



water safety
Scotland

Towards zero drownings: building a future where everyone in Scotland can be safe in, on and around the water

Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy 2026-2030





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Foreword

As Minister for Victims and Community Safety, it is my priority that we have a society in which people feel, and are, safer in their communities. In the context of drowning prevention, this means supporting individuals to be safe from unintentional harm, such as from accidents in our waterways. Our approach to achieving this is grounded in prevention and early intervention and as part of this, Scottish Government has provided long term support to Water Safety Scotland to deliver a coordinated approach to drowning prevention activity.

I am therefore very pleased to support Scotland's latest Drowning Prevention Strategy, which outlines the direction of travel and tangible actions to progress prevention activity and reduce the risk of drownings in our waterways over the next four years.

Central to this strategy is the need for continued focus, commitment and collaboration by water safety partners to build on the progress already made so far, as only our collective efforts will help us to deliver the change we need. I am grateful to partners for their steadfast involvement and contribution to support this work to date, and in time look forward to seeing how further collaboration can really deliver on this vital preventative work.

I also recognise that to prevent accidental drownings, we must double down on our efforts to reach those at the greatest risk of water-related incidents, as well as achieve greater awareness amongst the general public of the dangers of the water. I know significant progress has already been made in realising this, and plans on how this will be built upon is well set out in the strategy.

While further work undoubtedly remains, I am encouraged by the progress made so far and that there has been an overall decline in accidental drownings since the launch of the initial strategy in 2018. Through this successive strategy, partners have a solid foundation for the ongoing effort and I look forward to continuing to move towards our shared ambition of having safer, more resilient communities.

Kirsten Oswald MSP
Minister for Victims and Community Safety



Introduction

Our vision is:

Towards zero drownings: building a future where everyone in Scotland can be safe in, on and around the water.

Water Safety Scotland (WSS) is a partnership of organisations and individuals that aims to reduce water-related fatalities through a consistent approach to drowning prevention. It brings together a collaborative and integrated network providing a collective voice for Scotland to identify and resolve key issues related to drowning in Scotland. WSS provides the necessary structure and governance to help ensure that drowning prevention is managed and coordinated efficiently in Scotland.

In 2021, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the first ever resolution on global drowning preventionⁱ, recognising drowning as preventable and calling for coordinated, multisectoral action. In response, the World Health Assembly adopted its first drowning prevention resolution in 2023, supported by the UK, with a commitment to accelerate action on drowning prevention with immediate effect. This prompted the World Health Organization to establish the Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention and publish the first Global Strategy for Drowning Prevention in 2025ⁱⁱ.

Drawing on this global guidance and the National Water Safety Forum's UK Drowning Prevention Strategyⁱⁱⁱ, which sets out guiding principles for the UK nations, this strategy sets out a clear framework for Scotland that is grounded in the evidence and data and the practical realities of delivery in Scotland.



Figure 1: Relationship between global, UK and Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy



Scotland makes up the northern third of the UK and has more than 5 million residents with incredible and vast landscapes including thousands of lochs and miles of coastline. Scotland's drowning rate has historically been higher than some of its UK neighbours – with recent analysis showing a drowning rate of 0.86 per 100,000 people in comparison to the UK average of 0.42 over the years 2019–2023ⁱⁱⁱ. Drowning and Incident Review (DIR) data, which comprise the most complete dataset within Scotland, has also shown a decrease over the last few years, coinciding with improved resourcing and huge efforts by WSS. Scotland's first ever Drowning Prevention Strategy^{iv} has been reviewed periodically over the past eight years^{v,vi,vii} which has provided insights into several successful initiatives including free education resources for schools, the introduction of the Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) groups, a consistent water safety message, the introduction of DIR, activity-specific advice and numerous guidance documents for the management of water safety (see Figure 2 for further achievements).

These efforts, backed by the Scottish Government and a Ministerial Action Plan on Water Safety^{viii}, have managed to prevent any major increase in drowning deaths despite increasing pressures from climate change and the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to more people engaging in outdoor and water-based recreation^{ix}.

Every drowning is a tragedy and the impact significant – affecting families, friends and communities, as well as placing a significant burden on society through years of life lost. For example, 2023 data show 1076.2 years of life lost each year to accidental drowning in Scotland with an estimated societal cost of about £64,572,000^x. More must therefore be done to ensure a reduction in water-related deaths.

