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**NFNPA/RAPC 402/19**

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 3 JUNE 2019**

**ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT - 2018/19**

**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 September 2014. A further review and update of the Policy took place in 2018 and was approved by this Committee on 5 November 2018.
- 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.

<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 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 2018/2019**

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 (16 May and 2 October 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 Health and Safety documents currently contained on the Authority's corporate drive are being moved across to SharePoint in accordance with the review of the Authority's records management. Relevant H & S policies and advice will also be viewable on the Authority's new intranet.

- Following Risk Assessment training in 2018, a new risk assessment template was agreed and has now been implemented. This has standardised assessments providing uniformity and continuity. The template and completed risk assessments are now stored centrally and are accessible to all staff.
- As most NFDC staff have now moved out of the Lymington Town Hall, the Authority has redrafted the emergency fire evacuation procedure to ensure that NPA staff can be safely evacuated from the building in an emergency. Once the Police and other organisations take up occupation of their offices in the town hall, discussions will take place on a joint fire evacuation procedure.
- During the year officers updated the Driving at Work Policy and Authority's Risk Log (including risks and mitigation relevant to staff health and safety) and progressed actions on the Health and Safety gap analysis.

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 and tests of the fire alarm in the building.
- 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. Twenty-five staff had the DSE on line assessment this year.
- 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 in July 2018 - there were 6 attendees from the NPA.
- The Authority has four first aiders and NFDC has three first aiders on site. Two NPA first aiders received re-qualification training.
- A bespoke Emergency First Aid at Work course was delivered to nine staff. This course was specific to outdoor working in the Forest environment. During the year, another nine staff gained their Emergency First Aid at Work certificates. The majority of these staff were those in seasonal ranger and apprentice ranger roles.

### 3.4 Health and Safety - NPA hosted events

- Staff led or jointly delivered 339 events in 2018/19. 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 also led 26 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 may be 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 17 recorded incidents logged in the Accident Book which included:

- Seven accidents/incidents that involved staff. Two accidents were from tick / insect bites, one member of staff fell whilst passing through a farm gate and there were two instances of staff tripping - one over a kerbstone and the other up the stairs when it was dark.
- Seven accidents that involved members of the public. These included reports of wasp stings, a child being pushed into a tree by another child, two injuries being caused by using tools, one person fell over during the walking festival. One person was taken to hospital by ambulance after they felt breathless during a Princes Trust activity.
- One further incident was recorded when one of our first aiders administered first aid to a contractor who was making a delivery to the NPA. He had come into reception with a bleeding finger which had occurred at a previous job location.

### 4.2 None of the above instances were serious and have been investigated and any mitigation action put in place. All staff are encouraged to report accidents, incidents and near misses however small so that we can take steps to prevent any similar reoccurrence which next time might have more serious consequences. We have introduced new accident / near miss forms which record more details about the person affected and details of the accident / near miss, the injuries sustained or damage caused and also witness details. These forms are then passed to the person's line

manager to be checked to see if any follow up action or an internal investigation is required.

