

REPORT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

SUBJECT: GENERAL UPDATE

HEALTH & SAFETY - HAVS UPDATE

Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS) is one of the more prominent risks to the health of Authority employees (along with the actual use of Chainsaws and other cutting equipment), therefore a policy has been drafted in response to the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. The Policy will be presented to the next NPA for review and approval and a copy (see Appendix) is included for feedback from Members of the Human Resources Committee. This has already been provided to members of the Audit and Corporate Services Committee.

Equipment and software to measure exposure to hand arm vibration, has now been purchased and this is being rolled out across the Authority. Testing of equipment has taken place within the South and North Warden teams, and testing on the West Warden team equipment will follow in July. Monitoring of individual use of equipment will be phase two of the mitigation plan and will take place from August onwards.

The Authority has carried out annual health questionnaires on 37 employees requiring a HAVS assessment and at potential risk.

Caer Health (the Authority's retained OH provider) have completed a review and 7 employees have presented as being symptomatic. Managers will be asked to undertake Individual Risk Assessments to ensure further exposure is limited. 4 employees are already on reduced machine use, due to outstanding medical issues.

Because HAVS is RIDDOR reportable (depending on the extent of diagnosis), the Authority have reported 3 cases retrospectively, as they had not previously been reported.

Resource planning will be carried out towards the end of 2022 / early 2023, to develop a plan to mitigate the impact of an aging workforce and one that is potential at higher risk of health-related injury.

ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURE UPDATE

Members were presented with an update on the Organisational Restructure at an Extraordinary Committee Meeting on 25 May 2022. Further updates were requested, by Members, at subsequent meetings.

Staff directly impacted by the proposals have been advised individually of the changes endorsed by the HR Committee.

Discussions are ongoing in relation to the Team Leader - Policy role (part of Placemaking), which was presented as a counter proposal by the Head of Park Direction.

An all-staff communication was released confirming the changes endorsed by Committee. Staff were also advised that a decision on People & Governance was pending and that an internal review would be conducted of all administration roles to determine the best model of working.

Staff have been invited to provide further feedback, but no further response has been received.

An update will also be provided in the next Staff Newsletter and include a formal response to all questions submitted by staff during the consultation period.

Consideration is being given to set up an all-staff (face-to-face) meeting to maintain the momentum of change; and in light of Covid-19 which has stopped face-to-face meetings, it is felt necessary for general staff engagement.

Work has started on the administration review, with a plan to present back a proposal to the HR Committee at a further Extraordinary Meeting in July or early August. By this point, a decision for approval by Committee, will have been made regarding People & Governance and Health & Wellbeing (part of the Engagement and Inclusion structure).

An interview panel will shortly be set up to appoint the Head of Engagement and Inclusion; a role that impacts both the Discovery Team Lead and the Ranger Services Manager. This will provide certainty to both employees and enable the Authority to move closer towards the transition phase.

Recruitment campaigns are now being worked up for the following roles:

- Head of Nature Recovery
- Head of Regenerative Tourism
- Head of Placemaking
- Head of Decarbonisation

Following the resignation of the Business Improvement and IT Manager, a temporary internal appointment has been made as Team Leader and the permanent role will be reviewed when the new Head of Decarbonisation is appointed.

The recruitment of the Health & Safety and Training Officer is in its early stages and will be key to delivering the people management priorities key to the new strategy and structure. Other roles such as the Decarbonisation Officer and GIS Officer will again only commence once the head of service are in place.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment for the appointment of a new Director of Placemaking (Planning), Decarbonisation and Engagement has commenced, supported by search consultants Gatenby Sanderson.

The advertising campaign will close on 17 July 2022.

Social media feeds have been created to support the campaign which are being conducted bi-lingually. An example of one of the many images now being used in all social media recruitment is shown below and will help create a brand image for recruitment. This is supported by links to our website and that of Gatenby Sanderson and key word / hastags.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS – UK LIVING WAGE

The Authority have unofficially supported the UK Living Wage since 2015. The rate is currently £9.90 per hour, as opposed to the National Living Wage which is £9.50 (see below).

