

## REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

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### PEMBROKESHIRECOAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

#### ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2011

##### 1. Introduction. Purpose of report.

- a. A first annual report in 2006 paved the way for a series of updates through to 2010. This year's report builds on the past format by including greater detail about H&S management within PCNPA and seeks to place us in context with best practice and what others are doing.
- b. In outcome 8 of The Corporate Strategy, it states – **“The Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners”**. It then goes on to say that we will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when
  1. We receive a favourable Corporate Review by Wales Audit Office;
  2. We meet the targets in Strategic Grant letter;
  3. Customer satisfaction levels are improving;
  4. We maintain our position as a good employer, with engagement levels remaining high
  5. We retain Investors in People in 2012
  6. Improvement in the number of valid complaints and compliments
  7. The trend in the number of health & safety incidents is reducing
  8. The majority of our media coverage is positive or neutral

In terms of the outcomes of the Health and Safety Section, numbers 4 and 7 are relevant. This report seeks to demonstrate progress and proposed actions on these.

##### 2. Guiding principles and statutory duties

Our guiding principles have been set out in the form of a longer term vision and strategy (see appendix 1). In addition to this, good health and safety management is a core component of any successful organisation for a number of reasons outlined below.

- The legal framework in both criminal and civil law sets out standards both in statute and common law which we must adhere to as at least a minimum. Not only are criminal and civil actions costly and damaging to our reputation but they are the clearest indication that we have failed to protect our staff
- Our place as a public body with the highest aspirations in terms of governance puts the management of safety at the forefront in terms of importance

- Staff engagement, health and well-being is increasingly being recognised as a core component for success of any business whether commercial or in public service

### 3. National strategies and the wider context

The early days of health and safety post the industrial revolution brought about major improvements in working conditions in this country. Most of these improvements were in terms of machinery guarding and protecting people from physical injury. The last 20 years has seen a very different sort of development in understanding of health and safety. The move to risk assessment based H&S management in the 90s has been followed by greater and greater emphasis on stress, musculo skeletal (wear and tear) and more recently mental health, health and well-being and life balance. In the last couple of years, staff engagement has come to the fore as a means of running a highly successful and efficient business as well as maintaining high standards of health, safety and well-being.

However, good basic management of machinery use and standards of training, guarding and personal protection are still vital because of their capacity to cause injury. Our challenge is to push forward with new developments in H&S whilst continuing to concentrate on the management of the basic risks.

The HSE have published a strategy document setting out their key themes. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/strategy09.htm> The challenges for the HSE are:-

- to maintain standards in a time of significant cuts in public services including their own organisation,
- to ensure that organisations in the UK do not consider themselves 'overregulated'
- to continue to drive down accident and ill-health numbers when numbers have largely plateaued over the past 5 or so years and the law of diminishing marginal returns applies.

### 4. What we have done this year 2010-11

#### Policies and procedures

- Policies on First aid and Personal Protective Equipment have been reviewed and updated
- A complete review of all safecards has been carried out with all practical staff involved in a consultation exercise. A number of new safecards have been added and staff made aware.
- The staff handbook on Parcnet has now been separated from the safecard series to make access easier

#### Training

- A database containing all practical training records has been set up and, in conjunction with team leaders, training needs for the coming year have been established and costed
- Following a training course on safety in roadside working, a small group is now reviewing our roadside activities to see how we can achieve our aims, minimise risk and ensure legal compliance.

- A presentation to the staff meeting in February has increased awareness of aggressive incidents and the importance of reporting. We are now looking at ways of ensuring that staff from different sections can be made aware of 'difficult' customers that the organisation is aware of. There is also to be a training/awareness session late in 2011 dealing specifically with this issue

#### Monitoring

- A revised and more formal monitoring regime has been agreed in conjunction with the Technical Officer and the results of regular monitoring of H&S performance in the field will now feed into this annual report.
- A number of minor changes have been made to the incident and accident form and database allowing more accurate recording of aggressive incidents, more meaningful reports setting out prevention measures and a system by which line managers must see and comment on every incident.
- Incident and accident summaries are now reported to management team monthly where they are reviewed and a certain number followed up on to ensure appropriate action is being taken.

