking policy was to be enforced effectively in all areas of the University through an all-staff/all-student email, with particular reference to this area.
- Resolved: 1. The all-staff/all-student email had been drafted for approval by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), and would be circulated before the next meeting.  
**[Action: COO, Deputy Secretary]**

### Environmental Issues

- 09/052 Noted: 1. The Acting Environmental and Sustainability Manager was preparing a questionnaire on the procedures for waste auditing, recycling and waste streams, and this would be circulated to staff outside the meeting. This item was therefore closed.

### Reports from Schools and Departments

- 09/053 Resolved: 1. The University Fire Safety Adviser (UFSA) would review the Chubb fire safety assessment and local fire drill reports for LIS and report back to the next meeting.  
**[Action: UFSA, LIS Director]**

### Risk Assessment Software

- 09/054 Resolved: 1. A small working party had begun investigation into risk assessment software, and the Riskex software had been identified as the best solution available. Due to the relatively high cost of the software, a reduced price trial package was to be negotiated with the supplier if possible.  
**[Action: Steve Ludlow]**

### Audit of Sport & Recreation

- 09/055 Noted: 1. The issues outstanding from the audit had now been completed and this item was therefore closed.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT GROUP (HSAG)**

- 09/056 Received: 1. The minutes from the last meeting of the HSAG, held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009 (Agendum 5a).

- Received: 2. The report from the audit of EAS carried out on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009 (Agendum 5b).
- Noted: 1. Dr Andrew Sutherland has now taken over from Prof Peter Lambert as Chair of the HSAG, which means that each of the Schools will have now headed up the HSAG since its establishment.
- Noted: 2. An audit had been undertaken in EAS (Computer Science, Mathematics and School Office) on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009, and the recommendations made by the audit team had been fairly minor. The team had found that a very good working relationship existed within the department, which was commended.
- Noted: 3. Future audits had been programmed, commencing with Residential Services in June 2009, and then Aston Student Advice Point (ASAP). A formal request had been made by the Deputy Secretary and Risk Insurance Officer, to the Chief Operating Officer in his capacity as a University Trustee of Aston Student Villages, in advance of the planned audit in Residential Services.
- Noted: 4. As HSAG was concerned to look at all areas where Aston employees work, investigation was being undertaken to identify whether Aston Brook Green should be included.
- Noted: 5. A Safety Plan had been drawn up in EAS by Prof Robert Berry and Steve Ludlow, incorporating the recommendations made by the audit team, and this was to be presented to the EAS Executive Management Group at the end of April. The EMG would then make a formal response to the HSAG.
- Noted: 6. The stress survey in EAS was long overdue, but dependent on the outcome of the Capita survey and those results were not yet available. The deadline for this item would therefore need to be rescheduled beyond May 2009.
- Noted: 7. PAT testing in EAS was being carried out, but there was no system of co-ordinated records; this had been addressed in the new safety plan.
- Noted: 8. Sincere thanks were extended to Prof Peter Lambert for his dedication and commitment during his term in office as Chair of HSAG, a role he had performed in a humane and sensitive way.
- Resolved: 1. The UFSA would liaise with Steve Ludlow on the fire safety issues involving obscured door viewing panels in EAS. A campus-wide policy would then be developed by the UFSA.  
**[Action: UFSA, Steve Ludlow]**

Resolved: 2. The EAS audit report recommendation 7 was not limited to academic staff, and the wording on the report should be amended to reflect this.

**[Action: HSAG Chair, Safety Office]**

Resolved: 3. The stress survey was still outstanding from the audit in LHS and this would be completed as a matter of urgency.

**[Action: Kate Parsons]**

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

09/057 Received: 1. A draft institutional Emergency Management Plan (Agendum 6.1a).

Noted: 1. The core procedure had now been drafted, together with appendices on communications within the University and a contact list for external authorities; a further appendix would incorporate existing procedures for such events as a death in the student population, public disorder and infectious disease outbreaks.

Noted: 2. It was important to recognise that this document was not a business continuity plan, which would be prepared under a subsequent exercise.

