

**Agenda Item 15**  
**Report PR21/22-12**

Report to	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>
Date	<b>30 September 2021</b>
By	<b>Human Resources Manager</b>
Title of Report (Note)	<b>Annual Human Resources and Health &amp; Safety Report for the year 2020/21</b>

**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1) Note the content of the Human Resources and Health & Safety Report and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action**

**I. Introduction**

- I.1 This report highlights key areas of work in Human Resources (HR) and Health and Safety (H&S) carried out in the year ending in 31 March 2021, for the Policy and Resources Committee to note.
- I.2 The HR team are responsible for all of the organisation's HR and H&S activities, with payroll support from Brighton and Hove City Council and administration of the pension scheme by Hampshire County Council.
- I.3 The HR team also oversees the management of health and safety for the organisation, with strategic and best practice advice provided externally by the Health and Safety Advisor for the Peak District National Park Authority, Jon Wayte. Our internal NEBOSH qualified Health and Safety Advisor manages the day to day health and safety performance.
- I.4 At the November 2020 P&R committee meeting, separate reports for HR and H&S were submitted. It was agreed that these areas would be amalgamated into one report, as there was significant overlap.
- I.5 The report covers:
- Recruitment activity and turnover
  - Health and Safety
  - Approach to the Covid-19 Pandemic
  - Wellbeing
  - Learning and Development
  - Apprenticeship Scheme
  - Working Together – HR with other National Park Authorities
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Priorities for 21/22
- I.6 In addition to the area of work above, the HR team work closely and effectively with SMT and managers, playing a key role in all organisational issues and individual case management.
- I.7 The covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the work and priorities of the HR team. Despite these challenges, the HR team has continued to work closely with managers albeit

remotely, providing advice on a wide range of HR and H&S matters and has continued to provide good judgement in the recruitment and selection process. We have successfully adjusted our working practices to meet the needs of the organisation.

## **2. Recruitment activity and turnover**

- 2.1. As at 31 March 2021, the headline FTE for the Authority was 141.
- 2.2. The SDNPA staff turnover rate for 2020/21 was 13%. The average 2020/21 turnover rate for other National Park Authorities (NPAs) was 10%. According to the CIPD Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2020, the average labour turnover rate was 16% in 2019/20. Figures for 2020/21 have not yet been published.
- 2.3. The main reasons for leaving SDNPA were:
  - Personal circumstances (2 employees)
  - New employment (9 employees)
  - End of temp contract (3 employees)
  - End of apprenticeship placement (3 employees)
  - Retirement (1 employee)
  - Performance management (1 employee)
- 2.4. The organisation's size and structure limits the opportunities for career progression. We have therefore introduced a number of retention initiatives, including career grades and an investment in career development and training of staff. We now have a full development package to grow and develop our own staff, particularly in Planning, which is a known hard to recruit area, due to a national shortage of experienced planning staff.
- 2.5. In 2020/21, 20 appointments were made. 3 of these appointments were the result of permanent internal promotions, 2 internal temporary promotions and development opportunities one of which was to cover maternity leave the other from external funding. There were 15 external appointments of which 7 were new posts (6 fully and part externally funded), 3 apprentices and 5 following the resignation or retirement of existing staff.
- 2.6. During the pandemic the provision of recruitment support has continued to be effective and adapted to include interviewing via video conferencing. We have streamlined the new starter process and have also ensured that employees joining the organisation still received a comprehensive induction programme.
- 2.7. Recruiting of posts is done via a tailored approach. Adverts are placed directly on the SDNPA website, social media and targeted external sites. This method delivers a successful cost effective way of recruiting, which avoids inflated hourly rates or finders fees that agency recruitment would incur.
- 2.8. To enhance this tailored approach to advertising, we work with an advertising agency "Web Recruit", as part of the wider Working Together Project across all National Parks where 14 National Park Authorities are using this service. Web Recruit provides data driven advice on where to advertise, as well as coordinating social media campaigns on platforms such as LinkedIn.
- 2.9. SDNPA offers a wide range benefits as part of its employment package:
  - Local government pension scheme
  - Healthcare - includes cash plan, counselling and wellbeing discounts
  - 27 days annual leave, increasing to 30 days, plus bank holidays
  - Professional development
  - Flexible working
  - Cycle to work scheme
  - Car sharing
  - Use of pool cars for official business
  - Regular staff events / activities, which support the SDNPA's Purposes and Duty

- 2.10. These benefits support SDNPA in attracting candidates by demonstrating it's an employer of choice as well as helping to retain existing staff.

