



Occupational safety & health annual report 2025-26

1. Context

This report provides an overview of occupational safety and health (OSH) activity across the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) for the reporting year. It aims to provide assurance and outlines the progress made in maintaining safe working environments for employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors, including how risks have been managed and how incidents have been reviewed and acted upon.

As an organisation with statutory duties, operational services, and a large staff, volunteer and visitor population, PDNPA remains committed to ensuring that all activities are carried out safely, responsibly, and in full compliance with health and safety legislation.

2. OSH Policy and Governance

It is a legal requirement to have a suitable occupational safety and health policy setting out an organisation's intentions, administration and arrangements to deliver occupational safety and health. The policy has been reviewed and the updated 2026-27 version is due to be ratified by Resources Committee on 24 April 2026.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee (HSWC) met quarterly, reviewing performance, incidents and any corrective actions. The representation of all services at the HSWC, along with Trade Union, Staff Committee and our external OSH consultant representation, continued throughout the year. At the time of writing, there are 18 safety representatives, including the Chair and the People Manager. However, recent organisational changes mean that some of these representatives will be lost, and a review of the HSWC membership is therefore required to ensure all service areas continue to be appropriately represented.

Routine safety management of our activities is the responsibility of the Authority, management and employees.

3. Progress against the 2025/26 Action Plan (Year-end position)

During the reporting year, steady progress was made against the objectives set, reflecting our continued commitment to strengthening occupational safety and health performance. A review of these objectives shows progression across key areas, with actions completed and others reviewed for further progression into 2026-27. A detailed summary of each objective and its final year-end status is provided in Appendix 2A.

4. Key OSH Performance Indicators

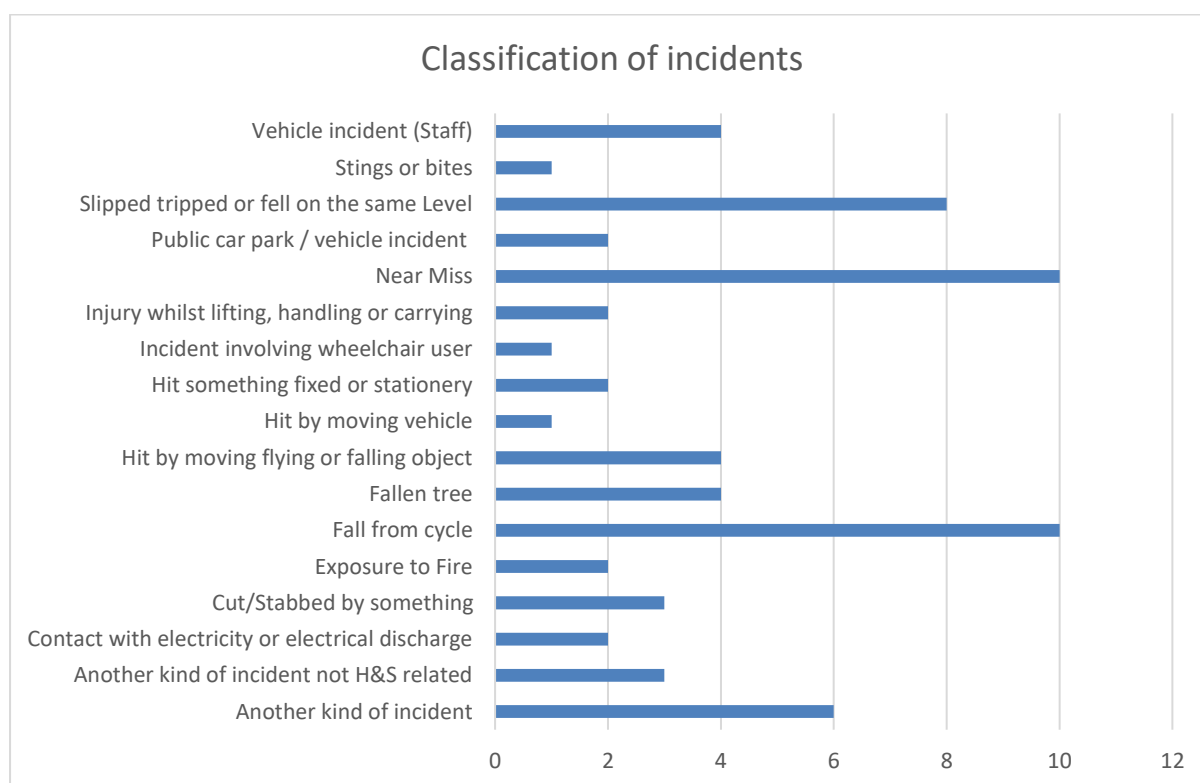
Accident/Incident statistics

The table below provides accident and incident reporting figures for 2025-26 and shows an overall reduction in accidents/incidents recorded across employees, volunteers and the public during the reporting period.

