

REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD TO COUNCIL

19 OCTOBER 2015

ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2013-14 and 2014-15

The Annual Health and Safety Report is normally considered at the end of the academic year. However, the comparator data is now collected by HESA only became available in May 2015, hence the delay in the report.

The report includes the following components:

Main Report :

Progress reported against the University Health and Safety Strategic Action Plan.
This report covers academic years 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Appendix 1: Comparator Data from HESA covering period 2013/14.

Appendix 2: Accident Rate Trends at Newcastle up to 2014/15.

Executive Board noted an increase in incidents in the first quarter, which also occurred at the same time in the previous year. This is a particularly busy time of year with the new student intake, and it may be that people are not being as careful as they should be when circulating around the campus. There is no common link between the incidents that have been reported and so it is difficult to identify any specific preventative actions.

The Faculty PVCs and the Registrar have been asked to look carefully at the incidents being reported in their areas and EB will keep this under review.

Mrs Veryan Johnston
Executive Director of HR
On behalf of Executive Board
9 October 2015

Annual Health & Safety Report to Executive Board, Council and University Health & Safety Committee

September 2015

This report covers the academic years 2013/14 and 2014/15.

1.0 University Health & Safety (H&S) Strategic Action Plan:

- 1.1 This H&S Strategic Plan identifies the key H&S priorities for the University over a 5 year period commencing in 2013/14.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Plan is to ensure that the University's H&S management arrangements remain robust in light of its ever changing operating environment. The core of the Plan pays particular attention to quality, effectiveness, proportionality and user support. This paper reports on progress against the action plan.
- 1.3 One of the most substantial projects was the development of a new on-line incident reporting, investigation and follow-up process and a supporting database. This was successfully launched on target on 1/5/15. User feedback has been very positive. The new process strengthens the focus on lessons learned from incidents so as to prevent or minimise their recurrence. The new database provides the Faculties and Units with improved access to incident data and thereby the opportunity for improved monitoring oversight.
- 1.4 The new OHSS (Occupational Health & Safety Service) website was launched in January 2015. Again user feedback was good. The website was completely restructured and the content rationalised to enable improved user access to the relevant information.
- 1.5 The management and governance arrangements for the control of Legionella were reviewed by the Strategic Water Safety Group. Significant changes have been made to further strengthen the control arrangements in the Faculties and Units. Implementation will be rolled out across the University during 2015/16.
- 1.6 Similarly, the management and governance arrangements for the control of biological safety and GM (Genetic Modification) have been further improved (see section 7.2 below).
- 1.7 Other H&S strategic actions completed during this reporting period included conducting a survey of Unit based staff with H&S supporting roles across the University (e.g. School Safety Officers, First Aiders, Fire Wardens, etc). Feedback has been positive and an action plan has been developed to further improve support.
- 1.8 An increasing number of the new Health & Safety (H&S) Management Standards have been developed for the aforementioned process reviews. The new succinct and simpler format is intended to provide a clear overview of the University standards required to be met for a specific topic. The H&S Management Standards explain the arrangements needed to adequately control health and safety risks. They cover the process, roles and responsibilities.
- 1.9 All Unit and Faculty H&S reporting and planning returns were received for 2013/14. An interim review of the annual H&S reporting and planning process for Units and Faculties was carried out during 2014/15 to improve the usefulness of the same.
- 1.10 The University H&S Strategic Action Plan is reviewed annually by University H&S Committee.

2.0 Occupational Health:

- 2.1 The University is working towards SEQOHS (Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service) accreditation. This is a national accreditation system for Occupational Health (OH) service providers. Its purpose is to demonstrate the attainment and continuous improvement of quality in OH provision. During 2013/14 and 2014/15 much effort was put into preparing the OH processes for the necessary submission for accreditation. This has now been made and the University is awaiting the associated audit.
- 2.2 The pregnancy and maternity management standard is being revised. The new on-line risk assessment process is being piloted in FMS. Implementation of the final process will be rolled out during 2015/16.

3.0 Incidents:

- 3.1 Appendix I shows the HESA incidents benchmarking data for 2013/14. Appendix II shows the incident rate trends for Newcastle University over the five year period to 2014/15. Appendix III provides a summary breakdown of the University safety incidents, by each quarter, for the same five year period to 2014/15.
- 3.2 The RIDDOR accident rate for staff improved significantly from 3.10 accidents per 1000 staff in 2012/13 to 1.47 in 2013/14. However, this still placed Newcastle in the upper quartile of Russell Group universities for this parameter in 2013/14.

4.0 Training:

- 4.1 During 2013/14 165 H&S training courses were provided and a total of 1840 staff and students were trained. During 2014/15 181 H&S training courses were provided and a total of 2655 staff and students were trained. These courses ranged from specialist courses, such as *Biological and GM Safety*, to general courses, such as *Basic Health and Safety*.

