

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

**3 September 2018**

**Health and Safety**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To update Members regarding Health and Safety activity so far during 2018/19 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 2018/19**

- 3.1 At the time of writing this report a total of 12 accidents to staff/volunteers had been reported since 1 April. No lost time was recorded as a result and all accidents were minor in their nature, involving manual handling, slips, trips or minor cuts. 7 of the 12 accidents were minor injuries to volunteers which occurred while carrying out practical work tasks.
- 3.2 A further 13 accident reports have been received with regard to visitors to one of our sites. 9 of these relate to school children engaging with activities organised by the Education and Youth Engagement Team. All were minor in their nature and required no further action.
- 3.3 The remaining 4 reports involve visitors to our car parks or visitor centres. Action has been taken in relation to one of the accidents with modifications being made to the external food servery at Sutton Bank. One report involved a visitor having a suspected heart attack – thankfully the visitor was fine after receiving hospital treatment and compliments were received regarding the conduct of our staff in dealing with this matter. The two other accidents involved visitors tripping over on site. Investigations have found no obvious trip hazards.
- 3.4 It is worth noting that the corresponding figures for 2017/18 were very similar with 10 accidents (5 involving volunteers) being reported plus 14 other reports regarding visitors.
- 3.5 During the 1 April - date period, 6 near misses have also been reported. One was described in detail in the May report. 3 others involved minor behavioural issues with school groups (for which the supervising teacher is responsible) with no further action being deemed necessary.

3.6 The remaining two near misses warranted further investigation/action as follows;

- An experienced volunteer slipped into a stream whilst out undertaking a water vole survey. The water was waist deep and the volunteer was able to get out easily. He went immediately home after the incident. The task was properly risk assessed and this was being followed. The volunteer was also using the lone working system. The stream was narrow and water flow was slow. The volunteer felt that this was a simple slip on his part. Officers agree with this, but have shared knowledge of the incident to emphasise the need for care whilst working alongside water;
- An office cleaner slipped while stood on a desk to close a window. No injury resulted, but this clearly raised a number of issues in that desks should not be climbed on by anybody and office windows must be shut by the last person leaving the office in the evening. Reminders have been issued.

#### 4. **Minor Fire at Sawmill Lane Depot – 18 May**

4.1 It was reported verbally at the last meeting that there had been a minor fire in the outside storage compound at Sawmill Lane, Helmsley. This has now been thoroughly investigated both by officers and the Authority's external health and safety advisor.

4.2 A member of staff had lit a fire to burn destroy non-hazardous waste in a controlled manner. Unfortunately, this fire had not been properly put out and subsequently reignited in the dry and windy weather conditions. The fire spread to a skip containing a range of waste materials waiting to be disposed of. The fire in the skip was discovered by another member of staff, who called the fire service and the matter was swiftly dealt with. A number of actions have been taken as a result;

- The staff member responsible for the fire has admitted their responsibility for the fire and the errors that had been made;
- It has been made clear to all staff that under no circumstances should a fire be used to dispose of commercial waste. In a fully risk assessed process, certain staff members may dispose of green waste on site in controlled conditions.
- Waste management practices have been revised to ensure they contribute to sustaining the natural environment in line with Authority policy. A more formal regime has been put in place to actively manage the storage compound.

#### 5. **Other Health and Safety Activity**

5.1 Senior Rangers currently lone work at weekends. Their responsibilities can take them to any part of the National Park depending upon what issues arise. This has created some issues about effectively managing their lone working as it is not always possible for them to predict where they will be. Officers are investigating other systems that will ensure the safety of our lone workers. Further details will be reported at a future meeting. It should be noted that the Rangers' work patterns make them the highest priority for a lone working device. However it may have applications for other members of staff who lone work.

5.2 In view of the continuing growth of volunteers' input into the Authority's work, particularly in carrying out and supervising practical work tasks, one of our volunteers has been invited to join the Authority's Health and Safety Group. The volunteer concerned will attend his first meeting in the Autumn.

5.3 A joint health and safety inspection of the Headquarters site has been carried out with the UNISON H&S representative. Although no major issues were found, an action list relating mainly to housekeeping has been drawn up and dealing with these has been built into the HQ Caretakers' work programme.

5.4 Task Day Leader training has continued to be delivered. The Authority's external health and safety advisor has taken part in several of these sessions. He has confirmed that the health and safety aspect of the training is sufficiently detailed and appropriate for the Task Day Leaders to safely lead volunteers on practical work tasks.

5.5 Consideration has been given to the visibility of Authority vehicles when they are parked at the side of high speed roads and staff are undertaking work and/or inspections. High visibility markings are being added to the back of all Ranger, Apprentice and Volunteer Team vehicles as a result of this in accordance with Chapter 8 guidelines issued by the Department of Transport.

## 6. Progress on the 2018/19 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;

- Implement the action plan arising from Volunteer Health and Safety Survey;

*No serious issues were highlighted but the results and best practice were cascaded to all staff, plus feedback and actions to all volunteers via the volunteer newsletter Involved.*

- Investigate how well the revised Lone Working Policy is operating and make further recommendations to amend it if necessary;

*This has been incorporated into the SLA arrangement for the coming year and will take place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the year. Paragraph 5.1 outlines current actions in relation to lone working.*

- Work with NYCC's Health and Wellbeing team to develop a follow up plan to build on and complement the work done on health promotion in 2017/18;

*The provision of the Health Assured range of information, advice and confidential counselling has been bought for a further year. Resilience training is planned for the Autumn/Winter and a repeat of the health check programmed for Spring 2019.*

- From a Health and Safety point of view, monitor the effectiveness of 'contracts' with associate volunteering groups;

*The original 'contract' for Associate Groups was put in place 2 years ago with the advice and agreement of the Authority's health and safety and insurance and insurance advisors.*

*Officers believe that it would be prudent to check that this advice is still current – at the moment there are a small number of active Associate Groups, but it is anticipated that this will be an area for future growth. Advice regarding the 'contract' has been received from the Authority's solicitor. As a result of this, a number of minor changes have been made along with a simple process that involves reviewing each contract on a six monthly basis (this is the responsibility of the Volunteer Officer). Further advice from our insurers and health and safety advisor is due very shortly.*

- Assess and develop health and safety knowledge in managers at and below Director level;

*The first of 2 Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Managing Safely courses was run in June with a further one planned for October. The two courses will see a total of 20 managers develop their health and safety management skills via a 4 day examined programme. After the second course has been completed, a list of action points will be drawn up and Members will be made aware of this at the November meeting.*

- Revise the use of the SLA days to ensure that there is regular professional input into the Health and Safety Group;

*The main SLA contact has attended all of the H&S group meetings this year, is on site all day after these meetings and available to staff for any issues they wish to resolve. He will also advise on updates to the Education and practical risk assessments later this year and has attended the training days provided for Volunteer Day Task Leaders.*

- Trial the use of 'mental health' first aiders.

*15 members of staff have been trained and reported back on their experience of the mental health first aid training programme. This was very positive and a further 15 additional staff (training in October) will receive training and will provide support to colleagues alongside more traditional first-aider. This complements the advice and availability of confidential counselling that is available via Health Assured.*

*A number of staff have already used support from the mental health first aiders.*

## 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, 2018  
FRASC Reports 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018