### **3. Health and Safety**

- 3.1. The existing arrangement of an internal Health and Safety Advisor and external advice from the Peak District National Park Authority Occupational Safety and Health (PDNPA OSH) Advisor has proven to be very efficient. It has ensured work is not duplicated while providing sufficient resource both locally to address more immediate issues and overall, for more strategic OSH issues.
- 3.2. The PDNPA OSH Adviser has regularly shared OSH information, updates and guidance and attended the P&R Committee to co-present the Annual Report for 2019/20 in November 2020. Although the PDNPA OSH Advisor is unable to attend this P&R committee meeting, he has fed into this report.
- 3.3. Day-to-day routine management of health and safety matters is performed by staff and supervised by managers. Where possible a planned programme of audit and inspection visits to principal workplaces was carried out and any actions followed up by our internal Health and Safety Advisor.
- 3.4. Workplace visits typically take account of:
- Safety related documentation. Good documentation is an essential component part of any safety management system. Key documents include: safety policies and associated procedures, safe working method statements and risk assessments, incident reports/records and follow-up/action reports. These documents, including many risk assessments and core safety policies are becoming more consistent across a number of NPAs allowing much more efficient and timely review, replacement and referral.
  - Physical conditions and work activities – including: work spaces, access and egress (safety and fire), building conditions, work equipment and the use of PPE (personal protective equipment).
  - Risk assessments – a continuing improvement in the completion, use and a thorough review of risk assessments has been evident through 2020/21. The process of risk assessment review has driven a general improvement in the understanding of risk. Use of risk assessment formats used at other National Parks has made future review simpler and helped to ensure that these assessments are current, valid and consistent with the standards adopted elsewhere. All reviewed risk assessments are available on the intranet. The SDNPA Health and Safety Advisor will continue to focus on risk assessments and the use of controls identified by these assessments, as key evidence that safety is being properly considered and well managed.
- 3.5. Quarterly Health and Safety Committee meetings have continued, where matters such as incident, accident and near-miss reports and follow-up action reports are considered and new guidance and policies discussed and implemented. Standing items of wellbeing and the pandemic ensured that these remained key priorities for the Committee. The constitution of the Health and Safety Committee reflects the structure of the organisation with representatives from all directorates and officers representing HR, facilities, volunteers, OMT and UNISON. The Committee is currently chaired by a member of OMT. Representatives have received IOSH training in their expanded role, which is clearly defined and incorporated in a reviewed Health and Safety Policy, with future training scheduled for new representatives. The Committee has structured a forward work-plan which is supported by and consistent with work carried out by both the SDNPA Health and Safety Advisor and the PDNPA OSHA. Sub groups have been formed to meet in between the quarterly meetings to ensure that actions are moved on quickly, for example Health and Wellbeing and our approach to extreme weather conditions. All representatives are also focussing in improving communication channels within the teams they represent, by including a standing health and safety item on team meetings.

- 3.6 Reporting of incidents, near-misses and follow-up action continues to improve. An analysis of incidents recorded in 2020/21 can be found in **appendix I**.
- 3.7 In December 2020, we launched a new on-line DSE training and assessment system, which can be used in any working environment and has enabled the HR and Facilities teams to quickly and effectively identify any equipment and adjustments needed to ensure that staff are working safely.
- 3.8 SDNPA has a positive health and safety culture, which is supported by the following:
- All committee meetings are now chaired by an OMT level manager and there is a health and safety standing item on the OMT agenda following the committee meetings. At these meetings, OMT are fully supportive of any recommendations made by the H&S Committee.
  - Regular health and safety communication and reminders are sent to staff via Update and meeting minutes are publicised on the intranet.
  - The constitution of the committee fairly represents the structure of the organisation to allow all staff to feedback any issues through their reps to the committee. Staff outside the committee have been involved in the working groups that have evolved from the committee, e.g. the health and wellbeing group.
  - A substantial part of the training budget was invested in health and safety training
- 3.9 All new policies, procedures, risk assessments and training materials are shared between all NPAs advised by the OSHA. This allows for significant efficiency savings in the production and delivery of these developments and ensures greater consistency of approach and execution of safety management. In effect, these contribute to the adoption of 'best practice for NPAs' in various OSH matters.
- 3.10 In summary, the evidence of inspections and reports to the Health and Safety Committee suggests that health and safety is managed well and continuously improving at SDNPA and the Policy and Resources Committee can receive positive assurance of that by this report.

#### **4. Approach to the Covid-19 Pandemic**

- 4.1 A key focus of HR and Health and Safety this year has been responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. The following measures we put in place in response to the situation:
- We held an emergency COVID related H&S committee meeting to discuss our approach to the pandemic and prioritise our actions to ensure staff, members and volunteers safety.
  - Group volunteer tasks were intermittently suspended from March 2020 and May 2021 in response to government guidelines and updates. These measures were crucial to ensure the safety of our volunteers.
  - We have followed government guidelines to develop a COVID safe working environment for all staff in the SDC and the area offices, including the provision of guidance related to working outside. This has been constantly reviewed, developed and updated in line with government advice.
  - Staff have been advised to work from home in accordance with government guidelines.
  - The new DSE training and assessment system has been vital in ensuring that staff were able to work at home safely.
  - The Facilities Team undertook the responsibility to set up offices and meeting rooms to ensure compliance with the guidelines and provide a safe working environment, including guidance for area offices and the use of tools, SDNPA vehicles and other equipment.
  - Extensive health and wellbeing support was provided, as detailed in section 5 of this report.
  - Two surveys were conducted to gather information on the health and wellbeing of staff and begin to gather data on staff expectations post COVID. The feedback has been

positive in respect of the support staff have received and data has been used to input into a review of future working policies and practices for the SDNPA post COVID.

- COVID 19 risk assessments and guidance was developed and constantly adapted to address a multitude of scenarios and situations as required.
- This work has all been critical to ensure outdoor activities and work can continue where possible and that we can still provide a Visitor Service to members of the public through our SDC reception.

4.2 Public Health England (PHE) and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) conducted an interview with the H&S Advisor and the Facilities and Properties Officer, following up on an outbreak of Covid cases in December 2020. SDNPA had positive feedback from both parties on how the situation was dealt with and was commended on the implemented practices and measures we enforced.

## 5. Wellbeing

5.1. HR proactively monitor the recording of sickness absence and contact managers regularly to ensure that accurate recording has taken place.

5.2. Sickness data for 2020/21 can be found in **appendix 2**. Detailed absence statistics are reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee and reported to OMT.

5.3. New employees in physical outdoor roles are asked to complete a health declaration and, if necessary advice is sought from Occupational health so any reasonable adjustments can be made to support the individual.

5.4. Significant progress continues in supporting health and well-being internally, particularly in the area of mental health. We have 15 trained Mental Health First Aiders and all directors, managers and staff have been trained in mental health awareness.

