

NAS Health and Safety Committee Meeting
25 January 2008 10:00am, Lord Clerk Register's Room, GRH

Attendees: Dave Brownlee (Deputy Keeper- Corporate Services), John Fraser (ICT Digital Information Systems), Linda Gordon (Court and Legal Records Branch), James McCormack (Government Records Branch), Stuart McIver (ICT Digital Information Systems), John Mitchell (Accommodation Services Branch), John Welsh (ICT Digital Information Systems), Jenny Cutts (secretary).

Apologies: Tristram Clarke (Outreach Services Branch), Alex Cochrane (Reader Services Branch), Jimmy Gilmour (Archive Attendant Team Leader, Reader Services Branch), Bob Phillips (Accommodation Services Branch), Davie Renton (Accommodation Services Branch).

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence from Tristram Clarke, Alex Cochrane, Jimmy Gilmour, Bob Phillips and Davie Renton were noted.

2. Health and Safety Entry on *theOracle*

John Mitchell reported that ICT have prepared Health and Safety pages for theOracle featuring various documents that have been produced. Further editing is required before review by Dave Brownlee. Once agreed, the Health and Safety pages may be added to the intranet.

3. H&S Inspections, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments

It was reported that TTH and DIU H&S inspections are up to date. One issue arising was the lack of adequate work space on digital imaging work stations. Equipment has been moved as a result. Anti-glare glasses have also been provided on request and an engineer's visit is scheduled for adjusting the monitor heights as necessary on Monday 28 January 2008. It was clarified that Health and Safety Liaison Officers (HSLOs) should take initial action on H&S inspections before referral to John Mitchell as appropriate. H&S inspections should take place quarterly if possible in advance of meetings of the Health and Safety Committee, DSE assessments should be undertaken annually and when staff join NAS or move locations.

4. Current H&S issues of concern

4.1 It was noted that some equipment moves were scheduled for the near future, including removal of the old photocopier from room 23, GRH. Lockable chemical storage unit will be obtained for DIU and desk and chair height adjustments will also be made. One chair with rollers will be replaced with a static one which is more suitable for the user. John Mitchell explained that matters such as this can be progressed through the Requests For Change (RFC) process and do not need to be effected through H&S channels.

4.2 Out of date fire signage was discussed. It was noted that some of these signs would not meet European Regulations on fire safety. John Mitchell explained that a fire safety report has been produced and decisions on fire signage will be made following a scheduled inspection by the Crown Fire Office.

4.3 Gordon Stocks reported that an ongoing problem with the ladies toilets in TTH being too cold has not been resolved. The temperature is consistently measured as being 13 degrees and helpdesk calls have been logged and closed although the problem has not been rectified. It was thought that the call had been closed correctly as an engineer had fitted a new valve, however this was not done properly and the fault had recurred.

4.4 It was clarified that the cleaners are not expected to re-use plastic bags in all circumstances, but to use them with an awareness of ecological sustainability.

4.5 A new type of vacuum cleaner has been tried in GRH and an order for more of the same model has been placed.

4.6 John Mitchell explained that all reports of faults or requests for accommodation services work should be made through the helpdesk rather than mentioned to Archive Attendants. An example of an accident in New Register House was cited whereby an individual had been injured while attempting to fix a problem on their own at a weekend.

4.7 Complaints about the light levels at the GRH side door have been investigated. The current lighting has been found to be within the appropriate levels and to change the lighting there would require the type of fitting be changed. Bob Phillips is investigating this possibility with Historic Scotland.

4.8 It was noted that the WRH fire drill was due but that there are not enough fire marshals based at WRH to facilitate this. David Gilmour has volunteered to be a fire marshal, but as a new member of staff, has not received training for this role yet. It was also noted that the number of fire marshals at WRH has decreased with Jimmy Gilmour's move to GRH. The number of HSLOs at WRH is also insufficient.

4.9 The problem of records trolleys accumulating and blocking the GRH North West corridor near the side door is still under investigation. The Heads of Reader Services and Conservation Services have been tasked with considering solutions. In addition, plans to relocate the GRH rep room and transmissions room are being drawn up. It was noted that the James Craig Walk entrance might be considered for use as an alternative records delivery entrance.

