



# Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

Minutes of the Group Corporation Board Meeting

Held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 4pm

In the Board Room, Castleford College

**Members In Attendance:** Yasmin Ayub (YA), Ruth Baxter (RB), Nigel Brook (NB), Claire Corneille (CC), Dmitry Fedotov (DF), Jayne King (JK), Ellie Halligan (EH), Andrew McConnell (AM - Chair), Ben Porter (BP), Martyn Shaw (MS), Richard Stiff (RSt), Sam Wright (SW - Principal and CEO).

**Apologies received from:** David Powell (DP), Jess Smith (JS), Vijay Teeluck (VT), Janet Waggott (JW), Neil Warren (NW) and noted Nigel Brook (NB) may need to leave the meeting early.

**In attendance:** Lorraine Cross (LC), Lisa Macdonald (LM), Jason Pepper (JP), Antonia Praud (AP - Director of Governance), and Karen Sykes (KS)

Item		Action
1	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. A warm welcome was given to Jayne King and Ellie Halligan, attending their first meeting, and a round of introductions made.</p> <p>Governors noted the resignation from Ruth Sacks, and recognised the significant contribution Ruth had made, especially in the preparation for merger.</p> <p>Governors were also informed of the request for a sabbatical for David Powell, for an initial three-month period, and confirmed their support and <b>approval</b>, effective immediately.</p> <p>Apologies were received from DP, JS VT, JW and NW, and partial apologies were received from NB, which were all <b>accepted</b> with consent.</p> <p>Declarations of interest for items on the agenda were received from JK (in her role at the British Library, has worked with RSM and WYLP), and from RS (in the Audit item, as a Governor from Selby College.)</p> <p>There were no additional items of business to add to the agenda and governors noted the rules of confidentiality.</p> <p>Governors were reminded about their invitation to the FE awards, commencing after the board meeting for students from Castleford and Wakefield Colleges, and informed that the Selby award ceremony had been postponed and was now on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023.</p>	

