

**NFNPA/RAPC 337/17**

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 5 JUNE 2017**

**ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - 2016/17**

**Report by:** Steve Avery, Executive Director

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Authority aims to minimise the incidence of workplace risks and promote staff wellbeing by providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. The Authority sees Health and Safety as being part of everyday good management and adopted a Health and Safety Policy in 2007, which was subsequently updated in August 2010 and again by this Committee on 8 September 2014. A further review of the Policy is due to be carried out this year (2017/18).
- 1.2 Members have responsibility for monitoring the Health and Safety Policy and so the purpose of this report is to update Members on how the Authority has discharged its Health and Safety duties over the last year.

**2 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 2.1 Responsibility for discharging the Authority's duty to safeguard health and safety rests with the Chief Executive, those responsibilities being delegated to the Executive Leadership team and Managers for the implementation of policy and practice and for ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities, both for themselves and others. Operational ownership for Health and Safety has been assigned to the Executive Director.
- 2.2 The table below sets out the relevant areas of responsibility within the organisation.

<b>Officer/Group</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
CEO (Alison Barnes)	Overall responsibility for ensuring Health and Safety policy and legal requirements are adhered to at all times.
Lead Member (David Harrison)	Ensures Member input into matters of Health and Safety.
Executive Director (Steve Avery)	Operational ownership for Health and Safety across the Authority.
Health and Safety Representatives and line managers	Responsible for representing the individual teams and undertaking specific tasks, e.g. reporting areas of concern and ensuring health and safety procedures are followed.
Health and Safety Forum	Ensure Health and Safety best practice is acted upon across the organisation and issues discussed and remedied. The Forum meets twice a year and includes the Lead Member and officers as set out above.
Health and Safety Quarterly meetings	Responsible for addressing 'day to day' health and safety issues and attended by the Executive Director, Manager of Corporate Services and the Business Support Officer with specialist advice being provided by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator (NFDC).
All staff	Responsible for their own Health and Safety whilst at work or on work duties.

### **3 Health and Safety Activity undertaken during 2016/2017**

3.1 Health and Safety (H&S) has remained at the heart of the Authority's approach to working and the following activities have been undertaken over the last year:

- There have been two meetings of the H&S Forum (23 November 2016 and 29 March 2017). The Forum provides an opportunity to capture learning and best practice from around the organisation and to share health and safety news and views.
- In addition, the H&S Quarterly meetings have continued and allow staff to address all health and safety issues as they arise as well as those raised at the Forum meetings.
- The corporate drive of the electronic records system is updated to help staff access all relevant H&S policies and advice. This information will be placed on the Authority's new intranet to enhance accessibility once this is in place later this year.

3.2 Ensuring that staff are able to work in a secure and safe office environment is an important aspect of the Authority's Health and Safety work. During the last year:

- The NPA fire wardens continued to carry out weekly hazard checks. There were 2 planned fire drills (26 September 2016 and 3 May 2017) and two other evacuations (5 September 2016 and 26 October 2016).
- The Driving at Work Policy was reviewed and updated and adopted in February 2017. The new policy merged two previously separate policies (Driving at Work and Pool Car policies) into one document for ease of reference - elements of the former policies were also updated in this process.
- The Lone Working Policy was reviewed, updated and adopted in February 2017 – the revised policy also now contains a flow chart to provide clear lines of action in assisting to locate lone workers who have not returned to the office.
- A new DSE online assessment was introduced for all staff to complete and has been useful in identifying neck, shoulder, back or arm pain, as well as fatigue and eyestrain relating to staff workstations.
- In March 2017, NFDC's Health and Safety Advisor produced a Gap Analysis table which provides a framework for planning, actioning and reviewing health and safety work. The Analysis is attached as **Annex 1** and demonstrates the Authority's on-going commitment to Health and Safety. Officers are currently working on the actions in the table.
- A PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) Policy has been drafted and is awaiting approval. This policy deals with protection of employees from exposure to work place hazards.
- First Aid Needs Assessment written and adopted in August 2016. This assessment identifies the Authority's first aid requirements in terms of ensuring adequate and sufficient availability of first aid equipment (i.e. first aid kit), facilities and personnel.

