

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**
Date **19 July 2022**
By **Human Resources Manager**
Title of Report **Annual Human Resources and Health & Safety Report for the year 2021 - 2022**

Note

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to note the report

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 2022, 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 The report covers:
- Recruitment activity and turnover
 - Health and Safety
 - Wellbeing
 - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Learning and Development
 - Apprenticeship Scheme
 - Working Together – HR with other National Park Authorities
 - Priorities for 2021/22
- I.5 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.6 Throughout 2021/22 the covid-19 pandemic continued to have an 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. As COVID restrictions changed during 2021 and different operations either reopened/recommenced or closed and ceased, risk assessments and work arrangements for those operations were continuously reviewed and reissued, as necessary. Staff returning to workplaces or operations were routinely briefed on new requirements on their return. H&S advice and support has been maintained throughout the different stages of lockdown, tier restrictions and on reopening. This has included, important messages about the restrictions and reinforced staff confidence.

2. Recruitment activity and turnover

- 2.1. As at 31 March 2022, the headline FTE for the Authority was 145.
- 2.2. The SDNPA staff turnover rate for 2021/22 was 13.8%. The average 2021/22 turnover rate for other National Park Authorities (NPAs) was 13.6%. According to an analysis of labour turnover between January 2021 and January 2022, by Cendex, part of XpertHR, the total labour turnover of all companies surveyed stood at 14.4%.
- 2.3. 20 employees left the organisation, with the main reason of seeking new employment. Other reasons include retirement, personal reasons, dismissal and the end of fixed term contracts.
- 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 2021/22, 20 appointments were made as follows:
 - 7 permanent and temporary internal promotions and development opportunities - one of which was to cover maternity leave and 3 from external funding
 - 13 external appointments - 3 new posts (2 at Seven Sisters and 1 in Corporate Strategy). All other 10 appointments were following the resignation, retirement, dismissal or internal promotion of existing staff.
- 2.6. We continue to embrace a flexible approach to interviews having adapted interviewing via video conferencing during the pandemic as well as conducting face-to-face interviews. Following the introduction of blended working, we continue to streamline the new starter process and ensure employees joining the organisation still receive a comprehensive induction programme.
- 2.7. Recruiting of posts is primarily 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
 - Health cash plan that also includes 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

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 with external advice, provided by the Occupational Safety and Health Adviser (OSHA) of the Peak District National Park Authority (PD), under a service level agreement (SLA), ensures sufficient H&S resource is provided. Locally, addressing more immediate day-to-day issues and overall, for more strategic OSH matters. The SLA with the PDNPA is amended and continues from 1st April 2022, reducing the cost by half, while maintaining the principle benefits of this arrangement.
- 3.2. The PD OSHA regularly shares OSH information, updates and guidance, including for 2021 specifically for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The PD OSHA has provided feedback for this report. As an approved training provider for Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) courses, the PD OSHA is also the key training provider for *Managing Safely*® for National Parks and *Managing Safely for National Parks Refresher*® training courses.
- 3.3. Day-to-day routine management of health and safety matters is performed by staff and supervised by managers. An appropriate programme of audit and inspection visits to principle workplaces was carried out during 2021 and any actions followed up by our internal Health and Safety Advisor. Regular visits and audits of Seven Sisters Country Park took place this year, during significant works at this site and suitable recommendations made, as necessary.
- 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, COSHH, 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, vehicles 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 2021/22. 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 to staff 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. During 2021 all of these matters have included specific reference to and consideration of special arrangements because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.5. Quarterly Health and Safety Committee meetings take place, 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. All

representatives have received IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) training in their expanded role, which is clearly defined and incorporated in a reviewed Health and Safety Policy, and new representatives were trained in November 2021. The Committee has structured a forward work-plan which is supported by both the SDNPA Health and Safety Advisor and the PD OSHA. 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 Sub groups have been formed to meet in between the quarterly meetings to ensure that actions are moved on quickly. Key projects have included our approach to extreme weather conditions and a procedure for recording dangerous and difficult sites.
- 3.7 Reporting of incidents, near-misses and follow-up action continues to improve. An analysis of incidents recorded in 2021/22 can be found in appendix 1.
- 3.8 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. This system has proven essential in ensuring the safety of staff whilst working from home when the new blended working model was introduced, allowing us to monitor the suitability of home work stations
- 3.9 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 *Managing Safely® for National Parks* and *Managing Safely for National Parks Refresher®* training for Committee reps and managers, provided by the PD OSHA.
- 3.10 All new policies, procedures and risk assessments and relevant guidance, legislative updates and briefings from HSE are shared between the NPAs advised by the PD OSHA. This allows for significant efficiency savings in the production and delivery of these materials and encourages 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a key focus of the Health and Safety Committee. There was a standing item at all committee meetings to review the safety measures that had been implemented, in accordance with legislation and official guidance.
- 3.13 Throughout the year staff were kept regularly updated and reminded of all COVID safety measures via FAQ's on the intranet and by e-mail communication.
- 3.14 When the lifting of restrictions were announced by the government in February 2022, an extended health and safety meeting was held to review how this would impact on the safety measures in the SDNPA offices. Feedback was sought from staff through the H&S reps and a controlled removal of restrictions was implemented to ensure that staff felt as safe as possible in their working environment. COVID 19 risk assessments and guidance were adapted and staff were kept informed though updated FAQs on the intranet. We have

continued to ensure cleaning of all workspaces and some isolated desks were still made available for any staff considered as vulnerable.