This strategy builds upon the work of Scotland's first Drowning Prevention Strategy (2018–2026)^{iv} (see Figure 2 for key outputs), but crucially, it takes new steps to engage partners and communities across Scotland. In order to achieve the vision set out in this strategy, WSS and its partners must continue a collaborative approach across sectors, organisations and communities to optimise efforts to reduce drowning risk, prevent water-related harms and save lives.



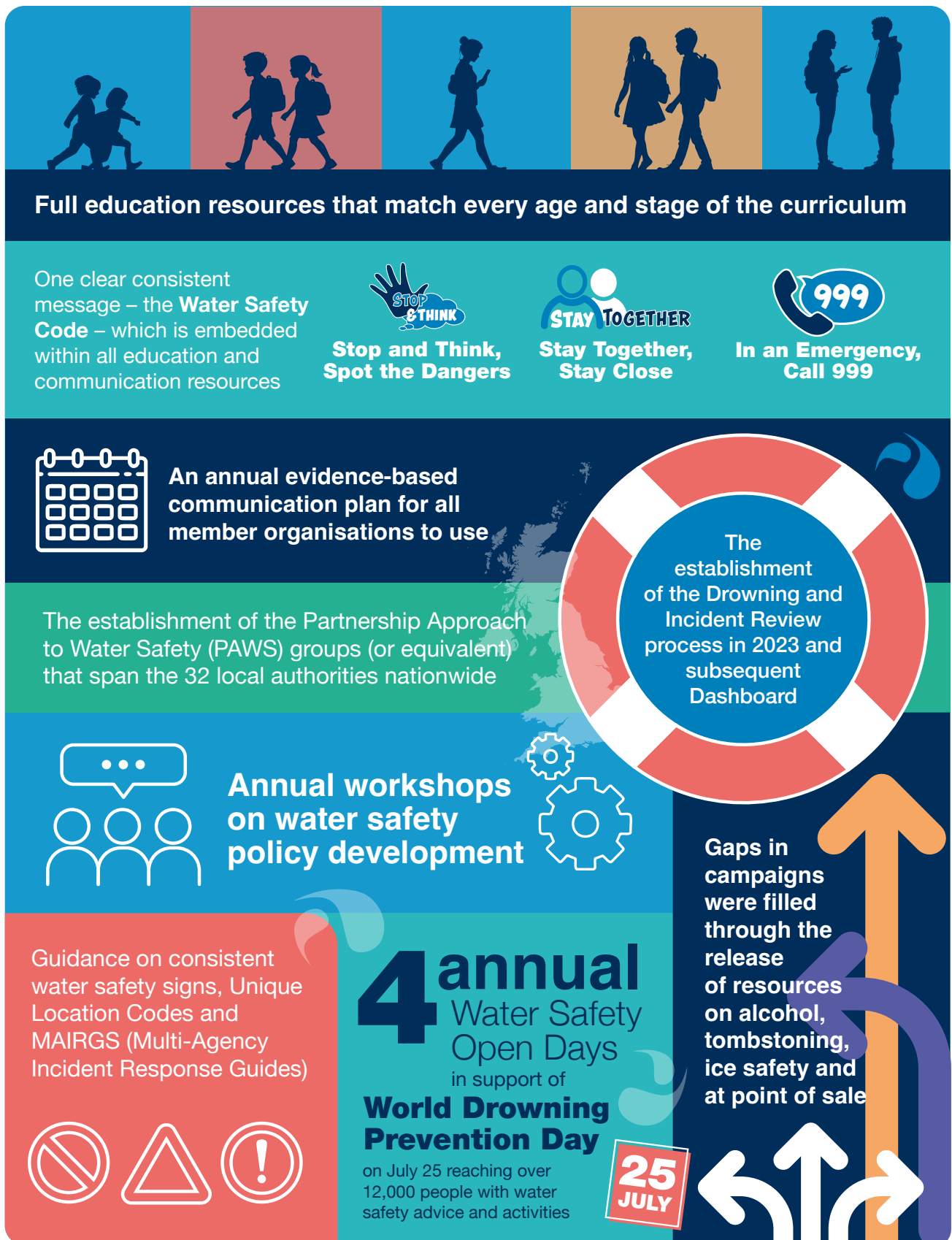


Figure 2: Key outputs of Water Safety Scotland over the past decade, through Scotland's first Drowning Prevention Strategy



Understanding the issue (data and context)

The development of this Strategy for Scotland has been strongly supported by improvements in data quality through the implementation of the Drowning and Incident Review (DIR) process. Improved data enable a better understanding of risk, more targeted prevention efforts and improved monitoring of outcomes. These considerations are central to the approach and priorities set out in this Strategy.