5.0 HASMAP Audits:

- 5.1 12 HASMAP audits were completed during 2014/15 as part of the robust University internal H&S audit programme. This included the first HASMAP audits of NUMed and NUIS. OHSS directs significant resource at the HASMAP audit programme since it provides a critical means of assurance to University H&S Committee, Executive Board and Council.

6.0 Enforcement Authorities:

- 6.1 All actions arising from the HSE audit in June 2013 of the management control arrangements for the Containment Level 3 Infectious Diseases Facility were completed.
- 6.2 In February 2014 HSE carried out an audit of the management arrangements for control of Legionella in the cooling tower in the School of Mechanical & Systems Engineering. The inspector was largely positive about existing arrangements but highlighted a small number of improvements required due to 'statutory contraventions'. A letter was received from HSE under the new 'Fee For Intervention' (FFI) regime. This should be viewed in the context that it is not an enforcement notice and that 80% of organisations that received similar inspections of cooling towers had also received such FFI letters. This outcome appears to indicate a change in the

approach of HSE with a particular focus on cost recovery. All actions required were quickly addressed by the School.

- 6.3 Other visits and communications have been received from regulatory authorities during the course of 2013/14 and 2014/15. These included Environment Agency, Environmental Health, Fire Brigade, Building Control, Public Health England, Chemical Weapons Authority and National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO). No major concerns were identified.

7.0 Health & Safety Committees:

- 7.1 Regular meetings of the University H&S Committee, the Radiation Protection Sub-Committee and Microbiological Hazards & Genetic Modifications Sub-Committee took place during 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 7.2 The Microbiological Hazards & Genetic Modifications Sub-Committee has been re-named as the Biosafety Committee. Its terms of reference have been revised to further strengthen the management and governance arrangements for the control of biological and GM safety. Its remit now formally includes biosecurity.

8.0 OHSS resources:

- 8.1 The Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) has reduced her working hours from 1.0 FTE to 0.4 FTE. Contingency arrangements have been put in place, including the appointment of an additional interim RPA.

9.0 Next Steps:

- 9.1 Progress of the University H&S Strategic Action Plan will be continued. One of the next high priority strategic objectives will be to review the University's arrangements for Travel and Work Abroad. Central to this review will be user input. Following the success of the new incident reporting and follow-up system there is now demand for the Travel and Work Abroad process to be facilitated by an equally effective on-line system. Professor Andy Russell of the School of Geography, Politics & Sociology will chair this review group.
- 9.2 Other key objectives in the coming year will include reviews of the management arrangements for hazardous waste, third parties and fieldwork. OHSS will continue to ensure the appropriate level of consultation, communication, training and user feedback arising from process reviews.
- 9.3 The annual H&S reporting and planning process for Units and Faculties will be further strengthened during 2015/16.
- 9.4 High priority will be given to recruitment of a new 0.6 FTE Radiation Protection Adviser.
- 9.5 The management arrangements for Radiation Protection will be reviewed with key stakeholders.
- 9.6 Arrangements will be made for an external audit to be carried out during 2016.

Brian McBride
Head of Occupational Health & Safety Service
11 September 2015

Appendix I - Annual HE Sector Safety Incidents Summary 2013/14 (Source: HESA, Higher Education Statistics Agency)

Note
Oxford did not submit data to HESA

Figure 1 - Total RIDDOR* Reportable Accidents 2013/14
* the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

