YOUR VIEWS, STAFF FOCUS GROUPS & ACTIONS

After the University Staff Survey, E&F held focus groups to discuss in an open and confidential forum some of the issues raised by E&F staff.

Thank you to all staff who attended the focus group sessions. Updates, and actions taken on your suggestions and concerns, are on pages 2–3 of this edition of 24/7.
The six areas considered were: catering, communication, facilities, people, process and senior management.

**CATERING**

- **Information** – The timing of the changes on screen for digital signage has been improved, making it easier to read.
- **Value for money** – Staff requested good value for money across all areas i.e. similar pricing as on the high street. The Catering team will continue to benchmark prices with both national data (TUCO) and local competition.
- **Taste and see** – Personal assistants and administration colleagues ordering from delivered catering wanted to see the items available, and portion sizes, to allow them to make more informed choices when ordering for meetings. The Catering team ran a ‘taste and see’ session with regular customers and those who are known to use approved caterers on campus.
- **Drinking water on campus** – Staff expressed a need for a promotional push/campaign on tap water across campus for health and wellbeing. The Catering, Hotel, and Conference Services Director, and the Sustainability team are working on a joint campaign – promoting tap water and hydration – for the start of the summer term.

**FACILITIES**

- **Heating in SportsPark reception and café** – Catering, SportsPark and E&F contingency budgets will fund a project to improve heating in the SportsPark reception and café. The project is expected to be completed in December 2018.
- **Your own food at catering outlets** – Matthew White has confirmed that staff can consume their own food at any University catering outlet.
- **Laptops instead of PCs** – This has been raised with IT and the Staff Survey Action Group. We already have the flexibility, but this change needs to be accommodated within current departmental budgets. Heads of Department can also allow such requests when IT equipment is upgraded/replaced.

**PROCESS**

- **Office moves** – Guidance notes are being produced for staff undertaking small office moves. These notes will provide details on how to access E&F/University support services e.g. cleaning, portering, IT, phone support, etc.
- **Relocation checklist** – Users’ needs are to be considered when occupants are required to relocate. A checklist of potential issues is being developed and will be used when space reallocation is needed.
- **Health & Safety (H&S) meetings** – Staff felt the existing H&S&W Committee was ineffective due to an unclear remit and too many attendees. After reviewing requirements, three new committees have been established: the Health, Safety and Welfare Steering Group; the Health, Safety and Welfare Best Practice Group; and the E&F Wellbeing Group.

**COMMUNICATION**

- **Website** – Work is in hand to further bolster the website regarding staff information. The survey revealed that whilst staff induction covers the website for new team members, our longstanding staff would find it useful to have a refresher on available benefits and campus resources. The current list is online: [www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/humanresources/General_Information_for_Staff_Members_15-16.pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/humanresources/General_Information_for_Staff_Members_15-16.pdf)
- **Sharing ideas** – Staff valued the increasingly open communication being encouraged across departments, roles and management hierarchies. To support this, various initiatives – including inter-department social events to encourage informal communication; open plan and shared circulation space; and IT solutions to provide support – are being explored and advanced.
- **Photo ID** – Organisation charts and photo-id options to help navigate within the organisation and to encourage productive inter-department communications are being explored. This is subject to further on-going support consultation.

**PEOPLE**

- **Staff surgeries** – Colin Robbins held several ‘staff surgeries’ allowing staff to discuss issues (micro-management, stress from workload, etc.) raised at the focus group meetings one-to-one. Ellie, Charli and Nicola from Human Resources (HR) hosted wider surgeries. These surgeries provided staff with the opportunity to chat in a secure and confidential environment.
- **Mental Health First Aid** – This is a mental health training programme available to all E&F staff. Also, the University’s Employee Assistance Programme has been promoted at staff induction sessions, in other 24/7 newsletters, and at Colin Robbins’ No Mushroom talks.
- **Team-building social events** – An E&F team-building social event (a treasure hunt) is planned for 21 June. If this event is well-supported and well-attended, more E&F social events will be arranged.
- **Staff wellbeing, pay & reward** – (Please read the Human Resources article on page 3.)
- **Performance and development review/job chats** – These issues were raised with HR/People Development. E&F teams can hold these meetings to fit in with their business. Further discussions will be held after the re-structure.

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

- **Consistency of communications** – The process of reviewing communications protocols has begun and the need to develop clearer, consistent, joined-up communications has been included in the University staff survey process.
- **360 reviews for senior managers** – The Estates & Facilities senior management team supported the introduction of 360 reviews. They will explore the mechanisms available to implement this.
- **Informal briefings** – We will arrange an informal briefing session, and request ideas for discussion topics.

**UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR YOUR WELLBEING**

The University is committed to improving staff and student health. For information, guidance and support, please visit: [www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/policiesandprocedures/humres-healthandwell-being.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/policiesandprocedures/humres-healthandwell-being.aspx)
STAFF SURVEY ACTIONS UPDATE

I am delighted with the progress made and the actions taken by the E&F Staff Survey focus groups following the drawing up of action plans.

There were six main headings: catering, communication, facilities, people, process and senior management.

Some of the articles in this edition cover many of the measures we have taken as a result of staff comments and proposals arising out of the E&F focus groups.

**More dialogue**

Opportunities for more detailed dialogue with E&F staff included:

Confidential ‘surgeries’ (three) – small groups of staff meeting with me to discuss detailed issues of concern or query. Two surgeries were held at Whiteknights and one at Greenlands, and several key topics were discussed.

Where there were common points of concern or similar queries or suggestions came forward, team meetings were arranged with relevant department heads to give more details to teams and to explore possibilities for adopting some of the suggestions.

**HR surgeries** – the E&F support team from HR held drop-in surgeries for E&F staff to hold confidential conversations (as requested in recent No Mushroom talks).

I have also had some staff call in to see me for one-to-one meetings to discuss a range of queries, and a few good suggestions arose from these meetings. I have also responded to three written submissions.

**New initiatives**

One of the new initiatives requested was the provision of lunch/relaxation space for E&F staff. One room has already been made available in the E&F building (for which new furniture is also being planned), with others to follow where suitable spaces can be identified and freed up over the lunch break.

Another proposed change is to adopt a new approach to the No Mushroom talks to allow more interaction and dialogue. This will be trialled at the next round of talks planned for the summer term.

**Colin Robbins (Director of Estates & Facilities – Head of Function)**

HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPORT

Advisors at Greenlands

A Human Resources (HR) advisor goes to the Greenlands campus every two weeks; they are available at Greenlands Human Resources office every other Tuesday. They can visit more frequently if demand increases.

Introduction to HR – for supervisors and team leaders

This is a 60–90 minute session run by HR advisors and HR partners for E&F. The session covers the management and support of employees from a supervisor or team leader perspective.

The session promotes reward programmes such as Celebrating Success, and the Lump Sum award.

It also raises awareness of the support mechanisms in place for employees such as the Employee Assistance Programme; Occupational Health; Health, Advocacy, Respect and Care (HARC) and harassment advisors; and the support HR can give to supervisors, team leaders, managers and individuals.

So far, eight sessions have been arranged across Whiteknights, London Road and Greenlands, and 28 people have attended.

More dates have been arranged to run this course until September 2018. After this, the course frequency will be reviewed.

As many of you will now be aware, the University’s Executive Board announced recently the intention to re-structure Estates & Facilities to create greater transparency.

The plan is to move Health & Safety Services into the Governance Function and then to create two new Functions: ‘Estates’ managing the key building and facilities management related activities of Projects, Maintenance, Grounds, Space & Strategy and Campus Services; and ‘Commercial’ which will be the new home for Property Services, Catering and Conference Services (CHCS), SportsPark, and Accommodation Contract Management (ACMO). The process for appointing two new Heads of Function will commence shortly.

The intention is for the restructure to be undertaken this summer; this means I will be leaving the University in the autumn.

I have thoroughly enjoyed over 13 years as the Head of Estates & Facilities – all the more for working with so many excellent people.

Thank you for your help and support. It has not always been easy, but in the most part it has been huge fun, very rewarding and immensely satisfying.

I shall watch with interest as the new structure emerges.

Colin Robbins (Director of Estates & Facilities – Head of Function)
ACHIEVEMENTS, AWARDS & NEW QUALIFICATIONS

KAREN THOMAS’ 1,000-MILE RUN FOR CHARITY

Many E&F colleagues generously sponsored Karen Thomas (Accommodation Contract Management Director) to complete the challenge of the 1,000-Mile Run.

The distance is the equivalent of running the entire length of Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal! It’s a year-long commitment to running marathon distances in snow, ice, rain and high heat.

Karen completed 1,000 miles on 27 December — with just three days to go to the end of the challenge — after being unable to run for six weeks because of a torn achilles.

In all over £250,000 was raised for the RunForLove foundation which tackles modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

MATTHEW WHITE’S CATERING AWARD

On 5 April at the Hilton Metropole Hotel in London, Matthew White (Catering, Hotel and Conference Services Director) was awarded the Cost Sector Catering Public Sector Award 2018.