#### Health and well-being

- A report was produced on options for whether we should go for a health and well-being award and if so which award would be suitable. As a result of that a decision has been made to aim for the IIP Workplace well-being award and, as a first step to involve staff from all areas in the process.

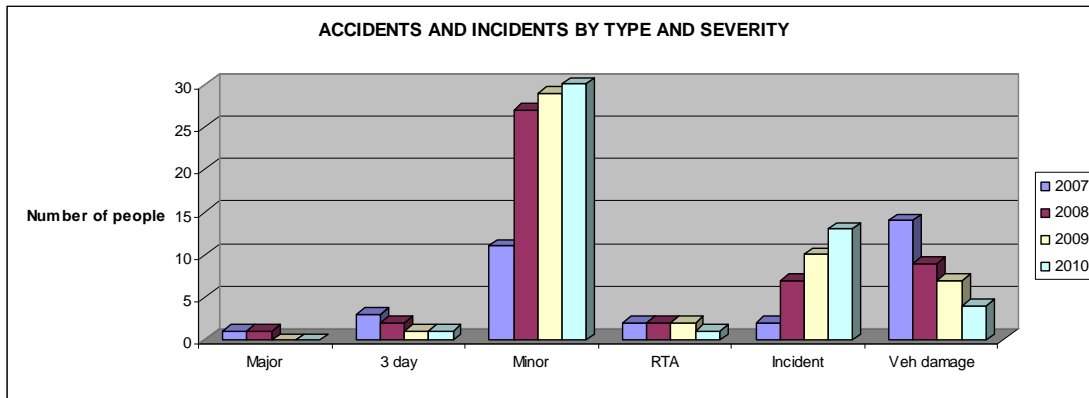
#### Projects and specific issues

- Following a report to H&S Group and management team, alcohol gel dispensers are now located at Llanion as a pilot project aimed at reducing the spread of infections causing colds, flu and stomach bugs.
- In conjunction with Recreation Management staff, carried out a review of the coast path safety statement
- In conjunction with Education Services Manager, carried out a review of H&S in activities and events

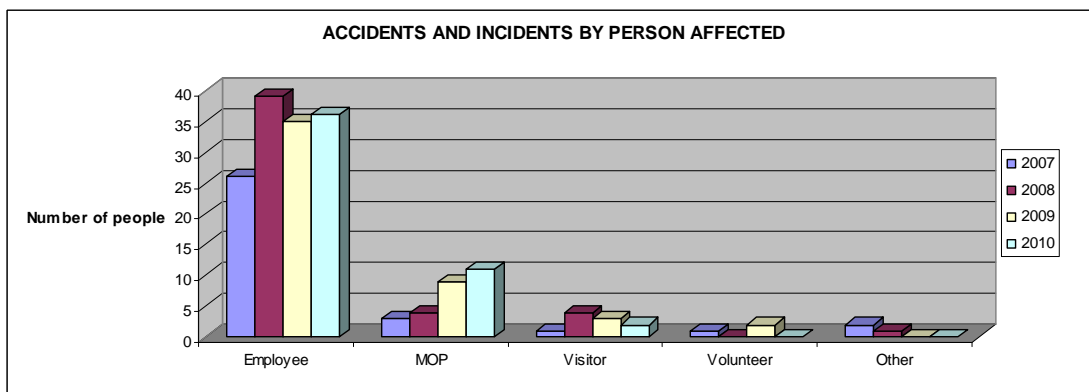
### **5. What we are measuring (and how information feeds back into future decisions and initiatives)**

#### Accidents and incidents

Great emphasis is placed on the reporting of incidents or "near misses". Action following an accident may prevent a second occurrence; action following an incident may completely prevent someone being hurt. All incident and accident reports are acted upon, in the first instance by the line manager and then the H&S Advisor or Technical Officer may get involved as necessary. Management team also actively monitor on a monthly basis and follow up on particular incidents.



