

Occupational Safety and Health Adviser (OSHA)

Annual Report for 2022-2023 – final draft

1. Context

This retrospective report is primarily concerned with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) performance during the period March 2022 – April 2023. While the last remaining legal restrictions, related to coronavirus were lifted in mid-March 2022, fall-out from the pandemic continued to have an impact on our working arrangements. Many events that had been put on-hold during the previous two years returned and the Government focus was now clearly set on and restricted to, the continuing immunisation programme. A majority of colleagues had by now adopted a hybrid working pattern, sharing their work hours between remote or home working and time in the office. While OSH concerns associated with this change were few, significant time and effort went into ensuring our workforce was well supported, particularly in respect of suitable workstation set-up and for individual wellbeing.

This report will, in accordance with the OSH Policy, Part III, Governance Arrangements, be submitted for consultation to the Health & Safety Committee and the Management Team, then to the Programmes & Resources Committee.

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence that OSH performance is satisfactory and continuously improving.

This report includes

- An overall appraisal of OSH performance for the Peak District National Park (PDNPA) for the previous year with particular reference to corporate initiatives, making further significant improvements and to performance indicators
- Accident and incident data and analysis for the year 2022-23 for staff and for visitors, including near-miss reporting
- A report on OSH services provided to other National Parks (NPAs)
- Recommended priorities and actions for 2023-2024, and beyond

2. Health & Safety performance

Overall, a good OSH culture exists at PDNPA. Employees understand the importance of OSH management both for their own and for others safety and well-being. During 2022-23 the profile of OSH and particularly of risk assessment, has continued to be raised significantly as a legacy of working through the coronavirus pandemic.

2.1 OSH performance indicators

Qualitative OSH performance indicators were introduced from 2019 and have been routinely reported in Quarters 2 and 4 since then.

Table 1 Quarter 4 OSH performance indicators summary results 2022-2023

Indicator	Target	Q4 result	Comment
Senior managers (SLT and HoS) completing IOSH <i>Leading Safely</i> within last 3 years ¹	100%	78% (Of current HoS – see note 1)	A further review of the OSH training needs of senior management should take place for delivery from 2024 (See section 6 of this report).
Team Managers completing IOSH <i>Managing Safely/Managing Safely Refresher</i> within last 3 years ²	100%	41% (of current Team Managers)	Further <i>Managing Safely</i> [®] for NPAs and <i>Managing Safely Refresher</i> [®] courses will be provided in July 2023
Staff have completed <i>Introduction to Health and Safety</i> course	100%	86% (last figure available)	A significant review and update of the online learning resource (<i>ELMS</i>) has been completed by the provider and South Downs NPA (2023). Changes to the way this resource is used and in particular the use of refresher courses will be implemented at PDNPA in 2023.
Number of near-miss reports received as a proportion of total reports received	50%	19% (33% for staff and 14% for visitors)	
Generic risk assessments are available for all key NPA OSH matters	100%	100%	The list of key NPA OSH matters will be continuously reviewed and agreed across NPAs

Notes: 1. Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) *Leading Safely* course was introduced in 2019 for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Heads of Service (HoS). Of the 15 colleagues completing the course in 2019, 8 are no longer with the organisation. The remaining 7 are all current Heads of Service (2022-23).
2. Further organisational change at PD is anticipated and a review of training needs for new/re-designated managers started in 2022-2023 will continue in 2023-2024.

2.2 OSH audits and inspections

The OSHA performs a continuous, rolling programme of visits to PDNPA premises and staff at work. During this programme, the OSHA provides a monitoring and mentoring role including opportunities to recognise and endorse good practice, respond to instances where some improvements are necessary and to further coach staff. Interventions typically include enhancing competence to manage a wide range of OSH matters, improving the use of available resources and promoting the constant review and improvement of risk management controls. This rolling programme of workplace visits forms the opinion of the expert OSHA in respect of routine OSH performance.