Key data insights

Over five years (2019 to 2023¹):

There were **463** water-related fatalities in Scotland

Accidental water-related outcomes² accounted for 51 per cent (236 people) of the fatalities, while a further 42 per cent (194 people) were suspected suicide. The remaining 7 per cent were inconclusive or crime (33 people)



51
per cent

Accidental

42
per cent

Suspected suicides

7
per cent

Inconclusive
or crime

On average, each year, there were 47 accidental water-related fatalities in Scotland



The following data include only DIR data of 97 fatalities from 2023 to 2025.

Eight in ten accidental water-related fatalities were males; accidental water-related fatalities were most frequent in **males aged 50 to 59**



95
per cent

of those who died as a result of an **accidental water-related fatality** were **White**



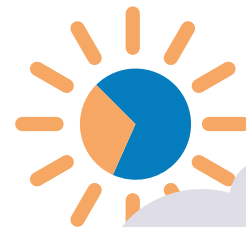
65 per cent of accidental water-related fatalities involved individuals who were **residents of the local authority area** where the incident occurred



More than half of accidental water-related fatalities happened at **inland locations** (65 per cent)

31 per cent

of accidental water-related fatalities happened in the **summer season**



Alcohol/drugs were reported as being present in **44 per cent** of fatalities



51
per cent

The majority of accidental water-related fatalities **occurred during a recreational activity**



A full data analysis is available for Scotland in Annex 1: watersafetyscotland.org.uk/about/strategy

1 Data for 2021 to 2023 are sourced from the updated Water Incident Database (WAID) dataset, while 2024 to 2025 data are sourced from the DIR dataset; both sources are used to enable trend analysis across the full period.
2 Accidental refers to accidental and natural cause outcomes.



From insight to action

Once high quality data are collected, it can be analysed to identify the interventions most likely to reduce deaths. The global framework of people, places and contexts can help in this regard but is intended to guide rather than exclude – our long-term vision remains the same: building a future where everyone in Scotland can be safe in, on and around the water.

People:

Drowning patterns vary by life stage, behaviour and vulnerability. In Scotland, males – especially those aged 50 to 59 and 20 to 29 – experience a disproportionate share of accidental drownings, requiring tailored engagement methods.

Places:

Drowning occurs more frequently in some locations than in others. Inland waters (especially rivers) account for most accidental fatalities. Coastal environments, especially beaches and harbours remain a major source of harm.

Contexts:

A significant proportion of drowning occurs during every day, unplanned exposure to water – such as walking near rivers and lochs or along coastal paths – where hazards may be underestimated and prevention systems can be weak. Additionally, angling and open water swimming account for a significant proportion of water-related deaths in Scotland and therefore require a particular focus.

Vision

Our vision is:

Towards zero drownings: building a future where everyone in Scotland can be safe in, on and around the water.

Outlined below is a summary of the key values and functions defined in the UK Drowning Prevention Strategyⁱⁱⁱ. These form the foundation of this strategy, guiding its direction and ensuring consistency with national priorities.



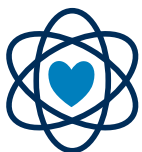
VISION

Towards zero drownings: building a future where everyone in the UK can be safe in, on and around the water.