- 3.15 Group volunteering has now resumed following the pause due to Covid restrictions. Volunteers are following the same ongoing health and safety precautions as staff and members in relation to Covid safety. Training for volunteers has also resumed with volunteers completing initial and refresher training for Outdoor First Aid and other qualifications as necessary, for their roles. This year, the Health and Safety committee reviewed the Chainsaw Policy, as it relates to volunteers.

4. Wellbeing

- 4.1. HR proactively monitor the recording of sickness absence and contact managers regularly to ensure that accurate recording has taken place.
- 4.2. Sickness data for 2022/21 can be found in appendix 2. Detailed absence statistics are reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee and reported to OMT each year.
- 4.3. The organisation provides a high level of support to employees with health or mobility issues by working closely with the individual, their line-manager, our occupational health provider and facilities. 'Reasonable adjustments' have been made in a number of cases, to support the individual, ensuring that they can continue to work well. Changes include to working hours, duties and the provision of specialist working equipment.
- 4.4. Our Health Cash Plan available to staff and Members offers a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits and access to an employee assistance programme.
- 4.5. Significant progress continues in supporting health and well-being internally, particularly in the area of mental health. We have trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) and all directors, managers and staff have been trained in mental health awareness. This year we have recruited a number of new MHFA with training for the new recruits and refresher training for existing MHFA originally scheduled for March 2022, now delayed due to the pandemic and rescheduled to take place in 2022/23. Once completed, our MHFAs will be involved in reviewing our health and wellbeing provision.
- 4.6. There is a dedicated health and wellbeing hub on the intranet with links to health and wellbeing resources and promotes health and wellbeing activities..
- 4.7. Health and Wellbeing training courses are available through our e-learning platform "ELMS" for all staff and cover a wide range of topics, examples include: e-mail stress, bullying and harassment, drug and alcohol awareness, stress management, healthy lifestyles, couch to 5k and building personal resilience.
- 4.8. During Mental Health Awareness week in May 2021, we organised opportunities for staff to meet up with their colleagues. This was very well received as during the pandemic this interaction had been severely curtailed. This also helped to ease staff back into the workplace after the COVID-19 'lockdowns'. Additionally, we organised health and wellbeing webinars for all staff.
- 4.9. We have placed high importance on ongoing communication with staff, by providing monthly wellbeing e-mails, highlighting wellbeing resources and tips for maintaining good mental-health. This has also been well received and staff are engaged and sharing their own wellbeing ideas in the wellbeing hub.
- 4.10. There is a standing Health and Wellbeing item at all Health and Safety Committee Meetings.
- 4.11. We introduced new health and wellbeing modules as part of our DSE training package.

5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. To further support inclusivity, we run a guaranteed interview scheme for those with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the post and advertise that fact we support

flexible working. We also work with our advertising agency, Web Recruit, which we share with the other NPAs to ensure we are using appropriate platforms where we can be more visible to a diverse range of candidates. Adverts now include an EDI organisational statement, which promotes our approach to equality. Person Specifications continue to be scrutinised at the point of advertising to ensure there are no unnecessary requirements included, which could prevent or restrict those who can apply.

- 5.3. HR run a tailored recruitment process to ensure adverts are placed appropriately, in the most cost effective way. When required (for hard to fill positions) this includes widening where and how we advertise e.g. using a recruitment agency. In this situation HR aspire to only work with agencies that hold EDI as a propriety when searching for candidates to encourage a broad range of candidates to apply.
- 5.4. Historically our data monitoring of applicants has included gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and age, this has now been expanded to also include other protected characteristics (see appendix 3 for current demographics and appendix 4 for EDI data collected for applicants and successful candidates). The data in appendix 4 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. We have reviewed how we collect recruitment data and will be in a position to provide a more detailed analysis of applicants, shortlisted and interviewed candidates to the committee next year.
- 5.5. Virtual interviews are offered as an alternative to attending in person and ensure we ask all interviewees if they require any adjustments to attend interviews. We have also offered support and training to our apprentices to prepare them for an interview process. We use competency-based interview questions that are applied consistently to all candidates and ensure that they are judged fairly against the criteria in the person specification.
- 5.6. During their induction all new staff are now signposted to our mission statement on our website and our EDI Policy. They are also required to complete our e-learning EDI module.
- 5.7. To attract a wider range of applicants, to support our staff and promote a better work-life balance, we have adopted blended working which allows staff to work from home, the offices and other remote locations. We have suitable IT systems to enable remote working and participation in video conferencing and webinars. We have moved to a more flexible working day that is not limited to traditional working hours.
- 5.8. In April 2021, we ran a series of webinars on Equality and Diversity - Back to Basics, Recognising Unconscious Bias and Anti-racism & Allyship for all staff. These sessions were well-attended and well-received. We are developing a bespoke area on our intranet so that staff can access learning resources and webinars and are looking at further training in 2022/23.
- 5.9. In March 2022 we carried out a review of our gender pay gap. We had previously carried out this exercise in 2018. Although there is no obligation for organisations with less than 250 employees to do so, we chose to do this internal review. The full report is in appendix 5. The analysis showed that our gender pay gap over the last 3 years has reduced from 22% to 12%. Nationally in the UK the mean gender pay gap is 15.4%. The shift has been attributed to more opportunities for flexible working, support of professional studies and internal promotions.