The Minimum Wage	National Living Wage	Real Living Wage
£9.18	£9.50	£9.90 (£11.05 in London)
Statutory	Statutory	Voluntary
21 and older	23 and older	18 and old

The UK Living Wage (otherwise known as the Real Living Wage) is the only UK wage rate paid voluntarily and is paid by over 10,000 UK businesses, feeling their staff deserve a wage which meets everyday needs.

The UK Living Wage is calculated according to the cost of living, based on a basket of goods and services. It was last updated on 15 November 2021 with voluntary implementation 15 May 2022.

At an NPA meeting in March 2015, Members agreed to a proposal to pay the UK Living Wage and adopt a 'supplementary living allowance' paid as a separate element of pay to bridge the gap between the Authority's pay rates and the Living Wage at the time.

As this has continued each year since 2015, it could be strongly argued that this has become '*custom and practice*' and if tested in an Employment Tribunal would be considered as a permanent contract change. Moreover, as no discretion has ever been applied in the last 7 years.

Since 2016, Citizens Cymru Wales have met with the First Minister annually to review progress on the spread of Living Wage accreditation in Wales.

To date the Authority have not formally accredited and the agreement by the NPA at the time was not to.

However, the campaign for a Living Wage is seen by many as a demonstration of the effectiveness of positive civil organisation and is being linked to creating a “*more equal Wales*”.

Members are asked for their support for a short paper to be presented to NPA by the HR Manager for approval of formal accreditation. This would enable the Authority to actively market itself as a responsible and fair wage employer committed to going further than the government minimum to make sure it staff earn enough to live on. The Authority would also be able to apply the Living Wage logo on its recruitment collateral as a further demonstration of its commitment.

As one of the most talked about concerns in recent months has been the continued skill shortage, with businesses finding it ever more challenging to fill vacant posts, the Authority needs to use every opportunity to present itself as an ‘Employer of Choice’.

PAY AND GRADING REVIEW UPDATE

Since the last report, the majority of time has been spent supporting the organisational restructure and staff impacted by the proposals.

However, some progress has been made in upskilling the HR team on the new National Joint Council (NJC) grading scheme.

Communications are now being drafted for managers and staff as we start the process of engagement and involvement.

RECRUITMENT

It is widely reported that a skills shortage exists across the UK with 67% of Welsh employers saying the lack of specialist skills and relevant experience is having an impact. This is now being felt, for the first time, by the Authority.

More pressure is being put on the Authority to consider a trainee programme investing in its own training and development, as well as internal staff’s career progression.

Areas the Authority are currently finding it ‘difficult to recruit’ to include: Seasonal Wardens, Finance, Catering and customer facing roles in our Centres.

Recommendation: Members are asked to NOTE this report

(Further information is available from the Kelland Dickens, Human Resources Manager, on 01646 624825 – email kellandd@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

POL_XXX

Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) Policy



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Internal Policy

Review

Version	Effective Date	Document Owner	Review Date Trigger
V1	TBC	Human Resources Manager	Every three years or in line with new legislation

Target Audience

All staff (including volunteers) working with vibrating equipment.

Consultations

Group	Date
Staff Reps	17 February 2022
Countryside Managers	January 2022
Leadership Team	8 February 2022
Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee	2 March 2022

Approvals

Approved by	Name	Date	Signature
NPA		30 March 2022	

Document Location

Location
Parcnet

Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	3
2. Responsibilities.....	3
3. Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS).....	3
4. Causes	4
5. Risk Assessments and HAVi Technology	4
6. Risk Controls.....	5
7. Exposure Values	6
8. Health Surveillance and monitoring.....	6
9. Reference	7
10. Version History	7

1. Policy Statement

Employees who frequently use vibrating equipment are at risk of suffering permanent damage to nerves, blood vessels and joints of the hand, wrist and arm.

Hand-arm vibration can cause Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome and / or Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) caused by exposure to vibration at work is preventable and this policy has been produced in response to the *Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005* aimed at preventing permanent damage to health.

The Authority will take all responsible steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees, including those who are exposed to vibration in the course of their duties.

The Authority will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that any risks are reduced to a minimum level or removed wherever possible.