	<p>It was then confirmed that the Strategy event on 19<sup>th</sup> January, would then be followed by a short board meeting, to review and approve the SAR, QIP and policies.</p>																												
2	<p><b>Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the board meetings on 29<sup>th</sup> September and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022</b></p> <p>The Board resolved to <b>approve</b> the minutes, subject to editing the typo for Doncaster, on p14.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising from the minutes on 29<sup>th</sup> September:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Amend the wording on page 6 of the strategy to correctly position the governance and data reporting of the Local Boards to the Group and Committees</td> <td><b>Completed by the board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Gather feedback from the Local Boards on the recommendations for KPI and PI Chairs of the Local Boards</td> <td><b>Item on each local board agenda in October and November</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Amend “strong culture” to “high performing” culture</td> <td><b>Completed</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Add in the values and behaviours into the top section of the policy and amend the name to People and Culture Strategy</td> <td><b>Completed</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Review the final values proposal and bring back the final recommendation to the board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October</td> <td><b>Approved on 4<sup>th</sup> October</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Prepare a communications plan to share the new group values</td> <td><b>Completed – shared by Sam Wright in the preceding staff briefings</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Add Infrastructure Risk to the risk strategies and amend documents to reflect the revised risk appetite of the board</td> <td><b>Risk Register amended and shared with committee and board.</b></td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Matters Arising from the minutes on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Amend the spelling “Fedotov” in the attendees of the July minutes</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Present the Health and Safety Policy to the Board</td> <td>Revisions were suggested at the Finance, People and Resources committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November. This will be presented to the board at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January.</td> </tr> </table>	1	Amend the wording on page 6 of the strategy to correctly position the governance and data reporting of the Local Boards to the Group and Committees	<b>Completed by the board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October</b>	2	Gather feedback from the Local Boards on the recommendations for KPI and PI Chairs of the Local Boards	<b>Item on each local board agenda in October and November</b>	3	Amend “strong culture” to “high performing” culture	<b>Completed</b>	4	Add in the values and behaviours into the top section of the policy and amend the name to People and Culture Strategy	<b>Completed</b>	5	Review the final values proposal and bring back the final recommendation to the board meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>Approved on 4<sup>th</sup> October</b>	6	Prepare a communications plan to share the new group values	<b>Completed – shared by Sam Wright in the preceding staff briefings</b>	7	Add Infrastructure Risk to the risk strategies and amend documents to reflect the revised risk appetite of the board	<b>Risk Register amended and shared with committee and board.</b>	1	Amend the spelling “Fedotov” in the attendees of the July minutes	Completed	2	Present the Health and Safety Policy to the Board	Revisions were suggested at the Finance, People and Resources committee meeting on 29 <sup>th</sup> November. This will be presented to the board at the meeting on 19 <sup>th</sup> January.	1
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3	Share Plan for student voice activities.	DF is providing an update at this meeting.	3
4	Present the Growth Strategy to the board	Update on agenda this evening and approval requested on 19th January	
5	Review the staff survey results at Finance, People and Resources Committee	Headlines shared at the Finance, People and Resources Committee meeting on 29 <sup>th</sup> November. CC and KS will discuss how to best have oversight of individual actions.	
6	Provide an update in the Autumn term on job evaluation, staffing structures and plans	Update on agenda this evening.	5
7	Prepare a contingency plan for rising staffing and other costs	JP preparing update for the next meeting.	6
8	Review the Reserves Policy at Finance, People and Resources Committee in the Spring term	JP & Committee will review this in the Spring term.	(4)
9	Review the results from the last student survey at the Curriculum and Quality Committee	The Curriculum and Quality Committee will review student surveys at each committee meeting	
10	Finance, People and Resources Committee will review and report back for assurance to the board on the staff survey results and action plan	A summary was shared at Finance, People and Resources Committee and next steps to be agreed with Lead Governor, People.	7
11	Local boards to review the KPI and PI and feed back via their Chairs.	It was on the agenda at each Local Board meeting and the chairs met together on 12/12/22 (this afternoon)	
12	Amend the schedule of business so KPI are reported to the Board and relevant board committees	Underway – on agenda for Executive meeting on 13/12/22	
13	Update on the roll out of the new values to Finance, People and Resources Committee	Roll out via the staff briefings by Sam Wright at all three sites. On agenda today.	

	14	Update on plans to expand the workshop accommodation and additional classroom space at Castleford College, including consideration of resubmission of a bid.	<p>We have submitted an alternative bid last month for a new construction workshop at the back of the site.</p> <p>The outcome will be shared in the Spring.</p> <p>We are beginning the planning permission process.</p>
	15	Update on summary report for staff and key stakeholders	In production.
	16	Impact report for additional support for learners	This will be presented as an item at Curriculum and Quality Committee in the Spring term.
	17		Staff survey – see item 10
3	<p><b>Principal's Update</b></p> <p><b>Staffing:</b>  Governors noted it was Jo Taylor's last meeting and passed on their congratulations for her new role. Governors noted the formative role JT had played in creating the apprenticeship provision at the group, which is now a significant and profitable operation.  SW shared the new executive structure from January 2023. It was confirmed that SW would not be recruiting to JT's current role, but LC would take on the strategic lead for apprenticeships and a new role, Director of Apprenticeships, would report into LC.</p> <p>Andra Ghencea joins the group as Director of Adult Skills, from Barnsley College. Andra will have line management of several departments, including English, Maths and ESOL.</p> <p>Jack Leng joins the Group as the Lead for Digital Teaching and Learning. Jack will lead on digital pedagogy and develop our Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy. Initially Jack has been tasked with reviewing the systems that teachers use across the 3 colleges and making recommendations for changes based on good pedagogy. It is hoped the impact of this will result in increased student engagement with Century Tech in English, Maths and Science.</p> <p><b>Attendance:</b>  Attendance is significant as evidence suggests poor attendance is the start of the end for students, linked to student withdrawals. Attendance remains a challenge across the group and is a key area of focus and priority.</p>		