6. Learning and Development

- 6.1. The organisation's learning and development plan includes health and safety, core skills and role specific training. Training was delivered virtually and face to face, where feasible during the pandemic.
- 6.2. In 2021/22 core skills training was a continuation the learning and development plan identified in 2020/21 and included:
 - Learning sets for CPM Leads on working together to achieve organisational outcomes
 - Retail training for our visitor centre staff,

- Time Management
- Report Writing
- IT skills e.g. Excel
- Project Management Training
- Having Difficult Conversations

- 6.3. We ran virtual training sessions on Managing Hybrid Teams in preparation for the introduction of the new blended working model and remote working
- 6.4. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training sessions were made available to all staff, as detailed in paragraph 5.8.
- 6.5. The following table shows the number of days' training carried out in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the average number of days offered to staff in 2021/22 was 3.25 per employee, which was consistent with 2020/21.

Year	Core skills	Role specific	Health & Safety	Total no of days	Average no of days per employee
In 2020/21	321 days	60 days	108 days	489 days	3.5 days
In 2021/22	178 days	49 days	252 days	479 days	3.3 days

- 6.6. The organisation also supported a small number of employees through professional development and further education courses, one of which is a continuation of training that commenced in 2020/21.
- 6.7. 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 showed a significant increase in training days. This is explained by a rollover of training from the previous year that we were unable to undertake due to the pandemic.
- 6.8. 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.
- 6.9. We continue to bespoke all courses so that they are relevant to our organisation and signpost staff to SDNPA specific policies and procedures.
- 6.10. 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.
- 6.11. 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. After a pause of the apprenticeship programme for a year due to Covid-19, the easing of restrictions allowed us to open our doors again to a new cohort of apprentices. SDNPA was able to support a total of 8 apprentices across the following areas:
- 3 Business Administrator Apprentices within our Support Services and Thrive project teams
 - 3 Countryside Apprentices within the ranger teams
 - 2 Forestry Apprentices

It was challenging to set up the Forestry as although the funding was in place, there was no college close to us able to deliver this standard. However we were able to work with

Plumpton college early this year and agree on the delivery. We also partnered with Penfold Woodland Management with the aim of their team delivering some of the practical skills required for the apprenticeship

- 7.2. During this period, 2 of the business administrators have finished their apprenticeships, one of which secured a fix term role in the Support services team.

8. Working together with other National Park Authorities

- 8.1. The SDNPA HR team works closely with the other National Park Authorities, and during 2021/22 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. During the pandemic we were able to share and learn from our approaches and challenges. We also held a dedicated EDI meeting to look at how we were each promoting this important area of work
- 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. We also use Web Recruit, a shared approach to recruitment advertising.

9. Priorities and actions for 2021/22

Key Priorities for HR in 2021/22 include:

- Implementing the HR responsibilities relating to the EDI action plan
- Introduction of an applicant tracking system
- Design and communicate a staff survey to review the blended working arrangements
- Review the organisations approach to stress management
- Look at ways of digitalising existing HR processes to increase efficiency
- Continuation of the work on internal health and wellbeing
- Ensure that Members are fully briefed and trained on their H&S responsibilities
- Continuing development and implementation of robust safety systems of work and risk assessments at Seven Sisters Country Park accounting for the type of activities in place

10. 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</p>

Implication	Yes*/No
	<p>consultant. It allows for significant efficiency savings in the production and delivery of these developments</p> <p><i>Note: The SLA with the PDNPA is amended and continues from 1st April 2022, reducing the cost, while maintaining the principle benefits of this arrangement.</i></p>
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Human Resources and Health & Safety supports work across all PMP and Corporate Plan Objectives
Links to other projects or partner organisations	NA
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	NA
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	There are no social value implications in this paper
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	<p>The HR function delivers an equalities act compliant service through recruitment, training and workplace adjustments. We have an equalities 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 for individuals with disabilities with advice from occupational health.</p>
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 and through the SLA with the Peak District National Park Authority we achieve significant efficiency savings and adopt 'best practice' for NPAs
Are there any Data Protection implications?	The HR Team has due regard for the Data Protection Act 2018 and all collection and processing of personal data is compliant
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA	An effective HR service contributes to principle 4 – promoting good governance.

Implication	Yes*/No
Sustainability Strategy?	

11. 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 PATERSON

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Appendices Appendix 1 - Data analysis for incidents 2021/22

Appendix 2 - Data analysis for sickness absence 2021/22

Appendix 3 - EDI Demographics of SDNPA employees – 2021/22

Appendix 4 - EDI statistics – Recruitment in 2021/22

Appendix 5 - Gender Pay and General Progression and Career Development

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management;
Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer;
Legal Services

External Consultees Health and Safety Advisor for the Peak District National Park
Authority

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 \(Report PR20/21-28 Agenda item 18\)](#)

[2020/21 Annual Human Resources and Health & Safety Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in Sep 2021 \(Report PR21/22-12 page 85 Agenda item 15\)](#)

Data analysis for incidents 2021/22

When Covid-19 restriction eased normal outdoor work resumed and staff returned to the offices, and this resulted in the number of incidents reported increasing slightly from 2020/21 but was still fairly consistent with previous years.

The number of reported near misses however dropped so all reps have been reminded to communicate the importance of reporting near misses as these are crucial in helping prevent future workplace incidents and unsafe conditions and promoting a workplace safety culture.

This year we had one reported RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Reg 2013) case; which resulted in a significant period of absence from work. This event was fully investigated and reported to the HSE (health and Safety Executive), who did not pursue any formal investigation or action. Remedial action was immediately taken and the trip hazard removed to avoid future incidents.