Matthew was nominated for his work in university catering. These awards are highly prestigious. He said:

‘It is a huge honour to be recognised in this way, by colleagues and peers from across the hospitality industry’.

SPORTSPARK’S TOP HASMAP SCORES

The SportsPark recently had a Health and Safety Management Profile (HASMAP) audit. This scheme measures health and safety management performance in the Higher Education sector.

The SportsPark attained a very impressive Level 3 – the highest score available.

The audit focused on management of specific risks, and leadership and integration. It found that the SportsPark have integrated health and safety into everyday activity, and that this is clearly supported by managers and staff.

Well done to Greg Goddard (pictured) and the rest of the SportsPark team.

NEW CLEANING SERVICES TRAINING PROGRAMME

Cleaning Services recently reviewed their training provision for their team.

Michelle Baker (Deputy Cleaning Services Manager) wrote and created the Cleaning Services Training Programme.

The Programme uses video (made by and starring Reading staff) and workplace assessments to ensure our cleaning staff understand and complete a series of training modules.

The modules include: toilet/washroom cleaning, damp mopping, dust control, sweeping, vacuum cleaning etc., as well as specialist skills such as laboratory cleaning.

The Programme means we have a concise, bespoke training regime for cleaning at the University.

Each member of staff received a certificate after successfully completing the training. Further checks and audits by Cleaning Supervisors will ensure that our staff retain their training knowledge, our very high cleaning standards are maintained across the campuses for our customers, and we contribute to the Campus Services ISO9001:2015 accreditation requirements.
Back in October some of our staff had the opportunity to be photographed with the Premier League football trophy which RSSL had in their possession for a day on campus.

Steve Dale and Graham Sewell (Building Maintenance Services) proudly pose below.

Steve Boon (Facilities Maintenance Director) thanked everyone for all their hard work in getting Whiteknights campus so high up in the final results.

‘Fantastic news... excellent result! Congrats to all the teams involved!’

Colin Robbins (Head of Function)

Whiteknights made it into the top 10 for UK’s favourite parks in the Green Flag National People’s Choice list! There are around 1,500 sites across the country and we are the only university in the top 10!

Steve Dale with the trophy

XMAS FUNDRAISING THANKS

Christmas raffle
A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the Christmas raffle to help raise funds for Parkinson’s UK. We generated £81 – a great result considering the raffle was only open for two days!

Theresa Ell received the briefcase hamper, and Phil Taylor the second prize of a cheeseboard and crackers.

Christmas Jumper Day
Thanks to your additional kindness, we raised £143 for Save the Children with our Christmas Jumper Day! Sweepstakes winners Rachel Savin and Lesley Brady kindly donated their winnings to the charity (although they did get a couple of bottles of wine).

Huge thanks to Rhiannon Vaughan for organising these events.

Graham Sewell

PREMIER POSES
Congratulations to the new Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP) Security team!
The Science Park Shinfield Campus officially opened for business in February. The Science Park is already home to over 70 companies covering a broad range of technology and business sectors.

A new E&F Security team has taken over the site security. The team offers the excellent standard of dynamic 24/7 security that the department is known for.

‘We have brought a really great team here, with highly experienced and trained officers, who bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise with them. We are looking forward to growing with the campus, continuing to meet the needs of all the clients, and helping to give the Thames Valley Science Park and Reading University communities a safe and secure experience.’

Dominic Facherty (Head of TVSP Security)

FROM COFFEE TO CRISPY BACON: CAFÉ NO. 1

In February 2018, the Catering, Hospitality and Conference department teamed up with the newly opened Thames Valley Science Park to launch Café No. 1.

Café No. 1 is in the main foyer on the ground floor: everyone who enters the building is greeted with the aroma of handmade coffee and freshly baked pastries.

The café is equipped with new, high-specification equipment including counter-top blenders for smoothies, a hot display cupboard, and a Combi oven that can batch cook anything from fresh croissants to crispy bacon.

Café No. 1 is staffed by Honorata Piasecka (who has competed at several national barista competitions) and Daniel Lenton who is always happy to help. Both team members are also responsible for the on-site hospitality business, which can provide refreshments for team meetings and conferences anywhere within the Thames Valley Science Park.

Café No. 1 offers great coffee and provides a relaxing time-out space for the 200 tenants that occupy the building.

Be sure to visit Café No.1 when at Thames Valley Science Park!

Catering’s delivery menu
Venue Reading’s hospitality delivery menu is available online at: www.venuereading.com/Catering/vr-hospitality.aspx
DO YOU FEEL SAFE?