With the majority of staff now working both from home and at the office or other workplace, guidance on setting up remote workstations and other support, particularly about maintaining communications and considering good mental-health and wellbeing have continued to be priorities. Staff surveys have been used to identify both individual concerns and common problems and these have been addressed on a case-by-case basis, as necessary.

As coronavirus restrictions were lifted and operations reopened and recommenced, risk assessments and work arrangements for those operations were reviewed and reissued. Staff returning to workplaces or operations were routinely briefed on their return. The OSHA has also maintained a regular visit schedule to all workplaces that have been operational throughout the different stages of coronavirus restrictions and on reopening. During these visits, questions have been answered, important messages about any new ways of working reinforced and staff competence and confidence enhanced.

2.3 The risk/action 'escalator'

Where a serious health or safety related matter is identified that requires 'escalation' to senior management for further investigation and/or action, this will be identified. Apart from for coronavirus, which is well covered in my previous report, there has, for 2022-2023, been no other such incident.

3. Key OSH management system developments during 2022-2023

3.1 OSH management system – documentation

Good documentation is an essential component part of any safety-management-system. Knowledge, understanding and use of documented systems are key to our overall success in implementing, maintaining and demonstrating good OSH management. Key documents include OSH Policy, risk assessments (and where indicated safe work procedures), incident and near-miss reports (and any follow-up investigation reports). All key documents are regularly reviewed and updated by the OSHA.

Key developments in 2022-2023 include

- PDNPA OSH Policy (for 2022), was revised and adopted at P&R Committee in December 2021
- A reviewed and updated set of key-topic, generic risk-assessments*
- A modified Business Continuity Plan (BCP), which has been reviewed to ensure lessons learned from working through the coronavirus pandemic are properly considered and plans modified, as necessary

Many of these documents are shared with other NPAs to foster a more consistent standard and approach to managing key OSH matters within the NPA family.

*A series of generic risk assessments have been produced, reviewed and made widely available. These are also regularly shared with other NPAs.

3.2 OSH management system - resources

In conjunction with servicing continuing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for OSH advice to Northumberland and South Downs NPAs, the OSHA resource at PDNPA, has been maintained at 30 hours per week since April 2019.

Representation of all services at the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) together with Union and Staff Committee representation continues. The HSC continued to meet remotely throughout the COVID pandemic and has met both in person and remotely (hybrid) since. Most staff have returned to regular office working.

3.3 OSH management system - training

Day-to-day, routine management of OSH matters is the responsibility of all employees. All line managers have particular responsibility for ensuring that OSH requirements detailed in policy, procedures and risk assessments, are properly understood and complied with. A significant component of this responsibility is ensuring that suitable and sufficient levels of information, training, qualification and supervision are provided and maintained. This has continued, supported as necessary by the OSHA through 2022-2023.

Globally recognised, Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) accredited, OSH management training was introduced in 2019 and all managers were recruited.

Following the initial OSH courses, provided by an external trainer, it was determined that a more bespoke course, designed specifically for NPAs would provide additional benefits. The PDNPA OSHA pursued this and the PDNPA became an approved IOSH training provider for *Managing Safely*® in November 2019 and for the one-day *Managing Safely Refresher*® in 2022. The OSHA has since developed and continuously improved specialised versions of these IOSH courses for the National Parks.

Two further *Managing Safely for the National Parks* and two *Managing Safely Refresher* courses were completed at PDNPA with 31 colleagues gaining and refreshing this qualification in 2022.

For managers and supervisors not requiring the full IOSH level course, the PD OSHA has also developed a one-day *Essential Risk Assessment for the National Parks* course. Focusing on the important topic of risk assessment and using case-study examples relevant to the National Parks, this course has been delivered to 71 colleagues at the Yorkshire Dales NPA in 2022. This course will be available for PD colleagues in 2023-2024.

Throughout 2022-2023, OSH matters became an established item included in all Staff Briefings. The focus on risk assessment and the identification and implementation of appropriate controls during the various stages of the coronavirus pandemic, has raised the profile of this core risk management discipline and has had a generally positive legacy effect in this respect. The overall benefit of this is a further enhancement of our already positive safety-culture.