When the Government Covid-19 restriction were eased, SDNPA choose to keep some measures in place to ensure staff safety and reduce anxiety of returning to the offices. Perspex glass has been fitted onto some desks, limited number of staff were allowed in certain meeting rooms, a one way system around the building was maintained and a limited number of passengers per vehicle was agreed with ranger teams. Staff were advised to work from home if they were asymptomatic or in close contact with someone infected with COVID-19. Even though we had these measures in place we still registered 58 positive Covid-19 cases amongst staff. There is no evidence however that the virus was transmitted in the workplace.

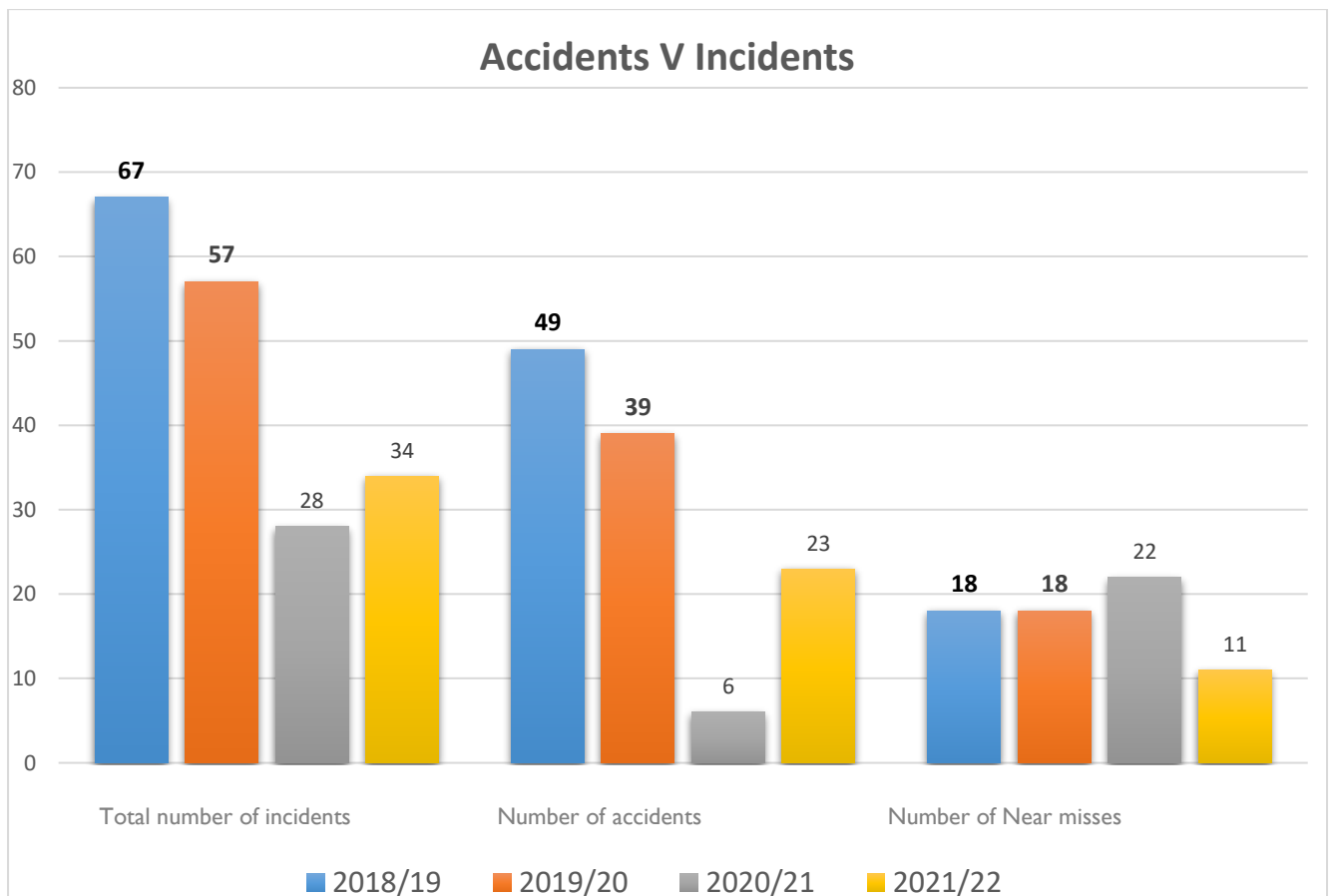


Fig 1. Accidents Vs Incidents for the last 4 years

This year the number of incidents was slightly higher than previous year, this increase was expected as teams resumed work with the ease of COVID-19 restriction. Of the 34 incidents reported 23 were accidents. The remaining 11 were near misses. Additionally, we accounted for 58 COVID-19 cases reported amongst members of staff.

Slips, trips and falls were recorded as the highest number of incidents, followed by cuts and grazes.

This year we have seen new categories of incidents logged, such as dog bite and biological hazard, involving animal excrement but these were mostly isolated cases and upon investigation it has been concluded that staff were following correct safety procedures.

Table 1. Number of incidents reported per type

Type of incident	Number of incidents
Near miss	11
Slips/trips /falls.	5
Other	18
Total	34

This report now includes data for Seven Sisters Country Park. Since the acquisition we have registered a total of 7 accidents. The area with highest number of accidents was Western Downs with 11 reports. This does not necessarily mean this area is higher risk in terms of safety, but may indicate that there is more thorough reporting of accidents and near misses at this site.

