
Health and safety annual report 2025/2026

Sport for life

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

Introduction

1. This report provides analysis of standards of health and safety management for the financial year 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

This report presents health and safety data over a six-year period, where available, enabling comparisons and trend analysis. Where trends have been identified, these are highlighted and accompanied by further analysis if required.

Summary of performance

2. **sportscotland's** performance during 2025/26 at a glance:
 - An internal health and safety audit;
 - 194 accidents, incidents and near misses (+10 on previous year);
 - Two reported RIDDORS; and
 - 209 instances of employee absences.

Statement of assurance from external health and safety consultants (fulfilling the role as 'competent person')

3. Amalgamate Safety Risk Management Ltd, acting as **sportscotland's** health and safety competent person under Regulation 7(1) of the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, confirms that the Senior Leadership Team at **sportscotland** demonstrates a strong commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its activities. The current health and safety management system is robust with regards its key activities and **sportscotland** is committed to continuous improvement of its health and safety management system and performance.

Changes in legislation and enforcement visits

4. There were no changes in legislation during the year that impacted the areas of the organisation.
5. There were no enforcement visits (Health and Safety Executive, local authorities) during the year at the **sportscotland** sites.

Internal health and safety audit

6. An internal audit was completed by the organisations auditor, with the audit of health and safety arrangements concluding that key policies and procedures are in place and operating across the organisation, with strong evidence of a positive safety culture and well-maintained sites. However, the audit identified a number of areas where arrangements would benefit from further development, including enhancing detail within policies, strengthening induction records, improving risk assessment arrangements, and formalising processes for capturing root causes and lessons learned.

A clear management action plan was developed in response (comprising urgent, important and routine actions), with clear ownership and implementation timescales assigned. All Priority 2 (important) actions were completed within the required timeframe which demonstrates a proactive and committed approach to continuous improvement and strengthening health and safety governance across the organisation.

Accident, incident and near miss reporting

7.1 Incidents overview

There was a total of 194 reported incidents in 2025/26, which is an increase of 10 incidents on the previous year.

The increase in reported incidents for the year is due to the work undertaken in the previous year to promote the importance of incident reporting, following concerns of under-reporting across various sites.

Following feedback from the Health and Safety Committee that incident levels at the National Centres can appear disproportionately high, the incident reporting framework was reviewed and revised to provide clearer categorisation and improved transparency. Incidents are now recorded under four primary categories with a separate category for work-related employee incidents. These distinctions provide greater clarity in how incidents are attributed across the organisation, ensuring that incident data more accurately reflects the underlying causes and operational context.

Activity related incident – inside

Activity related incident – outside

These are defined as those arising from sport or sporting activities in indoor and outdoor environments, including training and performance environments, for example: injuries sustained within a gym or sports hall; injuries sustained whilst participating outdoors on a tennis court or ski slope.

Non-activity related incident – inside

Non-activity related incident – outside

These capture those not directly linked to sports or activities, such as facilities or estates issues, general operational activities, illnesses, etc. For example:

slips, trips or falls within accommodation or communal areas; work equipment or building defects.

7.2 Reportable incidents (RIDDOR)

Under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations), there were 2 incidents reported to the HSE in 2025/26, however subsequent review against the regulations confirmed that neither met the reporting criteria.

At National Centre: Inverclyde, a resident sustained wrist fractures following a fall from a bicycle during an off-site cycling activity, and at National Centre: Glenmore Lodge, a visitor participating in a kayaking course struck a boulder, resulting in a head impact and brief loss of consciousness. While both incidents involved injuries of a nature that can be reportable under RIDDOR, they occurred as a direct result of participation in sporting activities – injuries arising from sporting activities are not reportable under RIDDOR unless there is a clear failure of work-related controls or conditions.

Following this review, the Accident, Incident and Near Miss Reporting Standard was strengthened to formalise the escalation and validation process for potential RIDDOR incidents – all incidents under consideration for RIDDOR reporting are now subject to review in consultation with the Health and Safety Officer and, where appropriate, the external competent advisor prior to submission. This ensures a consistent and informed approach to decision-making and provides assurance that statutory reporting requirements are applied accurately, with robust internal controls in place to support effective classification and governance of reportable incidents.