5.5. There is a dedicated health and wellbeing page on the intranet with links to health and wellbeing resources and promotes health and wellbeing activities and an internal working group was set up to review our health and wellbeing provision.

5.6. Our Health Cash Plan offers a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits and access to an employee assistance programme.

5.7. Health and Wellbeing training courses are available through ELMS for all staff and cover a wide range of topics, e.g. e-mail stress, bullying and harassment, drug and alcohol awareness, stress management, healthy lifestyles, couch to 5k, building personal resilience etc.

5.8. During the pandemic, our focus on wellbeing increased significantly to ensure that all staff were supported whilst working remotely and we put in place the following:

- A dedicated page was set up on the intranet - "Remote working tips, advice and resources" with links to many wellbeing resources, including articles, podcasts and helpline numbers.
- Regular reminders of internal support including the Simply Health counselling service were communicated.
- Weekly wellbeing e-mails to staff, including a "lockdown survivors guide" with hints and tips of how to look after physical and mental wellbeing.
- Guidance to support working from home was communicated, such as tips for chairing and attending virtual meetings and creating work corridors to separate personal and work time.
- Health and Wellbeing webinars were organised, specifically for staff at SDNPA.
- Weekly coffee drop in sessions so staff across the organisation could keep in contact with each other via zoom

## 6. Learning and Development

6.1. The organisation's learning and development plan includes health and safety, core skills and role specific training.

6.2. In 2019/20 a training needs analysis was carried out and took into account feedback from managers, needs identified from performance and development reviews and the staff survey. A full programme was launched towards the end of 2019/20, with the plan spanning 2019/20 and 2020/21. It included the following bespoke core skills training:

- Time Management
- Effective Communication
- Minute taking
- Coaching and Mentoring Skills for Managers
- Having Difficult Conversations
- Building Personal Resilience
- Ensuring a Positive Workplace Culture (addressing bullying and harassment)
- Management Skills for Achieving Organisational Outcomes

6.3. At the beginning of the pandemic, training was put on hold but when it became apparent that face to face training would not be possible for some time (with the exception of some health and safety training), we worked with our training providers to adapt our training plan to be delivered virtually.

6.4. Despite the difficult circumstances, we still delivered a comprehensive training plan and continued to support role specific and health and safety training. The following shows the number of days training carried out on 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the average number of days offered to staff increased from 2 to 3.5 per employee.

	2019/20	2020/21
<b>Core skills</b>	98	321
<b>Role specific</b>	77.5	60
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	116	108
<b>Total no of days</b>	291.5	489
<b>Average no of days per employee</b>	2	3.5

6.5. The organisation also supported 4 employees through professional development and further education courses, some of which are a continuation of training that commenced in 2019/20.

6.6. A substantial share of the training budget is allocated to health and safety training, which is monitored and implemented within the HR team, by the Health and Safety Advisor. This year we have rolled out a number of courses including fire warden and bespoke outdoor first aid training. We have also ensured that the ranger teams completed the necessary training to be able to carry out their roles and use equipment safely. Manual handling training was also carried out internally by staff who have been accredited to deliver this.

6.7. Our e-learning system ELMS which was designed by SDNPA and introduced in 2017, has proven to be useful resource whilst staff were working remotely. ELMS houses a comprehensive induction programme, ensuring that all information is easily accessible and all key training is covered by new starters.

6.8. We continue to bespoke all courses so that they are relevant to our organisation and signpost staff to SDNPA specific policies and procedures.

6.9. In addition to an internal ELMS Working Group, an external working group with representatives from the other National Park Authority has also been set up to share ideas.

6.10. ELMS is now being utilised by all 15 National Park Authorities. This has allowed us to share training resources with the other NPAs and has also greatly reduced the licence costs for each NPA.

## 7. Apprenticeship Scheme

7.1. We were able to support our apprentices through their training programme despite difficulties resulting from Covid. The education providers, particularly for the ranger apprentices found it difficult to support face to face learning as did the SDNPA in respect of practical skills support and training. However, despite the challenges all our apprentices

completed their course.

7.2. All the ranger apprentices secured posts following completion with 2 successfully moving to permanent assistant ranger roles in the SDNPA. We had similar success in business admin and facilities where both apprentices were offered permanent roles.

7.3. Unfortunately due to Covid related issues we were not able to recruit ranger apprentices in September 2020, but we did, from a strong field of applications appoint to opportunities in business admin and for the Thrive team, and all these recruits are doing well in their work and studies.

## **8. Working together with other National Park Authorities**

8.1. The SDNPA HR team works closely with the other National Park Authorities, and during 2020/21 we have attended quarterly meetings with the HR managers of all other National Park Authorities. There are also online and e-mail communication tools in place to share policies, practices, issues and ideas. This has been particularly useful during the pandemic allowing us to share our approaches and challenges during this time.

8.2. The NPAs share some HR services across all UK parks which has a joint benefit in respect of both cost savings and cross organisational understanding.

8.3. SDNPA is one of 5 NPAs that share the Peak District health and safety resource, benefitting from the advice from Jon Wayte, the Peak District's Health & Safety Advisor.

8.4. Our e-learning system ELMS which is being used by all 15 National Park Authorities, led by SDNPA continues to be the most successful example of a shared service. A majority of the Parks are also using the system to train and induct their volunteers.

8.5. Work continues in looking at different ways of working together, and the most recent example is Web Recruit, a shared approach to recruitment advertising.

8.6. We also started to review a shared lone working system that is used by some of the NPAs, with the aim of trialing and implementing in 2021/22.

## **9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

9.1. HR regularly reviews all policies and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and advertises through a wide range of platforms to ensure that we reach out to a diverse pool of candidates.