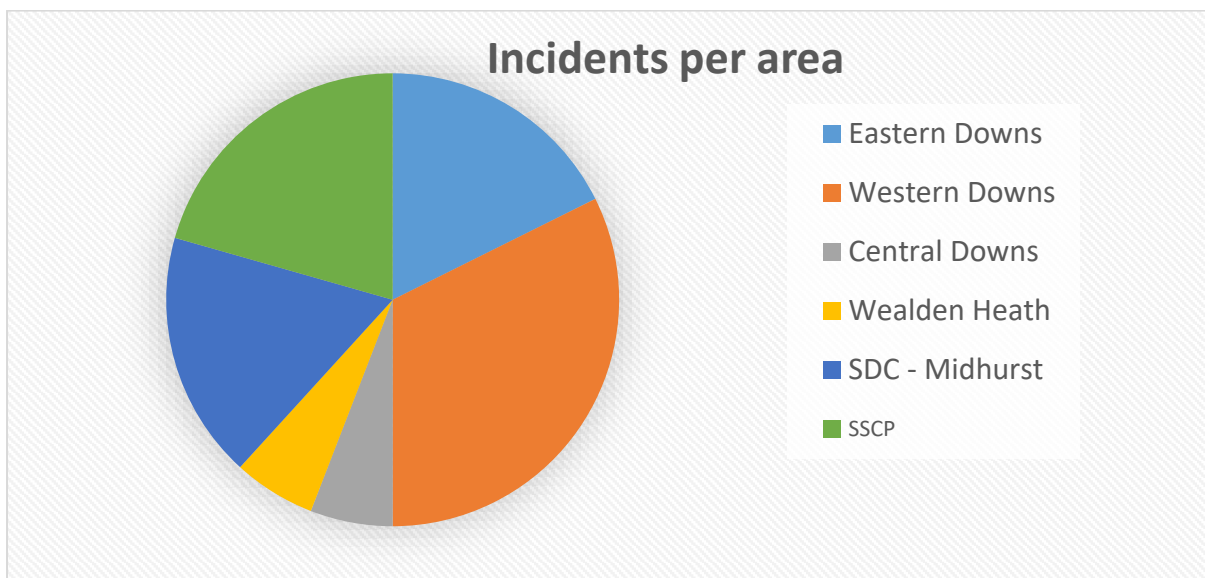


Fig 2. Number of incidents reported per area

The majority of reported incidents was employees (19) followed by volunteers (10). This ratio is consistent with previous years. We had an increase of reported incidents involving members of the public, which relates to Seven Sisters Country Park and a new risk for the organisation.

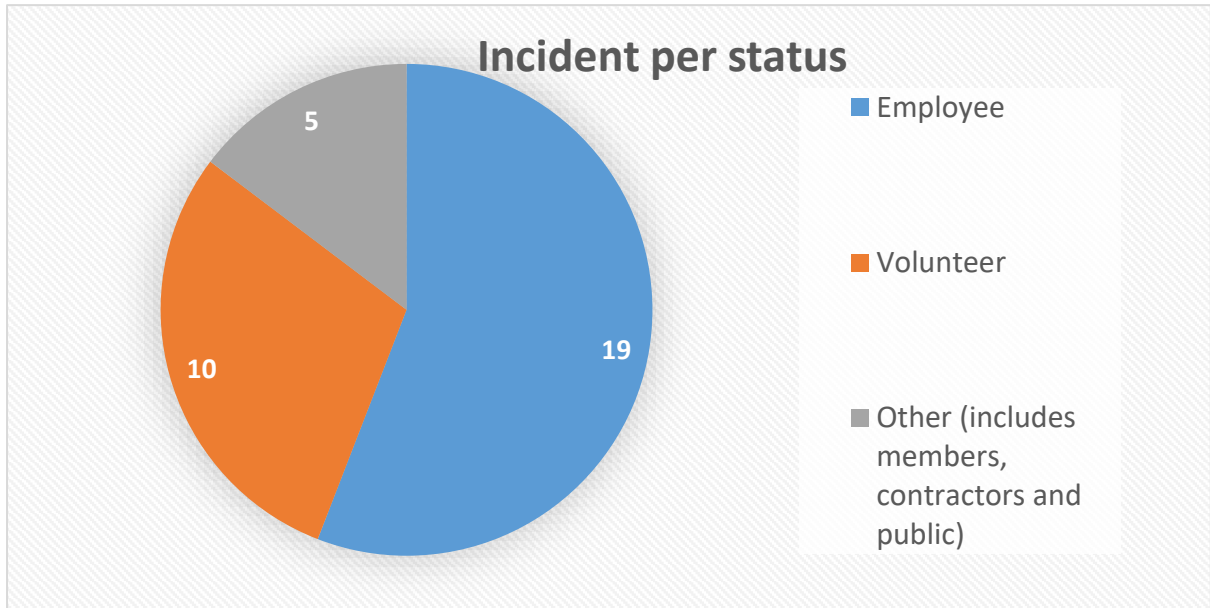


Fig 3. Number of incidents per status

Data analysis for sickness absence 2021/22 Appendix

In 2020/21 a significant drop in sickness absence was noted. This was attributed to under reporting as staff were mainly working from home and social distancing resulted in less transmitting of infections. In 2021/22 sickness levels have risen again as staff have returned to the workplace and have had more contact with other individuals. We have also actively promoted the reporting of sickness absence through our management system which has also had an effect.

The table below (table 1) shows average number of days sickness over the last 4 years.

Table 1 - average number of days sickness over the last 4 years

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Average no of days	3	3.26	2.92	4.48
Average no of days (exc long term)	2.50	3.26	1.72	3.53

Although the average number of days absence this year seems higher than usual, this is due to a small number of cases of long-term absence. Taking into account short term absence only, the figures are consistent with previous years before the pandemic.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the average number of days lost to sickness absence in 2021 was 4.6 days.