Attendance needs to be every one's concern and students need to be aware we are checking up on poor attendance regularly. There also needs to be consequences for missing lessons. CA, and her team, are doing a lot of work to initialize engagement with students and to win students back. 16-18 attendance has dropped, and it is poor attendance in English and Maths that is pulling this overall result down. (84%) It impacts attendance at Castleford most (81.1%), due to the number of students on Lower Level courses.

**Retention:**

Attendance also impacts on retention. The retention figures this year look strong (99%) but this masks the fact that the in-year retention figures shown did not include the students on two year courses that left last year. (approx. -2%). Retention across the group had declined last year and lower in comparison to similar colleges. The group needs to do all it can to act on early signs of disengagement to resolve issues manifesting into withdrawals.

**Capital Funding Bid:**

The group have been successful in securing capital funding of £1,335,850 over the three financial years 2022-23 to 2024-25. This will be used to purchase capital equipment and adapt accommodation to enhance our technical provision at Levels 4 and 5 in range of existing and new high-cost subjects of strategic importance in the localities which the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group serves, and which will enhance graduate employability and skills, the needs of employers and industry and therefore local and regional economies.

**Green Skills Update:**

The group were successful in getting funding and are working in partnership with Wakefield Council on a project. The research is looking at how the move to net zero carbon emissions will affect the skillset, jobs, businesses and education in the region.

There was an event at Castleford College on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. There were 30 attendees (a mix of employers and stakeholders). As a result, the group have a clear action plan that will be used to develop courses and will inform staff on how to work with employers across the district.

**Good news stories:**

Governors noted a number of events including:

- The recent graduation ceremonies
- The official opening of Castleford College on 18<sup>th</sup> November by Yvette Cooper MP.
- Lucas Moon, who achieved 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Annual Welding Skills Competition.

**Recruitment Position:**

College	16-18 Applications for	16-18 Applications for
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	2023-24	2022-23
Castleford	221	236
Selby	143	128
Wakefield	853	634
TOTAL	1,217	998

The figures are really positive, and the group are in a similar position to the point last year. Governors recognised the tremendous effect from the school liaison team.

Governors questioned whether the group were close to capacity in some departments and whether there was the potential to increase the intake in key skills areas? It was explained that there were challenges including needing specialist programme leaders, as well as constraints with estate (e.g. in Construction at Castleford) but agreed the team would look at the data underneath the headlines and provide a report.

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Governors identified that numbers had dropped at Castleford and asked if there were any areas of specific concern? It was noted that there were no specific areas impacted, it was only two or three students per class spread across all areas.

Governors challenged if there was potential to engage in political lobbying as the North is vastly behind in terms of levelling up and the green agenda? It was suggested the stakeholder event on 19<sup>th</sup> January would be a good place to consider this.

Governors asked what the impact of the recent ONS re-classification would be? JP confirmed he has circulated some data to the Chair of Finance, and he would circulate this and the latest AoC briefing to the board.

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Governors questioned if it will change the appetite of colleges towards borrowing and it was confirmed it is too early to confirm this either way.

Governors questioned if there were any further updates to the challenges noted with transport at the last meeting. The group are helping out with the cost of living crisis in a number of ways including the Christmas swop shop, preparing food parcels that are available at Student Central, providing free fruit to students, and vouchers to help students over the Christmas period, and extending the time that free breakfasts are available. Support has been trickier at Selby, due to the use of contractors.

