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## Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

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### Update on casework volumes and types over 2019-2022 calendar years.

- Purpose:
1. To update members on casework handling of all types including monthly breakdowns and summary of key types by volume.
  2. To consider findings, trends and other relevant issues arising.

### Background

1. The National Park Authority has a number of duties and responsibilities requiring provision of advice to internal colleagues and key partners alongside responding to both general enquiries from the public and also complaints over obstructions to and/or interference with the exercise of statutory access rights.
2. In order to both monitor and process these tasks a casework record is maintained. This 'log' records numbers and types of casework including dates, handling times and a record of contacts made during processing.

### Casework Handling

3. Management of casework workload is an ongoing consideration with the present system allocating casework on the basis of a 50:50 split between the two Outdoor Access Officers in post. Depending on the complexity or nature of any given case collaboration and discussion often takes place towards ensuring balanced decision making. Processing, recording and allocation is supported by an administrative support officer.

### Analysis of Annual Records

4. The current record shows a relative decrease in casework for the 12 month review period versus 2021 figures with an early indication of overall casework volumes returning towards pre- Covid levels i.e. 2019. It is noted however that 'access rights' related cases (circa 40) have remained at a similar level over the years 2020-2022, being higher than baseline.
5. Records for the **12 month review period** vs baseline compare as follows:



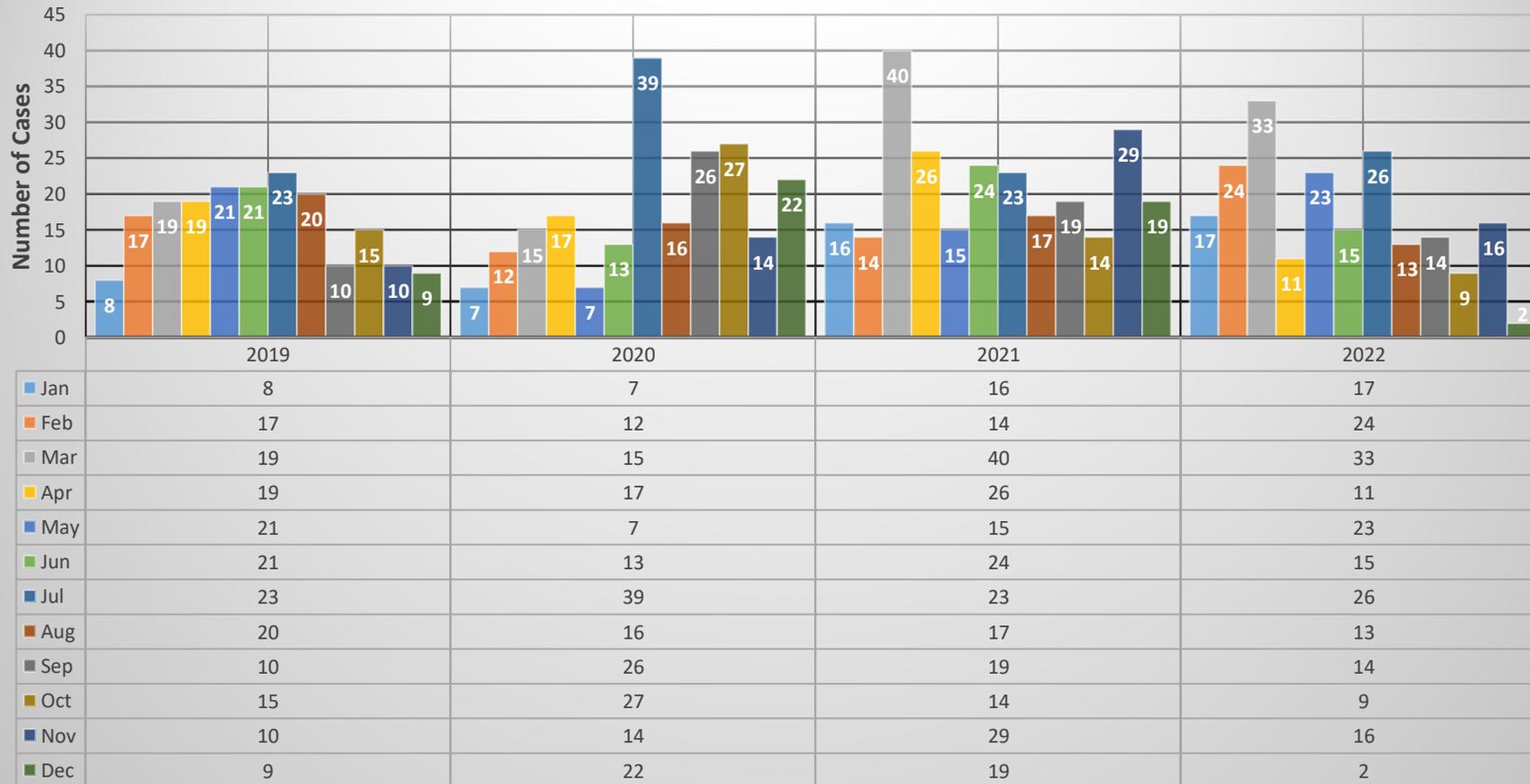
- 2022 – **194** cases = 1% over baseline
  - 2021 – **259** cases = 35% over baseline
  - 2020 – **215** cases = 12% over baseline
  - 2019 – **192** cases = baseline
6. It is probable that 2022 maintained a higher number (compare pre-pandemic) of UK residents holidaying at home (i.e. within the UK) due to pandemic related issues continuing to affect international travel with these higher numbers seen feeding into the levels of external casework experienced. The logic here relates that a greater number of visitors to the National Park means a concurrently higher probability of access related problems arising and thence being reported. There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest the number of campervans and mobile homes being used has seen a sustained increase since the pre-pandemic period and this persists.
7. Planning and forestry consultations saw a reduction over the period while ‘funding’ casework dropped out as a consequence of AECS Improving Public Access grant opportunities being withdrawn by SG.
8. Casework handling capacity and procedures have proven resilient to fluctuations in numbers and types of issues overall although any sustained upward trend requires monitoring in respect of staff capacity. Casework is reactive and tends to limit capacity elsewhere when an increase in caseload is evident.