Absence monitoring

8.1 Absence overview

There were a recorded 209 instances of absence reported by managers across **sportscotland** (the number of separate occasions an employee is away from work, regardless of the duration of each absence), which is a total of 1,845.94 working days lost – an increase of 50.42% on the previous year, which is predominantly driven by long term absence.

8.2 Absenteeism reasons (excluding annual leave)

As with previous years, the highest absence reasons continue to be linked to general illness, such as cold or influenza, COVID symptoms, sickness and nausea, stomach bug, and viral. These account for 63.16% instances of absence.

8.3 Long term absences (over 28 days in duration)

In relation to the length of absences, 16 instances out of the recorded 209 were categorised as long-term sickness. This is an increase of 6 from the previous year. Although the increase in the number of long-term sickness cases increased slightly, the total number of working days lost due to long-term sickness increased by 598 working days compared with the previous year, reflecting a higher proportion of

prolonged absences. This increase in long-term absence duration was the primary factor contributing to the overall rise in absence during the reporting period.

The increase in long-term sickness absence was largely attributable to a small number of prolonged absence cases. The highest absence reasons were cancer (408 working days lost), back and spinal disorders (255 working days lost), and surgery-related absences (173 working days lost). These conditions often require long courses of treatment, recuperation and rehabilitation, with employees requiring sufficient time away from work to support their recovery and enable a safe and sustainable return to their role.

Learning and Development

- 9.1** During the year, the organisation implemented an upgraded Learning Management System (LMS), bringing all training and development activity into a single, centralised platform. This enhancement represents a significant improvement in how learning is accessed, managed and recorded across **sportscotland**, with improved functionality including automated renewal reminders.

As part of this update, the health and safety training provision was strengthened through the introduction of tailored e-learning modules aligned to the organisations operational environments, sites and policies. Content has been personalised for our various roles and responsibilities, ensuring that employees receive targeted training relevant to their activities, such as risk assessment completion, manual handling, control of substances hazardous to health and use of display screen equipment.

A manager dashboard has subsequently been introduced, providing line managers with oversight of their teams' training records and enabling monitoring of completion of mandatory modules within required timeframes. This strengthens governance and accountability at a local level, ensuring that training compliance is actively managed and addressed where required.

The overall average e-learning completion rate of 91.7% provides further assurance that health and safety training is proportionate, role-specific and effectively monitored, supporting compliance with statutory requirements and strengthening overall health and safety awareness across all departments.

Priorities for 2026/27

- 10** As with previous years, there will be a requirement to work together with managers to achieve the below priorities.

Health and safety risk register review

A comprehensive review of the health and safety risk register will be undertaken to ensure that key organisational risks remain relevant, accurately assessed and supported by appropriate control measures. The review will provide assurance that emerging risks are identified and risk rating remain proportionate. This will support the

ongoing development of a proactive and risk-based approach to health and safety management.

Creation of health and safety legal register

A legal register will be developed to provide a central record of the legislation, regulations and approved guidance applicable to the **sportscotland's** activities. The register will support the identification, monitoring and review of legal requirements, helping to ensure ongoing compliance and informing the review of standards, risk assessments and operational practices. Establishing the register will strengthen governance arrangements by providing greater assurance that health and safety obligations are understood, regularly reviewed and effectively managed.

Noise and vibration assessments

Noise and vibration assessments will be completed across the National Centres to better understand employee exposure to these occupational health hazards and ensure compliance with statutory requirements. The findings will be used to identify any necessary improvements to equipment, working practices or control measures, helping to reduce the risk of long-term health impacts.

Continued development of the health and safety management system

Continued work on developing the health and safety management system with further standards required for the organisation which include Events Management; Construction Design and Management; Provision and Use of Work Equipment; and, Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment.

