

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2012

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, ACAD (Professor N. Norris) (in the Chair), Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), Director of Human Resources (Mrs C. Piper), Director of Estates and Buildings (Mr R. Bond), Head of Staff and Educational Development (Mr P Levy), Director of University Services PPE/FMH (Mrs A Rhodes), Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Prof. Yvonne Tasker), Senior Reader, Norwich Business School (Dr Sara Connolly), Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), Director of Planning (Mr I Callaghan), Trade Union Representative (Mrs N. Skivington), Human Resources Manager (Mrs S. Forder), Disability Co-Ordinator (Ms J. Abson), and the Community & Student Rights Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Mr S. Clark).

With: Equality and Diversity Manager (Ms H. Murdoch) and Equality and Diversity Project Officer (Ms J. Corby)

Apologies: Dr L Bohn (Assistant Head of Outreach), Professor P Gilmartin (Executive Dean of Faculty of Science), Head of Marketing and Communications (Mrs S. Gook), Independent Member of Council (Ms L. McGillivray)

1. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

None

2. MINUTES

Confirmed
the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2012.

3. FIRE SAFETY FOR DISABLED STAFF, STUDENTS AND VISITORS

Considered
the report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. EDC12D001).

Noted
the University is built to 1970's designs and structures which is a constant and long term challenge to make fully safe. The University's Health and Safety Services and Health and Safety Committee have carried out a great deal of positive work to meet legal and other safety requirements. However, a partial impact assessment of the Fire Safety arrangements was carried out by the Equality Project Officer. The paper outlined the issues found and proposed 11 recommendations.

EDC12M001

EDC-M2

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Within the discussion the following points were noted:

- Because of the movements and flows of students, in particular, the approach needs to take account of 'horizontal' communication across the organisation as well as cascading information and guidance vertically.
- Some of the solution would be found in adopting a more building-based approach where buildings are occupied by a combination of Schools and Services.
- Management responsibility for this area has been 'grey' with no-one taking overall responsibility
- A process of collect, collate and disseminate needs to be taken to resolve the range of issues highlighted;
- Communication will be key to the effectiveness of applied solutions
- There is already a network of established Fire Marshalls which could prove useful as a 'framework' within which to establish additional actions to cover current gaps;
- Some areas, such as the Library, Hive the main Lecture Theatre block and other bookable rooms, have longer opening hours and are often booked through the evenings or at weekends;
- The PEEP system relies on individually tailored plans and this poses some difficulty for 'local' PEEP Officers who may have no knowledge of other buildings facilities and restrictions. Information made available for each building noting facilities and restrictions for those with mobility, hearing and visual impairments would help inform PEEPs as well as providing some basic, generally available guidelines;
- It was noted the Students Union building is in urgent need of review particularly in respect of emergency egress from the upper floor;
- That the Students Union building is counted as part of the University's main physical infrastructure;
- Noted that there has been some disagreement on responsibility for holding PEEP information and action taken to break the cycle and clarify this would be beneficial.

- Use of the Disabled Liaison Officers network to undertake the building information review was discussed but felt to be inappropriate due to the additional nature of this role and other pastoral duties undertaken as additional duties by DLOs.
- It was noted that the Head of Health and Safety has run a great deal of training for staff in Schools and additional recommendations would require additional programmes/need resource put into training;
- Not all students or staff disclose the issues that would be pertinent in a fire-risk situation. A number of mechanisms at either recruitment, admission or induction could be used as it is a Health and Safety issue rather than an Equality and Diversity issue;
- Notices already exist in bookable rooms with information about operation of IT equipment. This could be extended to include notices about fire evacuation requirements.

Taking all the above into account actions were agreed as follows:

(1) Director of Planning to report what resources are needed and how Estates will carry out a fire safety audit;

ACTION: Director of Estates

(2) Estates to provide a list of all UEA buildings indicating the current position with respect to fire safety:

ACTION: Director of Estates

(3) Room Bookings Team to liaise with Estates to populate rooms across campus with Fire Evacuation Information

ACTION: Director of Planning

(4) Timetabling Group to be asked to add this issue to Agenda for discussion, action and monitoring of progress

ACTION: Director of Planning

(5) Template to be produced asking for specific information about access to and evacuation from rooms for others, outside main timetabling system to use

ACTION: Director of Planning

(6) It was proposed that money from the DDA Budget (Campus Access Budget) be used to acquire a part time person to co-ordinate the various actions involved across the campus to ensure the University becomes compliant.

ACTION: Director of Estates

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(7) Campus Access Group to meet in December to determine what funds are available to progress action above

ACTION: Head of Equality and Diversity

(8) Each Building to have a Health and Safety Committee reporting centrally to University Safety Services with representation from Schools/Divisions but led by a Manager/Head of School within each building

ACTION: Heads of School

(9) Review to be undertaken of all information relating to PEEPs currently held on the system and comprehensive guidance to be written for this. To include range of disabilities such as: mobility, hearing, visual, cardiac and epileptic impairments or conditions.