Noted: 3. An accompanying document was being drafted by the Risk & Insurance Officer (RIO) to provide a fully detailed plan of the process as a whole, including reviews and personnel responsible for specific activities within the process.

Noted: 4. Within the strategic team, it would be noted that appropriate consultation would be undertaken with relevant trades union representatives.

Noted: 5. A training programme is being planned for the Senior Officers on the EIMS rota, to be delivered jointly by the Deputy Secretary, RIO and an external consultant with experience as an Emergency Incident Manager.

Resolved: 1. The plan should be revised to include specific reference to ongoing review, both after any emergency management event and also on a regular annual basis. This should include a debriefing meeting following any event, to review the appropriateness of any actions and/or outcomes.

**[Action: Deputy Secretary]**

- Resolved: 2. The draft procedure and associated appendices would be revised to include the amendments discussed at the meeting. Members were requested to make any additional comments to the Deputy Secretary within the next 2 weeks, in order to meet the agreed deadline for presentation to the Executive and Council at their respective May and June meetings.

**[Action: HSC Members, Deputy Secretary]**

## **PANDEMIC PLANNING**

- 09/058 Received: 1. Supplementary documents from the RIO in association with a draft procedure on 'flu pandemic planning (Agendum 6.2a).
- Noted: 1. The procedure had been drafted after consideration of the practicality and suitability of various options, and based on the 5 specific UK alert levels, to provide planning in the event of pandemic 'flu or other similar medical emergencies with wide-ranging implications.
- Noted: 2. Specific actions were being taken with regard to intra-University communications, improved awareness of good health and hygiene practices, and security resourcing.
- Noted: 3. Guidance on pandemic planning was due to be published in the autumn by the Higher Education Business Continuity forum (HEBCon).
- Noted: 4. A definition was still required for both financial (business) and health & safety critical activities in individual Schools and Departments, with a reference to key roles associated with these activities, where appropriate.
- Resolved: 1. The draft core procedure would be circulated to members for their comments immediately after the meeting, together with an invitation to approve this document for onward transmission to the May meeting of the Executive.  
**[Action: RIO, Safety Office]**
- Resolved: 2. At the request of any member, or in the event of substantial comment, following circulation, the draft procedure, would be presented to the HSC for further consideration at the next meeting, and then to the June meeting of the Executive.  
**[Action: RIO]**
- Resolved: 3. The working group would re-convene after the HEBCon guidance was published, to review the draft plan accordingly.  
**[Action: RIO]**

## STUDENTS' GUILD AUDIT

- 09/059    Received:    1.    A written progress report from the Guild General Manager (GGM) on issues outstanding from the audit (Agendum 6.3a).
- Noted:            1.    The action plan had not been provided in the GGM's absence, and this would be circulated to members before the end of the month.
- Noted:            2.    A quote had been received for work to disable the sound from the DJs' system in Einstein's Bar when the emergency alarm system was activated, and progress of this work would be monitored.  
**[Action: Catering Manager, GGM, UFSA, Trevor Owens]**
- Noted:            3.    A plan was in place for fire refuges on the staircases at each end of each floor in the Students' Guild building; the work being undertaken on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor will initiate refuges there, and the lift has been fire-protected by work to isolate it on the ground floor. Further investigation was being made into additional work to provide full refuge protection facilities, but it was anticipated that it would not be complete before the end of 2010.
- Resolved:        1.    The Guild Welfare Officer would liaise with the GGM to issue an updated action plan.  
**[Action: Drew Williams, GGM]**
- Resolved:        2.    The UFSA would continue to liaise with Estates & Facilities and with the Disability Co-ordinator over the ongoing investigations into further fire refuge provision.  
**[Action: UFSA, Estates Manager, Disability Co-ordinator]**

## FIRE SAFETY

- 09/060    Received:    1.    A report from the UFSA on fire safety issues (Agendum 6.4a).
- Received:        2.    An update from the Conference General Manager on joint evacuation procedures for the Aston Business School building.
- Noted:            1.    Conference Aston had shown good practice in their approach to public fire safety procedures, and this was being adopted in other areas of the University as the UFSA is rolling out signage and procedures for lecture theatres and public assembly rooms.