4. Accidents and incidents data and analysis for 2022-2023

4.1 Staff and Volunteers

The PDNPA, in common with other NPAs, continues to enjoy a low accident rate. Causes of accidents are familiar and only minor work-related injuries have been experienced. For 2021-2022 there were zero *reportable incidents*¹.

There were 12 staff and 7 volunteer incidents and *near-misses*² reported in total.

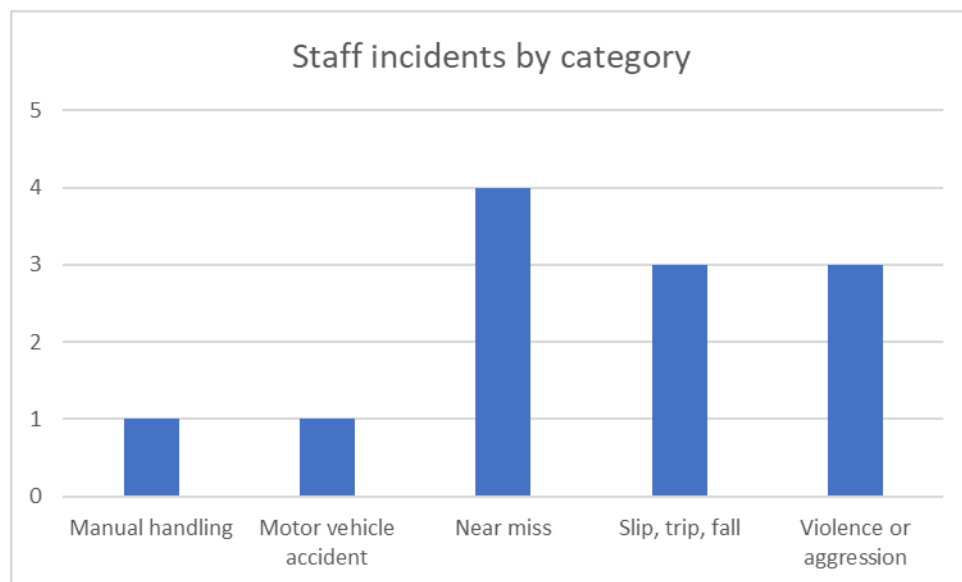


Figure 1. Staff incidents by category

Notes: 1. Certain typically more serious incidents are required to be reported to the enforcing authority (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

2. A near-miss is categorised as an event that might have caused some injury, damage or loss but which, on this occasion, did not. Near-miss reporting is

encouraged to allow management improvements to be identified and made before an accident occurs.

There is no identified significant increase in the number or pattern of minor incidents reported for 2022-2023.