People affected	2024-25	2025-26
Staff/Member	25	26
Visitor/Member of the public	42	32
Volunteer	14	7
Contractor	1	0
\`No-one (near miss)	3	0
TOTAL	85	65

Although overall incident reporting appears to have reduced, internal employee reporting has remained at a similar level to last year. Public and volunteer reports continue to be important in highlighting wider risks, and staff play a key role in encouraging this reporting to ensure issues are captured and acted on. However, our employee accident and incident data still suggests there is some under-reporting. While the introduction of new reporting forms and processes in 2024-25 has helped raise the profile of safety reporting, the level of detail required, uncertainty about what incidents should be reported, competing operational pressures or a perception that minor incidents are not significant enough to log may all be contributing factors.

A further breakdown of the categorisation is provided below.



All incidents were investigated promptly, with corrective and preventative actions implemented as needed. All logged incidents are reviewed monthly at a meeting of key staff to ensure sufficient information is reported and follow up actions are completed in a timely manner.

Summary of Significant Incidents

One volunteer incident was reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) as the individual was taken to hospital and received treatment for a head wound. The injury occurred while a small post knocker was being used to drive wooden stakes to support newly planted tree guards; during the activity,

a stake failed at a knot, causing it to deflect and resulting in the post knocker striking the individual's head.

A follow-up investigation has been undertaken and confirmed that the relevant risk assessment was in place and being followed, and appropriate demonstrations had been provided to volunteers on how to carry out the task safely.

As a result of the investigation, updates are being made to the generic risk assessment for tree planting and additional on-site checks will be incorporated into future activities to strengthen safety controls.

Training and competency

Mandatory safety training:

- IOSH Managing Safely - planned training was postponed due to the impact of ongoing organisational change throughout the year on managers' capacity and availability. In February 2026, 7 employees were enrolled on the full online self-guided Managing Safely training and 13 were enrolled for refresher training. To date, 8 have been completed with an overall completion deadline of the end of June 2026. A rolling programme of refresher training has now been implemented and there are plans for a further 11 staff/new hires to be enrolled throughout 2026-27.
- Fire safety – 149 staff and 2 volunteers completed our online learning. These were both new starters and refreshers throughout the year.
- First aid – 16 staff completed some form of first aid training during the year.
- Introduction to Health and Safety – 17 staff and 59 volunteers completed our training as part of their induction.

Specialist training delivered:

- Risk assessment training: 24 staff completed risk assessment training in June 2025.

Workforce survey

At the time of writing, the 2026 staff and volunteer survey, open until 15 April 2026, seeks feedback on a number of key functions including health and safety. The survey is anonymous. An update will be provided to the HSWC and the Resources Committee meeting.

In the survey, staff have been asked to respond from strongly disagree to strongly agree on three statements relating to safety and wellbeing:

- I feel safe in my work environment
- I know the relevant H&S policies and procedures relating to my work
- I feel my wellbeing at work is considered a priority

Volunteers have been asked to respond from strongly disagree to strongly agree on three statements relating to safety and wellbeing:

- I feel safe when volunteering
- I know the relevant H&S policies and procedures relating to my work
- I feel that my wellbeing while volunteering is considered a priority

5. Risk management

All of our 19 generic risk assessments have been reviewed during the year in line with our scheduled programme. Any updates following the review were provided at the HSWC and published on the HUB.