## **Proposed Changes to Future Casework Monitoring and Reporting**

9. As of the current calendar year we have modified the monitoring approach adopted in our casework handling procedures to focus primarily on matters pertaining to the delivery of statutory consultations (forestry and planning) and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Section 13 duty to uphold access rights. In effect this means monitoring and reporting going forward will be focussed on instances where obstructions to access rights are the subject. A key purpose of this to align monitoring and reporting with NP Park Plan outcomes and maintain a focus on statistics and trends relating to obstruction to access specifically such they relate to Sections 13 and 14 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
10. Future reporting to the LOAF will take a similar statistics-based format as is currently the case however will reflect the aforementioned change in focus.



### Casework Totals by Month/Year: all Categories

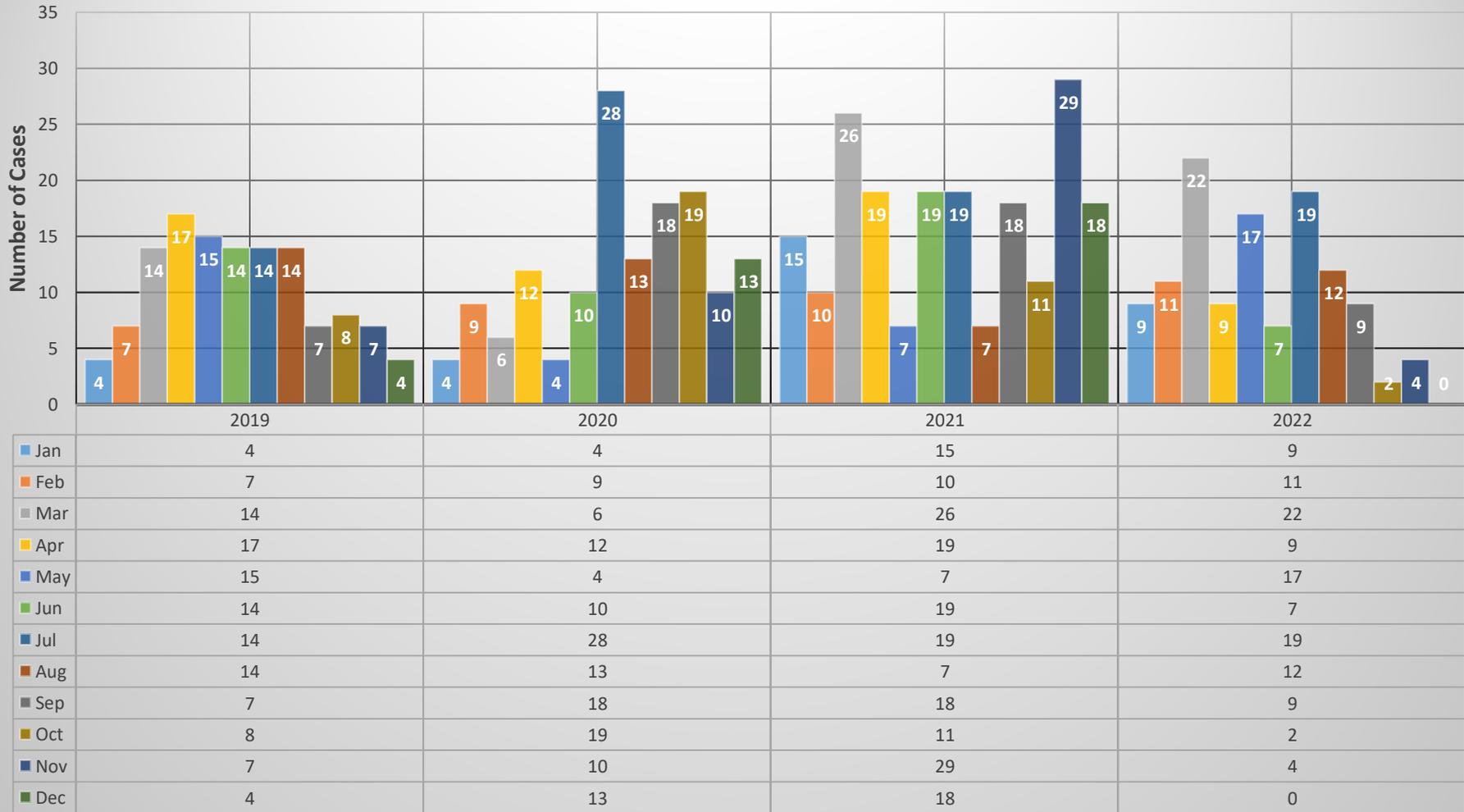


Month & Year

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



### Casework Totals by Month/Year: all Categories ex. Planning & Forestry

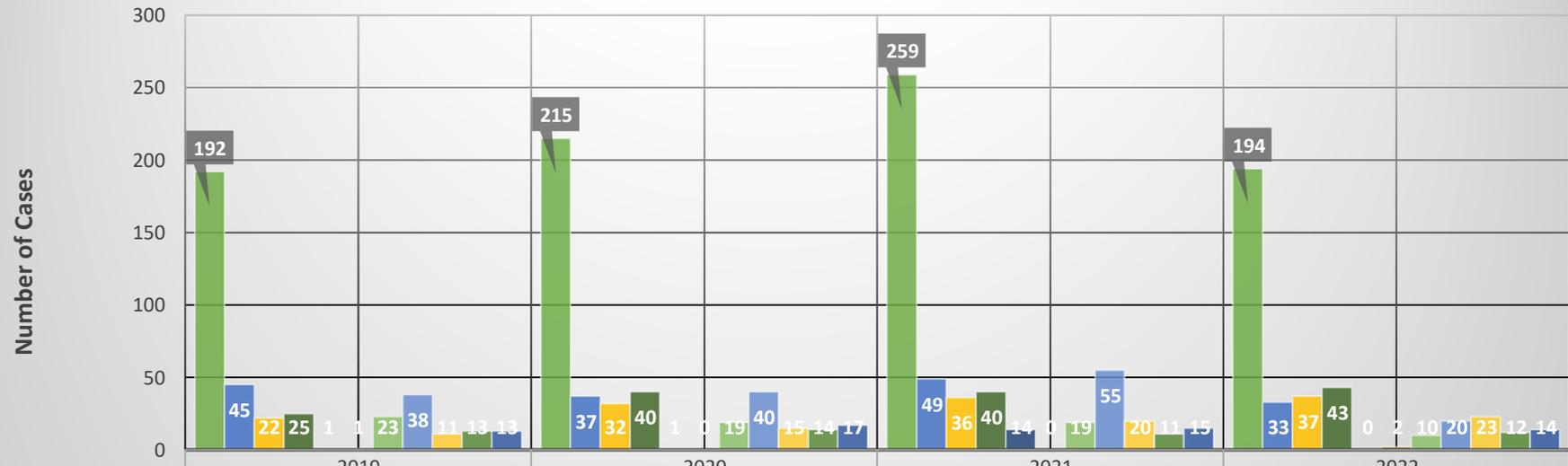


Month & Year

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



### Casework Totals by Year/Category



■ Grand Total for Year	192	215	259	194
■ Planning Consultns	45	37	49	33
■ Forestry Consultns	22	32	36	37
■ Access Rights	25	40	40	43
■ Funding	1	1	14	0
■ Land Ownership	1	0	0	2
■ Obstruction	23	19	19	10
■ Other	38	40	55	20
■ Path Maintenance	11	15	20	23
■ Signage	13	14	11	12
■ Tourism	13	17	15	14

■ Grand Total for Year ■ Planning Consultns ■ Forestry Consultns ■ Access Rights ■ Funding ■ Land Ownership ■ Obstruction ■ Other ■ Path Maintenance ■ Signage ■ Tourism



**Cairngorms**  
National Park Authority

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'  
**Mhonaidh Ruaidh**