The Authority will ensure that departmental managers carry out adequate risk assessments for using vibrating equipment.

The Authority will ensure that employees who use vibrating equipment receive adequate information and training on precautions to be taken to mitigate any associated risk.

The Authority will ensure that a programme of surveillance is carried out for employees who are at risk from using vibrating equipment.

2. Responsibilities

The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy rest with each Director and department/functional manager.

The Countryside Managers are responsible for ensuring measures (HAVi) provided by the Authority to regularly monitor exposure levels of staff using vibrating equipment, are carried out on a regular basis.

All staff working with vibrating equipment are responsible for their own and others health and safety and are expected to fully comply with this policy and any associated risk assessments in place.

Human Resources are responsible for implementing an annual health surveillance programme for all staff using vibrating equipment and reporting any RIDDOR reportable incidents.

3. Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)

HAVS is vibration transmitted from equipment into a workers' hands and arms. It is a general term embracing various kinds of damage, including:

- Vascular disorders such as Vibration White Finger causing impaired blood circulation and blanching of affected fingers and part of the hand;
- Neurological and muscular damage leading to pain and numbness in the fingers and hands, reducing grip strength and dexterity and reduced sensitivity to touch and temperature; and
- Other passive kinds of damage leading to pain and stiffness in the joints of the wrists, elbows and shoulders.

HAVS is a reportable disease under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)** may also be reportable under certain circumstances.

**The carpal tunnel is a small tunnel that runs from the bottom of the wrist to the lower palm. CTS occurs when the nerve from the forearm into the hand becomes squeezed at the wrist. CTS is a relatively common condition that causes pain, numbness and a burning or tingling sensation in hands and fingers. Symptoms can range from mild to severe.

The effects of HAVS on an employee can include:

- Reduced flexibility and strength of grip.
- Inability to do detailed work.
- Inability to work with hand-held equipment.
- Pain and resulting sleep disturbances.
- Difficulty in working outdoors during inclement weather with symptoms caused by cold and / or damp weather conditions.

4. Causes

Jobs requiring regular and frequent work with vibrating equipment are most likely to result in an employee suffering from HAVS. Examples of vibrating equipment used by the Authority include:

- Chainsaws.
- Strimmer and Brush cutters.
- Powered lawn mowers.
- Wood machining tools such as hand-fed circular saws.

It also includes other equipment such as Hammer drills, Power hammers/chisels and Kerb saws.

The risk of developing HAVS depends on a number of factors such as:

- The amount of vibration produced by the tool.
- How often the tool is used.
- How long the tool is used for on each occasion.
- The way the tool is used.
- Working conditions, including posture and weather conditions.
- The general health of the individual.

Some employees may develop symptoms after only a few months exposure to vibrating equipment, whilst for others it may take years.

5. Risk Assessments and HAVi Technology

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations require employers to assess the vibration risk to employees and ensure the risk is either eliminated at source or where not reasonably practicable, reduced to as low a level as practicable.

Managers **MUST** ensure that Risk Assessments are carried out on all vibrating equipment in order to assess the risk caused by working with the equipment. Risk Assessments once completed will be signed off by the Human Resources Manager.

Where the Risk Assessment indicates that an employee is likely to be exposed above the Daily Exposure Value or the Daily Exposure Limit Value, action must be taken to control the risk.

Furthermore, as the Authority has a general duty to protect the health of employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, even exposure below the daily limits should result in acts to eliminate or reduce vibration risk to as low as level as practicable.

The Authority have invested considerably in technology to measure Actual Vibration Magnitude (AVM) of its equipment and HAVI+ technology to measure Trigger Time and uses of AVM to calculate HAVs exposure of staff using tools. This is in line with the legal requirements of the CVWR 2005 and in lien with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance.

Continual monitoring is NOT a requirement of the regulations and the HSE do not support this. However, the Authority will carry out periodic measuring.