MISSION

The UK Drowning Prevention Strategy sets out the NWSF's key principles for preventing drowning by informing consistent and complementary strategies across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



VALUES

- Collaboration • Equity
- Informed action • Compassion



SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS

- Data and evidence • Communication
- Education • Policy

Figure 3: The concepts underpinning the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy



Informed by the vision and these core values, WSS has formed clear priorities and targeted interventions to reduce drowning through functional subgroups, which are consistent with the UK strategy:

- Data subgroup
- Education subgroup
- Communications subgroup
- 'Blue light' Control Room subgroup

The remainder of this strategy outlines clear aims, objectives and actions, which will be developed into targeted projects delivered by WSS, its subgroups and members. This is illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Scotland's strategic delivery framework



Aims

The following aims will achieve the vision of **Towards zero drownings: building a future where everyone in Scotland can be safe in, on and around the water.**

- Ensure water-related fatality data are collected and used to inform prevention activities
- Strengthen water safety education across Scotland
- All local authorities and major landowners should have an active water safety policy
- Increase public awareness of water-related risks and ensure consistent, innovative and high-impact water safety messaging
- Strengthen inter-agency communication, capability and collaboration in water-related Search and Rescue (SAR)
- Strengthen collaborative action to prevent suicide at water.

AIM

Ensure water-related fatality data are collected and used to inform prevention activities

Data play a critical role in understanding the issue of drowning by providing insights into patterns, risks and behaviours which can help to inform targeted interventions to save lives. The Drowning and Incident Review (DIR) system was developed for Scotland and aims to ensure a comprehensive review of each accidental water-related fatality to gather relevant data that may help to prevent future incidents. The system has been evaluated, is endorsed widely^{xi} and captures all known water-related fatality data in Scotland. It must be maintained and actively used to support ongoing prevention efforts. Consideration should also be given to enhancing efforts around the collection of non-fatal incident data.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Sustain the DIR process as the lead collation system for Scotland

- All emergency services continue to input into the DIR process
- The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) continue to support the management of the DIR system infrastructure
- Explore opportunities to support the increased uptake of the DIR system across SAR organisations.

Collate and publish water-related fatality statistics

- Verify and publish live water-related fatality data via the online DIR dashboard
- Release an annual press release and highlight real-time DIR data
- Explore opportunities to better understand how non-fatal incident data could be captured and utilised.



Audit DIRs for local implementation, support Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) groups with resources and capture learnings to inform national asset development

- In line with DIR guidance, audit DIRs to verify local recommendation implementation
- Support the PAWS groups by providing advice, assets, and resources aligned with DIR recommendations, while capturing local learning to inform the national development of future assets.

CASE STUDY

The DIR process

The DIR process is Scotland's drowning data collection system that captures drowning data, reviews individual drowning deaths and suggests potential measures that could prevent the reoccurrence of similar events. Created by RoSPA and SFRS, and supported by the SAR organisations in Scotland, the DIR process has been running since May 2023. It was originally created in response to ongoing data challenges, including insufficient details and high numbers of incidents recorded as "unknown". The DIR follows a consistent and methodical process that can be seen below in Figure 5 and is described in detail in the DIR guidance^{xii}.

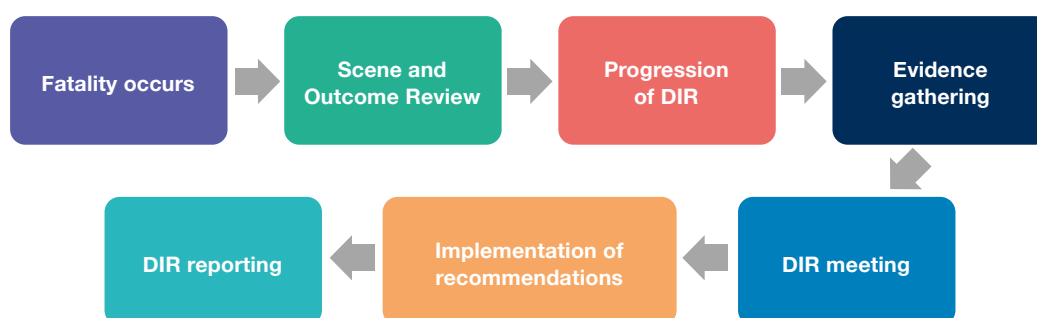


Figure 5: The DIR process

The process has resulted in tangible benefits for drowning prevention in Scotland. Since the introduction of the DIR process, there are no "unknown" drowning fatalities in Scotland, all water-related fatalities are classified. The process provides high quality, rich data with insights that directly inform and strengthen Water Safety Scotland's (WSS) prevention efforts. Some public-facing data are also published and updated monthly in a [live dashboard](#). Finally, the process has led to the suggestion of more than 250 recommendations and controls that may prevent a future fatality. Overall, the process has significantly strengthened data collection and enhanced the evidence base needed to inform effective interventions in Scotland.