4.10 Fire safety for disabled visitors to HSR was discussed. It was noted that safe zones had been identified as waiting areas in the event of fire in the East and West corridors. Fire safety procedures currently are that staff members would escort disabled visitors who are not able to use the stairs to a safe zone, where constant telephone contact with GRH side door will be maintained. There is no compulsion on staff members to also stay in the safe areas though in practice they may choose to do so. It was reported that many NAS staff are not happy to use the Evac Chairs currently in place to carry visitors down stairs in the event of a fire alarm. John Mitchell agreed it may be difficult to move people from wheelchairs onto the Evac Chair and considered that the experience of being carried in such a way would be unpleasant for the visitors. It was added that disabled researchers are encouraged to visit HSR instead of WSR, as there is an access lift into General Register House. Measures to notify visitors of these fire safety procedures were discussed.

Action: Dave Brownlee, John Mitchell, Bob Phillips to discuss with Reader Services Branch.

5. SHAW Report

A regular programme of complimentary therapies for staff was discussed. There was no uptake by TTH staff, but therapies have been offered at WRH and GRH. A complaint had been made about using the first aid room in GRH for this purpose. It was noted that the WRH first aid room is always used as there is no meeting room in that building. It was agreed that the first aid rooms may be used for therapies provided that the first aid room furniture is not displaced and that it would be immediately vacated if first aid facilities were required.

6. Accident Reports

It was reported that there had been two minor accidents reported since the last meeting. No further action was required in either case.

7. Minutes of last meeting (29 October 2007) and matters arising not already covered

7.1 [4.3] FAB have identified a supplier who will dispose of redundant cartridges at a cost. It was noted that a list detailing all cartridges for disposal should be drawn up for this purpose.

7.2 [4.5] Bob Phillips discussed weekend security arrangements with SG and resolved the issue.

7.3 [4.7] It was noted that Alison Horsburgh and Linda Ramsay are still considering record movement routes around GRH. [4.8] Trolley damage to GRH corridors will be repaired after ScotlandsPeople Centre work is complete and before the Centre opens.

7.4 [4.9] GRH lifts have been operating adequately recently and the main problem has been fixed.

8. Any other business

8.1 Dave Brownlee will put out a staff notice asking for volunteer HSLOs and fire marshals.

Action: Dave Brownlee to issue a staff notice.

8.2 It was evident that SC1 notifications of staff changes do not go to HSLOs. Notification of new starts is necessary for performing health and safety assessments.

Action: Dave Brownlee to check the SC1 notification system.

8.3 John Mitchell noted that the 2007 Construction and Design Regulations require NAS van incidents, including minor accidents, to be reported. SG issue forms are available inside the van for this purpose. It was noted that an additional member of staff may be required for directing the van reversing out of WRH loading bay, in respect of members of the public walking past the exit.

8.4 Manual handling training was discussed. It was agreed this may be suitable for a variety of staff across the office. Practical elements of such training courses were considered useful.

8.5 Fire safety training for marshals was also discussed. It was noted that training had not been delivered since 2005 and was overdue. It was suggested that all staff might benefit from fire safety training.

Action: John Mitchell to arrange manual handling and fire safety training with the Development Centre.

8.6 It was reported that there will be no HSLO present during the DIU imaging backshift at GRH. A supervisor has been appointed and she will receive proper health and safety induction training. She will also be encouraged to undertake a first aid course.

8.7 Dave Brownlee confirmed that HSLOs duties are for the whole building in which they are based. The number of HSLOs does not need to be evenly distributed between all business areas though it would be preferable if we had a spread across the office.

8.8 It was reported that contractors often leave equipment in the loading bay at TTH, which could cause obstruction and prevent clear access to the van. HSLOs may explain their role and ask contractors to move items as necessary. If this did not have the desired effect the matter should be escalated to John Mitchell.

8.9 Design proposals for the refurbishment of tea rooms have been received for senior management to approve.

8.10 During re-shelving of the Mathieson Dome, foam protection had been singed by halogen lights in the lifts there. No documents had been damaged. Investigations into replacement light fittings are under way.

9. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held during May 2008 and that Jenny Cutts would canvass for dates nearer the time.

Jenny Cutts
30 January 2008