

**North York Moors National Park Authority
Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee**

20 November 2017

Health and Safety Update

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members regarding Health and Safety activity so far during 2017/18 and to update on progress made on the Health and Safety work programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the March NPA meeting, Members agreed the health and safety work programme for the coming year. The purpose of the regular papers to this Committee is to update Members on progress made on the work programme, review accident/near miss information and to raise other health and safety matters

3. Accidents and Near Misses 2017/18

- 3.1 At the time of writing this report a total of 14 accidents to staff/volunteers had been reported since 1 April. No lost time had been recorded as a result and all accidents were minor in their nature, involving slips or trips. 6 of the 14 accidents were minor injuries to volunteers. Four of these occurred while carrying out practical work tasks and the other one while researching a guided walk route. The proportion of accidents involving volunteers has fallen sharply during the course of the year.
- 3.2 One accident which resulted in a volunteer injuring a finger while unloading a trailer has merited further investigation. A heavy item had moved in transit and slipped while being unloaded. If a bigger trailer had been available for use, equipment would have been loaded differently and the accident avoided. In light of this and the subsequent discussions within the Ranger team, it has been agreed that larger trailers will be bought.
- 3.3 Over the course of the summer months an additional 21 accidents or incidents have been reported involving either children/young people attending one of the Authority's activities or visitors to Sutton Bank/the Moors Centre. All were minor in their nature and mainly involved slips, trips or fall or insect stings. While 21 incidents may look high, it should be seen in the context of in excess of 160,000 visitors to the Centres in the financial year to the end of October.

4. Health and Safety – Volunteer Service

- 4.1 At the meeting in June, Members were updated on the actions that had been taken as a result of the Veritau Audit in January. While these actions have been satisfactorily completed, the changing nature of the way in which volunteers are managed and used means that Officers continue to pay close attention to health and safety matters in this area.

- 4.2 Members will be aware that there have previously been issues regarding a small number of people who were undertaking work on the Authority's behalf but not formally registered. The Head of the Volunteer Team has confirmed that all people volunteering for the National Park Authority are now either registered as volunteers (and therefore subject to the Authority's Health and Safety programme and covered by its insurance) or are subject to a written agreement which sets out responsibilities and liabilities relating to both insurance and health and safety.
- 4.3 In the Volunteer Welcome Pack, volunteers are directed to the location of the Health & Safety and Lone Working policies on the My Volunteering system. There are tick boxes for volunteers to say that they have read and understood them. All risk assessments that relate to activities undertaken by volunteers are now on My Volunteering, with the relevant ones being brought to the attention of volunteers by their line manager and Task Day Leader.
- 4.4 Additionally all Task Day Leaders who run volunteer activities give a Health & Safety briefing at the start of each task. Task Day Leader training for both staff and volunteers devotes a day to training in Health & Safety and leadership skills. Volunteers are periodically reminded that they need to check and update any health details that have declared in relation to undertaking voluntary work. This information is available to Task Day Leaders to ensure that all volunteers undertaking a task have no relevant declared health issues.

5. **Other Health and Safety Activities**

- 5.1 Officers continue to periodically review cases that the Health and Safety Executive have taken to prosecution stage to ensure that any learning is shared. Three cases have been considered recently, including;

<http://press.hse.gov.uk/2017/council-fined-after-apprentices-fingers-crushed/>

<http://press.hse.gov.uk/2017/council-fined-after-member-of-public-crushed-by-tractor/>

<http://press.hse.gov.uk/2017/company-and-contractor-fined-after-member-struck-by-fencing-wire/>

These cases related to the management of apprentices, carrying out practical works in a public area and an accident involving a contractor. All three have been discussed within the Health and Safety Group, at Management Team and then within departmental meetings.

- 5.2 The ongoing development of the range of activities that volunteers undertake, particularly in conjunction with the Ranger Service, has led to the Head of Recreation and Park Management considering how to ensure that tools and equipment used by multiple users are;

- only used by suitably qualified and experienced people;
- returned to stores in the same condition that they went out in; and
- any faults reported to ensure that damaged tools can be repaired.

While some of this is about ensuring that we have the right culture in place, it also relates to everybody being clear about their responsibilities. To assist with this a system will be introduced whereby tools are graded and labelled appropriately;

Level 1 tools – all staff and volunteers can use with appropriate safety briefing (mainly hand tools);

Level 2 tools – only those who have been specifically trained can use them (for example, brushcutters);

Level 3 tools – only specified staff and volunteers with appropriate external accredited training (for example, chainsaws and mini excavators).