ACTION: E&D Team

(10) Audit to be undertaken of PEEPs already held by Dean of Students and Human Resources, and information held on a central log within USS. NB Check agreement obtained from students and staff on sharing of information in this way

ACTION: E&D Team

(11) Working with relevant areas (USS, Schools, HR, DoS) review how information is disseminated, action prompted and awareness raised around this aspect of Fire Evacuation across the Campus.

ACTION: E&D Team

(12) Note was taken of some specific areas requiring particular attention: Suffolk Terrace/Counselling Service; Congregation Hall, The Street, the Students Union building, the Careers Centre, the Chaplaincy and Accommodation;

(13) Note was taken that many rooms are booked by Student Societies for use in the evenings/weekends/non-standard hours and an Audit would need to take this into account as well as incorporating a system for capturing temporary situational disabilities such as a broken leg. Students Union Welfare Officer can provide a list of Societies and contacts.

ACTION: STUDENTS UNION

4. EQUALITY STRATEGY

Considered

the report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. EDC12D002)

(Agreed that the range of objectives should be reviewed and prioritised.

ACTION: Head of E&D

Agreed that a description of how an objective will be achieved should be included in any formal plan presented to the Committee in future

ACTION: Head of E&D

Agreed that where a plan is formally agreed there be regular progress updates to the Committee (as for the previous plan on which progress was last reported in February 2012).

ACTION: Head of E&D

Agreed that a paper will be raised to ET and Council to carry through Actions 33/34 introducing the e-learning module 'Diversity in the Workplace' as mandatory for all staff.

ACTION: Director of HR/CSED

5. NEW PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS – EQUALITY ACT 2010

Considered

the report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. EDC12D003)

(Agreed that other guidance exists that would cover the information proposed for a Student Support Plan. That guidance for Schools in making reasonable adjustments in Field Work or in Laboratories would be useful.)

ACTION: Head of E&D

6. ATHENA SWAN UPDATE

Considered

the report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. EDC12D004)

Noted

the University has achieved a Bronze award as an institution; Norwich Medical School is making its Bronze submission on 30 November 2012; Five more submissions will be made in April 2013.

Noted

That RESNET was praised as active good practice at UEA but is struggling to run on what is essentially a voluntary basis; RESNET Chair is to request funding via a CUBs Bid in the forthcoming round.

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7. FACULTY UPDATES

Considered

an oral update from the Faculty Representatives

Noted

the focus within Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences is fully on Athena Swan awards at the moment.

No Faculty update was received from SSF, HUM or SCI.

8. SERVICES UPDATE

Considered

oral update from Dean of Students highlighted the range of user and service information now available

Noted

there have been substantial increases in number of substantive appointments being sought; Large increase in demand regarding Maths and Stats workshops; Waiting periods have been an issue as resource has been static while demand is substantially increasing across all support teams. The group least likely to engage with the range of services provided are international male students; Older students (i.e. those aged over 25) are more likely to use the services offered; Specific Learning Difficulties remain the largest self declaring group and 800 Educational Psychologists reports have been carried out this academic year; A service, aiming to be equivalent to DoS, is being established at UEA London.

No service update was received from Estates, HR, or ISD.

9. UNION UPDATES

Considered

an oral update from the Union of UEA Students who confirmed they have produced a report of LGBT+ students' experiences at UEA and are working closely on related topics with one particular School in this respect following concerns raised by a group of students.

In response to a request from the Disabled Students Officer the Union's representative agreed to take up and progress the issue of fire doors within the Student's Union building which are currently not operable or difficult to manage for a range of disabled students.

Noted that the Union is establishing gender neutral toilets within the Student's Union building.

ACTION: Students Union Representative

An oral update from the Trades Unions Representative who reported the Unions are working on the following themes:

Car parking charges and part-time staff. It is felt the charges are discriminatory because this impacts mainly on women who are part-time and often paid at the lower end of the pay scale. Part-time staff currently pay disproportionately more for parking because they are not charged pro-rata but on a full-time salary basis. Although parking charges are levied on a half-day or full-day basis, part-timers' hours don't always fit into the normal working pattern of exact half days or full days.

More support for women returning from maternity leave and issues around accommodating their requests for flexibility and reduction of their working hours.

Backfilling of posts, ie vacancies filled by moving staff internally and slotting them into vacant posts thus avoiding the normal recruitment procedure.

Terms and conditions of staff contracts issued post-integration.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

11. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2012/2013

Reported

that the future dates of the Equality and Diversity Committee had been set as:

Tuesday 19 February 2013 – 2pm

Tuesday 14 May 2013 – 2pm

12. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Received

the membership of the Committee. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. EDC12D006)

13. RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Received

the reserved areas of business and confidentiality. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. EDC12D007).