The above graph shows the types of incidents and severity of accidents recorded. Incidents of vehicle damage peaked in 2007. An ongoing programme of driver awareness training and follow ups after such incidents has contributed to a reduction in numbers since 2007. An increase in minor injuries and incidents is likely to be a consequence of awareness raising and a better understanding of the need to report all incidents. Many injuries reported as minor are very slight and might under other circumstances go unreported.

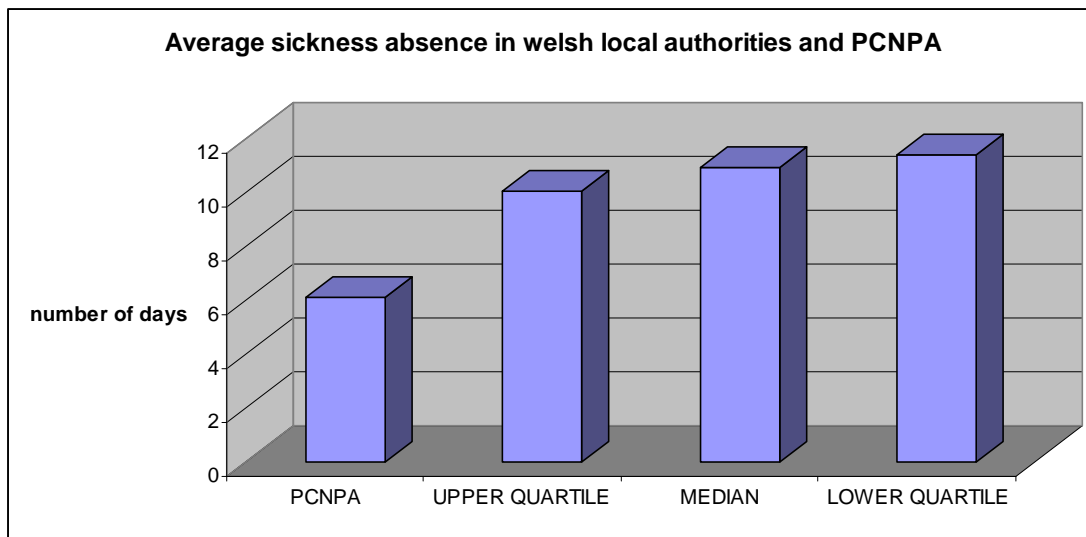


This graph shows the spread of incidents and accidents between our own employees and others affected in some way by our activities.

### III Health

The Authority's overall sickness absence rate is 6.1 days per full time equivalent post. A recent CBI/Pfizer survey suggests an average UK figure of 6.4 with private sector averaging 5.8 and public sector 8.4.

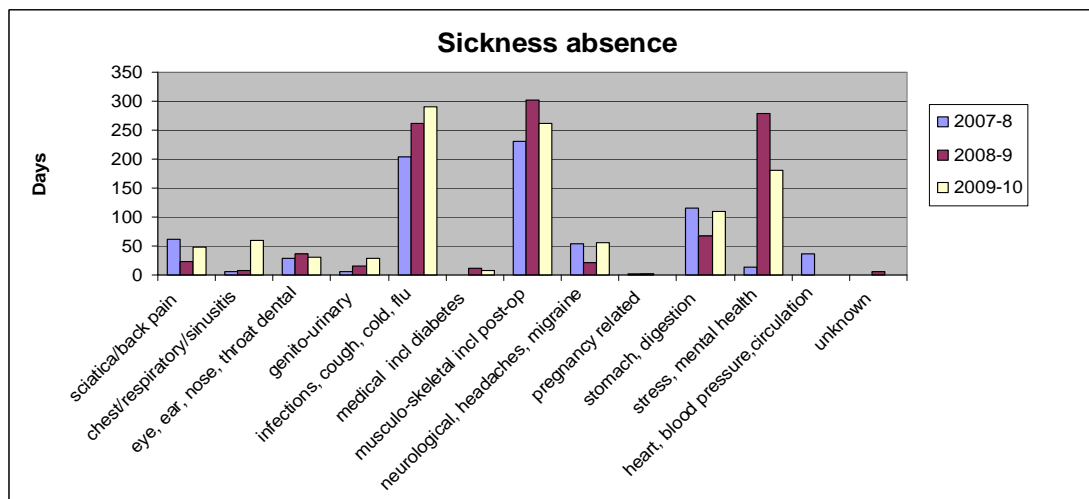
Our figures are comparable with private sector rates and considerably better than the public sector average as can also be seen from the graph below which shows that the average absence rate in welsh local authorities is in excess of 10 days per employee.

