

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 10 SEPTEMBER
2018**

ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - 2017/18

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 and update of the Policy has commenced and it will be brought to this Committee for approval once it has been considered by the Health and Safety Forum.
- 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, assisted by the Corporate Services Manager and Business Support Officer.
- 2.2 The table below sets out the relevant areas of responsibility within the organisation.

Officer/Group	Responsibility
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 Corporate Health and Safety Manager (NFDC).
All staff	Responsible for their own Health and Safety whilst at work or on work duties.

3 Health and Safety Activity undertaken during 2017/2018

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 (6 September 2017 and 16 May 2018). 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 has been updated to help staff access all relevant H&S policies and advice. This information has been placed on the Authority's new intranet to enhance accessibility and work is also on-going on Health and Safety documents in terms of a review of the Authority's records management system.

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 fire drills (11 September 2017 and 23 April 2018).
- The new DSE (Display Screen Equipment) online assessment for staff has been useful in helping staff to identify and take steps to avoid neck, shoulder, back or arm pain, as well as fatigue and eyestrain relating to staff workstations. 42 self-assessments have been completed on line.
- A PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) Policy was adopted on 22 May 2017. This policy deals with protection of employees from exposure to work place hazards. PPE is currently being sourced and handed out to those staff who have identified a need through a completed risk assessment.

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

- Fire warden training took place again this year. It was arranged by NFDC.
- Risk Assessment training was provided to Managers on 15 and 16 February 2018, topics included in the training were understanding the principles of risk assessments and employer and employee responsibilities. Managers also discussed and inputted into a template for Authority risk assessments which has since been agreed and implemented.
- The Authority has four first aiders and NFDC have six first aiders on site. 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 (First Aider at Work) undertook a refresher course in Emergency First Aid at Work.

3.4 Health and Safety - NPA hosted events

- Rangers led or jointly delivered 165 events in 2017/18 reaching 11,500 people. Risk assessments are completed 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 10 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 completed 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 terrain 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 nine recorded incidents logged in the Accident Book which included:

- Three minor accidents/ incidents that involved staff.
- Two minor accidents that involved members of the public; one person was pulled over by a dog during a guided walk and one where a child was pushed against a tree by another child during an activity in the woodland.
- There were four near misses. Action has been taken to prevent these causing any problems in the future.

5 Sickness Absence

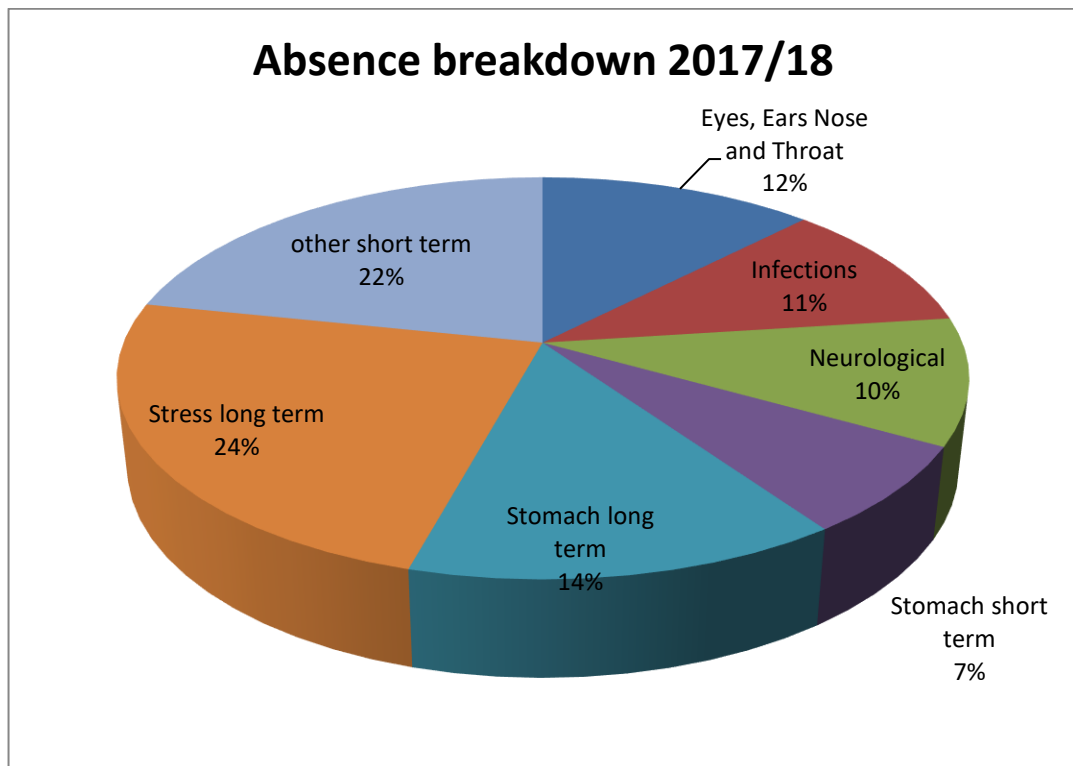
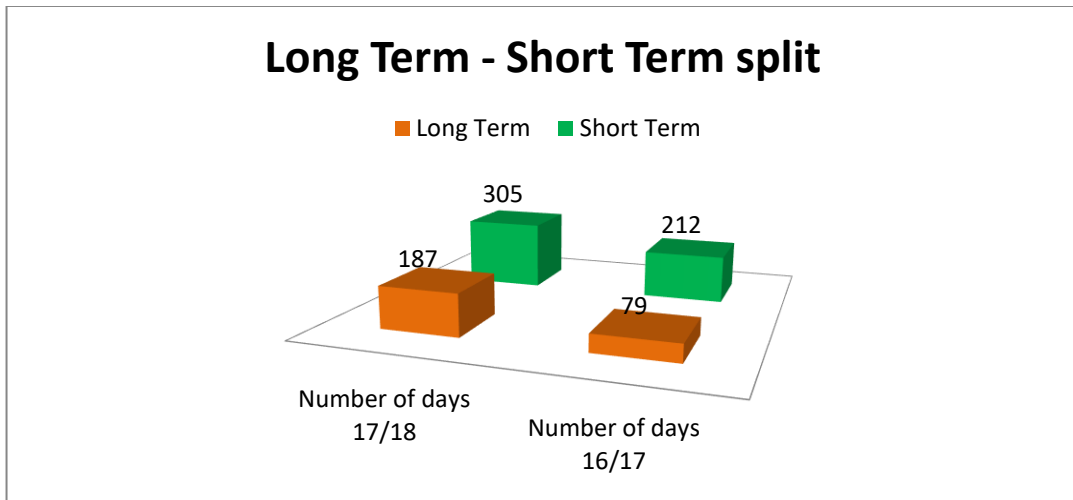
5.1 2017/8 saw a marked increase in sickness absence when compared to preceding years.