9.2. To further support inclusivity we run a guaranteed interview scheme for those with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the post. We have also started to work with our recruitment advertising agency, Web Recruit which we shared with the other NPAs on using platforms where we can be more visible to a diverse range of candidates. Adverts now include an organisational statement, which promotes our approach to equality.

9.3. We have historically collected gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and age data and our monitoring has now been adjusted to include other protected characteristics. The recruitment data in **appendix 3** is monitored to ensure that there isn't a significant discrepancy in the characteristics of people who have applied for posts and those who are appointed.

9.4. The HR Manager worked with the Director of Planning and the Countryside and Policy Manager, sourcing and interviewing EDI Consultants.

9.5. The HR Team worked closely with the appointed consultants, The Diversity Partnership to facilitate a review of recruitment, policies and procedures. The findings confirmed SDNPA has policies that are generally inclusive and their recommendations in ensuring that our recruitment process encourages applicants from diverse backgrounds will be a key priority for the team in 2021/22.

9.6. 3 online training modules; Equality and Diversity - Back to Basics, Recognising Unconscious Bias and Anti-racism and Allyship were organised and planned for April 21 for all staff.

- 9.7. The action plan that The Diversity Partnership proposed is a cross organisational initiative with HR forming a key part of this.
- 9.8. Due to the integrated nature of the organisational approach to EDI, we propose to report on our progress against the actions as part of the wider group, however this will form a key part of our priorities and actions going forward. Those will be put forward to the committee in the 2021/22 report.

#### 10. Priorities and actions for 2021/22

Key Priorities for HR in 2021/22 include:

- Review of HR processes and procedures to support the new blended working model, including a comprehensive training programme for managers and staff
- Continuing the review of the PDR (Performance and Development Review Process) and Competency Framework.
- Development of a training module within the PIER Management System as this was delayed from last year
- Continuation of the work on internal health and wellbeing
- Ongoing development of the apprenticeship scheme
- IOSH training for OMT and H&S Committee Reps
- Introduction and monitoring of new lone working devices
- Implementing the HR responsibilities relating to the EDI action plan, to be finalised in October 2021.

#### 11. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	<p>Delivery of an efficient HR service contributes to the effective running of the organisation and the Authority overall, achieving value for money.</p> <p>The current shared health and safety services with Peak District NPA provides excellent value for money, in comparison with using another local authority or external consultant. It allows for significant efficiency savings in the production and delivery of these developments</p>
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	There are no social value implications in this paper
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	<p>The HR function delivers services through recruitment, training and workplace adjustments, which are compliant with the Authority's duties under the Equalities Act 2010. We have an Equality and Diversity Policy and all staff completed the Equality and Diversity ELMS training module.</p> <p>The Authority focuses on protecting the health, safety and welfare of <i>all</i> staff, members and volunteers. Reasonable adjustments are made to provide a safe working environment for all, through regular DSE assessments provision of necessary work place equipment and dynamic risk assessments. Reasonable adjustments will be made</p>



	for individuals with disabilities with advice from occupational health.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	There are no Human Rights implications in this paper
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	There are no Crime & Disorder implications in this paper
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	The health and safety work that has been carried out and our future health and safety plans take into account the latest health and safety legislation.
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy: 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly	An effective HR service contributes to principle 4 – promoting good governance.

## 12. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

There are no risks arising directly from this paper although key HR risks are captured in the corporate risk register.

**Vicky Patterson & Debbie Hartman**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**  
**South Downs National Park Authority**

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Appendices Appendix 1 – data analysis of incidents  
Appendix 2 – data analysis of sickness  
Appendix 3 – Recruitment Equal Opportunities Monitoring Data  
SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management;  
Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer;  
Legal Services, Head of Business Services  
External Consultees None  
Background Documents: [2014/15 Health & Safety Report submitted to the Governance Committee by the HR Manager in July 2015 \(Report GOV20/15, page 207\).](#)  
[2015/16 Health & Safety Report submitted to the Governance Committee by the HR Manager in Sept 2016 \(Report GOV24/16, page 91\)](#)

[2016/17 Health & Safety Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in Sept 2017 \(Report PR18/17 page 167 Agenda item 14\)](#)

[2017/18 Health & Safety Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in Sept 2018 \(Report PR38/18 page 21 Agenda item 10\)](#)

[2018/19 Health & Safety Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in Sept 2019 \(Report PR19/20-15 page 85 Agenda item 14\)](#)

[2019/20 Annual Health & Safety Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in Nov 2020 \(Report PR20/21-28 Agenda item 18\)](#)

**Data analysis for incidents 2020/21**

Due to the covid 19 pandemic, we have seen a low number of reported incidents. This is a result of the pausing of most outdoors tasks with volunteers during the pandemic and employees working from home where possible.

Another positive outcome has been the higher number of near miss reports in comparison to the number of actual accidents, meaning that members of staff have been proactive in reporting more near misses. Reporting near misses is vital in reducing the number of incidents in the future, as hazards can be identified and mitigated.

This year there have been no RIDDOR cases reported to HSE, although we were required to report the covid outbreak of cases in December 2020 to Public Health England, upon which we were contacted to provide evidence of steps taken to ensure our employees safety and a covid secure workplace. The feedback provided by both Public Health England (PHE) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was positive and both interview officers were pleased with all measures we had taken to ensure the safety of our staff. These measures included; up to date risk assessments according to government guidelines, social distancing between workstations, reduced number of desks available in each office, hand sanitising stations available throughout the offices, ceasing of group tasks and temporary closure of premises in response the covid outbreak.