AIM

Strengthen water safety education across Scotland

Education is critical to drowning prevention, providing essential lifesaving knowledge and skills. WSS, in partnership with Education Scotland, has created free water safety-education resources that align to every age and stage of the Curriculum for Excellence. Additional workshops have also been created for external practitioners to deliver in schools, in colleges and with youth groups. Promoting these resources widely is key to ensuring that everyone in Scotland benefits from water safety education. However, more must be done to raise awareness of these materials and to extend educational efforts to other groups, including adults.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Develop and embed basic aquatic skills for all children

- Promote the national delivery of primary-school swimming to ensure every child in Scotland has the opportunity to learn essential aquatic life skills using the National Primary School swimming framework
- Emphasise the importance of these skills by integrating them into learning experiences, alongside other key life skills
- Promote opportunities to progress these skills (FLOAT, in particular) in outdoor environments, building on foundations developed in pools.

Improve awareness and knowledge of water safety education through schools, teachers and pupils

- Promote learning to swim for all ages
- Work with youth organisations (e.g. the Scouts, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh) to embed the Water Safety Code within relevant programmes
- Encourage the adoption of experiential learning approaches and offer guidance to local areas
- Create CPD courses/resources for teachers to increase confidence when teaching water safety
- Expand the availability of WSS's school resources and workshops through wider platforms and promotion.

Help equip communities with the skills and confidence to prevent drownings and respond effectively to water emergencies

- Provide an online education resource for adults on water safety to enhance skills and confidence around water
- Signpost access to lifesaving, first-aid and CPR training to improve confidence for response
- Collaborate with partners to strengthen the public's confidence in responding to water emergencies
- Promote bystander rescue projects that improve rescue skills such as the Respect the Water campaign and throwline training to adults
- Support the principle of deploying trained lifeguards where appropriate.



CASE STUDY

Embedding Water Safety through the National Primary School Swimming Framework

The National Primary School Swimming Framework (NPSSF) places water safety skills and knowledge at its core, ensuring children across Scotland gain access to this vital, lifesaving education. Central to its design is the integration of the Water Safety Code, providing consistent, clear messaging to all pupils.



**Stop and Think,
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,
Stay Close**



**In an Emergency,
Call 999**

Figure 6: The Water Safety Code

The NPSSF supports a blended approach to learning. Pupils develop practical, skills-based competencies during swimming sessions in curriculum time, while classroom learning is reinforced through the WSS education resources. By signposting teachers and school swimming providers to these materials, the NPSSF strengthens understanding beyond the pool, embedding water safety across the wider curriculum.

Since its launch in 2024, early impact is evident. The number of local authorities providing water safety information and resources to schools, parents and guardians has increased from 15 to 19. This reflects growing recognition of the importance of equipping children with both swimming ability and water safety awareness.

Schools are also reporting improved in-pool progression in pupils' water safety skills and knowledge, alongside positive impacts across wider curriculum areas such as health and wellbeing. This demonstrates the value of a structured, consistent approach.

With the recent Scottish Government budget commitment to support national roll-out, the NPSSF will expand its reach. By ensuring consistent, aligned messaging and access to high-quality resources, it will play a key role in helping improve water safety skills and knowledge for children across Scotland.

AIM

All local authorities and major landowners³ should have an active water safety policy

A water safety policy enables consistency, efficiency and accountability within drowning prevention work. WSS has produced clear step-by-step guidance for the creation of water safety policies, as well as workshops and drop-in sessions to provide vital discussion and support to local authorities and major landowners across Scotland^{xiii}. This work must continue in order to ensure consistent implementation and sustained progress in water safety.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Monitor and record the number of local authorities that have adopted a water safety policy

- Analyse and report on the adoption of water safety policies
- Report on whether local authorities are reviewing their water safety policy at regular intervals.

Support all 32 local authorities to develop and adopt a water-safety policy, ensuring guidance, resources, and engagement

- Provide free, annual workshops for local authorities and landowners
- Provide one-to-one support and advice to local authorities and landowners, prioritising the highest-risk areas.