	For student transport, there are a range of stop gap arrangements in place. The group are going to tender to address the legacy arrangements in March, and governors can receive an update at the next meeting.	10
4	<p><b>SO1 – Develop a Skills Offer that is aligned to the needs of the areas we serve through partnership and collaboration</b></p> <p>Governors received the proposed plan for the employer engagement event on 19<sup>th</sup> January, including stakeholders, key employers, civic and community partners, educational providers and skills support networks.</p> <p>Governors noted the proposed timings and headlines. The three drivers are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing advanced skills for the region</li> <li>2. An inclusive curriculum to engage and progress</li> <li>3. Sustainable and green skills (our approach, developing our strategy, developing or skills of sustainability and growing curriculum areas of specialism.</li> </ol> <p>The board will also review the growth strategy, including the growth of priority skills sectors.</p> <p>Governors questioned if the range of employers attending reflected the broad range of skills priorities in the region. It was confirmed that invites were sent to a range of employers including construction, engineering and the NHS.</p>	
5	<p><b>Strategic Objective 2 – Ensure our Curriculum Delivery is high quality, inclusive and ambitious and we provide an outstanding student experience</b></p> <p>With the two colleges merging mid year, this meant the Curriculum and Quality Committee had the additional challenge of reviewing two separate SAR reports (Self Assessment) this year.</p> <p>The Committee broke up the reports into areas of responsibility for each member of the committee, who reviewed their sections for both colleges. The committee have given feedback to the Executive team, on where data could be presented, the narrative reviewed and improved for the reader, and presented challenge, verbally and written, for response and discussion.</p> <p>Whilst the committee accepted the additional challenges for the team this year (e.g. presenting trends in data over time, as a result of the pandemic, and different MI systems), further assurance was requested, before the SAR's were presented to the board for approval.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised that the management team had been very receptive and responsive to the challenge process, and had confirmed they would respond by the first week in January. This would enable committee members to review the revised reports and feedback, in time for the board to review this at their next meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January.</p> <p>Governors questioned the risk to delaying the approval of the documents to January and received assurance that staff were focused on key priority areas, and the delay until January would not impact on external partners (ESFA, Ofsted or OfS).</p>	11
6	<b>SO3 – Develop a strong culture and people who are effective and committed</b>	

**Grievance Policy:** Governors were informed the policy had been reviewed by the trade unions, and in existence at Wakefield College for some time. Changes made included references to names and the new group structure. Governors challenged if Senior staff were included within this policy and it was confirmed the group had a separate Senior Postholder Policy that would be reviewed. The board approved the policy.

**Staff Pay and Job evaluation:** Governors noted the group were conducting a root and branch review, taking samples of roles from across the group, using an external consultant. They were informed the process had encountered delay and would continue into the Spring term. Cost of living and inflationary challenges, meant differentials between lower bands had been eroded over time. The board were informed it will be challenging to find the balance between what is palatable for the workforce, the need to improve engagement, whilst being mindful of affordability.

Governors questioned if there were concerns about strike action, given recent media headlines. Governors were informed a number of colleges in the region had already received strong letters from unions noting industrial action. The move from August to February pay review, has helped the group's bargaining position, as it can be informed by decisions from other colleges.

Governors asked what the range of pay awards within the sector had been, and were informed this was between 0 and 18%. The group currently has 3% in the budget, awards will be effective from February, although confirmation will be delayed this year. The exercise will need to provide a range of increases, within the overall amount, to allow a provision of an award to address differentials and increases to the national living wage, for those on the lower grades.

Governors challenged the impact the pay evaluation process may have this year, noting the influence and impact should some roles be downgraded, and if it was sufficiently high a risk on the group risk register. It was confirmed that the exercise can be very emotive, and assurance was given that no staff will be worse off as a result of the job evaluation exercise.

**Values:** There has been a soft roll out of the values this term. Induction material has been updated with the new group values and staff were informed in the Principal's briefing, that the new group values had been approved. The Marketing team will support further promotion of the values and are planning additional activities later in 2023.

