

7 August 2026

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons

CT/26/23

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

Further to the evidence session held with the Committee on 9 July 2026 on *Restoration and Renewal (R&R): Costing and governance*, I committed to write back to you with further information on two specific points requested by the Committee: a list of health and safety incidents in the Palace of Westminster and further information about logistical plans for the works to the Northern Estate. The second of these has been provided in a separate annex; we would like to request the Committee does not publish the annex because it outlines plans which are subject to discussion with external bodies.

Palace of Westminster health and safety incidents

As set out on page 9 of the R&R Client Board's costed proposals report, 36 fire incidents, 12 asbestos-related incidents and 19 stonemasonry incidents were recorded within the Palace of Westminster between 2016 and the publication of the report in February 2026.¹ Since publication of the report a further three fire incidents have been recorded, bringing the total number of reported fire incidents to 39. As previously requested by the Committee, the Clerks provide an annual update on asbestos-related incidents and the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) across the Parliamentary Estate and will continue to do so for the duration of the Committee's inquiry into the R&R Programme.²

In line with its statutory responsibilities, Parliament records all health and safety incidents to help identify causes, learn lessons and reduce the risk of similar incidents occurring in future. As requested, I can confirm the total number of reported incidents within the Palace since 2016 to 30 June 2026, broken down by category, as set out below. The definitions for the different type of incidents are:

- i. **Accident:** An unplanned event that results in injury, ill health, or damage to property;
- ii. **Near Miss:** An event that did not cause harm but could have under slightly different circumstances;
- iii. **Hazard:** the potential to cause harm, including ill health and injury, damage to property, plant, products or the environment, production losses or increased liabilities.

Reported Safety Incidents in the Palace of Westminster by Year			
Year	Accident total	Near Miss total	Hazard total
2016	95	24	1
2017	83	44	6
2018	72	29	22
2019	78	32	19
2020*	47	20	15

¹ committees.parliament.uk/publications/51442/documents/285576/default/

² committees.parliament.uk/publications/42278/documents/210123/default/

2021*	41	19	18
2022	82	37	39
2023	86	59	61
2024	87	77	95
2025	109	88	115
2026 (YTD)	52	55	37

**Key coronavirus pandemic restrictions were in place during 2020 and 2021*

Further information on the constituent sub-categories of these incidents is provided in the Appendix.

All safety incidents, including those referenced by the Committee Chair at the evidence session (Q 49) which had been provided to the Committee via a freedom of information request, are published on the Parliamentary intranet (ParliNet) and made available to the wider parliamentary community. These monthly safety reports provide further analysis of reported incidents, including a breakdown of the constituent incident categories and trends in safety performance. This approach promotes transparency and supports the identification, assessment and effective management of safety risks across the Palace of Westminster and the wider Parliamentary Estate, contributing to the development of a positive and proactive safety culture.

It is the responsibility of everyone working in Parliament to report health and safety incidents. As part of the Safety Transformation Programme, which the Clerk of the House and the then Clerk of the Parliaments updated the Committee on in their correspondence in January 2026, work is underway to continue to encourage proactive reporting across Parliament.

In addition to health and safety incidents, on average each month sees around 2,900 reactive maintenance jobs raised, approximately 87% of which are repairs completed on an initial visit, together with around 380 minor works. Between 2021/22 and 2023/24 reactive maintenance tasks increased by 70%.

I hope this information is helpful and I look forward to any recommendations from the Committee following the evidence session.