This will continue with ongoing discussions between the Health and Safety Operational Group and external health and safety advisors to ensure the additional standards apply to the organisational needs.

Continued implementation of the health and safety management system

Following the completion of the annual review of health and safety standards, the organisation will continue to implement and communicate the management system through employee engagement sessions and workshops. This will support consistent understanding and application of health and safety requirements across the organisation.

Support from SMT, the Leadership Group and the Learning and Development Team will be required to ensure employees understand the standards and how they apply to their roles and responsibilities.

Table 1: Incidents reported across sportscotland sites

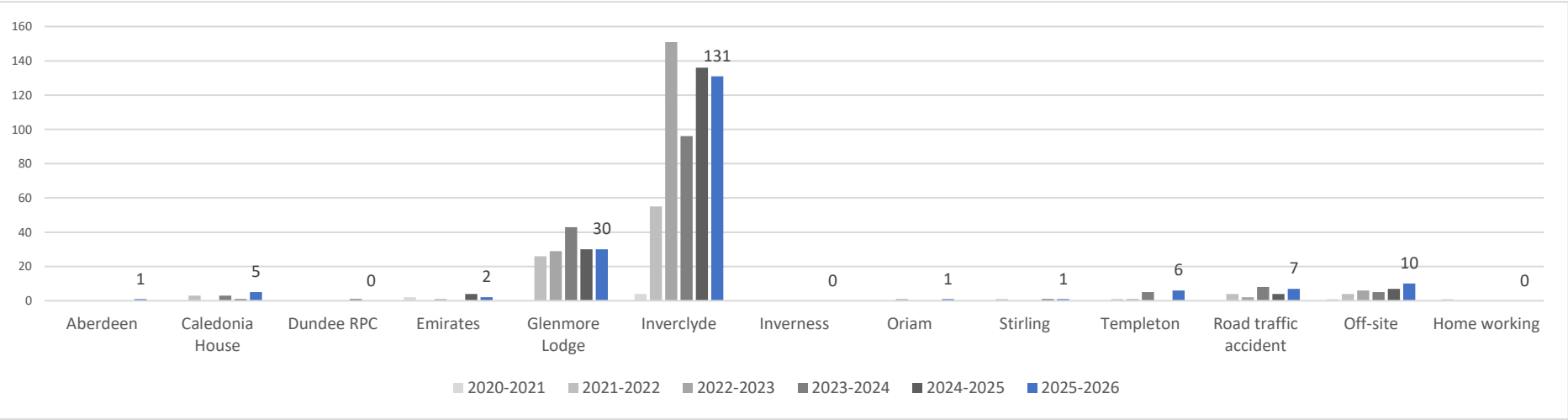


Table 2: Type of incidents reported at National Centres

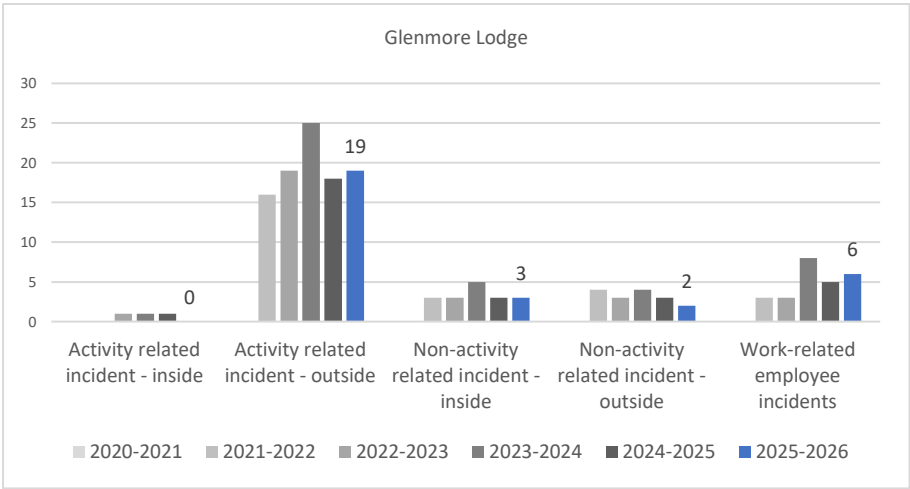
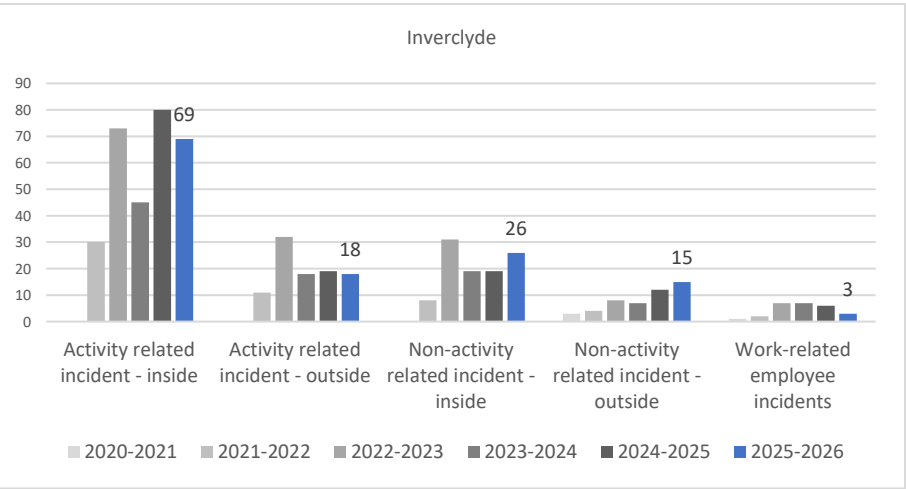


Table 3: Instances of absences across organisation areas (number of separate occasions an individual is away from work)

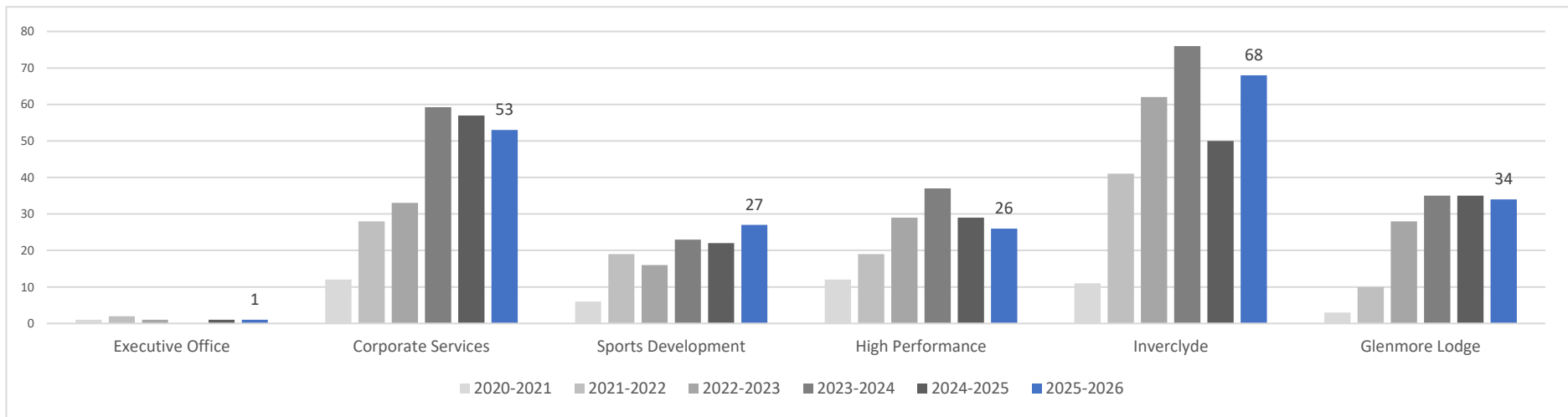


Table 4: Working days lost across organisation areas