- Noted: 2. The generic Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for Conference Aston had been approved.
- Noted: 3. A successful Fire Brigade exercise on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2009 had been undertaken on the University campus. A full report will be submitted to the Emergency Planning Working Group, once the formal report has been received from West Midlands Fire Service.
- Noted: 4. A fire assessment carried out in CEAC had concluded that, although it would not be possible to provide fully-compliant refuge areas, it would be acceptable to designate areas for wheelchairs as safe areas, with a temporary communication system linked to security. This was in acknowledgement of the short life-span of the building.
- Noted: 5. A “road test” had been carried out by inviting some of the currently registered PEEP users to try out the new communication system in the Main Building to check its effectiveness; there were some concerns raised about the positioning of some handsets, which may not be easily reached by users of large electric wheelchairs. It was recognised that this is a temporary solution, and that it will remain on the priority list of works to be completed, once areas with no communication systems have been provided with facilities.
- Noted: 6. The Equal Opportunities Adviser was issuing a survey later in the day which would include consideration of PEEPS for people with mobility difficulties or sensory impairments.
- Noted: 7. The Conference Aston evacuation procedure had been completed and agreed, and was due to be implemented in full from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009; it was acknowledged that this was dependent on some circumstances beyond the University’s control, but it was considered that this was a reasonably practical date for implementation.
- Noted: 8. Further staff training was being conducted during May in preparation for implementation of the plan; and tests would be needed (daytime and night-time) early in June.
- Noted: 9. Additional planning would be needed to address specific issues associated with the SAGA group visiting in July.
- Noted: 10. The evacuation procedure produced by the Conference General Manager was only “joint” with ABS from the point where the ABS fire wardens reported to the Conference Aston fire wardens at the assembly point. It was therefore critical that ABS formulated their part of the evacuation procedure.

Resolved: 1. The Conference General Manager would liaise with the UFSA to produce specific guidance relating to the SAGA visitation. **[Action: Conference General Manager, UFSA]**

Resolved: 2. The UFSA would liaise with ABS to follow up the missing part of the evacuation procedure.  
**[Action: UFSA, ABS Secretary]**

## **ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS**

09/061 Received: 1. A report on accidents and incidents occurring since the last meeting (Agendum 6.5a).

Noted: 1. A courtesy letter had been sent to the visitor who was scalded by hot coffee from a faulty jug. No further communication had been received from this visitor since the incident.

Noted: 2. As part of the new incident reporting procedure, the Safety Office would ensure that details were sent to the relevant School or Department to avoid any being missed when locally monitoring trends or investigating causes of incidents.

Noted: 3. One visiting student from Matthew Boulton College had suffered epileptic fits on two occasions in the Woodcock sports facility. It had been suggested that this might be connected with the emergency lighting system, although no other similar instances had been reported and Estates & Facilities had checked the effects of strobing, with no result.

Resolved: 1. Contact would be made with the manufacturer of the emergency lighting system to flag these incidents and the possible link, with a request for further information.  
**[Action: Estates Manager]**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING**

09/062 Received: 1. A verbal report from the HHS on the review of current arrangements for provision of health and safety related training to all staff.

Noted: 1. Following the request at the previous meeting, generic and specialist training requirements for staff had now been received from EAS, LHS, Human Resources, Estates & Facilities, Conference Aston, Sport & Recreation, ABS, LSS and Residential Services.

- Noted: 2. Additional dates had been made available on the Staff Development website for various health & safety training courses.
- Resolved: 1. Remaining Schools and Departments would be contacted to request their individual training matrices, and this would include smaller, administrative areas without direct representation on the HSC.  
**[Action: HHS]**
- Resolved: 2. Members should make sure all staff in their respective Schools and Departments are aware of the training opportunities available, and encourage them to make online bookings.  
**[Action: HSC Members]**

### **LONE WORKING**

- 09/063 Received: 1. A verbal report from the HHS on the introduction of lone working guidance.
- Noted: 1. Guidance documentation is to be finalised by the end of April 2009, and a copy circulated to members following a review by Human Resources.

