

ITEM 9 – NCL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION			
Meeting:	Resources and General Purposes Committee		
Presented by	Brian Gilchrist		
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Date Created	20 February 2020	Telephone	01698 232391
Appendices Attached	None		
Disclosable under FOISA	Yes		

1. PURPOSE

To update the committee on several key health and safety activities undertaken since last meeting.

2. BACKGROUND

See above

3. DETAIL

See paper attached

4. BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Not applicable

5. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

None

6. RISK

None.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None, as all activity within budgeted costs.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

9. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

10 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the contents of the update.

Resources and General Purposes Committee

2 March 2019

Item 9 – Health and Safety Update

1. Health and Safety Corporate Committee

At its November 2019 meeting, the Resources and General Purpose Committee received the notes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee that took place on 29 October 2019. The next meeting of the corporate committee took place on 18 February 2020, however, notes were not yet prepared at the time of submission of Board committee papers and will follow in due course.

However, there are several updates of interest to the Board, which are highlighted in the sections below.

2. Air Quality Testing

Routine air quality testing highlighted a number of areas in the Engineering and Automotive block at the Motherwell campus where readings were elevated. As this information coincided with the ‘catch up’ week between our semesters which meant fewer staff and students were present, the decision was taken to close the building to allow a deep clean and further testing to take place. The building reopened on 27 January for the start of the second semester as planned.

The Head of Estates will provide the Committee with a more detailed report on this matter. However, from an organisational perspective, the testing also highlighted that there are some actions that staff can and should take that will address this issue in the long term. These relate to improved housekeeping of personal workspaces and more effective use of the ventilation systems already in situ. This will be addressed via an internal communications campaign and additional support for secure destruction of materials that are no longer required.

There was some local media interest in the closure of the building, but this was addressed via a clear statement from the College which became the basis of the printed story.

3. Mild Steel Welding Fume

Members will recall that this has been raised at previous meetings to update on our response to amended HSE guidance on the potential carcinogenic properties of mild steel welding fume. We put a number of temporary measures in place pending further advice from HSE in relation to workplace exposure limits (WEL). HSE have now advised that they are not implementing a WEL based approach, but have issued guidance based on welding time per day, with definitions of high intensity welding and low intensity welding based on time spent in this activity on a daily basis.

Having considered the guidance, we have defined our welding activity has high intensity and have purchased 30 air fed masks with rechargeable battery packs as a permanent measure. These are now in place.

As this now ensures that we continue to be compliant on an ongoing basis, the matter is now formally closed as far as the involvement of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee. Evaluation of the masks will continue to take place within the relevant faculty and risk assessments and safe systems of work updated as necessary.

4. Healthy Working Lives

As a result of the significant work undertaken by our Health and Safety Advisers and Occupational Health team, we were awarded Healthy Working Lives at Silver level. This advanced our accreditation from Bronze.

We have already started on the preparations to gain our Gold Award and an all staff survey is now live and runs until 18 March 2020. This survey was last undertaken for our Bronze award in 2016, so it will be interesting to measure our progression in the intervening period.

5. Coronavirus

Given the prominence of coronavirus across all news channels at present, the College continues to share information and guidance provided by national agencies. We have put up posters and are sharing the NHS and Scottish Government information on The Clan and our social media feeds. The advice is being circulated digitally as far as possible, as the messages are being updated regularly. We are also keeping a watching brief on the FCO advice in relation to overseas travel to make sure that we are giving correct advice to anyone travelling – particularly as we are entering the part of the year where most ERASMUS+ trips will take place.

Following discussion at the Corporate Health and Safety Committee on 18 February we agreed that it would be useful to install additional hand sanitiser stations at all campus entrances, as keeping hands clean is a key part of the messaging from the NHS. Arrangements for this are now in progress via the Estates team. To support this we will be putting out some communication to staff to encourage staff and students to use these – both in terms of the specific coronavirus advice and as a general protection against other winter illnesses.

Assistant Principal: Organisational Development

February 2020