**Supporting Futures Selby:** Governors received assurance that the latest Chair's Action had been confirmed to staff. Following a staff consultation exercise, where staff were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposal, the decision was taken under Chair's action, for staff working for Supporting Futures Selby to transfer from Supporting Futures Selby Ltd to Selby College, on Selby College terms and conditions from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022. This meant all staff would benefit

	<p>before Christmas, from improved terms and conditions, in line with their colleagues at Selby College. The decision was taken under Chair’s action, as waiting until this board meeting would mean the group would miss the earlier December payroll deadline. The recommendation had been noted in board updates, had been an intention of the group, since merger and is in line with the group’s values and people and culture strategy. The costs were also included within the budget approved by the board.</p> <p><b>Staff Survey:</b> The group have just completed the first pulse survey of the year. There was a 49% engagement rate. Local boards will receive a update in their next meeting, and CC and KS will meet to discuss the results, and action plan.</p>	(4)
7	<p><b>Strategic Objective 4 – Deliver strong Finances to facilitate investment in our resources and our offer</b></p> <p>Governors reviewed the autumn term finance report. Of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Business reviews were running later than they would have liked, but will run to plan again next year. There is nothing coming out of the initial reviews to raise concern to governors.</li> <li>• Selby College has been chosen for an ESFA funding audit.</li> <li>• Although there is a £1.1million adverse position to budget, a sizeable amount is directly correlated to Selby Learners being moved to the group DAS (Digital Apprenticeship Service) system and generating errors. The Executive Director Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement is confident the errors can be cleared, enabling funding to be claimed.</li> <li>• Tuition fees – there has been a big drop in access enrolments, so achieving this target will be more challenging. There has been a significant increase in adult learners to offset this however.</li> <li>• Pay and non-pay costs remain close to budget with only a small (£40k) variance overall.</li> <li>• The pay budget for the year includes a requirement to achieve £1.7million of efficiencies/ turnover savings this year. To date, £600k has already been achieved.</li> <li>• The group are confident in achieving “Good” Financial Health (ESFA) this year.</li> </ul> <p>Governors challenged the impact JT’s departure would have on the department, and the key updates to the DAS system. It was confirmed that she leaves a strong team behind, and it would not impact on the projects in hand.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee confirmed there had been good in-depth discussion at the committee, including key updates on the ESFA audit and the gaps on the DAS register.</p> <p>An update would be presented to the committee, following the conclusion of the business reviews. It was confirmed that efficiency savings were not all linked to staffing. In particular, procurement would bring in key savings.</p>	12

	<p>Governors from Selby had challenged the latest financial reports, noting the deficit at Selby College and confirming it was at odds with the final reports the Selby board had received within weeks of merger (a surplus and Good financial health). JP had agreed to prepare a paper to document why the accounts had changed. Key items included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to apprenticeship income</li> <li>• Depreciation charges</li> <li>• Amendment to the asset register.</li> </ul> <p>See confidential minutes.</p>	13
8	<p><b>Chair's Update</b> Governors noted one chair's action (Supporting Futures Selby (in Item 6)).</p> <p>Search and Governance Committee: The Committee had interviewed four potential external candidates, who all had strengths to offer to the group. The board approved three appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annabelle James to join the Local College Board Wakefield.</li> <li>• Simran Jandu to join the Local College Board Wakefield.</li> <li>• Simon Ward to join the Local College Board Selby.</li> </ul> <p>Two new staff governors have also been appointed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brian Fisher joins the Local College Board Castleford.</li> <li>• Tony Jackson joins the Local College Board Wakefield.</li> </ul> <p>The corporate seal had been used twice since the last meeting, as recorded in the briefing paper.</p>	
9	<p><b>Governance Updates</b> Governors noted the latest training update. Thanks were noted to Governors who attended the latest safeguarding training with the West Yorkshire Children Safeguarding Partnership. All Governors who were unable to attend were requested to confirm which of the four online sessions they could attend, with Carol Price, next term.</p> <p>Governors approved the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern Slavery Statement</li> <li>• The Whistleblowing policy</li> </ul>	14
10	<p><b>Student Update</b> Governors received an update on activities from the new Student Governor, and President of the Student Union, Ellie Halligan.</p> <p>The Student Union are meeting weekly (on Tuesdays at Castleford and Wednesdays at Wakefield and are developing sessions at Selby). They have 7-10 regular attendees.</p> <p>The have relaunched the group student union logo and have been selling notebooks with the new logo.</p>	