Janis Pich on new initiatives and reporting health, safety and welfare issues

Do you know how to report issues of health, safety and welfare? Most staff should know to submit an incident report if something happens, and to also report a ‘near miss’ in the same way.

If you don’t know how to do this, please make sure you ask at your next one-to-one meeting with your line manager.

Reporting a concern

The notification form is online at www.reading.ac.uk/internal/health-and-safety/IncidentReportingandEmergencyProcedures/IncidentNotification/

Sometimes, however, issues crop up which cause concern and aren’t an ‘incident’ – do you know how to raise it then?

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, we are all responsible for our own safety and that of our colleagues. So we should all be prepared to raise a concern. In the first instance this would be through normal line management routes, or to your local Health and Safety Coordinator (do make sure you know who this is!).

E&F health, safety and welfare management

We recently reviewed E&F’s health, safety and welfare management arrangements. We have created two new groups to help make sure we are fulfilling all our obligations: the E&F Health, Safety and Welfare Steering Group, and the Health, Safety and Welfare Best Practice Group http://edms.reading.ac.uk/sites/EF/EFCommon/247/ManagementHealthandSafetyinE_F.pdf

Health, Safety and Welfare Steering Group

Janis Pich (E&F Director) chairs the Health, Safety and Welfare Steering Group. Its purpose is to ensure we have the appropriate oversight of health, safety and welfare at senior management level.

It will identify the things that the Head of Function needs to have confidence are happening, and put in place measures to ensure this is the case.

Responsibility for management of health, safety and welfare lies with individual Heads of Department for their areas of responsibility.

Heads of Department (HoDs), you can raise issues:

• through your HSCs;
• directly with the Best Practice or Steering Group;
• at Senior Management Team (SMT); or
• at your one-to-ones (121s).

Health, Safety and Welfare Best Practice Group

We know that there are a lot of good things happening across E&F and that the general Best Practice Group shares these very well, so we have created a separate Health, Safety and Welfare Best Practice group to focus on sharing good ideas in this specific area.

Ian May (Maintenance) was elected by the Health & Safety Coordinators in the group to lead it.

The group will also work closely with the Health, Safety and Welfare Steering Group to enact things discussed there as appropriate.

Two members of the Best Practice group (including Ian) sit on the Steering Group.

The flowchart illustrates the routes to report a concern.

Thank you for reading this far! Together we can make sure we are doing all we can to keep each other safe.

KENNY PAGAN’S LONG SERVICE AWARD

Kenny Pagan received his Long Service award in October 2017.

Kenny has worked all over the University, and is now currently a Lead Chef in the Central Kitchen.

REPORT A CONCERN

You can raise a concern via:

• Incident reporting
• The online form at www.reading.ac.uk/internal/health-and-safety/IncidentReportingandEmergencyProcedures/IncidentNotification/
• Normal line management routes
• Your Health and Safety Coordinator (HSC), who can pass your concerns on to the Best Practice (BP) Group.

Heads of Department (HoDs), you can raise issues:

• through your HSCs;
• directly with the Best Practice or Steering Group;
• at Senior Management Team (SMT); or
• at your one-to-ones (121s).

Farewells

We’ve said goodbye to several team members since the last issue of this newsletter – read more on page 8.
AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST...
Retirements and farewells

FAREWELL TO PROJECTS TEAM MEMBERS
Since the last edition of 24/7 we have bid farewell to several members of the Projects team: Dorothy Hague, Chris Robinson, Constanza Tani, Robert Shankland, Daniel Bates and John Turner. We wish all of them the very best.

KATE CAMA FAREWELL
We said a sad farewell to Kate Cama who left Greenlands at the end of January after 18 years of service. She decided to move back home to be closer to her family.

Kate’s character and passion for Henley will be missed by those who had the opportunity to work with her.

CAPTION COMPETITION
Your chance to win wine or chocolate! Please send your captions for the above image to Maria Swan by 29 June 2018.

SEND US YOUR NEWS
Tell us about changes, achievements and team news!
Please send your articles and pics for the next 24/7 newsletter to Maria: m.swan@reading.ac.uk

LARRY WOODLEY RETIRES
Larry Woodley (Health & Safety Services), pictured here with his wife Val, retired in November 2017. Larry was looking forward to spending more time with family and pursuing his jewellery-making hobby.

GOODBYE OLA
On 20 October, we said goodbye and good luck to Ola Stannard (Administration Manager, Campus Services). Ola had worked for E&F since April 2008 and is sorely missed. Ola is pictured on her last day with Lucy Virtue (Campus Services Director).