6. Risk Controls

Managers should consider the following controls to mitigate risk from vibration. Specifically:

1. Considering alternative working methods which eliminate or reduce exposure to vibration, including automation and mechanisation.
2. Replacing old equipment and tools and selecting the lowest vibration tool that is available, for example chain saws with anti-vibration mountings. Managers should check with suppliers and compare vibration emission information for different models.
3. Reconfiguring and spreading workloads resulting in equipment being used for shorter periods of time.
4. Ensuring equipment is adequate and fit for purpose. Equipment that is too small or not powerful enough is likely to take longer to complete a task and expose an employee to risk for longer than necessary.
5. Undertaking regular maintenance and monitoring of equipment. In order to minimise the deterioration of equipment and ensure equipment is being used correctly, items should be inspected and serviced on a regular basis. Advice from the suppliers/manufacturers should be taken into account.
6. Providing regular information and training to employees using vibrating equipment.
7. Reviewing and updating Risk Assessments on regular basis.
8. Ensuring employees are properly equipped with PPE to keep them both warm and dry, encouraging good blood circulation. Gloves should be worn where feasible to keep hands warm.
9. Talking to staff regularly about whether there are any vibration problems with any equipment and the way it is being used.

It is PNCPA's policy to purchase, where ever possible, machines of the lowest vibration value.

Employees should be consider the following controls to mitigate risk from vibration:

1. Inform your manager about any equipment that produces too high a level of vibration so risks can be properly managed.
2. Maintain blood flow in fingers by keeping warm at work and wearing warm gloves and extra clothes if required.
3. Exercise hands and fingers regularly to improve circulation.
4. Use the right equipment for the job.
5. Do not use greater physical force than necessary to grip or direct equipment.
6. Avoid lengthy exposure to equipment without breaks – short burst are better.

7. Keep tools in good working order.
8. Take an active part in health and safety training - even if you think you know all the facts, it's a good refresher.
9. Do not ignore symptoms and report relevant medical factors such as diagnosis of diabetes for example.

Managers and employees should be vigilant of early symptoms of HAVS or CTS which include:

- Tingling and numbness in the fingers.
- Fingertips going white and becoming red and painful on recovery (particularly in cold or wet weather).
- Not being able to feel things properly.
- Loss of strength in the hands.

If any of these symptoms are present, advice should be sought from HR immediately and a referral to Occupational Health made. In addition, all employees will be made aware that if at any point they feel an individual tool or piece of machinery has deteriorated in terms of vibration, they must report this immediately so that further investigations can be made.

7. Exposure Values

When undertaking Risk Assessments, managers should be mindful of both EAV and ELV values.

The exposure action value (EAV) is a daily amount of vibration exposure above which employers are required to take specific action to control exposure. For hand-arm vibration the EAV is a daily exposure of 2.5 m/s² A(8) – equivalent to 100 points using the HSE calculator.

The exposure limit value (ELV) is the maximum amount of vibration an employee may be exposed to on any single day. For hand-arm vibration the ELV is a daily exposure of 5 m/s² A(8) – equivalent to 400 points using the HSE calculator.

It should be noted that even if an employee's exposure is below the daily exposure value, the Authority still has a general duty of care and vibration risk to employees should be eliminated to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

8. Health Surveillance and monitoring

Human Resources will organise health surveillance with Occupational Health for all employees at risk. The frequency of surveillance shall be annual unless a greater frequency is decided by Occupational Health based on individual circumstances.

The purpose of which is to:

- Identify anyone exposed who may be of particular risk, e.g. for people with blood circulatory diseases such as Raynaud's Disease.
- Identify any vibration related symptoms at an early stage.
- Help prevent disease progression and help staff stay in work
- Check the effectiveness of vibration control measures.

The surveillance programme is provided through a 5 Tier system starting with a self-assessment questionnaire (Tier 1) to establish the status of employees working with vibrating equipment, through to specialist medical testing for HAVS at Tier 5.

All new employees at risk of HAVS will be required to undergo health surveillance before commencing work.

In addition, an employee leaving will undergo surveillance unless they have been screening in the last 6 months, to provide an adequate pre-exit health status record.

Human Resources will coordinate, through departmental managers, the monitoring of equipment and individual use of equipment, to measure exposure to Hand Arm Vibration. This will be done on a periodic basis for existing equipment and when purchasing new equipment.