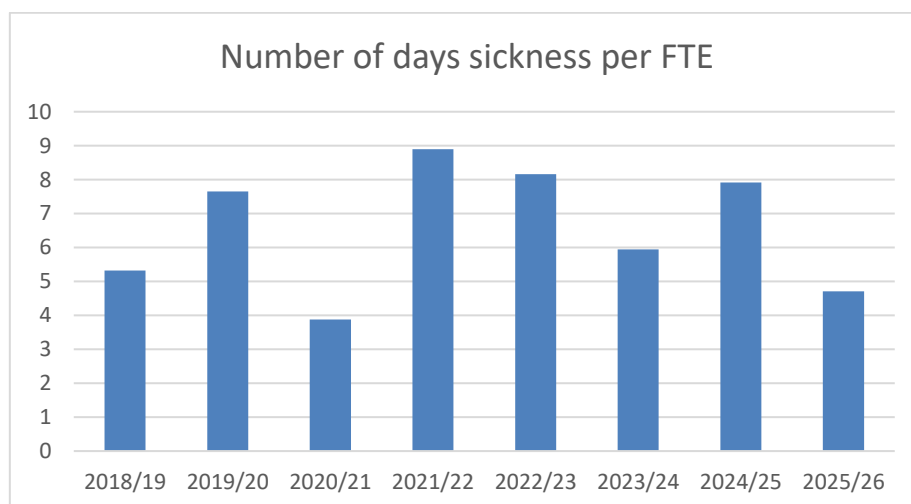
In October 2024, an audit of specific risk assessments began, with the Wider Management Team asked to confirm what assessments their teams use, when they were last reviewed, and how they are stored.

A sub-group of the HSWC reviewed the findings, which highlighted gaps in coverage, some outdated assessments, varied competence, and inconsistent storage arrangements. The HSWC approved several actions, including reviewing the current process, developing best-practice flowcharts, delivering risk-assessment training (completed), and identifying a consistent storage location.

Work to progress these actions, which was scheduled for Q4 of 2025-26, was delayed due to capacity constraints. The outstanding actions will be carried forward into the 2026–27 work plan, with a meeting of the working group scheduled to be held in May 2026.

6. Health and wellbeing

Our key sickness absence indicator is the average number of days lost to sickness per full-time equivalent (FTE). In 2025/26, sickness absence stands at 4.71 days per FTE, which is below the organisational target of 9 days and significantly better than public sector and local government norms. This improvement is primarily attributable to a sustained reduction in long-term sickness absence over the past two quarters. At present, there are no employees classified as long-term sick. The chart below illustrates absence trends over the past eight years.



Absence related to mental health accounts for approximately one third of all recorded absence this year. Mental health absence is tracked separately, to assure wellbeing oversight and effective support controls, and is routinely monitored and reviewed through absence reporting processes. It should be noted that none of the absences have been attributed to work-related stress.

A range of measures are in place to support employee mental health and wellbeing, including access to an Employee Assistance Programme (which offers confidential counselling 24/7), delivery of a resilience workshop for all staff in April 2025, and ongoing access to psychological and local counselling interventions where required. These continue to be actively promoted across the organisation. We have also renewed our commitment to Mindful Employer.

In addition, our stress risk assessment process has been strengthened in 2025, and managers are supported through the use of a structured “talking toolkit” to facilitate effective conversations around stress at work.

7. Employee engagement

As part of our commitment to raising the profile of occupational safety and building staff capability, we set a corporate objective for all employees: to ‘take responsibility for the day-to-day operational safety management of yourself and those working with you.’ A total of 138 specific objectives were recorded during the year. To date, 38 have been completed, with final results expected by the end of June.

8. Areas for development and priorities for 2026/27

Our occupational safety and health priorities for 2026/27 are set out in the OSH Action Plan 2026/27 and during April, both HSWC and Senior Management Team will be consulted on the drafted objectives. The priorities focus on strengthening OSH governance, improving risk management processes, and building organisational competence.

Key areas of work include reviewing the membership of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee, progressing improvements to specific risk assessments, and completing the refreshed programme of site inspections and audits. We will also continue to promote and simplify incident reporting and enhance management capability through mental health training and ongoing IOSH Managing Safely provision. These priorities will support a more consistent, proactive and resilient approach to health, safety and wellbeing across the organisation in the year ahead.

9. Conclusion

The 2025-26 year reflects steady progress in strengthening occupational safety and health across the organisation. Incident reporting, governance activity and generic risk assessment reviews have all contributed to improved safety awareness and control measures. While some areas will continue into 2026-27, clear priorities are being set to build capability, enhance wellbeing support and increase employee engagement. With ongoing commitment from staff and leadership, the organisation is well positioned to further improve its OSH performance in the year ahead.