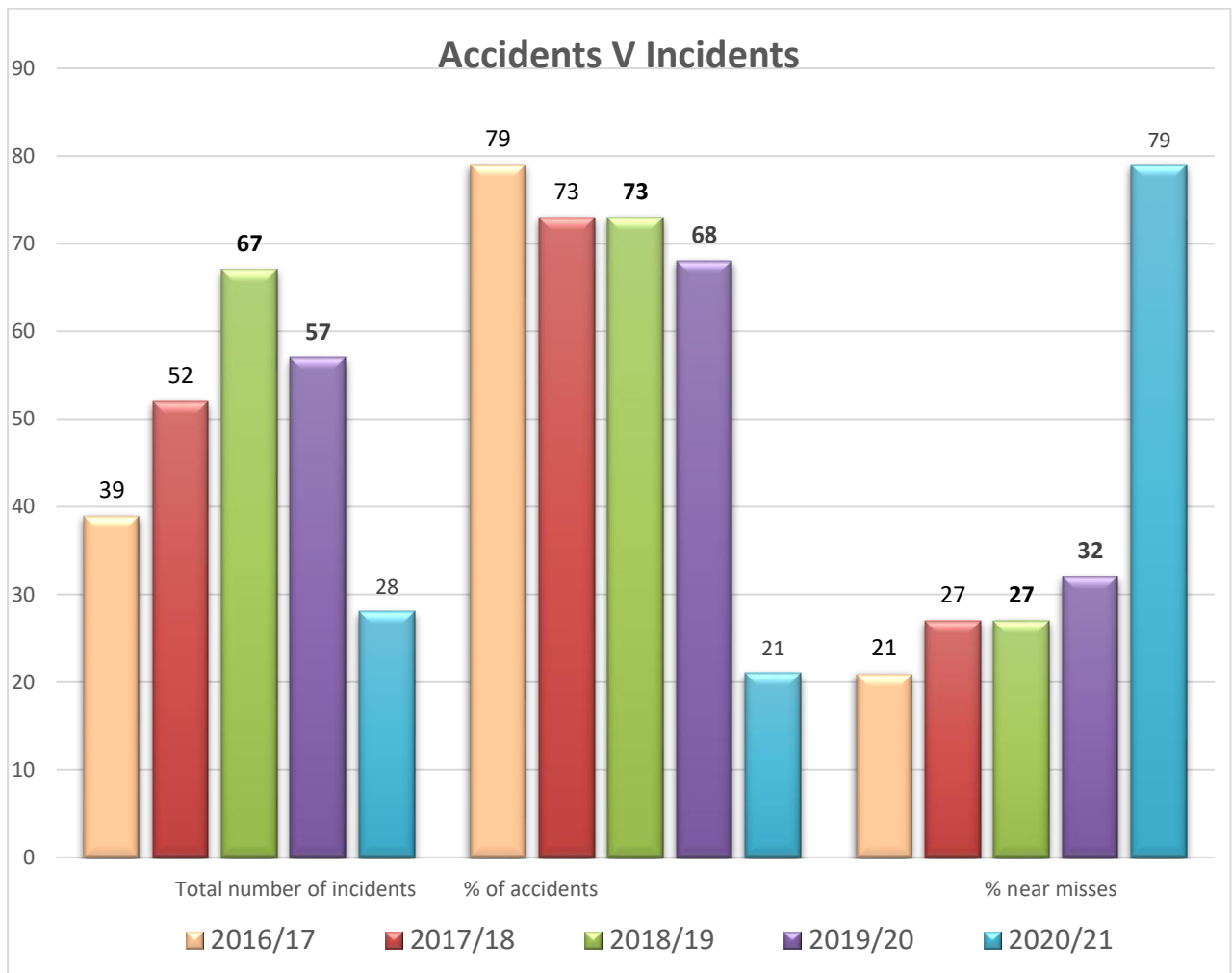


Fig 1. Accidents Vs Incidents for the last 5 years

As mentioned previously the number of incidents are lower when compared with previous years, and the same applies when broken down by type of incident with the exception of misconduct/ breach of

SDNPA policies. All misconduct reported cases were related to volunteers disregarding SDNPA covid procedures and guidance and carrying tasks when all activity has been ceased.

Type of incident	Number of incidents
Near miss	6
Cuts/Grazes	2
Vehicles	4
Property damage	1
Insect bites/stings	2
Verbal abuse/Harassment	3
Misconduct - breach of Policies	3
Covid cases	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