### **REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY and SCHOOL & DEPARTMENT PLANS**

- 09/064 Received: 1. A verbal update from the HHS on the planned review of the University Health and Safety Policy, and formulation of School and Departmental Health and Safety Plans.
- Noted: 1. The first meeting of the working group had taken place early in April, and minutes and an action plan had been produced, with the aim of presenting a first draft Policy to the HSC at the June meeting.
- Resolved: 1. The draft Policy would be discussed at the next meeting, and also guidance for Schools and Departments to produce their own safety plans; this would remain as a substantive item on the agenda for future meetings.  
**[Action: Steve Ludlow, HHS, RIO, Keith Munday, Disability Co-ordinator, HSC Members]**

### **REPORT OF THE RADIOLOGICAL SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE (RSSC)**

- 09/065 Received: 1. A written progress report from the SRO on matters outstanding from the last meeting of the RSSC (Agendum 7a).

- Noted: 1. Good progress was being made, and disposals were going according to plan.
- Resolved: 1. The SRO would liaise with the Estates Manager to arrange a meeting of the working group looking at a procedure for fume cupboard testing, in advance of the next meeting.  
**[Action: SRO, Estates Manager]**

## **EXTERNAL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES/GUIDANCE**

- 09/066 Received: 1. A guidance note from UCEA on dealing with workers' involvement in health and safety issues (Agendum 8a).
- Resolved: 1. The Safety Office would obtain hard copies of the relevant documentation, to be held in the Safety Office and in the Union offices. Arrangements would also be made to obtain access to online updates, and information on how to access these would be circulated to members.  
**[Action: Safety Office]**

## **REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS**

- 09/067 Received: 1. Minutes of local Health and Safety Committee/Group meetings from the following Schools/Departments:-  
 Finance, Purchasing & Director's Office  
 Conference Aston  
 Sport & Recreation
- Noted: 1. Conference Aston encourage staff to conduct "hazard spotting" as part of their involvement in general health and safety issues. The Conference General Manager will review their "near miss" report forms and only submit to the Safety Office those which constitute a genuine "near miss" incident.
- Noted: 2. Congratulations were extended to the staff in Sport & Recreation who had recently achieved further qualifications in health and safety.
- Resolved: 1. Schools and Departments will be contacted with a reminder to submit all completed meeting minutes in time for the next meeting of the HSC, before the summer recess.  
**[Action: Safety Office]**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

09/68 Noted: 1. There being no other business, the meeting was concluded.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

09/069 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 10.00am in the Council Room, at which time the schedule of meetings for 2009/2010 will be discussed.

## ACTION SUMMARY

Topic	Minute	Resolutions	Actions
Waste skips	09/051	The all-staff/all-student email regarding enforcement of the non-smoking policy had been drafted for approval by the COO, and would be circulated before the next meeting.	COO, Deputy Secretary
Reports from Schools & Departments	09/053	The UFSA would review the Chubb fire safety assessment and local fire drill reports for LIS.	UFSA, LIS Director
Risk Assessment Software	09/054	The working party would look into obtaining a reduced price trial version of the Riskex software for wider assessment.	Steve Ludlow
Health & Safety Audit Group	09/056	<p>The UFSA would liaise with Steve Ludlow on the fire safety issues involving obscured door viewing panels in EAS.</p> <p>Recommendation 7 of the EAS audit report would be re-worded to reflect that this item covered all staff.</p> <p>The LHS stress survey was still awaited from the audit and this would be completed as a matter of urgency.</p>	<p>UFSA, Steve Ludlow</p> <p>HSAG Chair, Safety Office</p> <p>Disability Co-Ordinator</p>
Emergency Management Planning	09/057	<p>The draft plan would be revised to include specific reference to ongoing review, both after any emergency management event and also on a regular annual basis. This should include a debriefing meeting following any event, to review the appropriateness of any actions and/or outcomes.</p> <p>Other amendments discussed at the meeting to be made to the draft plan.</p> <p>HSC members were requested to make any additional comments to the Deputy Secretary within the next 2 weeks, prior to the plan being presented to the Executive at the May meeting.</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Deputy Secretary</p> <p>HSC Members, Deputy Secretary</p>
Pandemic Planning	09/058	The draft core procedure would be circulated to members immediately after the meeting, so they may provide comments to the RIO.	RIO, Safety Office, HSC Members