Yours sincerely



Charlotte Simmonds
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Appendix: Sub-categories of health and safety incidents in the Palace of Westminster 2016-2026

Chart A: Breakdown of reported accident types

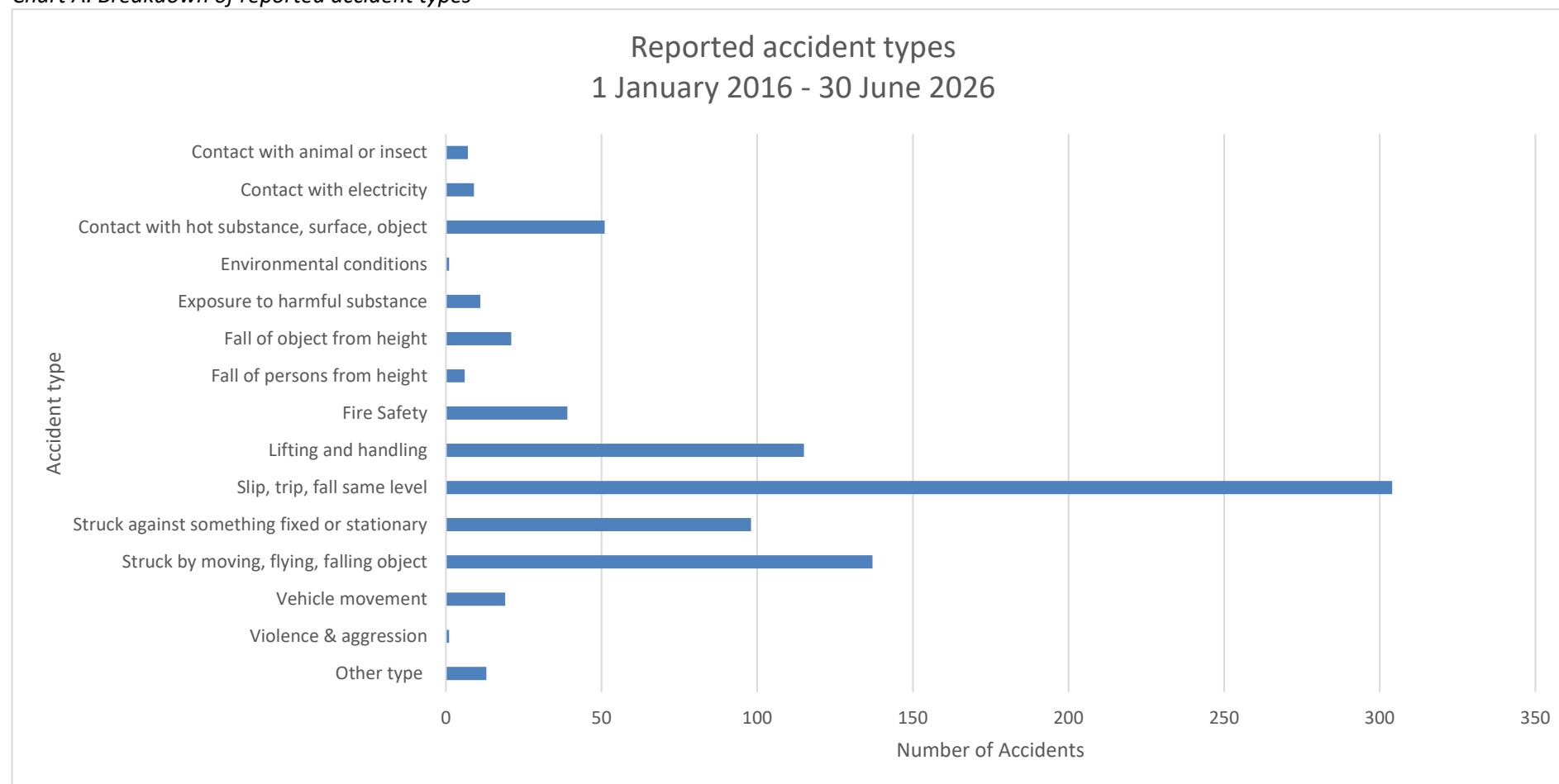


Chart B: Breakdown of reported near miss types

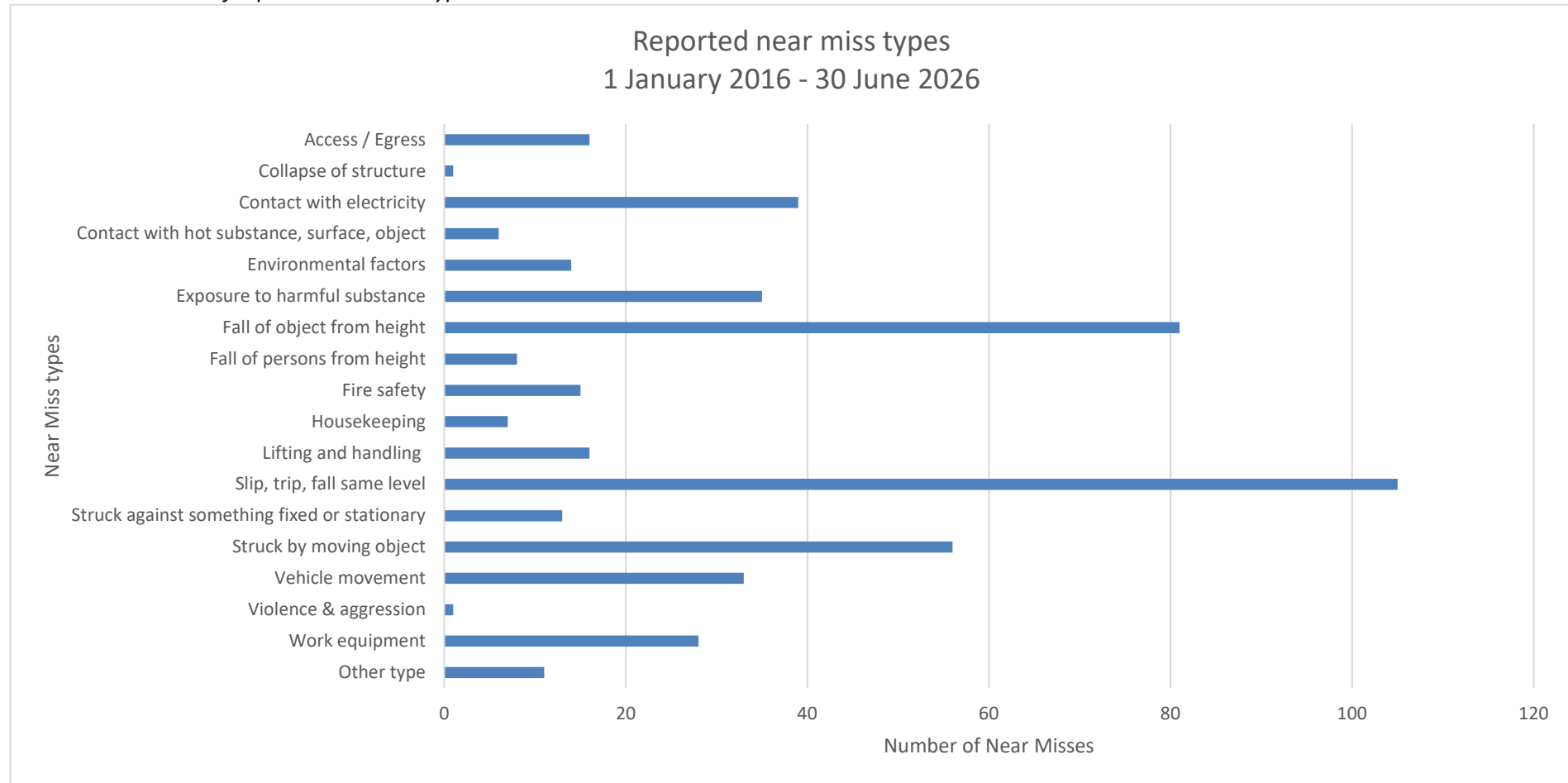


Chart C: Breakdown of reported hazard types