3.3 Training undertaken and qualifications gained in the past year include:

- A refresher course for fire wardens was held on 27 March 2017 at Lymington Town Hall. One existing first aider requalified as a first aider (certificates last for three years) and another attended refresher training during the year (the Health and Safety Executive recommends that first aiders attend refresher training to help maintain basic skills and to keep up to date with any changes to first-aid procedures).

- The Authority has four first aiders and NFDC have six first aiders. An arrangement between the two authorities means all first aiders are shared and can respond to incidents across both parts of the Town Hall building.
- A bespoke Emergency First Aid at Work course was delivered to seven staff within the Environment and Rural Economy team and the seasonal staff from the Recreation Management and Learning team. This course was specific to outdoor working in the Forest environment. During the year, another Emergency FAW undertook a refresher course in Emergency First Aid at Work.

### 3.4 Health and Safety - NPA hosted events

- Rangers led or jointly delivered over 176 events in 2016/17 reaching 10,348 people. Risk assessments are written for every event we lead and risk assessments are regularly evaluated and updated as necessary for resources and equipment. Volunteers are briefed before each event on any hazards highlighted in the risk assessments.
- The NPA led approximately 20 walks last year excluding the walking festival. Each route was surveyed beforehand to assess suitability and highlight any health and safety hazards that needed addressing before the event. Risk assessments were written for each walk. On the day, an 'on the spot' risk assessment is undertaken and continues throughout the walk. Changes may occur to the proposed route or in extreme conditions walks postponed in the event of conditions considered dangerous to participants' safety such as high winds or changing ground conditions dependant on the location and landscape of the walk. A safety briefing is undertaken for all participants highlighting the hazards of the risk assessment prior to each walk.

## 4 Recorded Health and Safety incidents

### 4.1 During the last 12 months there were eight recorded incidents logged in the Accident Book which included:

- Two minor accidents/ incidents that involved staff; one pregnant member of staff felt faint and another member of staff had an allergic reaction to their lunch.
- Two minor accidents that involved volunteers; one cut their leg on a post in the forest whilst carrying out survey work and another volunteer cut their nose and cheek whilst cutting down willow.
- One minor accident which involved a member of the public who fell off his stationery bike whilst on a guided cycle ride.
- There were three near misses. Action has taken place to prevent these causing any problems in the future.

## 5 Sickness Absence

5.1 Sickness absence for 2016/7 has increased since last year.

- There were a total of 291 days sickness recorded. This equates to 3.75 days per Full Time Equivalent.
- The table below shows the comparison with previous years:

2013/14	2014/15	2015/6	2016/7
3.37	3.11	3.58	3.75

- 79 of these days were recorded as long term absence (absences of 20 days or more).
- Of the 212 days recorded as short term, the following four reasons accounted for just over 70% of the total absences:

Reason	Number of days	% of short term absence
Eyes, Ears Nose and Throat	43	20.3%
Respiratory	42	19.8%
Stomach	35	16.5%
Infections	30	14.15%

- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Survey 2016 showed that the UK average level of employee absence in days per FTE in the public sector has increased from 9.3 to 9.9 days.
- Although the levels of sickness at the Authority are considerably lower than the national public sector average, the level has risen. As a result a training session in managing sickness absence has been given to managers to assist them in monitoring sickness levels within their teams.

## 6 General staff well being

6.1 The Authority offers an Employee Assistance Programme which is a free service for all staff and includes the following:

- 24 hours, 7 days a week confidential Freephone helpline.
- Telephone and face-to-face counselling support.
- Advice and support on matters including work, emotional, personal, relationship, family, legal, financial and health related issues.
- A monthly well-being topic that is promoted to staff via the Warbler.

6.2 The Authority ran its annual staff event known as ‘Discovery Days’ last June which 75% of staff opted to participate in. The purpose of this event is for staff to spend half a day on a selected Discovery Day of their choice to discover more about the New Forest National Park whilst learning about an area of work that the Authority undertakes.

## **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Equality or diversity implications have been taken into account in compiling this report.

## **8. Recommendation**

**This report is submitted for information and members are requested to note the report.**

### **Papers:**

NFNPA/RAPC 337/17

NFNPA/RAPC 337/17 – Annex 1

### **Contact:**

Steve Avery

Executive Director

Tel: 01590 646659

[steve.avery@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:steve.avery@newforestnpa.gov.uk)