Table 2 below shows a comparison of sickness absence for SDNPA, other NPAs and the UK.

	2018/19	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22
SDNPA (av no of days)	3	3.4	2.9	4.48
NPAs (av no of days)	4.3	7.3	2.8	4
UK (av no of days)	6.6	6.9	5.8	4.46

The most common reason for absence was COVID-19 infection, affecting 29 individuals and causing a loss of 204 days. These absences included 59 days lost due to long Covid.

Days lost to musculo-skeletal conditions was high (78) although this includes a non-work related case. Non-work-related stress was also high (32). In both cases these numbers are increased by the circumstances of small number of individuals

We have also included in the table below (table 4) details of sickness absence per illness over the last 4 years.

Table 3 – number of days lost to sickness absence over the last 4 years

Category of sickness	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Back and neck	86	6	40.5	18
Allergic reaction	0	2	2	12

Category of sickness	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Surgery / medical appointments	0	34	29	3
chest/respiratory	9	18	20.5	23
cough/cold	128	168.5	33.5	96
digestive/stomach	58	68	33	48
ear, eye, nose and mouth	8.5	5	10	14
Genito-urinary	11.5	34.5	2	31
headache/migraine	15	26.5	12	16.5
Heat Exhaustion	3	0	0	0
Musculo-skeletal	8.5	20	1.5	78
non-work related injury	5.5	3.5	0	0
other	25	38	13.5	34.5
Major illness (e.g. cardiac/MS/ME)	0	12	0	2
Pregnancy-related	3.5	3	41	3
MH - Anxiety	0	6	0	15.5
MH - Depression	15	10	0	0
MH - non-work related stress	25.5	2	99	32
MH - work related stress	0.5	17	4.5	0
MH - fatigue	0	0	13.5	3
Viral infection	0	2	0	13
work related injury	10	0	0	12
Covid	0	0	65	204
	412.5	476	420.5	658.5

Coughs, colds and gastric conditions, the most common reasons for sickness absence remain consistently high.

The significant increase in 2021/22 compared to previous years is due to a large number of days lost to COVID-19 and a small number of incidents of long-term absence amounting to 140 days.

EDI Demographics of SDNPA employees – 2021/22 –appendix 3

Marital Status

Category	%
Cohabiting /Married	53
Divorced/Single /Widowed	22
Prefer not to say	3
Not responded	22

Religion

Category	%
Staff holding a religious belief inc: Agnostic, atheist Buddhist, Christian, Pagan or other	36
no religion	35
prefer not to say	5
Not responded	24

Due to low numbers of individuals identifying as holding a certain religious belief this information has been categorised to ensure individuals right to privacy is maintained.

Ethnic Origin

Category	%
Other Ethnic groups	19
white British	59
Not responded	22

Due to low numbers of individuals identifying as ethnic groups this information has been categorised to ensure individuals right to privacy is maintained.

Sex Identity

Category	%
Female	50
male	28
Not responded	22

Sexual Orientation

Category	%
Bisexual, gay man, lesbian, other	5
heterosexual	57
prefer not to say	2
Not responded	36

Due to low numbers of individuals identifying as being of a certain sexual orientation this information has been categorised to ensure individuals right to privacy is maintained.

EDI statistics – Recruitment in 2021/22

In 2021/22 we received 269 job applications and 15 people were appointed from externally advertised posts. 3 of the appointments were internal staff.

We amended our EDI monitoring form part way through the year to cover all protected characteristics. We will there be able to provide a more detailed information in the 2022/23 report, including information on shortlisted candidates.

Disability

Disability	Applicants	Appointed
Yes	7%	7%
No	73%	93%
Blank	20%	0%

Marital Status

Marital Status	Applicants	Appointed
Married	12%	13%
Not married	2%	0%
Single	17%	46%
Blank	2%	7%
Cohabiting	5%	20%
In a relationship	1%	0%
Civil Partnership	1%	0%
Divorced	1%	7%
Prefer not to say	58%	7%
Seperated	1%	0%
Widowed	0%	0%

Age

Age	Applicants	Appointed
16-20	0%	0%
21-39	60%	53%
40-59	36%	47%
60+	1%	0%
Blank	3%	0%

Gender

Gender	Applicants	Appointed
male	37%	33.33%
Female	62%	66.66%
Other	1%	0%
Blank	0%	0%

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Applicants	Appointed
White British	73%	80%
Irish	0%	0%
other	6%	13%
blank	1%	0%
White and Black Caribbean	0.50%	0%
White and black African	0.50%	7%
White other	0.50%	0%
Asian/ Asian British	0%	0%
Indian	0.50%	0%

Religion

Religion	Applicants	Appointed
None	56%	60.00%
Christian	18%	20%
Buddhist	2%	0%
Hindu	0.50%	0%
Sikh	1%	0%
Any other religion / belief	2%	7.00%
Prefer not to say	4%	0%
Blank	17%	13%
Agnostic	0%	0%
Atheist	0%	0%
other philosophical belief	0%	0%
Pagan	0%	0%

Gender Pay and General Progression and Career Development

Background

In March 2018, organisations employing over 250 staff were required to present information on their gender pay gap on GOV.UK and their own public facing websites. It does not apply to smaller organisations such as SDNPA however in April 2018, HR undertook an internal review of our gender pay gap.

As part of our commitment to EDI, HR have reviewed our position to ascertain if any progress has been made in this area. Following a discussion with key members of the internal EDI working Group, we also agreed to review progression and career development of all staff since April 2018, to provide us with a broader view of how we have developed our employees.