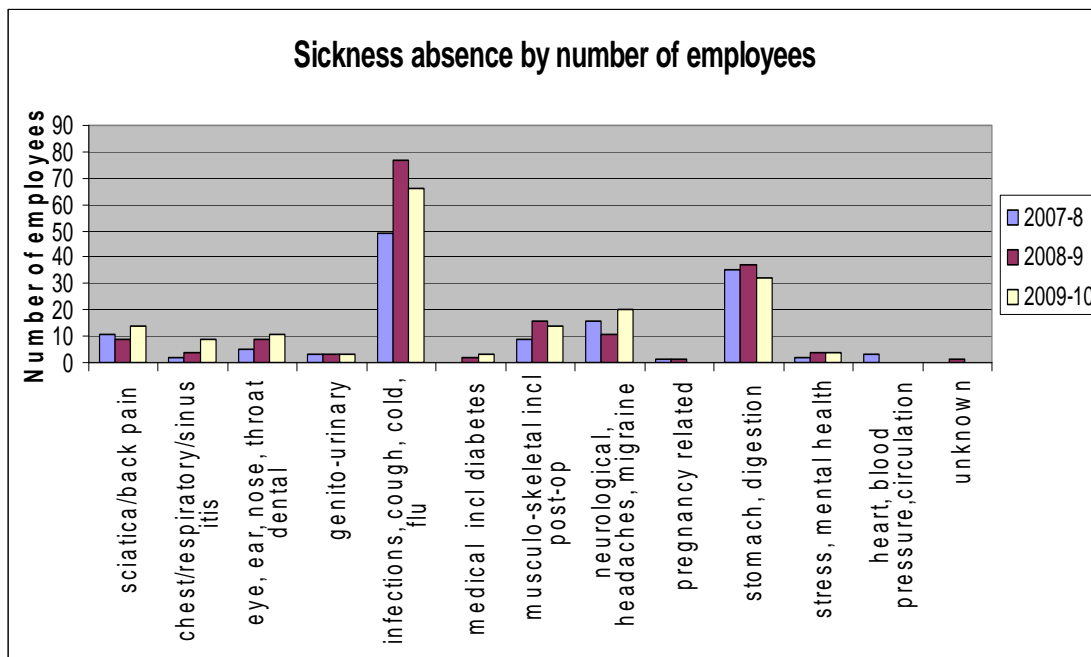


### III Health (cont)

Detailed analysis shows that (see 1st graph below) the greatest loss of staff time from illness comes from common infections such as colds, flu and stomach bugs; from musculo skeletal injuries and from stress and mental health issues. The 2 graphs together indicate that coughs, colds etc. affect a larger number of employees but generally for a shorter time whereas stress and mental health issues affect a relatively small number of staff but lead to more prolonged absences.

This analysis underpins some of the initiatives we put in place, such as the hand hygiene pilot which is aimed at reducing transmission of common infections between staff.