Support any proposed UK legislation that would require all major landowners to have a water safety policy

- Contribute to any relevant UK-wide working groups and initiatives.

Support PAWS groups to engage with key landowners whilst also identifying and addressing high-risk areas through targeted action plans

- PAWS groups to work with WSS to identify key landowners in their areas and promote the importance of a water safety policy
- PAWS groups to identify high-risk areas and implement Hotspot Action Plans and Multi Agency Incident Response Guides (MAIRGs).

³ A major landowner is defined, for the purposes of this strategy, as an organisation or individual associated with locations in Scotland that record the highest frequency of deaths, as identified through DIR data. These may include, but are not limited to, large private estates, utility companies, forestry bodies and national organisations.



CASE STUDY

PAWS

PAWS is a multi agency framework designed for Scotland to strengthen water safety awareness by bringing individuals and organisations in local communities together to focus on local risks with national support. Every area of Scotland has a PAWS (or equivalent) group which provides a coordinated approach and aligns local areas with the national strategic direction set by WSS. PAWS groups focus on three key stages:

Prevention

The prevention phase focuses on raising consistent water safety awareness through education, engagement and communications. PAWS groups are encouraged to promote WSS education and communications toolkits and resources. This stage also includes the development of Hotspot Action Plans which set out coordinated, targeted actions to reduce risks at specific locations.

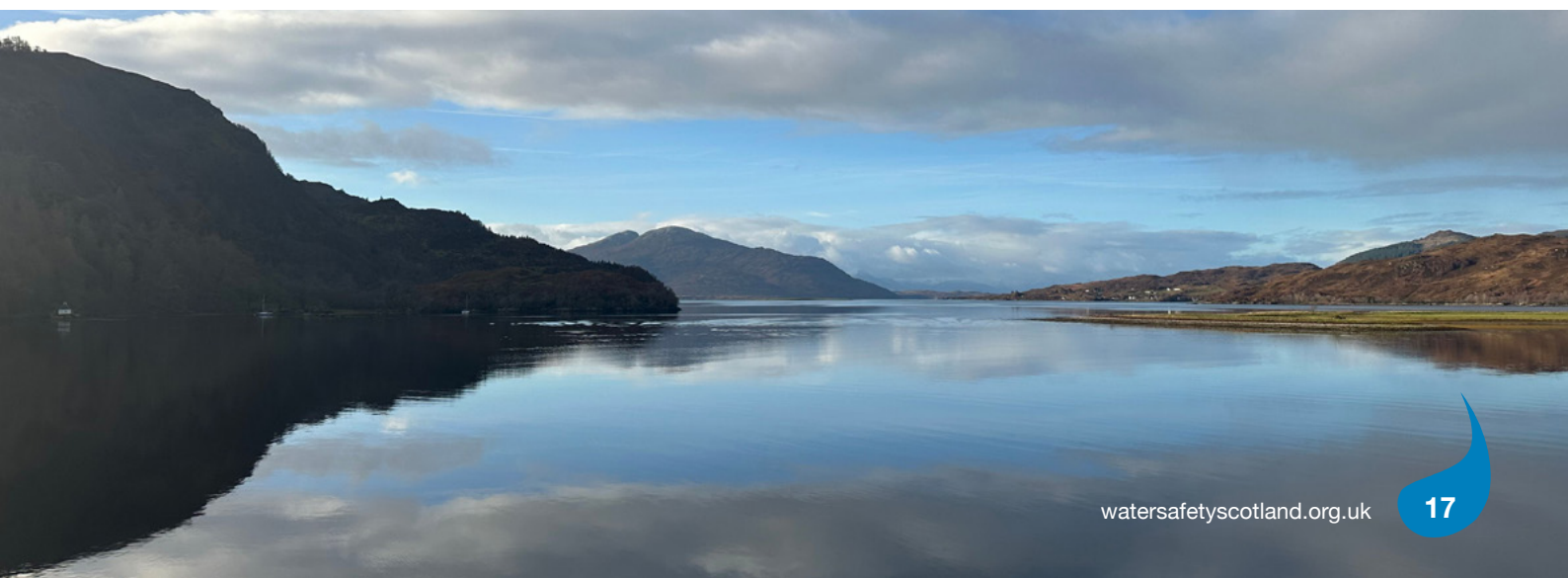
Improved Incident Response

This phase strengthens the way communities and agencies respond to water related emergencies. This includes training the public on interventions and supporting SAR organisations to undertake multi agency exercises. Through communications, consistent signage and unique location codes, calling the emergency services in a water-based emergency is a key message that is promoted to the public.