9. Reference

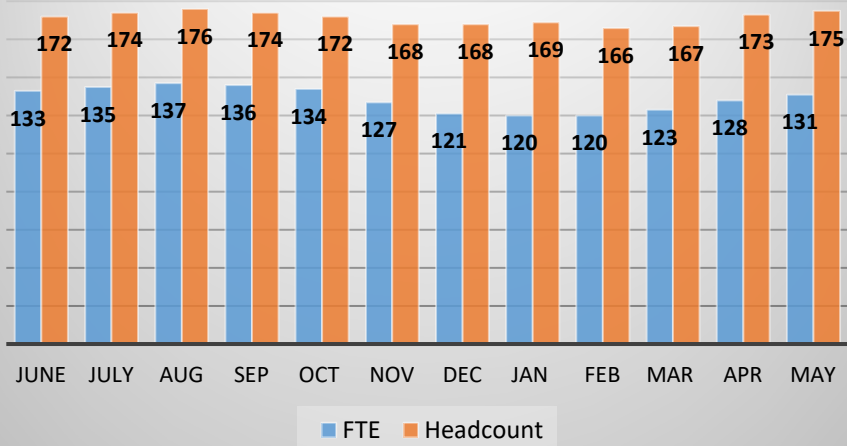
1	POL039	Health & Safety Policy
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10. Version History

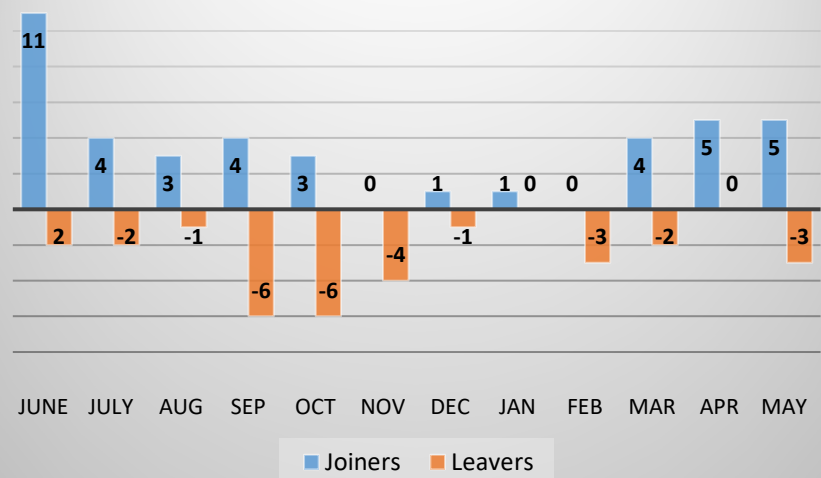
Version	Effective Date	Summary of Changes
1	30 March 2022	Adoption of formal policy

DRAFT

Headcount & FTE



Joiners & Leavers



Turnover
Rate: 7.6%
(UK Average
Turnover - 15%)