5.3 The Health and Safety Executive released its 2016/17 summary statistics for Great Britain plc on 1 November. As previously discussed with members, the Authority's small size can make meaningful comparisons with this level of statistics difficult, although a couple of national trends are worth noting

- 49% of sickness absence was caused by stress, depression or anxiety. The Authority has seen an increase in absence caused by mental health issues (within the context of a low overall absence rate). The increased amount of work done this year on health promotion and the availability of free confidential counselling are important in giving the Authority's staff access to information and practical help.
- Agriculture and forestry activities have the highest workplace injury rate and second highest work related ill health rates – emphasising the need for continued effort into managing the safety of outdoor, practical work tasks.

6. Progress on the 2017/18 Health and Safety Action Plan

6.1 The focus of work for the Health and Safety Group each year is the Health and Safety Action Plan approved by Members. Please see below for a summary of progress made to date;

- Share the outcome and develop/implement an action plan resulting from the health and safety attitude survey;

Survey outcomes have been posted on the Intranet and referenced in the Staff Bulletin; staff reminded of range of options for raising any health and safety issues. CEO emphasises importance of H&S in induction and staff meetings.

- Adapt the survey and conduct a similar process with regard to Volunteers;

The survey has been developed and is currently being conducted with volunteers and the outcome will be reported to the February FRASC.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Volunteer Leader training with particular regard being paid to their ability to lead tasks safely;

Training has been undertaken and initial feedback has been positive. Further work to evaluate effectiveness needed as Volunteer Leaders gain experience. This will be undertaken as part of the Health and Safety survey.

- Implement the actions recommended in the Veritau audit of the management of volunteer health and safety;

Recommended actions have been implemented as described in the report presented to the June meeting of this Committee. Continued work described in Part 4 of this report

- Develop/implement an action plan for the Authority's buildings and fire evacuation procedure following the Fire Risk Assessment inspections and subsequent reports;

Action Plans have been completed and will be implemented during the remainder of the financial year. The main issue is the replacement of fire doors which in the Old Vicarage raises some issues with regard to its listed status. A fire drill was held at HQ in July and this will be repeated shortly following the arrival of all planned new starters.

- Assess and report back to Members on how the Permit to Work and spot checking systems are working and improving standards with regard to safe working practice;

This will be reported back to Members at the February FRASC.

- Review the preventative health surveillance that is undertaken with Rangers and Apprentice Supervisors to ensure that it is fit for purpose;

Discussions have taken place with the Health and Wellbeing team at NYCC and Officers are satisfied that the correct range of health surveillance is in place for all appropriate members of staff.

- Arrange for external verification of the Authority's risk assessments via the Service Level Agreement;

This work will be completed by 31 December following a thorough review of risk assessments undertaken by the Health and Safety Group in October.

- Work with NYCC's Health and Wellbeing team to develop and implement a range of health promotion initiatives.

*Discussions have been held with the Health and Wellbeing team at NYCC regarding the options for provision of information and on-site events. All staff have access to Health Assured, a confidential support service, which is publicised regularly via Staff Bulletins and the Intranet (see **Appendix 1** for information). 'Know your Numbers' appointments with Occupational Health staff from NYCC will be held in January and all staff will be invited to attend.*

7. Financial and Staffing Implications

- 7.1 There are no significant additional financial or staff issues related to the contents of this report. Budgetary provision is sufficient to pay for all appropriate Health and Safety training and personal protective equipment.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That Members;

- Note the work undertaken since the last FRASC meeting on health and safety.

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Background documents to this report

File ref.

NPA Reports, December 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
FRASC Reports 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

Health and Safety Executive statistical analysis
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh1617.pdf>



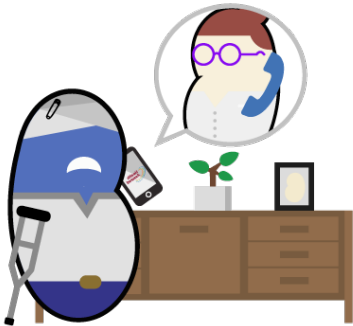
Health Assured



What is Health Assured?

Health Assured is a confidential support service for employees and their family members.

This service is available 24 hours online and by telephone.



Who provides the advice?

Calls will always be answered by a qualified and experienced councillor who will offer help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgemental manner.



What help is available?

This service provides instant and unlimited access to emotional support video content, engaging fitness videos and over 200 easy to read and understand medical fact sheets. It also includes personal coaching and health assessment areas which allow you to enter your own details and produce clear reports and advice.



How can I access it?



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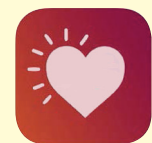
Username: Northyorkshire

Password: Council



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