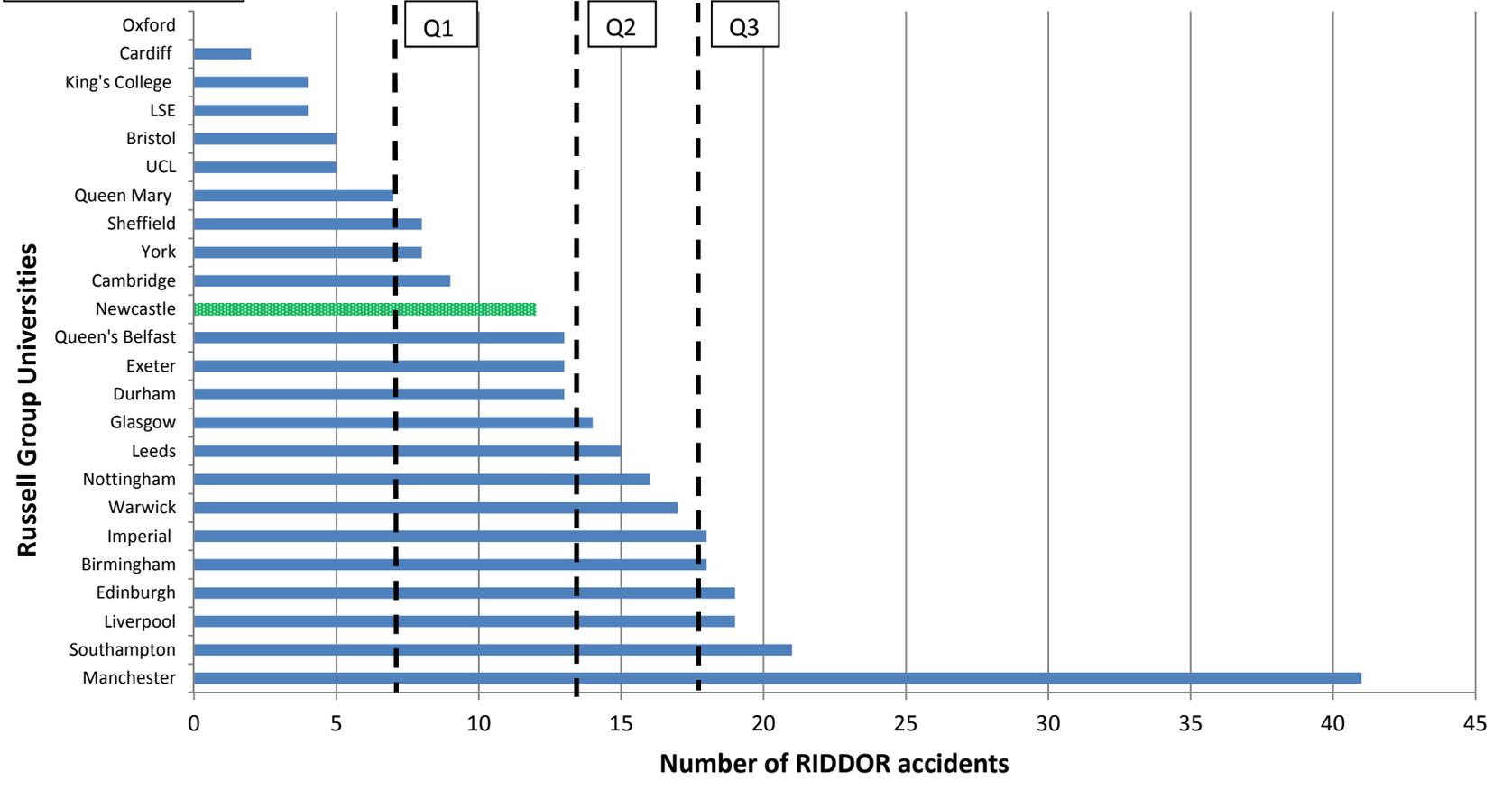
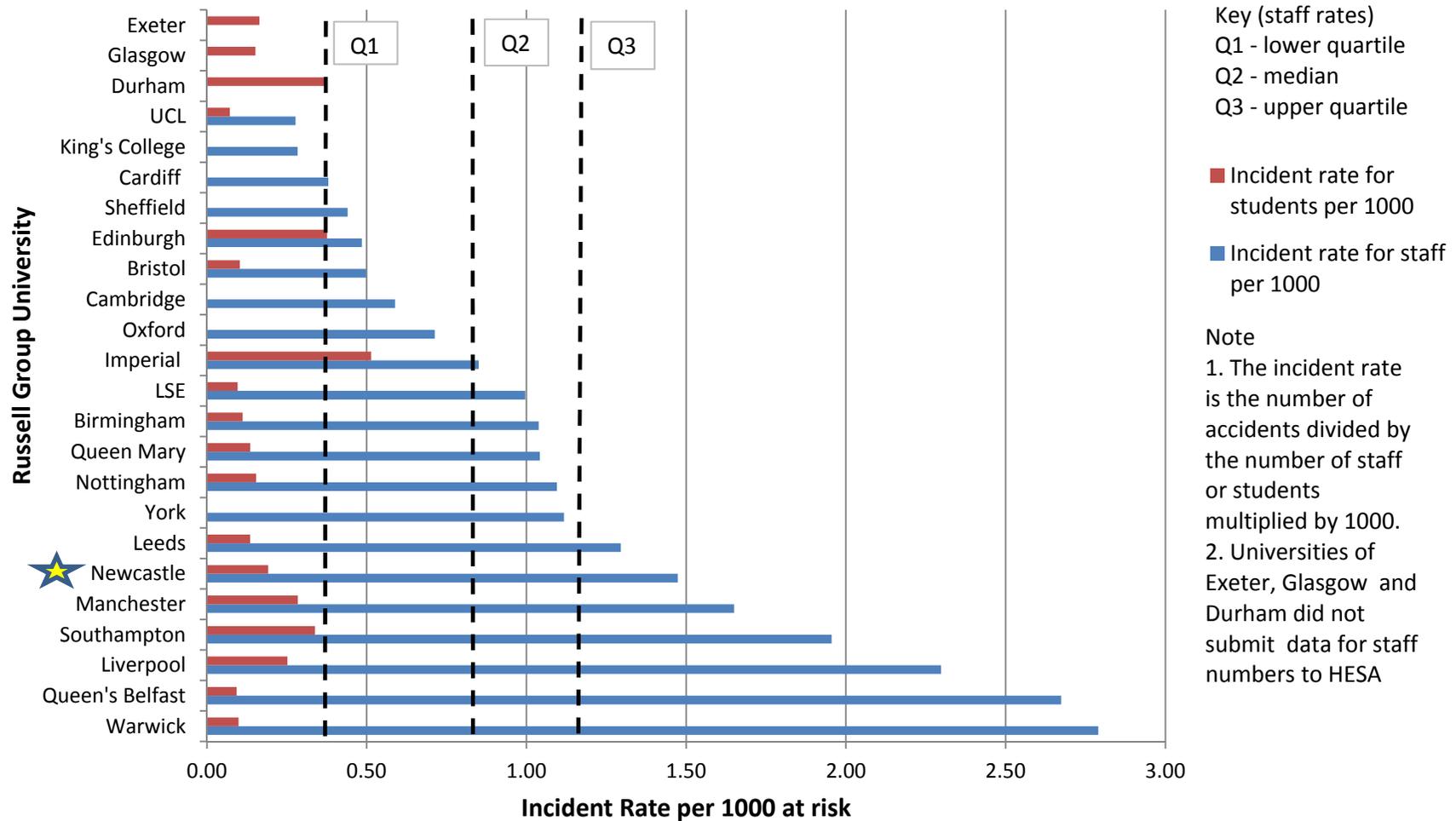