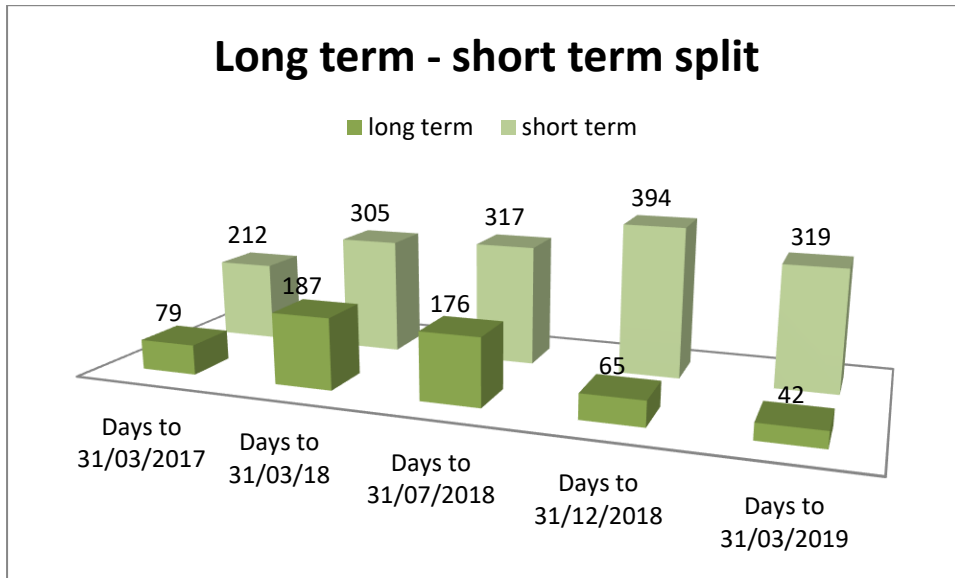
## 5 Sickness Absence

- 5.1 Members will recall that 2017/8 saw a marked increase in sickness absence when compared to preceding years. The statistics were investigated to see what had given rise to both long and short-term absence and reported to the September 2018 RAPC meeting where the Committee noted that within a small organisation, the long-term sickness absence could be heavily influenced by just one member of staff being absent on long term sickness. The Committee also noted that there had been a steep rise in flu and cold cases in the winter of 2017/18 with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight being one of the areas most affected.
- 5.2 Last autumn hand sanitizers were installed on each floor close to the central staircase in an attempt to combat the spread of germs in the office. Absence statistics for the 12 months up to the end of March 2019 are shown below with the overall short and long term sickness figure down to 4.93 days per FTE (Full-time equivalent). The most recent survey conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) showed that the UK average level of employee absence in days per FTE in the public sector was 8.4 days.

*The table below shows the comparison with previous years based on sickness days per FTE.*

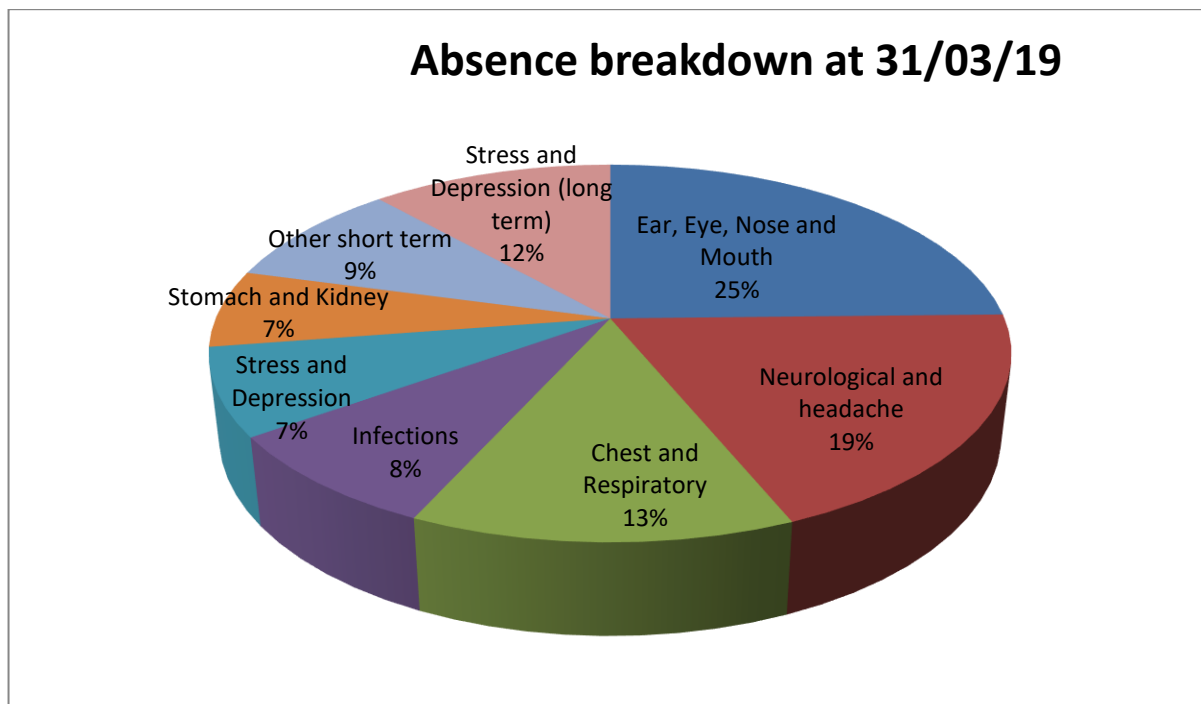
2013/14	2014/15	2015/6	2016/7	2017/18	Rolling year to 30/07/2018	Rolling year to 31/12/2018	Rolling year to 31/3/2019
3.37	3.11	3.58	3.75	6.16	6.17	6.13	4.93

*The table below shows the sickness figures quoted since March 2017. Each period looks back over a full 12 months.*



- Long term sickness absence, (absences of 20 days or more), has continued to decrease. The long term stress and depression issue has been resolved and is only included in this report because it looks back over a full 12 months.
- Short term sickness absence took a rise in the last report with 394 days being reported at the end of December 2018 but at 31 March 2019 the figure has dropped to 319 days.

<b>Top 5 short term reasons</b>	<b>Number of days lost</b>
Ear Eye Nose and Mouth	89
Neurological and headache	69
Chest and Respiratory	47
Infections	30
Stress and Depression	27



## 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 intranet.

6.2 We also ran our annual staff event known as 'Discovery Days' last June which 68% 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:

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