

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

COUNCIL

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
11 February 2008**

Present: Mr Dick Melly (in the Chair), Mr Hugh Jones, Mr Barry Douglas, Ms Patsy Carter, Ms Sheila Turley, Mr Des Freedman, Ms Eva Snell, Ms Raymond Kingsbury, Ms Laurel Sills, Ms Bronwen Bernard (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr Chris Pearson, Ms Anna Furse, Ms Kelly Thompson, Ms Anna Sabti, Dr Elizabeth MacFarlane.

In Attendance: Mrs Mary Bright, Mr James Hutchinson, Mr Steve Collins, Terry Weller.

OPEN BUSINESS

1 MINUTES

Received:

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2007.

Resolved:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held 12 November 2007.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minutes 3 (v) and (vi)

Noted:

that Union Branch Secretaries had not wished to meet separately with the Health and Safety Executive Inspector and that copies of the Inspector's follow-up letter had been sent to UCU and Unison branches and to the Students Union, by the Head of Health and Safety, on 7 January 2008.

3 PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE

Received:

a report on a proposal for the establishment of an Environmental Policy Sub-Committee of Estates Committee (08-72).

Resolved:

- (i) to raise no objection to the proposal for a consequential change to the terms of reference of Health and Safety Committee, as follows, with effect from 1 September 2008:

Clauses for deletion

~~4 To monitor and review the effectiveness of the College Environmental Policy, to facilitate its implementation, and to bring any deficiencies to the attention of Council.~~

~~5 To consider and advise Council on the College Environmental Policy, and on compliance with current and impending environmental legislation.~~

New clause:

To consider environmental issues referred by Council or its committees, or by the Environmental Policy Sub-Committee of Estates Committee, which have implications for the College's discharge of its obligations under health and safety legislation.

- (ii) to raise no objection to the proposal that an Environmental Policy Sub-Committee of Estates Committee be established from 1 September 2008.

4 FIRE SAFETY REPORT

Received:

a report from the College Fire Safety Officer on fire safety activities undertaken during 2007 (08-73).

Noted:

- (i) that there had been no reports of actual fires on College premises between January and December 2007. However there had been 11 malicious and 138 false alarm activations reported in Halls of Residence. The false alarms were due to water vapour escaping from ensuite shower rooms. New air extraction units are being installed, and smoke detector heads in these study bedrooms will be modified to address the problem. Action is taken against Hall residents causing malicious damage where individuals can be identified.
- (ii) that when reviewing fire risk assessments, priority had been given to Halls of Residence as fire is a high risk in sleeping accommodation. The College Fire Safety Officer has reviewed fire risk assessments of all Halls of Residence and made recommendations for remedial actions.
- (iii) that planned fire safety work for 2008 included more fire warden training for staff, participation in the review of security to clarify responsibilities in emergencies, and advising on personal emergency evacuation plans for staff and students with disabilities.
- (iv) that the Acting Head of Estates and Facilities will report on Halls of Residence fire safety remedial works, completed and outstanding to the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE VISIT

Received:

A letter sent to the Warden by the Health and Safety Executive in December 2008 (tabled at the meeting).

Noted:

- (i) that the letter followed visits from the Health and Safety Executive Inspector in October and November 2007 and concentrated on control of Legionella, asbestos and stress.
- (ii) that the Inspector was generally pleased with progress made so far on managing these hazards, but outlined various matters that required further attention.
- (iii) that the matters for attention had been discussed by HASIG and would be reported under Agenda Item on Health and Safety Implementation Group

6 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS: NEW EYECARE SCHEME WITH SPECSAVERS

Received:

A report on a scheme for free eyesight tests for College employees who are Display Screen Equipment Users (08-74).

Resolved:

to recommend to Council, the following amendment of the Health and Safety Policy with effect from April 2008:

Wording for deletion:

~~Display screen equipment (DSE) users are entitled to reimbursement of the cost of eye examinations. Reimbursement of the cost of basic frames and lenses will be made where the optometrist recommends that spectacles are needed specifically for DSE work. Where the optometrist recommends that new spectacles are required with an element that is specifically for DSE work, the user will be reimbursed for that element of the cost.~~

~~A DSE User Eye Examination request form (see K drive) must be signed by the user's Head of Department before attending an appointment with the optometrist of the user's choice. Staff can only recover the cost of eye examinations that have been authorised by their Head of Department.~~

New wording:

DSE users are entitled to eyesight tests and basic spectacles for DSE use, at no charge to themselves.

A DSE user requesting an eyesight test will be issued with a pre-paid voucher by the HR Department and asked to make an appointment with a convenient SpecSavers branch, where the voucher is exchanged for an eyesight test, and basic spectacles for DSE use if needed.

DSE users are entitled to free eyesight tests at intervals recommended by the optician or if suffering from headaches or sight problems that may be related to DSE work.

Noted:

that the new arrangements would be reviewed after twelve months in operation and that the Union representatives reserved the right to consult with their membership on this matter.

7 MOBILE PHONE MASTS

Received:

A verbal report from the Head of Health and Safety on the location and outputs of mobile phone masts on campus, and the location of wifi sites provided on campus

Noted:

- (i) that there are two macrocell mobile phone stations owned by O2 located on the roof of Whitehead Building. These transmit at two different radio frequencies (900 MHz and 2100 MHz). Transmitter powers are 22.5dBW and 27.4dBW.
- (ii) that a risk assessment was carried out by BT Cellnet in 2001 prior to installation of the stations. The assessment recommended a 4.35 metre exclusion zone in front of the antennae for people working on the roof. There are no publicly accessible areas within this zone. If work is required inside this exclusion zone, O2 must be contacted to switch off transmitters for the duration of the works.
- (iii) that the risk assessment concluded that exposure to people in the Whitehead Building, people passing the building or in adjacent buildings, would be well below standards set for the public by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). This is supported by monitoring carried out by the Health Protection Agency around mobile phone stations. Average exposures were found to be 0.002% of the ICNIRP standard for public exposure, and at no location was exposure found to exceed 0.2% of the standard.
- (iv) that wireless hotspots (wifi) are provided on campus to enable staff and students to access the College IT network and internet without the use of cables. A map showing locations of Goldsmiths wireless hotspots is published at www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/it/wireless-hotspots.php.
- (iiv) that signals from wifi are very low power, and radio frequency exposure is less than experienced by mobile phone users. There is no consistent evidence of health effects; however the Health Protection Agency has announced further research to address concerns about the increasing use of wifi in schools and elsewhere.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Received:

a report of the Health and Safety Implementation Group meeting held on 6 February 2008 (08-75).

Noted:

- (i) that the Health and Safety Executive has required further actions to control risks of Legionella and that quotes for this work were being obtained by the Estates and Facilities Department by the end of February 2008.
- (ii) that the Head of Health and Safety will investigate options for an electronic database to replace the current paper format asbestos register.
- (iii) that the HR Department is analysing sickness absence records to identify any stress 'hotspots' and hopes to complete this work by the end of April 2008. Staff Development training, including leadership courses, senior management coaching and wellbeing workshops, are currently offered and can help to manage stress.

9 NEXT MEETING

Noted:

that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 9 June 2008. The meeting will start at 1430 and will be held in Deptford Town Hall Building, room 110.

BB
February 2008