		<p>Comments from members would be incorporated into the draft procedure, which would either be submitted to the Executive direct, or be presented to the June meeting of the Executive.</p> <p>The working group would re-convene after the HEBCon guidance was published in the autumn, to review the draft plan accordingly.</p>	<p>RIO</p> <p>RIO</p>
Students' Guild H&S Audit	09/059	<p>Progress on the work to disable the sound from the DJs' wiring system in Einstein's Bar would be monitored.</p> <p>The Guild Welfare Officer would liaise with the GGM to issue the updated action plan to members before the end of April.</p> <p>The UFSA would continue to liaise with Estates &amp; Facilities and with the Disability Co-ordinator over the ongoing investigations into further fire refuge provision in the Students' Guild.</p>	<p>Catering Manager, GGM, UFSA, Trevor Owens,</p> <p>Drew Williams, GGM</p> <p>UFSA, Estates Manager, Disability Co-ordinator</p>
Fire Safety	09/060	<p>The Conference General Manager would liaise with the UFSA to produce specific guidance relating to the SAGA visitors in July.</p> <p>The UFSA would liaise with ABS to follow up the missing part of the evacuation procedure.</p>	<p>Conference General Manager, UFSA</p> <p>UFSA, ABS Secretary</p>
Accident & Incident Reports	09/061	<p>The Safety Office would ensure copies of incident reports were sent to the local School or Department.</p> <p>Contact would be made with the manufacturer of the emergency lighting systems in Woodcock sports hall to flag the incidents where a visiting student had had epileptic fits, and to request further information regarding any possible link.</p>	<p>Safety Office</p> <p>Estates Manager</p>
Health & Safety Training	09/062	<p>Remaining Schools and Departments would be contacted to request their individual training matrices, and this would include smaller, administrative areas without direct representation on the HSC.</p> <p>Members should make sure all staff in their respective Schools and Departments are aware of the training opportunities available, and encourage them to make online bookings.</p>	<p>HHS</p> <p>HSC Members</p>

Review of University Health & Safety Policy and School & Department Plans	09/064	<p>The draft Policy would be discussed at the next meeting, and also guidance issued for Schools and Departments to produce their own safety plans.</p> <p>This would remain as a substantive item on the agenda for future meetings.</p>	<p>Steve Ludlow, HHS, RIO, Keith Munday, Disability Co-ordinator, HSC Members</p> <p>Safety Office</p>
Report of the RSSC	09/065	The SRO would liaise with the Estates Manager to arrange a meeting of the working group looking at a procedure for fume cupboard testing, in advance of the next meeting.	SRO, Estates Manager
External Health & Safety Policies / Guidance	09/066	The Safety Office would obtain hard copies of the relevant documentation, to be held in the Safety Office and in the Union offices. Arrangements would also be made to obtain access to online updates, and information on how to access these would be circulated to members.	Safety Office
Reports from Schools & Departments	09/067	<p>Conference Aston:</p> <p>The Conference General Manager would review all local “near miss” report forms and only submit to the Safety Office those which constituted a genuine “near miss” incident, and not those which were simply hazard spotting.</p> <p>General:</p> <p>Schools and Departments will be contacted with a reminder to submit all completed meeting minutes in time for the next meeting of the HSC, before the summer recess.</p>	<p>Conference General Manager</p> <p>Safety Office</p>
Date of Next Meeting	09/069	The schedule of meetings for 2009/2010 would be discussed at the next meeting, to be held on Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 10.00am in the Council Room.	HSC Members