Table 1. Number of incidents reported per type

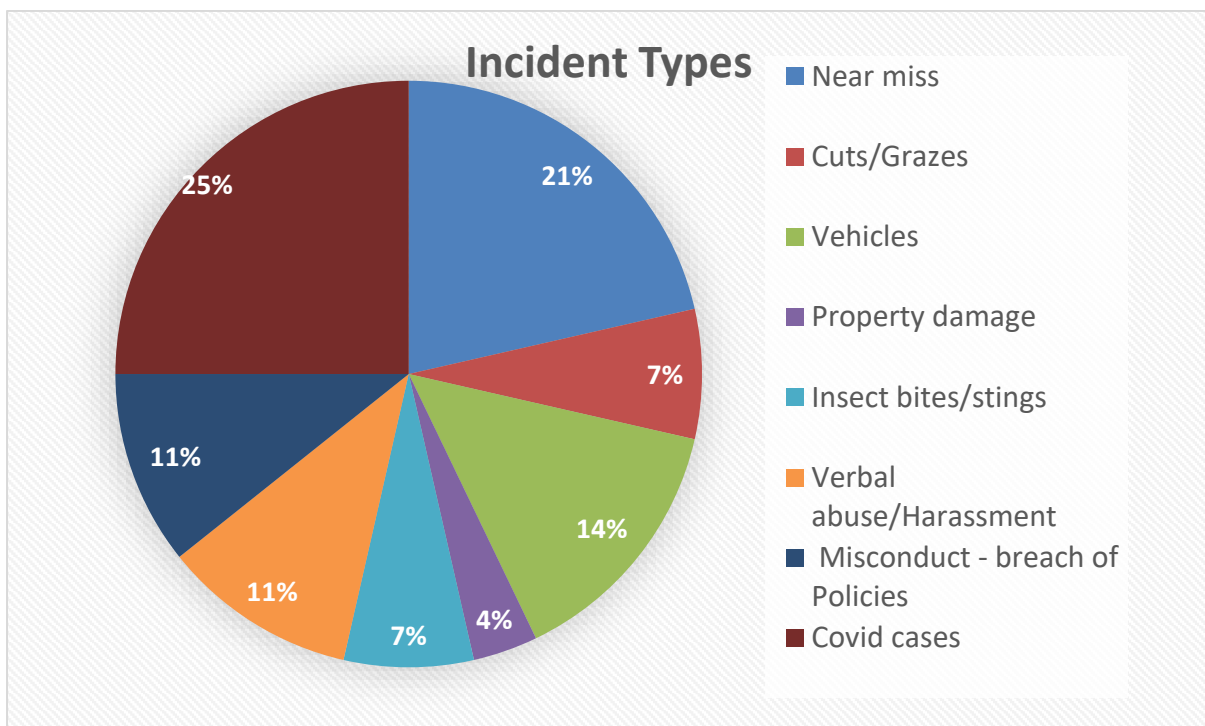


Fig2 Incident percentage by type

The majority of incidents occurred in South Downs Centre, this result was expected as most outdoor tasks were paused and the South Downs Centre has been open to some degree. The covid outbreak happened at this site which raised the total number of reported incidents by 7.

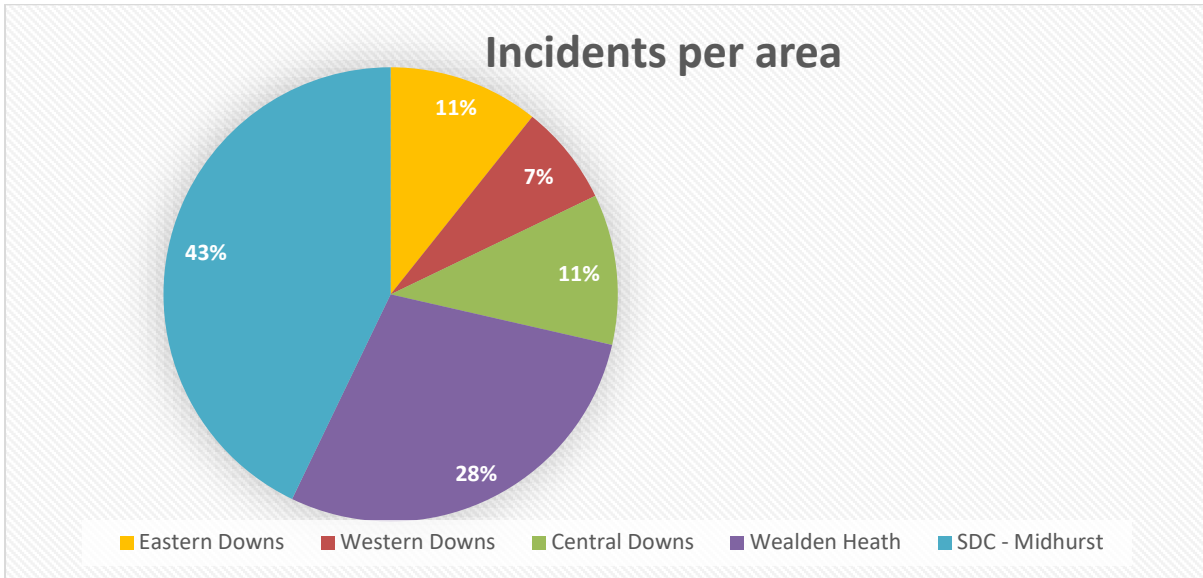


Fig 3. Percentage of incidents reported per area

Only employees and volunteer incidents have been reported this year as most work done by contractors had been cancelled or postponed, no public activities have taken place and most engagement has been done through social media platforms.

