

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

18 November 2019

Health and Safety

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members regarding Health and Safety activity so far during 2019/20 and particularly 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 2019/20

- 3.1 At the time of writing this report a total of 21 accidents to staff/volunteers have been reported since 1 April. The split of these was 11 accidents to volunteers, all minor incidents on practical work tasks, and 10 accidents involving staff. The equivalent figure in 2018 was also 20. No lost time has been recorded as a result. A further 8 minor accidents involving either visitors or children on organised school activities were also recorded.
- 3.2 During the same period, 8 near misses were reported. All have been followed up and appropriate action taken as a result.
- 3.3 Two near misses merit further reporting. Both incidents occurred within a couple of days at Danby in September. On the first occasion, a volunteer who regularly assists with tool maintenance was found by a staff member to have started up a chainsaw with the intention of using it to cut up waste timber. Use of chainsaws is not permitted under any circumstances by volunteers and in this case, the individual was not wearing protective equipment. On the second occasion, a different volunteer was permitted to use a brushcutter, under supervision, while under taking gardening work before he had received his formal training. Our policy on this is that brushcutters can only be used when individuals have completed their formal training.
- 3.4 Officers took both of these incidents seriously and have taken a number of actions as a result including;
- All chainsaws are now padlocked in situ and can only be accessed by fully trained staff.
 - A full list of all those who can take brushcutters from depots has been posted at each site. This list is restricted to trained Task Day Leaders only. The equipment can then be used under supervision by trained staff or volunteers. Brushcutters need to be formally booked in advance by a TDL.
 - Staff and volunteers have been reminded of the system for booking out, training, use and maintenance. The penalties for non-compliance have been made very clear.

4. **Health and Safety Training**

4.1 Following on from the discussion at the last meeting of this Committee, there has been a significant amount of training undertaken or in planning, in addition to the regular refresher training programme. The newer items include;

- Officers have given considerable consideration, and taken external advice, on how to incorporate the terms of the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 into our work more effectively. Training has been given to all Rangers and will shortly be given to those responsible for managing buildings to remind all of the full scope of the Regulations;
- A large amount of the practical work that staff/volunteers undertake requires some form of manual handling of equipment or materials. Traditionally, the approach of most organisations has been to train its staff in how to lift properly and safely. While this continues to be important, the Ranger team are due to take part in training in how to consider ways of avoiding significant manual handling tasks, such as moving bridge beams to site etc. This will shortly be delivered by colleagues from NYCC's Health and Safety team;
- As Members will be aware, the risk assessment format that the Authority uses has been changed to reflect current best practice. As part of this change process, staff who are involved in producing and updating risk assessments have attended training to go through the revised format which applies to both generic and site specific risk assessments;
- Most managers took part in the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Managing Safely Course in 2018 (a 4 day, examined programme). However, several managers were unable to attend the original dates and a number of new staff have been appointed this year, so further dates for this training have been arranged.

5. **Progress on the 2019/20 Health and Safety Action Plan**

5.1 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;

- Developing a consistent approach to driver training with an accompanying policy;

A trial tracking system was fitted to one of the pool cars to provide data about driver safety with regard to speed, braking and cornering. The system proved to need considerable administrative input to transfer the data to multiple drivers of the same vehicle and Officers took the view that the benefits did not outweigh the costs. An alternative one to one approach to driver training is being adopted instead with the first training expected to take place early in 2020.

- Ensuring that lifting and moving training is more appropriate and effective;

As well as the training mentioned in paragraph 4.1 above, plans are in hand to produce an in-house video to demonstrate safe lifting and moving techniques. Officers believe that this will be more effective as it will be able to demonstrate safe lifting on tasks that staff will undertake in practice as opposed to a more generic training format.

- Developing a formal register of relevant health and safety legislation and stating (briefly) how the Authority is complying with it;

Information has been gathered for this piece of work and Officers anticipate a draft being ready for members to consider at FRASC in February.

- Organising appropriate health and safety refresher training for members;

This is included in the Members' training programme for 2019/20. Unfortunately, the session due for October was postponed, but will be rearranged shortly together with a specific briefing on their health and safety responsibilities for the Authority Chair and Chair of FRASC.

- Consider updating the format used for risk assessments to make them more effective and more easily usable;

New format has been agreed and this is being rolled out as risk assessments are reviewed. Training has taken place as outlined in paragraph 4.1 above.

- Continue to focus on developing health and safety training for those who lead volunteers.

Staff in the Volunteering Team continue to undertake supportive spot checking of task day leaders (staff and volunteers) and walk leaders to ensure that safety briefings are undertaken to the required standard. Newly trained task day leaders are spot checked as a priority. Task day leader training and refreshers continue to emphasise the health and safety aspects of the role.

6. Other Health and Safety Matters

- 6.1 At the last meeting Members were informed of a short review that was being undertaken into the effectiveness of the Mental Health first aid training. The outcome of this was very positive and while the Officers believe that there are sufficient mental health first aiders, money will be allocated to ensure that this training is periodically refreshed.
- 6.2 On a related point, Members may be aware that a recent former apprentice sadly committed suicide in September. The recent Health and Safety Group meeting noted that all studies suggest that younger men in particular experience a disproportionate amount of mental health issues. Arrangements have been made for a trained mental health professional to attend and run a session at the next Apprentice Forum.
- 6.3 It has been confirmed via the 2019 National Tick Survey, that there is evidence of Lyme disease being present in 4% of ticks collected from Fen Moor on Levisham estate. This rate is similar to the national average (3.9%). Advice has been given to staff and volunteers this year regarding ticks. This includes guidance on the clothing that should be worn, how to inspect for ticks, how to safely remove them and when to seek medical guidance. Advice for the public is also available at the Visitor Centres and on the Authority's website.

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;

- Approve the work undertaken since the May FRASC on health and safety.

Contact Officer:
Ian Nicholls
Head of Corporate Services
01439 772700

Background documents to this report

File ref.

NPA Reports 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
FRASC Reports 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019