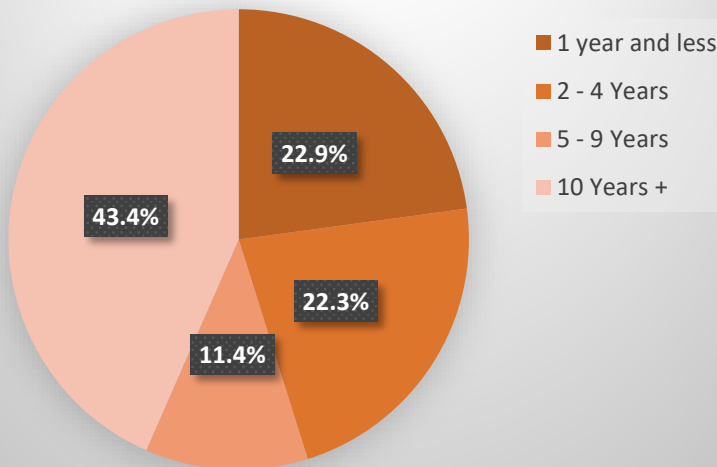
Average Age:
47.8

Average Length
of Service
(Years):
10.3

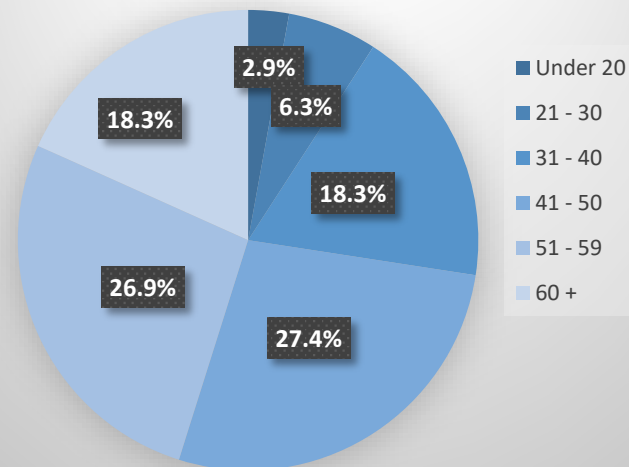
Welsh Skills
%age of Work
Welsh Level 1
or above:
40%

%age of staff
able to
communicate
bilingually:
17%

Length of Service



Age Distribution



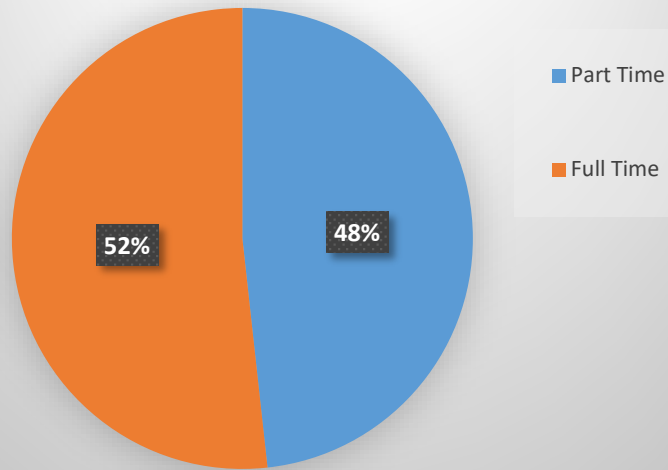
Gender
Distribution

- 55.4% Female
- 44.6% Male

Work &
Wellbeing
Reviews

- 93% completion

Part Time Distribution



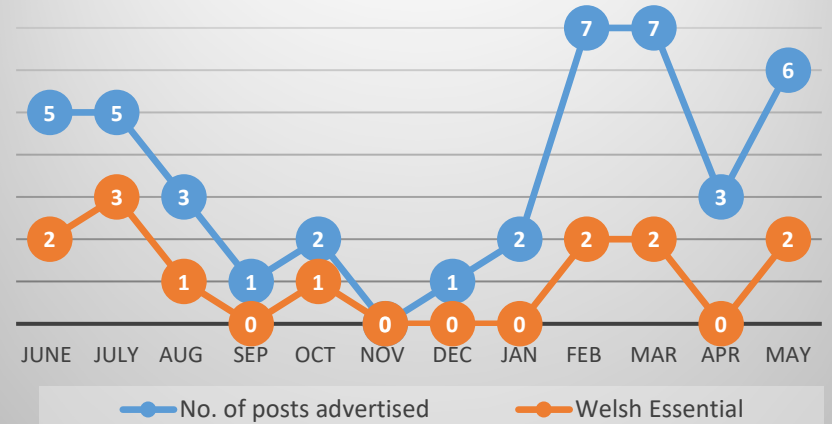
Average Hours:

