

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

**4 February 2019**

**Health and Safety**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To update Members on Health and Safety activity so far during 2018/19 and on progress made on the Health and Safety work programme.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 At the March 2018 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 22 accidents to staff/volunteers have been reported since 1 April. No lost time has been recorded as a result and all accidents were minor in their nature, involving manual handling, slips, trips or minor cuts. 11 of the 22 accidents were minor injuries to volunteers which occurred while carrying out practical work tasks.
- 3.2 A further 27 accident reports have been received with regard to visitors to one of our sites. 20 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. The remaining 7 reports involve visitors to our car parks or visitor centres.
- 3.3 It is worth noting that the corresponding figures for 2017/18 were similar with 16 accidents (7 involving volunteers) being reported plus 23 other reports regarding visitors.
- 3.4 During the 1 April - date period, 19 near misses have also been reported. This is significantly higher than the same time last year (6 near misses reported). Officers' view is this has reflected increased activity in encouraging the report of such occurrences rather than a problem with deteriorating health and safety performance.
- 3.5 2 of the Near Misses reported since the last meeting were significant and have led to a number of actions being taken as a result. Firstly, a volunteer was assisting staff on a Young Ranger session when it became clear that she had taken photos of the young people on her mobile phone intending to share these with the participants. The staff member dealt with the matter quickly and the photos were deleted. The volunteer had read the Safeguarding Policy but had not followed what it had said with regard to taking photographs. Staff are content that this was a perfectly innocent error which will not be repeated, but steps have been taken to strengthen the wording in 'Working with Children and Young People' risk assessment and to ensure that volunteers are specifically briefed about use of mobile phones.

3.6 The other noteworthy Near Miss involved an experienced member of staff manoeuvring a mini excavator in a small working area. This resulted in the excavator rolling on to its side. The staff member was not hurt and there was no damage to the machinery. The individual concerned had been appropriately trained and was experienced at using the excavator. He has written a detailed summary of what happened and is clear that a slightly different course of action would have avoided the incident. This experience has been shared with other staff who use such machinery.

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

4.1 The Construction, Design and Maintenance Regulations (CDM) 2015 place responsibilities on organisations that plan and manage construction projects. Officers will update members on their application in the Authority at the May FRASC meeting.

4.2 One of the outcomes of the health and safety training for managers organised in 2018 is an action for Officers to consider how to develop a programme of driver safety training. A number of options are being considered and this will form part of the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2019/20 (see paragraph 6.1 below). Discussions are being held with a company to provide a 12 month trial, free of charge, to fit tracking devices to some of our vehicles. These devices will provide a range of driver behaviour information (speed, acceleration, braking etc.) which can then be shared with the individuals concerned with the aim of improving driving styles. It is Officers' intention to fit the trial devices to pool vehicles (used by many staff) and vans which are mainly used by younger drivers.

4.3 The annual review of the Health and Safety and Lone Working Policies are underway. There have been some significant changes to working practices during the past 12 months and both of these documents need to reflect these changes. Consultation with members of the Health and Safety Group is ongoing and the revised documents will be presented to members at the March NPA.

4.4 The regular membership of the Health and Safety Group has been strengthened by the addition of a volunteer who is interested in health and safety practice.

4.5 The full outcome of the volunteer survey completed in January 2019 will be presented to the March NPA. Feedback about the way in which volunteer safety is managed was generally positive and a number of respondents mentioned the significant health benefits of volunteering. One area for action is in relation to better provision of waterproof clothing for volunteers who regularly undertake practical outdoor work. Officers are actively investigating solutions to this and have found appropriate budgetary provision.

#### 5. **Progress on the 2018/19 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;

- 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 NPA in March. 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. Results will be fed back to Members in due course*

- 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. This will be extended for 2019/20 as well. The health information that it contains is actively promoted to staff through a variety of different means. Resilience training is planned for the first half of 2019 as is a repeat of the health check programme.*

- 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 in relation to driver training, lifting and moving training and developing a register of compliance with relevant health and safety legislation.*

*Officers intend working on these areas 2019/20 and they will form part of the Health and Safety action plan for the year.*

- 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 has also advised on updates to the Education, practical and property related risk assessments and has also 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.*

## 6. Initial Thoughts for 2019/20 Action Plan

6.1 The draft action plan will be brought to March NPA for members' approval. Officers' initial thoughts are that the action plan will include;

- Developing a consistent approach to driver training;
- Ensuring that lifting and moving training is more appropriate and effective;
- Developing a formal register of relevant health and safety legislation and stating (briefly) how the Authority is complying with it;
- Organising appropriate health and safety refresher training for members;
- Consider updating the format used for risk assessments to make them more effective and more easily usable;
- Continue to focus on developing health and safety training for those who lead volunteers.

6.2 Members' views on these or any other items they feel should be included are very welcome.

## 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;

- Comment on the proposed Health and Safety Action Plan for 2019/20; 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