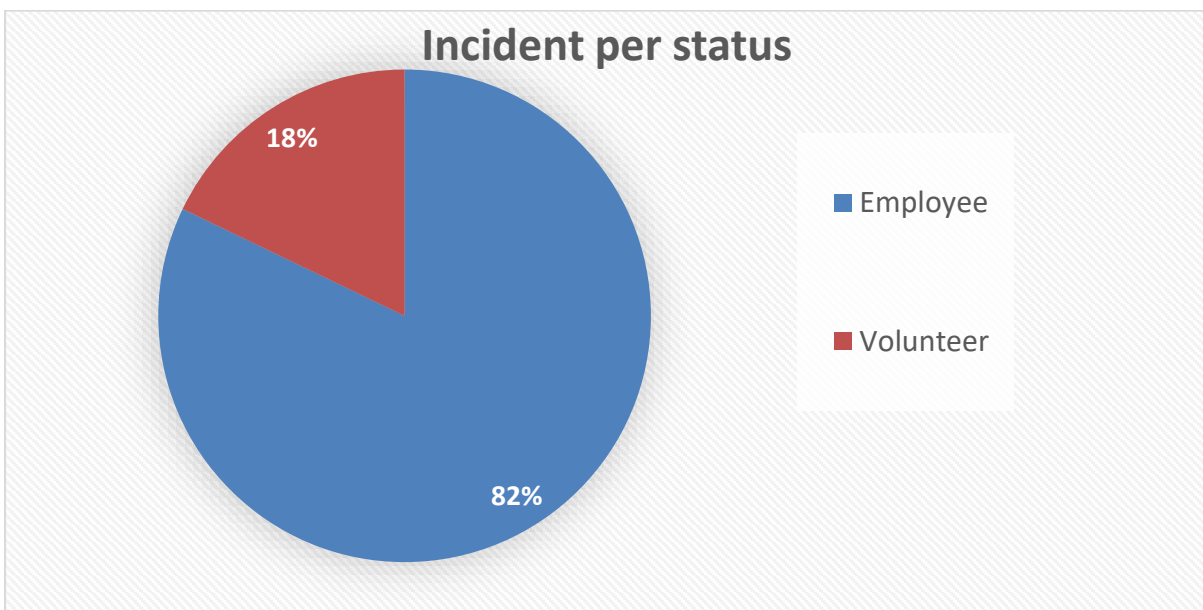


Fig 4. Percentage of incidents per status

### **Data analysis for sickness absence 2020/21**

Sickness levels and reasons for absence have remained fairly consistent in the past but in 2020/21 sickness levels dropped significantly.

In 2020/21 the average number of sick days per FTE employee per annum was 2.9, a drop from 3.4 days in 2019/20. However, the number of sick days **excluding** long-term absence (periods of 4 weeks or more) has halved, from 3.4 days in 2019/20 to 1.7 days in 2020/21. (See figure 1b).

This decrease is mainly reflected in the recording of coughs/colds and digestive/stomach illness as seen in figure 1a and is a likely effect of the pandemic. The Office for National Statistics has stated that the pandemic “has affected the sickness absence data in a number of ways; while the virus may have led to additional sickness absence, measures such as furloughing, social distancing, shielding and increased homeworking appear to have helped reduce other causes of absence, allowing the general downward trend to continue”. This has also been reflected in the sickness statistics of the other NPAs.

The pandemic has resulted in 65 days absence relating to the virus itself and 99 days lost due to non-work related stress, where the mental health of some individuals has been affected by the anxiety and isolation caused by the pandemic.

There is also a concern of under-reporting, as some individuals have been attempting to work from home during a period of illness when, ordinarily they would have not commuted into the office to work. Managers were therefore reminded of the importance of ensuring members of their teams do not attempt to work from home when sick.

In support of those absent due to mental health, additional support and resources have been provided throughout the pandemic and HR has worked closely with line managers to support individual cases.

Reasons for sickness absence	No of days lost 2020/21	No of individuals affected	No of days lost in 2019/20	No of days lost in 2018/19
Allergic Reaction	2	2	2	0
Back and neck	40.5	3	6	86.5
Chest and respiratory	20.5	1	18	9
Cough/cold	33.5	12	175.5	128.5
Digestive/stomach	33	9	76	58
Ear, nose and throat	10	4	5	8.5
Genito-urinary	2	2	7.5	11.5
Headache/Migraine	12	8	26.5	15
Major illness (Arthritis/Cardiac/MS)	0	0	20	0
Musculo-skeletal	1.5	1	11	8.5
Non-work related injury	0	0	3.5	5.5
Pregnancy Related	41	3	3	3.5
Surgery	29	2	50	0
Viral infection	13.5	4	2	0
Mental Health (other)	0	0	16	0
Mental Health (depression)	0	0	9	15
Mental Health (anxiety)	0	0	6	0
Work related stress	4.5	2	1	25.5
Non-work related stress	99	7	2	0.5
Covid-19 related illness	65	5	0	0
unspecified	13.5	5	42	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>420.5</b>		<b>482</b>	<b>400.5</b>

Figure 1a

Summary	1 Apr 20-31 Mar 21	Exc long term	1 Apr 20-31 Mar 20	Exc long term
Total no of sick days	420.5	248	482	482
Average no of days sickness at SDNPA	2.9	1.7	3.4	3.4