- There were a total of 492 days sickness recorded compared to 291 days last year. This equates to 6.16 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Survey 2018 showed that the UK average level of employee absence in days per FTE in the public sector has reduced from 9.9 days to 8.5 days. Across all industries the average is 6.6 days per FTE.
- The table below compares the Authority’s sickness record with previous years:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/6	2016/7	2017/18
Days per FTE	3.37	3.11	3.58	3.75	6.16

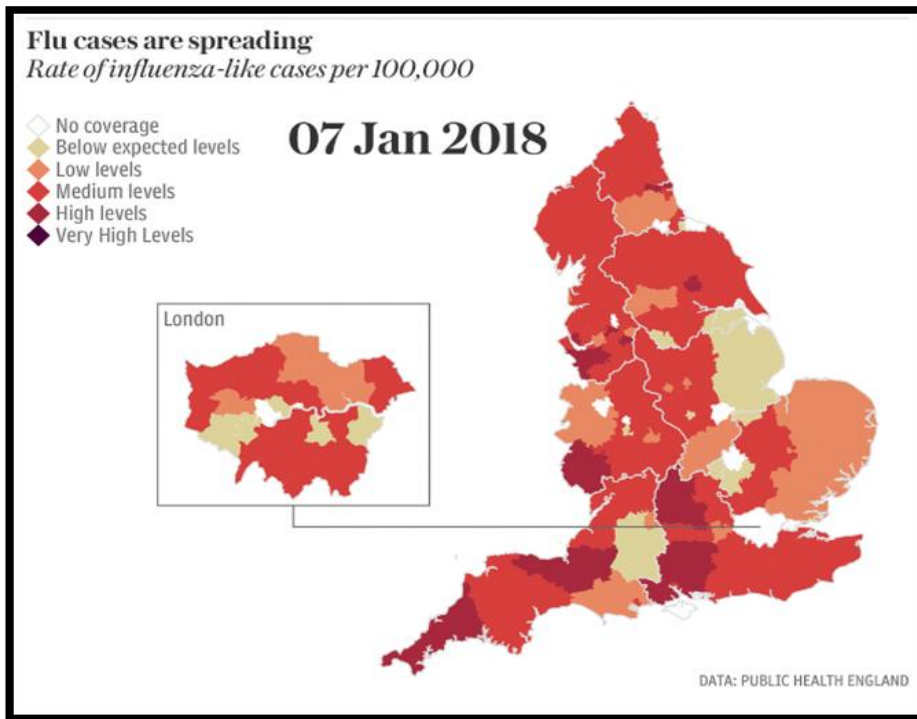
- Long term sickness absence (absences of 20 days or more) has risen from 79 days to 187 days. This accounted for 38% of overall sickness, and was due to reasons of stress and stomach. Within a small organisation the long term sickness absence can be heavily influenced by just one member of staff being absent on long term sickness, as was the case in 2017/18.
- Short term sickness absence also rose in 2017/18 from 212 days to 305 days. The following four reasons accounted for 65% of short term absences:

Reason	Number of days
Eyes, Ears Nose and Throat	61
Infections	52
Stomach	35
Neurological	50



5.2 Part of the steep rise in short term sickness for 2017/18 can be attributed to the particularly high level of influenza cases last winter with Hampshire recording some of

the highest levels in the country. December to March saw particularly high levels of short term absence due to colds and flu.



- 5.3 An updated procedure for recording sickness absence is now in place and managers have received further training on this. Quarterly sickness absence statistics will now be reported to the Executive Board in addition to the H&S Quarterly meetings.

6 General staff well being

- 6.1 The Authority continues to offer 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 We also ran our annual staff event known as 'Discovery Days' last June which 71% 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 and to gain a deeper understanding about a specific area of work that the Authority undertakes (as well as providing an opportunity to interact with colleagues in an informal setting).

7. Recommendation:

Members note the report.

Papers:

NFNPA/RAPC /18

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