To help ensure effective incident response, PAWS groups are also encouraged to produce MAIRGs for high risk locations, which set out how agencies will work together in a coordinated way when an incident occurs, along with practice exercises to test capabilities.

Review

The review stage ensures that learnings from significant water related incidents lead to meaningful change. The DIR process helps PAWS groups examine local incidents in a structured way and identify actions that could reduce the likelihood of similar events in the future (this process is explained in detail on page 11).



AIM

Increase public awareness of water-related risks and ensure consistent, innovative and high-impact water safety messaging

Effective communications, campaigns and resources are key to improving public understanding of water safety. WSS, with expert input from partners, has developed annual water safety-communication toolkits to ensure cohesive, consistent messaging across Scotland. These resources have been vital in raising awareness of drowning prevention and it is essential to continue this work while also targeting key high-risk groups.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

Promote the Water Safety Code and communications campaigns across Scotland

- Use multiple channels to distribute key messages to the public
- Attend relevant events across Scotland to promote the Water Safety Code
- Strengthen communication to raise awareness of alcohol as a risk factor in water-related incidents
- Create annual communication toolkits for consistent messaging.

Improve water safety awareness regarding resilience and disaster reduction

- Work with Scottish Government and other relevant partners to improve resilience and disaster reduction communications, nationally and locally
- Collaborate with resilience partnerships and the PAWS groups to promote the integration of the Water Safety Code in community flood planning.

Maintain relevancy of water safety messaging within communication campaigns and digital messaging

- Using insights, engagement and interactions to regularly audit WSS's digital messaging
- Survey members of the public to understand their awareness of water-related risks to inform future messaging
- Explore potential new platforms and approaches of communication to spread awareness of key messages, such as working with trusted voices and advocates to reach key target audiences and high-risk groups.



CASE STUDY

The Loch Ken Family Water Safety Day

The Loch Ken Family Water Safety Day was first piloted in 2023 in response to growing recreational use of the loch during summer and a recognised need to raise awareness of water safety among families. The event aimed to highlight open water risks and promote safe participation in outdoor activities during the holiday period.

Delivered in collaboration with local emergency services and national and local organisations, the pilot successfully demonstrated demand for accessible and family-focused water safety education. It has since grown into an established annual community event, attracting more than 500 attendees each year. Over three years, more than 1,500 people are estimated to have taken part, significantly increasing exposure to the [Water Safety Code](#) within the community and among visiting families.

The event directly supports Scotland's [Water Safety Code](#) by raising awareness of water dangers, demonstrating safe practices and equipping families with knowledge on how to prepare, plan and behave safely around water. WSS resources are incorporated throughout, ensuring consistent messaging supported by qualified instructors delivering practical, on-water sessions using rafted canoes alongside a range of engaging safety-focused activities.

Funding is being sought to sustain delivery during 2026–2028, including staff, equipment, free activities and transport to ensure accessibility. Held during the school summer holidays, the event fosters long-term behaviour change during the highest-risk period for accidental drowning. Key learnings highlight the effectiveness of multi-agency partnership, practical demonstrations and recurring seasonal engagement in improving community water safety awareness.

National Water Safety Open Day

WSS, supported by Scottish Water, RoSPA, the SFRS, the Darcey Sunshine Foundation and other partners, has delivered a Water Safety Open Day annually for the past five years. The event supports World Drowning Prevention Day, a UN initiative that raises awareness of the impact of drowning on families and communities worldwide while promoting lifesaving water safety knowledge.

The Open Day provides an opportunity to highlight drowning prevention work across Scotland and promote key messages, particularly the [Water Safety Code](#). Member organisations host stalls to share advice, activities and information with the public. The event also features rescue demonstrations, including from the SFRS, alongside water-based taster sessions delivered by partners such as Paddle Scotland.