Figure 2. Staff incidents reported 2015-2022

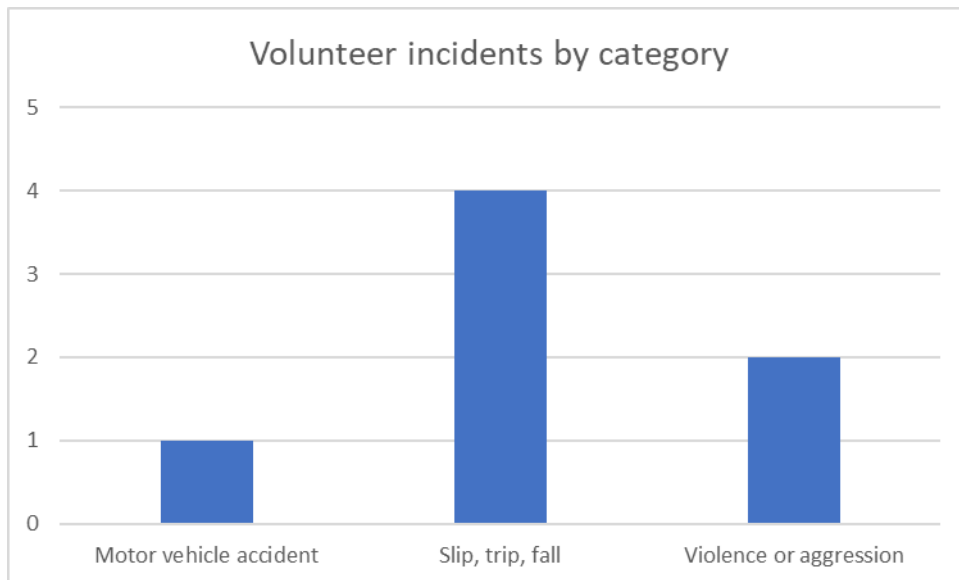


Figure 3. Volunteer incidents by category

In the last few years efforts have been made to increase the number of near-misses reported to identify matters that might be addressed before accidents happen. In 2019, a performance target was set for 50% of all reports to be near-misses and significant efforts were made to promulgate this initiative. This target was exceeded in 2019 but in 2020 dropped to 24%. During 2021-2022 however near-miss reporting for staff incidents rose again to 44% of all

reports. In 2022-2023 the proportion of near-miss reports for staff is 33%. Encouraging good incident reporting, including for near-misses remains a routine priority for the OSHA.

4.2 Visitors

Accidents and incidents involving visitors include familiar themes. Falls (often involving first aid) and cycling related incidents account for most incidents reported each year. The type and number of incidents reported for 2022-2023 are consistent with previous years.

There were 8 incident reports received involving visitors, including 1 near-miss. There were no RIDDOR incidents reported for 2021-2022.

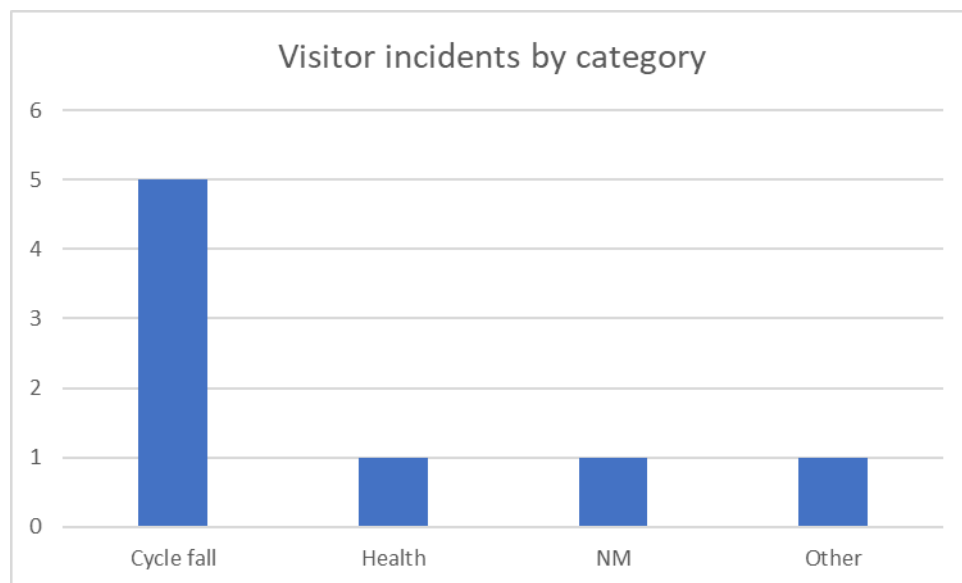


Figure 4. Visitor incidents by category

5. OSHA services to other NPAs

The OSHA continues to provide professional OSH advice and training to other NPAs through both formal SLAs and on a more ad-hoc basis. As described in section 3.3. above, since becoming an approved training provider for IOSH *Managing Safely*[®] and *Managing Safely Refresher*[®], courses have been made available to other NPAs. These and other training courses, have been delivered to South Downs, Northumberland and Yorkshire Dales NPAs in 2022. The provision of these courses has provided an income stream for the PDNPA, more than offsetting the costs of delivering these courses. The value of sharing solutions to common problems and of setting consistent targets and measures of compliance are intrinsic course factors, helping to consolidate the approach to managing key safety concerns across the NPA family. This excerpt from the South Downs NPA OSH annual report reflects this value.