Figure 2 - RIDDOR* Incident Rates for Staff and Students 2013/14

*the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013



Appendix II – Accident Rate Trends at Newcastle University 2010/11 to 2014/15

The accident rate (i.e. the number of workplace accidents per 1000 staff or students at risk) allows the University to compare its accident performance over time taking into account the changing number of staff and students associated with the Growth Agenda. Figure 3 shows that there has been a fairly sustained downward trend in the total accident (i.e. reportable and non-reportable to HSE) rates for staff and students over the last five years. There was a slight increase in the staff rate for 2014/15. This will be monitored closely to identify any trends.

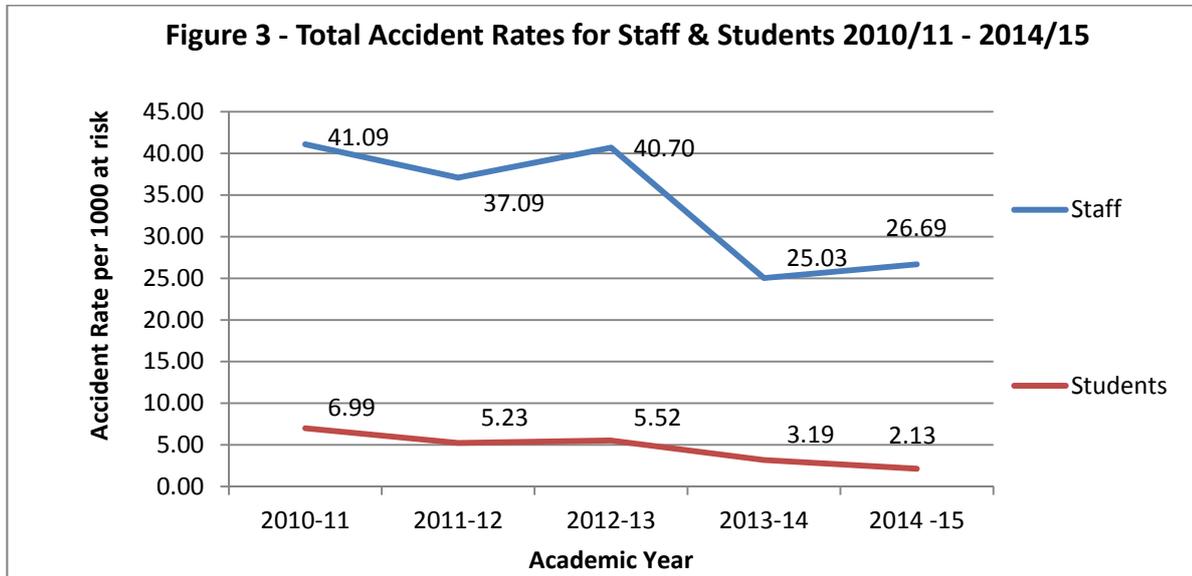


Figure 4 shows the RIDDOR accident rates (i.e. reportable to HSE) for staff and students and shows a similar downward trend over this period albeit that there is a slightly more significant increase in 2014/15. The actual numerical difference is small with only four more staff and three more student accidents.