**30.4 hours
per week**

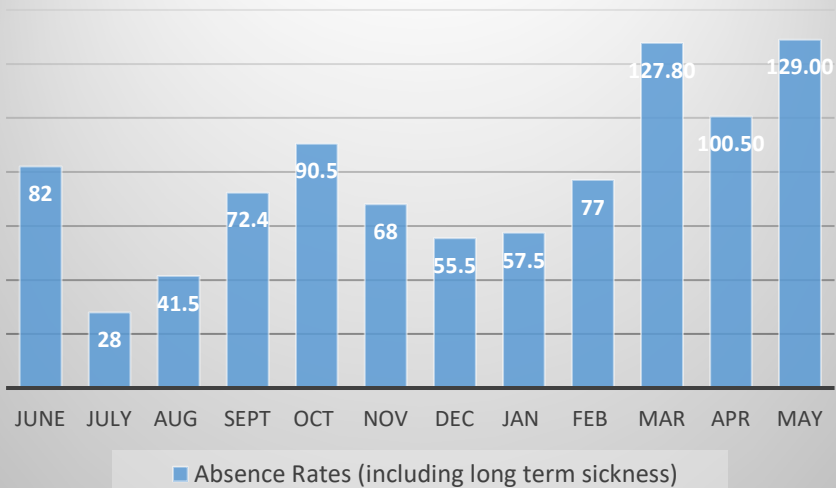
EOS Results

**75.8% of
employees are
'satisfied overall'**

Number of posts advertised and Welsh essential posts



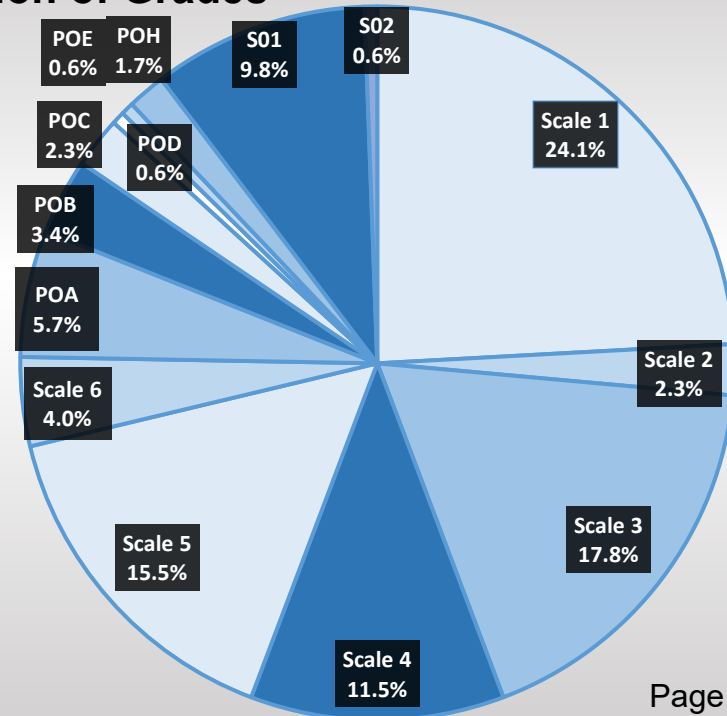
Absence Rates



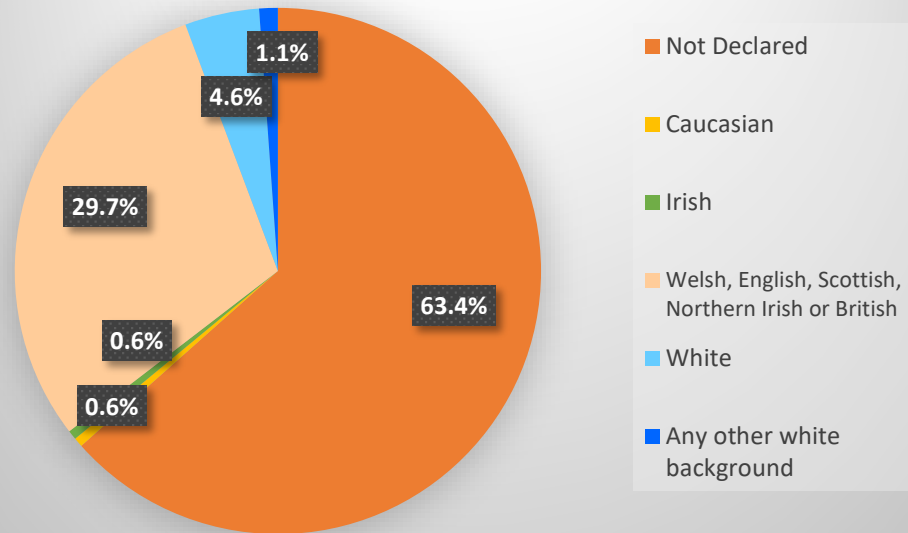
**Annual
Average Sick
Days Per
Employee**