	<p>They supported freshers' fair sales and handed out pronoun badges. They also promoted several clubs and activities, and are launching the IT club.</p> <p>Diversity and equality is important to the group and recent support has been given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaying Black Lives Matters posters around college.</li> <li>• LGBTQ day (they also support the LGBTQ Group that runs weekly and Evan is promoting)</li> <li>• Hidden disabilities day</li> <li>• Physical disabilities day</li> </ul> <p>They also offered support to a number of events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A culture and diversity event</li> <li>• The Mayor's innovation day</li> <li>• Anti-bullying day</li> <li>• Children in need day</li> <li>• Regular support at open events</li> <li>• Support for the Christmas swap shop</li> </ul> <p>The Union is very active this year. A cause very close to their hearts is hidden disability and they have 6 podcasts planned on autism awareness. They have accounts on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and governors were invited to follow them.</p> <p><b>Student voice:</b> 96 students attended the first group class rep conference and students were really enthusiastic. Student elections for local boards will take place next term. They would like to develop links for all students including adult learners and HE, and there are already 3 HE students on the Student Union.</p> <p>Governors asked what support they may like or what could be done to make students lives better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the length of the break</li> <li>• Students do not think English and Maths matter – need to better understanding given on induction on why it is important.</li> <li>• The student union have discussed the lessons too, as behaviour can be off-putting in some lessons.</li> <li>• More dyslexia screening and hidden disability training could help.</li> </ul>	
11	<p><b>Risk Register, Risk Briefing and Emerging Risks</b></p> <p>Governors acknowledged the group are going through a period of transition, and the group are trying to streamline processes and reporting lines. Following the approval of the group strategic plan, risks had been reviewed and linked to strategic objectives, with risk tolerances reviewed. Some risks had increased:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HE enrolment numbers are down on plan.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19+ provision, as access numbers are down.</li> <li>• 16-18 numbers, there have been a number of withdrawals, so the group are unlikely to hit the target this year. (ESFA)</li> </ul> <p><b>Emerging Risks:</b> See confidential minutes.</p>	
12	<p><b>Briefing Papers</b></p> <p>Governors noted the briefing papers and it was confirmed that the Health and Safety papers would be circulated.</p>	15

#### Action Log from meeting

1	Amend spelling of Doncaster in the September board minutes	AP
2	Present the Health and Safety Policy to the Board meeting on 19 <sup>th</sup> January	JP
3	Present the Growth Strategy on 19 <sup>th</sup> January	Executive Team
4	Meet to review the staff survey results from the York led survey and the latest pulse survey	CC and KS
5	Prepare a contingency plan, for rising staff costs and present to the Finance, People and Resources Committee	JP
6	Present a Reserves Strategy to the Finance, People and Resources Committee in the Spring/ Summer	JP
7	Complete mapping exercise on 13 <sup>th</sup> December with the Executive Team	Executive Team and AP
8	Provide a report on the challenges, opportunities and constraints and future plans for the estate	Executive Team
9	Circulate some information about the recent ONS reclassification	JP
10	Update on the bus tender process	JP
11	Review and approve the SARs and QIP on 19 <sup>th</sup> January	ALL
12	Provide an update after the conclusion of the business reviews on efficiency savings	JP
13	Present a positioning statement to confirm why the Selby financial closing position differs to that in February 2022, before the final statement and accounts are approved.	JP
14	Confirm attendance at a safeguarding online training session	ALL
15	Circulate Health and Safety Papers	JP and AP