Figure 1b

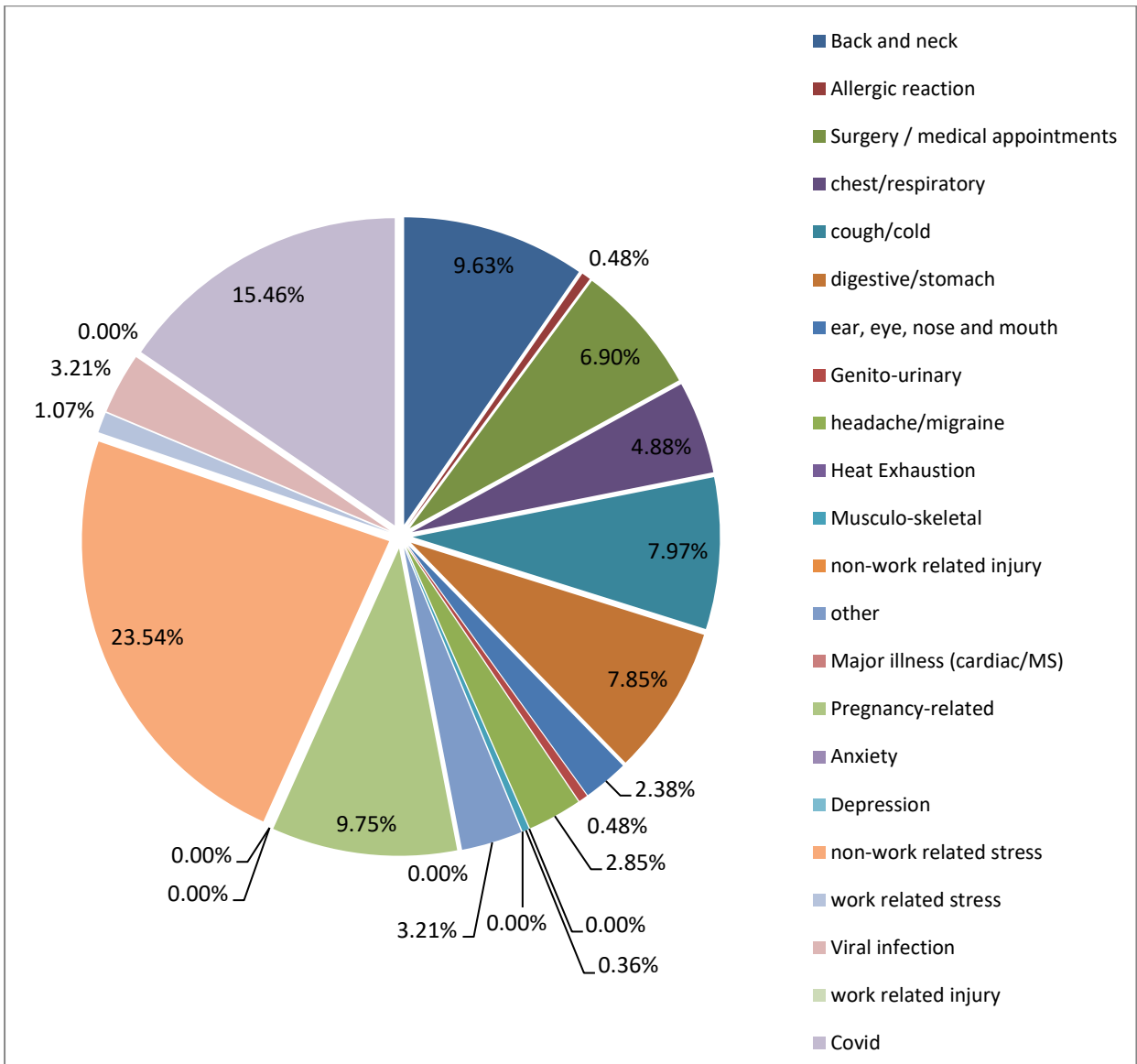


Figure 2

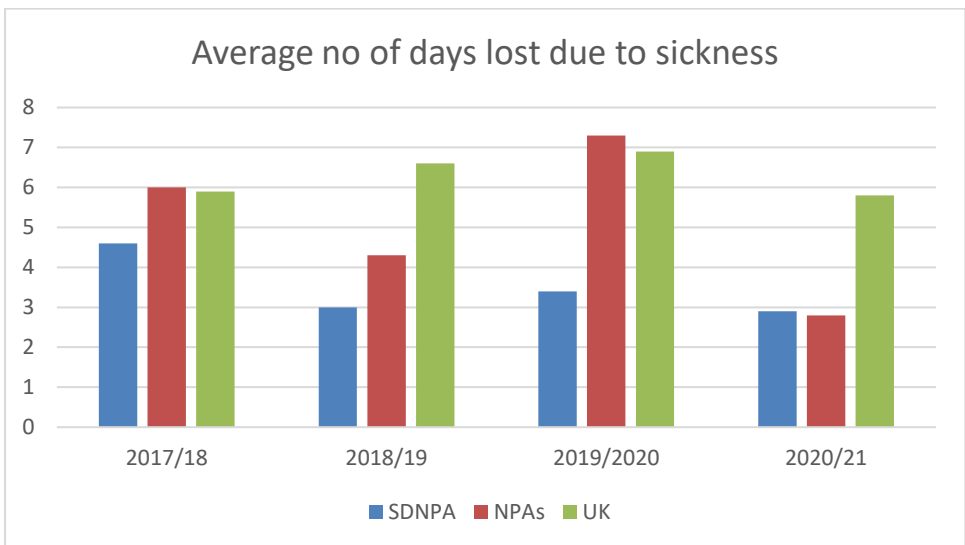


Figure 3



Recruitment - equal opportunities monitoring data

		Disability			Gender			Age					White				Mixed			Asian or Asian British				Black or Black British			Chinese or other ethnic group	
		yes	No	Blank	Male	Female	Prefer not to say	16 - 20	21 - 39	40 - 59	60+	Blank	British	Irish	Other	Blank	White and Black Caribbean	White and Black African	Other	Indian	Bangladeshi	Pakistani	other	Caribbean	African	Other	Chinese	Other
All applicants	Total Complete	1318			1311			1313					1309															
	Count	69	1236	13	636	671	4	11	780	472	32	18	1144	12	99	16	3	7	8	2	2	0	3	1	7	0	2	3
	%	5.2%	93.8%	1.0%	48.5%	51.2%	0.3%	0.8%	59.4%	35.9%	2.4%	1.4%	87.4%	0.9%	7.6%	1.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
	Ethnicity												97.1%				1.4%			0.5%				0.6%			0.4%	
Appointed	Total	68			68			68					68															
	Appointed	4	64	0	25	43	0	0	44	23	1	0	61	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	5.9%	94.1%	0.0%	36.8%	63.2%	0.0%	0.0%	64.7%	33.8%	1.5%	0.0%	89.7%	0.0%	8.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Ethnicity												98.5%				1.5%			0.0%				0.0%			0.0%	

		Religion									
		None	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Any other religion or belief	Prefer not to say	Blank
All applicants	Total Complete	1310									
	Count	747	310	4	2	2	6	0	22	73	144
	%	57.0%	23.7%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	1.7%	5.6%	11.0%
	Ethnicity										
Appointed	Total	69									
	Appointed	47	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	6
	%	68.1%	17.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	4.3%	8.7%
	Ethnicity										