- Inc. long term sickness:
0.45 days
- Exc. long term sickness:
0.32 days

Distribution of Grades



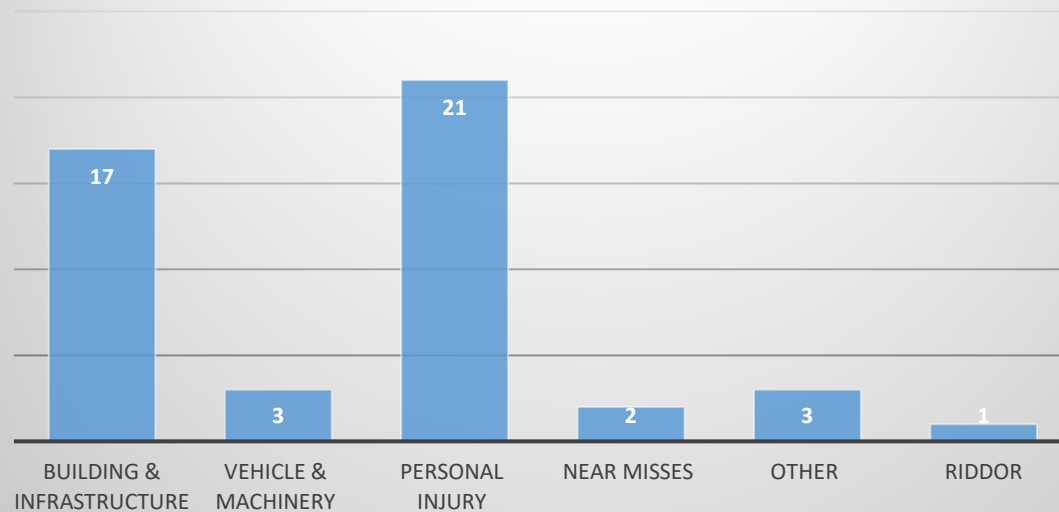
Ethnicity Distribution



BAME Benchmark

- Pembrokeshire - 1.3%

Accidents & Incidents - Annual Overview (May 2021 - Apr 2022)



Commentary:

- The above data is up to date as far as May 2022.
- With 71% of the Authority's staff being over 41 years of age and 42% over 51, the future impact of a potential drain on talent within the medium term is real. To manage this, the Authority will need to start developing plans to share knowledge where it has 'key-person dependency', and link this to the restructure Integration Plan. Furthermore, plans will be developed in 2023 to put in place a graduate and/or trainee programme with a structured career path to realign our age demographic.
- Members will possibly notice that the Average Length of Service has changed from 7.4 years to 10.3. It was explained previously that Cezanne HR had a systems glitch, and this has now been resolved. 10.3 years is the average length of tenure across all staff.
- Limited information is available to accurately record Ethnicity and although no organisation can mandate that staff complete ethnicity data, 63.4% of staff 'not declared' is a considered high. A staff briefing will be sent out to encourage participation and explain the benefits for individuals and the Authority of capturing this information.
- In an attempt to address the lack of diversity within the Authority, recruitment collateral will now include more diverse images, in an attempt to break down barriers and demonstrate that the Authority promotes inclusiveness.
- 44.2% of staff sit within Scale 1 to 3 of the Authority's pay and grading structure. The top salary for Scale 3 is £10.39 per hour, and with a UK Living Wage of £9.90 per hour, this has compressed the bottom of the scales. The Trade Unions have previously raised concerns about this, and that Authority has responded by agreeing to conduct a pay and grading review. The review is to commence in July this year.
- There was one RIDDOR during the period. This happened following an employee accident which resulted in a torn ligament and occurred whilst an employee was tree pruning. Due to Data Protection legislation no further information can be provided to Members.