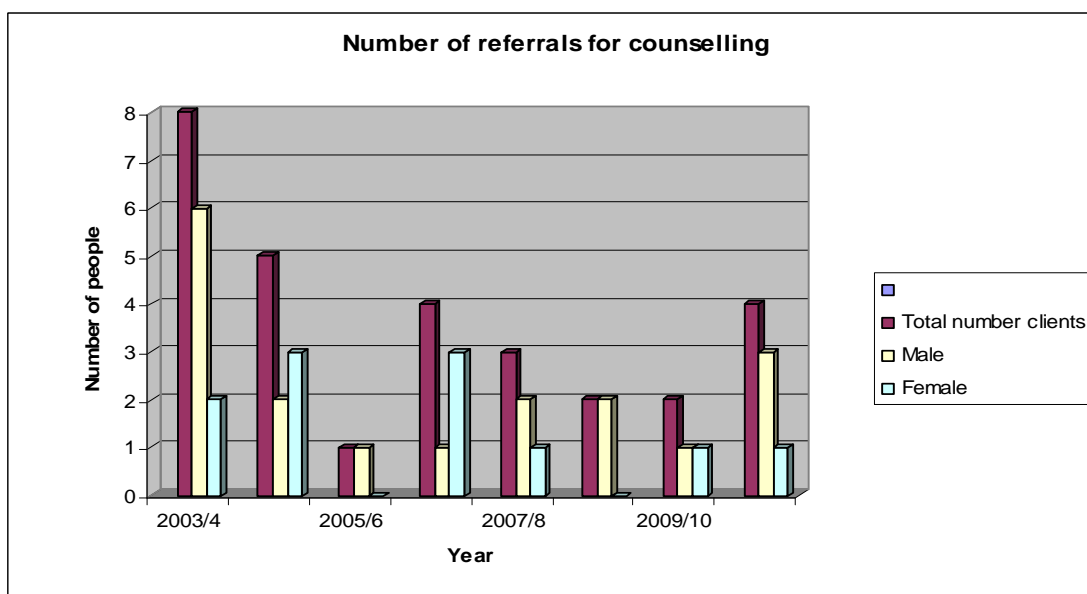




## Counselling

The Authority provides a direct-access confidential counselling provision for staff, this service cost £2465 in 2010-11. This service affords an opportunity for all staff to have someone to talk to when facing a personal difficulty or crisis and is one way of helping to prevent issues escalating and potentially leading to ill-health and absence.

Having shown a falling trend in numbers accessing the service, there has been a small rise this year (albeit from a very low base). The very small numbers of people involved make it difficult to read anything into the rise at this stage. Only one of the 4 people self referring mentioned work as one of the contributory factors to their need to see a counsellor.



## 6. Training events and feedback

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  
 Audit & Corporate Services Review Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2011

Chainsaw training: - 4 Wardens attended a chainsaw refresher and re-assessment course in March 2011. Feedback was positive with candidates reporting that the course was well run and that they had picked up some useful tips from the trainer.

Two one-day courses on walk leadership took place in March 2011. This mainly took place out on the Prescellis and whilst candidates expressed some uncertainty prior to the course, feedback was very positive and feedback from the trainer to us has informed some minor changes to our policy and procedures.

A course on roadside working and signage to warn traffic took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March. This involved most Wardens and Rangers, (20 candidates in total). This course unfortunately raised more issues than it resolved and significant work has taken place and is ongoing to ensure that we understand and comply with the law and keep our workforce and other highway users safe.

First aid training is ongoing with a review of the first aid policy recently completed. The main change in the new policy is a move towards training specifically aimed at provision of first aid in outdoor and remote situations.

