

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

19 November 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 20 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. 10 of the 20 accidents were minor injuries to volunteers which occurred while carrying out practical work tasks.
- 3.2 A further 18 accident reports have been received with regard to visitors to one of our sites. 11 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 7 reports involve visitors to our car parks or visitor centres. In addition to actions previously reported, a wasp's nest in the picnic area has been destroyed after visitors were stung. Staff were not aware of its existence, but reacted quickly to make the area safe.
- 3.4 It is worth noting that the corresponding figures for 2017/18 were similar with 14 accidents (6 involving volunteers) being reported plus 21 other reports regarding visitors.
- 3.5 During the 1 April - date period, 8 near misses have also been reported. One of the 2 near misses reported since the last meetings has led to a number of actions being taken. A volunteer was lone working while undertaking a water vole survey. He was working in an area adjacent to a conifer plantation and had 2 sites to look at. He had a map and could have chosen to walk from the first site to the second via established forest tracks. This route was, however, longer and the volunteer opted to take a 'short cut' through the conifer plantation.
- 3.6 He became lost and due to using the mapping application on his phone, the battery quickly went flat. He was able to alert the police to say that he was lost. The police contacted the Authority and while we were able to confirm that he was our volunteer, we were unable to pinpoint where he would have been working.

3.7 The Volunteer had used the lone working 'buddy' system correctly and had left his whereabouts with a family member at home. Unfortunately the 'buddy;' had left the house without taking their phone so were not contactable. The situation ended happily when the volunteer made his way out of the plantation and was able to return to his car and let everybody know that he was safe. He subsequently wrote a detailed and helpful note about how the incident occurred and what might prevent a repetition. Officers have taken this incident very seriously and, after discussion, have taken a number of actions which are summarised below;

- Lone working volunteers will be required to record via My Volunteering when they are undertaking work and where;
- Lone working volunteers whose duties require them to be in or immediately adjacent to water will be required to operate in pairs. This requirement will be dealt with via the risk assessment process;
- Managers who are responsible for lone workers have been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that all tasks are fully risk assessed in advance, clear instruction given about navigation from site to site via established routes and reiterate the needs for lone working 'buddies' to be contactable while out on site.

4. **Safeguarding and Protection of Children and Adults at Risk**

4.1 Over the last 18 months the Education and Youth Engagement Team have significantly increased the number of ways in which the Authority engages with children and young people. As well as providing additional clubs, volunteering opportunities and work experience there has also been an increasing occurrence of staff members and volunteers being left in loco parentis e.g. the Young Archaeologist Club, Duke of Edinburgh residential week and Young Rangers' activities. In line with activities elsewhere in the Authority, a large proportion of the delivery is undertaken by volunteers.

4.2 The Head of Education and Youth Engagement has therefore reviewed and significantly amended the Safeguarding Policy to take into account these changes in line with the professional guidance provided by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board. The guidance states that an organisation's safeguarding policy should be approved and endorsed by the relevant management body, be an agreed protocol for the entire organisation and be mandatory for all staff and volunteers.

4.3 The Authority's draft policy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this paper. As well as children, it also deals with adults at risk and young people at work, for example apprentices and students on work experience placements. As members will appreciate, this is an area of work that needs to be dealt with thoroughly, but in a way that is also sensible and proportionate. Officers are confident that the application of this policy achieves these aims while providing clear guidance to staff and volunteers who deal directly with these groups. Adequate systems are in place to ensure that DBS checks and refreshers are undertaken at the agreed intervals.

4.4 The Head of Education and Youth Engagement is responsible for publicising this policy and training staff/volunteers where this is appropriate.

5. **Other Health and Safety Activity**

5.1 Officers have taken advice regarding the measures that should be taken to ensure that the risks posed by Legionella are properly managed in visitor centres, public toilets, office buildings and depots. Training has been provided for Car Park Wardens and Caretakers who will be undertaking the routine checks that are necessary.

- 5.2 The Chief Executive, Directors and Head of Corporate Services have taken part in the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Leading Safely course. This included an assessment of current health and safety practice and how well it is 'led' as well as timely reminders about corporate health and safety responsibility. The officers involved each have 3 health and safety targets arising from this course and progress against these will be assessed as part of the appraisal process.
- 5.3 One of the outcomes from the course described above was to consider what further guidance members should receive regarding their responsibilities. It is now a number of years since health and safety was included in the members' training programme and, subject to any suggestions at the meeting, it is proposed to make arrangements for this in the first half of 2019.

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 advice has been sought, particularly in relation to lone working volunteers. This will be incorporated into the policy update due to be reported to FRASC in February. Trials of two systems that potentially provide technical solutions for senior rangers working at weekends continue to be undertaken. One of these includes a system recently implemented by NYCC.

- 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 advisors.

Officers believed that it would be prudent to check that the agreements being used are appropriate as the increased engagement with Associate Groups is anticipated to be the main area of growth in volunteer numbers during the next 2 years.

Advice regarding the 'contract' has been received from the Authority's solicitor, external health and safety advisor and our insurers Zurich Municipal. As a result of the helpful advice given, a number of 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). The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for 'authorising' each new or amended agreement.

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

Two Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Managing Safely courses have been run in June and October for a total of 20 managers to enable them to develop their health and safety management skills via a 4 day examined programme.

The key areas that have been highlighted for corporate attention are as follows;

- *Developing a consistent approach to driver training*
- *Ensuring that lifting and moving training is appropriate and effective*
- *Develop a register of relevant health and safety legislation and state (briefly) how the Authority is complying with it.*

Officers intend working on these areas in the coming months and will report back to members in due course.

- 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 (December 4) and has attended the training days provided for Volunteer Day Task Leaders.

The SLA has also provided specialist health and safety advice on a number of archaeological projects involving trenches and excavations.

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

30 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 has been one of the most enthusiastically endorsed training programmes that the Authority has run. The availability of trained mental health first aiders (from each Department, work location and all levels in the organisation) has been publicised to staff.

This approach continues to complement the advice and availability of confidential professional counselling that is available via Health Assured.

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;

- Ask Officers to arrange suitable health and safety training for Members; and
- Note the work undertaken since the last FRASC meeting.

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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