The ongoing collaboration between SDNPA and Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) for H&S management continues to work well. The involvement of the PDNPA OSHA positively impacts the decision-making process by offering

specialised knowledge and guidance tailored to the needs of the SDNPA. As a result, this collaborative effort has contributed to a safer working environment.

6. Priorities and actions for 2023-2024 and beyond

The PDNPA is embarking on a period of significant organisational change, that may affect the ways in which OSH will be overseen and supported. While day-to-day OSH is already managed by accountable line managers (as promulgated in the OSH Policy), these colleagues are supported by and to some extent supervised by, the professional OSHA. The employment of a chartered professional OSHA at the PD has contributed to the PD becoming a model for best practice in OSH management within the NPA family and facilitated the winning of income-generating agreements with other NPAs for OSH advice. It has also allowed initiatives such as gaining coveted, approved training provider status for IOSH courses. However, the PD is unusual in this regard and most other NPAs do not employ a similarly well qualified expert, relying rather on in-house resources supported by the advice and services of external providers, as and when necessary. The PD OSHA has, for some NPAs, been the preferred provider of this advice, at a cost to those Parks well below the cost of employing their own expert. It is also recognised that the employment of a dedicated OSH professional can in some circumstances, lead to a certain abrogation of responsibility, particularly for OSH management decision making when perceived as requiring, a more expert-level of knowledge.

As described in this report, the PD gains assurances that OSH is being well managed by, among other measures, the reports and feedback generated by the rolling programme of OSHA visits, audits and inspections. Without this resource, an alternative process for ensuring this assurance is provided to senior management and the Authority will be necessary.

Some specific functions currently performed by the OSHA such as fire risk assessments and portable-electrical-appliance safety inspection and test (PAT), and risk assessments for more technical matters including: dealing with asbestos, legionella in water systems and hazardous substances (COSHH) may require other supporting competent advice. Some of this may be alternatively provided in-house, notably by the Property Team who are already significantly involved in these matters. Where in-house resources are not sufficient, additional external assistance may be required.

As outlined in Section 3.3 of this report, the PD has since 2019 provided IOSH *Managing Safely*[®] qualifications and completed refresher training for 55 colleagues identified as being in key OSH management roles. This has very significantly elevated the competence and commitment of those managers and thereby the organisation overall, to manage OSH effectively. This important raising of the qualification level of so many of our line-managers, allows strong confidence that day-to-day OSH matters are now and will continue to be, well attended to. Maintaining this level of training and qualification, including for colleagues who move into key OSH management

roles, will be important to secure future positive assurance that OSH at the PDNPA is continually well managed.

Specific OSH management matters to be addressed for 2023-2024

- Following Board approval of the proposed restructure, PDNPA OSH Policy will need to be redrafted to ensure key OSH duties and roles are clearly defined for all levels of management and for all staff
- On restructuring, all managers in the third tier* should be considered for *IOSH Managing Safely*[®] training (or equivalent). Any not 'in-date' for training should be designated for a new course or refresher, as soon as possible after appointment
- Identify other OSH related training needs for all staff, emanating from the restructure
- Clearly identify all routine OSH related tasks that must be completed and ensure that designated individuals or teams or, where necessary, external resources are suitably allocated these tasks
- Review the use of OSH Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with the introduction of new and challenging targets for reporting during 2023-2024 and beyond

**Third tier refers to individuals in roles with responsibilities for OSH management within a service or team. Other key OSH staff, including H&S Committee representatives and others with any specific OSH role, may also be considered for IOSH level training (or equivalent)*

7. Recommendations

- The work, summarised in this report, to deliver good and continuously improving OSH management at PDNPA throughout 2022-2023, is recognised
- Proposals for specific matters to be addressed, associated with the organisational restructure in respect of OSH management through 2023-2024, are noted

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OSHA July 2023