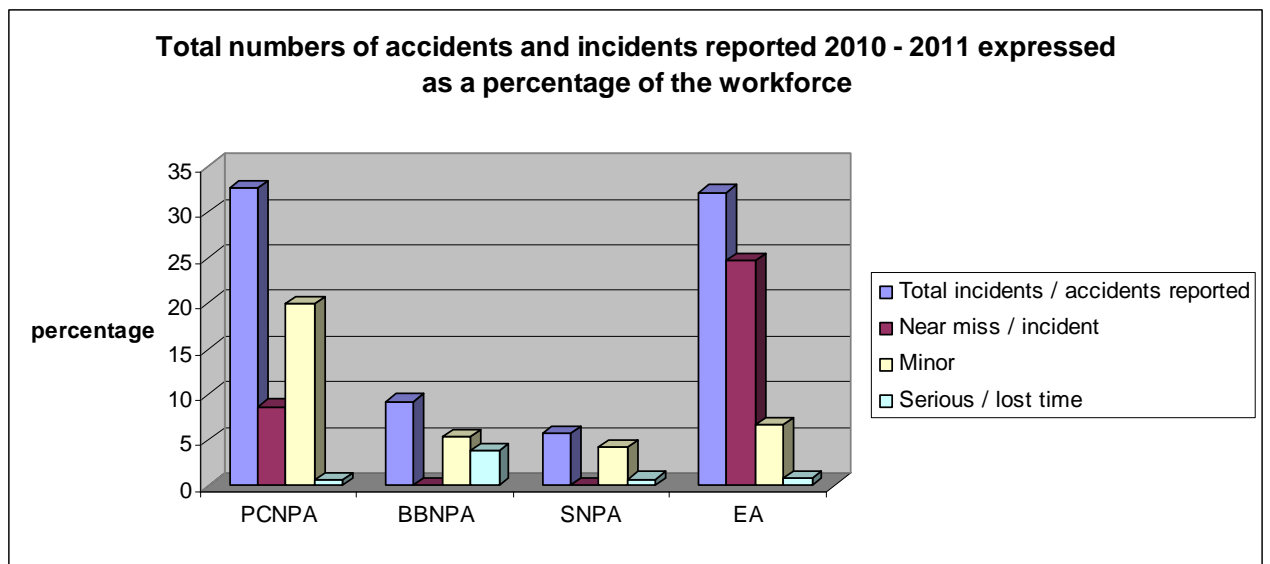
FIRST AID TRAINING 2010 - 2011	No people
Full first aid at work certificate	2
First aid at work requalification	2
Annual refresher course	6
One day emergency first aid course	29

Driver awareness training has been provided for staff using vehicles for work. This is ongoing and by the end of 2011 will have covered all essential vehicle users and those using works vehicles. 39 members of staff have been through this training with a further 20 to go.

## 7. Monitoring

A monitoring regime has been agreed and the H and S Adviser and Technical Officer carry out planned and unplanned visits to teams, sites and other work locations. A measure of the standard of safety and level of compliance is obtained from the faults or problems encountered during monitoring visits. 66% of these visits resulted in some form of improvement action demonstrating the value of providing a level of support from outside the immediate work teams.

## 8. How we compare with others: Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia NPAs, Environment Agency, National Trust,, national stats



Making statistical comparisons with other organisations is notoriously difficult as, apart from required data, we tend not to record the same things. Our figures are significantly higher than either of the other Welsh National Parks, probably due to recording or reporting differences. Our figures are however remarkably similar to The Environment Agency other than a slight imbalance between minor and near-miss incidents which could be a recording difference. We have offered the other two Welsh Parks our database and reports in an attempt to bring our systems more into line and negotiations are ongoing. In addition contact has been made with CCW and The National Trust to see if we can make useful comparisons.

## 9. What we are doing 2011-12

- i. Routine work including monitoring
- ii. Acting on incidents and accidents
- iii. Complete review on safety in roadside working
- iv. Set up working group on health and well being with timetable for attaining health at work award
- v. Run an awareness day on conflict management and personal safety with clear outcomes in terms of staff behaviour and understanding
- vi. Set up process to allow information about potential 'difficult people' situations to be available across teams.
- vii. Continue to communicate the H&S message through The H&S group and sub-group, electronic media, site visits etc.
- viii. Ongoing reviews of safecards and periodic reviews of policies and procedures as required.



**GUIDING PRINCIPLES (AS SET OUT IN ANNUAL REPORT 2006)**

- An organisation staffed by people who are fit and healthy and who are strongly motivated to stay fit and healthy as part of living a whole, active and fulfilling life.
- Staff who welcome and act on the health and safety message because they see it as a means of maintaining their long – term health
- Staff who no longer expect or accept that fitness levels and health reduce as an inevitable consequence of work and time
- Staff who are willing to tell us about health issues because they are confident that we will make every effort to accommodate and make adjustments as necessary while continuing to provide meaningful and worthwhile employment wherever possible