Gender Pay Progression

In 2018 the analysis on the gender pay gap found that the mean gap for SDNPA was 22%, as a result of the following:

- Number of lower grade admin roles (traditionally female)
- Higher paid admin/support roles outsourced (finance, legal etc)
- High number of female assistant rangers (grade 1) in stereotypically male roles – success in this area has reverse impact on gender pay gap
- Fewer females in senior management roles – mid range grades are currently more gender balanced which is encouraging for future promotion opportunities

At the end of 2021, the mean gap for SDNPA was 12%, which is a significant reduction from 2018.

Published returns from some comparator organisations are as follows; however it should be noted that these organisations have more than 250 staff (SDNPA figures are based on 160 staff) and the impact of this smaller number can emphasise smaller differences in the actual numbers through the statistical profile.

Nationally in the UK the mean gender pay gap is 15.4%.

Organisation	Mean Gap (%) – 2021	Mean Gap (%) – 2018
SDNPA	12%	22%
Cairngorms NPA	17.44%	21.5%
Lake District NPA	No further reporting since 2018	7.4%
Natural England	No further reporting since 2018	10.9%
Defra	4.3%	11.5%
National Trust	13.6%	12.8%
RSPB	13.28%	17.3%
West Sussex County Council	No further reporting since 2018	7.8%

Annexe I provides a more detailed picture by breaking down this information by grade and shows a significant shift of female employees (17 in total) into higher graded posts (particularly to grades 4 and 6), where employees in admin and support roles have had the opportunity to move into more senior posts. The support of flexible working also contributes to enabling female employees to progress into more senior roles.

Progression of all staff

As mentioned above it is also important to note the progression within the organisation for both female and male employees.

There have been 23 internal promotions and secondments since the April 2018 when the Gender Pay Gap report was submitted; 9 within Planning, 5 within CPM, 6 within Corporate Strategy and 3 cross- directorate moves..

There are clear development opportunities within planning and the area teams enabled by the structure, career grades and support of personal development. However, there are still challenges that limit progression to Head of Team posts particularly in Corporate Strategy where certain professional disciplines are needed and there is a significant skills gap in CPM preventing progression into specialist and CPM manager posts.

Professional Studies and Career Development

The structure and size does not allow for career progression in all areas of the organisation, however a significant investment has been made in supporting professional studies. Since April 2018, the organisation has supported the professional studies of 19 employees; 9 in Planning, 8 in Corporate Strategy and 2 in CPM. This investment has benefitted both the organisation and the individuals, enabling the development of existing skills needed to carry out roles effectively, the development of new skills and responsibilities and in some cases internal promotions. It also plays an important part in staff retention.

Building on success to date and future actions

- Continue to review and develop policies and procedures and embed hybrid working to fully support equalities issues; flexible working, job share, part time working, family support mechanisms. This will ensure that we are offering the best possible opportunities for all staff across all areas and at all levels in the organisation and continue to close the gender pay gap.
- Ensure our job evaluation system continues to work well and ensure we pay equally for all jobs of equal value regardless of gender.
- Improve learning and development opportunities and focus on identifying and supporting key talent within the SDNPA and improve career opportunities for individuals to progress between grades to senior roles.
- Improve the gender balance across our senior roles by continuing to encourage internal development and progression but this is a longer term aspiration
- Provide targeted training based on the competency framework to provide a clear route of progression through the organisation.
- Continue to work closely with staff and UNISON to make sure the SDNPA retains its reputation as a good employer

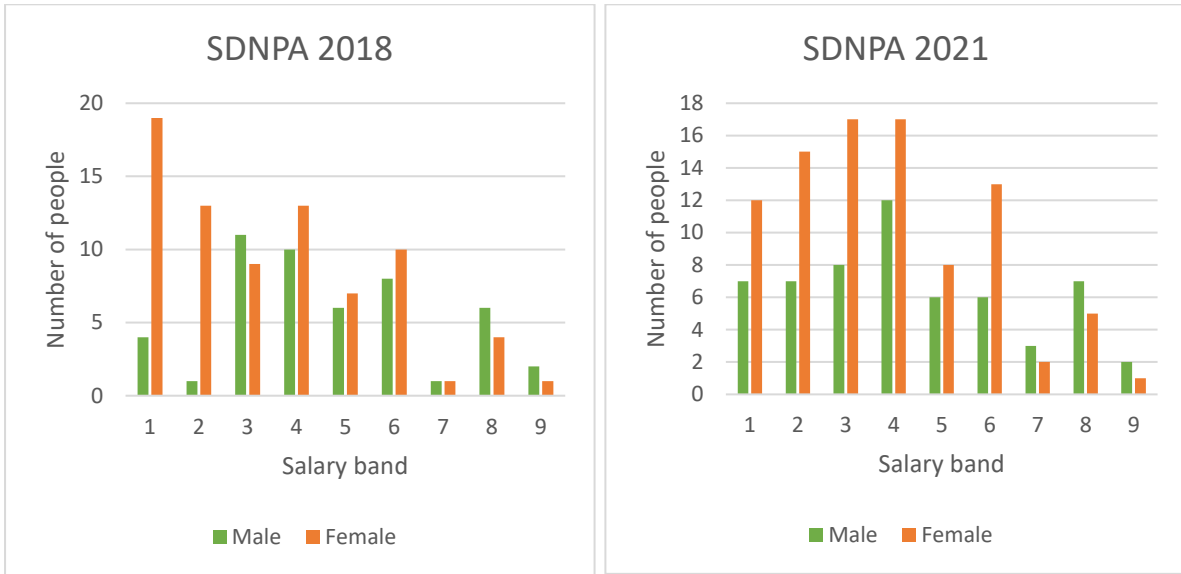


Fig 1

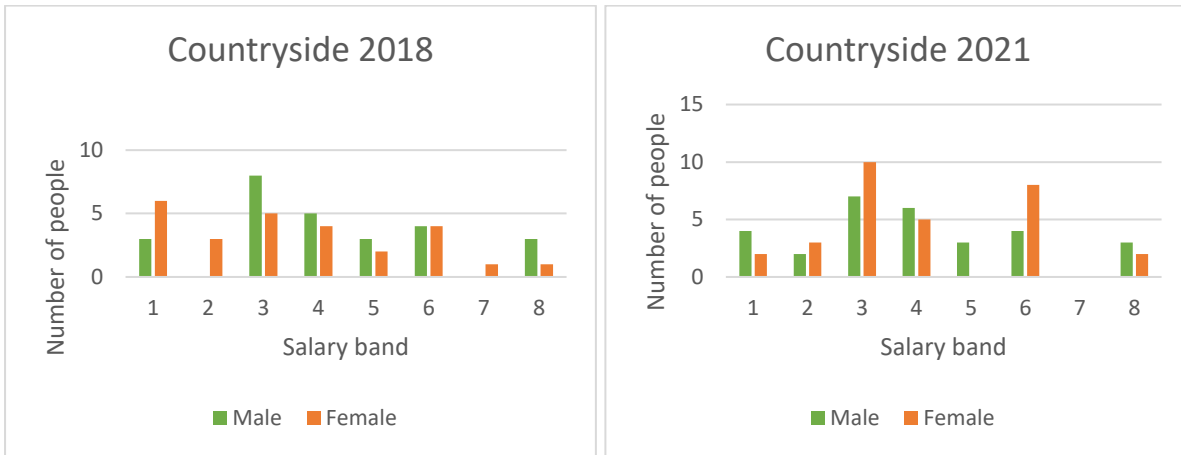


Fig 2

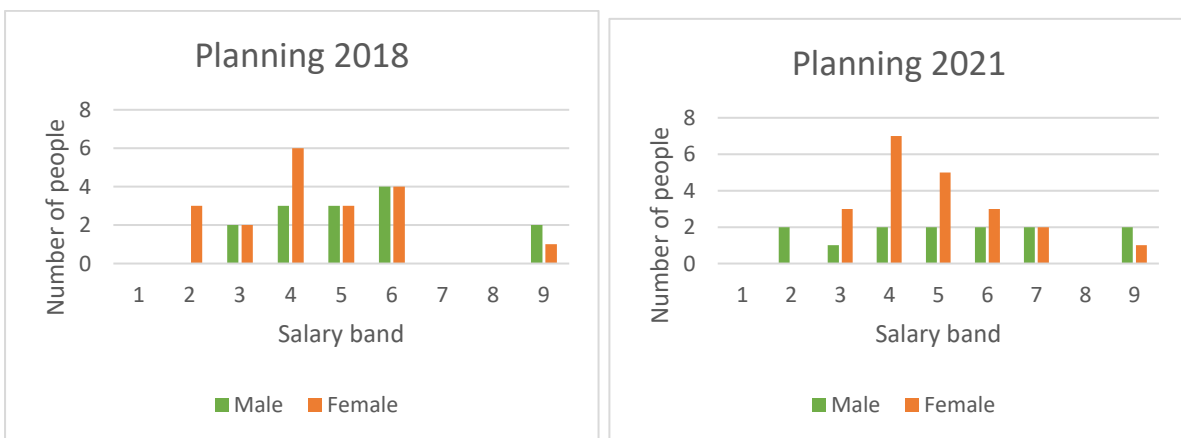


Fig 3

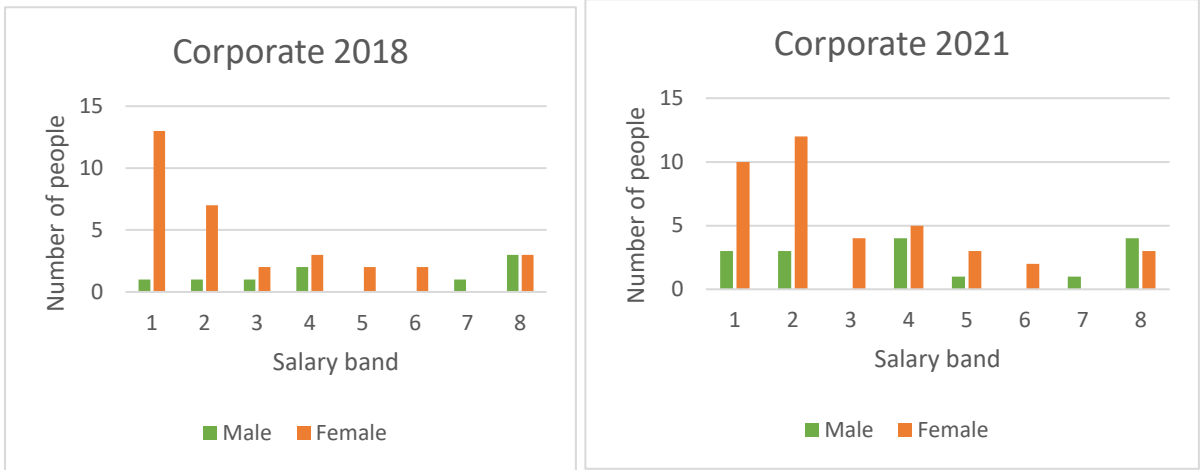


Fig 4