Collectively, these events have engaged more than 12,000 people, helping to improve awareness and encourage safer behaviours around water.



Credit: JFD media

AIM

Strengthen inter-agency communication, capability and collaboration in water-related SAR

SAR plays a vital role within drowning prevention efforts. It is crucial for the emergency services to collaborate with partners to enhance their capabilities in water-related SAR. WSS, through SAR partner agencies and independent lifeboats, has endorsed multi-agency exercises and produced various guidance documents and resources aligned with what to do in a water-based emergency. However, continued collaboration and further action are needed to strengthen preparedness and response efforts.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Strengthen inter-agency communication and collaboration

- Provide the opportunity for SAR organisations to meet to ensure an aligned approach to water-related incidents.

Share knowledge and insight between SAR organisations

- Develop and support mechanisms for SAR agencies to collectively share operational insight, incident trends and learning
- Review mechanisms and explore options to share appropriate risk information.

Embed joint prevention activity in SAR organisations

- Continue to develop and deliver collaborative education and community engagement through PAWS groups and in line with WSS priorities.



CASE STUDY

SAR in Scotland

SAR plays a vital role in Scotland's approach to water safety, providing lifesaving response while also contributing valuable operational insight that strengthens prevention. The experience SAR organisations bring through incident response, debriefs and multi-agency reviews offers a critical perspective on risk, behaviours and intervention opportunities, helping to shape national and local activity.

SAR agencies have been integral to Scotland's first Drowning Prevention Strategy^{iv} and the DIR process, contributing directly to reviews of accidental water-related deaths. Their operational knowledge enhances learning and informs future prevention efforts. Beyond DIR, SAR organisations have supported wider initiatives across Scotland, including the development of Unique Location Codes, improvements to water safety signage, enhanced hotspot action planning and strengthened multi-agency working through PAWS groups.

As an example of how this work is delivered in practice, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority convened a multi-agency meeting with SAR Partners and National Park representatives to address ongoing communication challenges during emergency incidents in the local area. This identified inconsistencies across the communications chain and led to the development of a live multi-agency exercise on Loch Lomond, as well as support through the Minister's Water Safety Action Plan^{viii} and WSS's Search and Rescue Subgroup. It also reinforced the importance of the Loch Lomond's MAIRG, which is now reviewed annually.

AIM

Strengthen collaborative action to prevent suicide at water

Suicide prevention relies on coordinated action as emphasised in **Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2026–2029**^{xiv}. While water-related suicide represents just one aspect of the issue, it is a preventable harm where collaborative approaches can have an impact. Although WSS is not the lead in this area, we will continue to support partners and help strengthen collective action.

- Support efforts to create safer environments that reduce the risk of suicide
- Contribute relevant data and intelligence to suicide prevention leads
- Support SAR organisations' responses to incidents relating to suicide water environments.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Regularly monitoring, evaluating and reviewing this strategy, its framework and function are essential to ensure its continued relevance and usefulness with changing demands, trends and technologies.

WSS will review this strategy annually through its Steering Group and will work with the NWSF annually for a full UK review of the strategic framework.

In addition, WSS's subgroups will develop workplans, including KPIs, to deliver these actions through defined projects (as set out in Figure 4). Progress against these workplans will be regularly monitored and reported, enabling adaptive delivery, clear accountability and continuous improvement.





Acknowledgements

This document was developed and written by members of Water Safety Scotland's (WSS) Strategy Subgroup: Carlene McAvoy (RoSPA), Emma Dudley (RoSPA), Graham McCallum (RLSS UK), Michael Avril (RNLI), Leigh Hamilton (LLTNP), Richard Wasson (HMCG), the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

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We would also like to thank all organisations and individuals who responded to the member and public consultations.

Appendices

Appendix One - Notes on the data

The data presented in this report are drawn from two primary sources. Data for the years 2021 to 2023 are sourced from the Water Incident Database (WAID) dataset, specifically the updated version developed as part of the **WAID Enhancement Project**. This corresponds to Version 2 of the published 2020 to 2023 dataset and represents the most current and accurate WAID data available for that period.

Data for 2024 and 2025 are sourced from the Drowning and Incident Review (DIR) dataset, which was introduced in May 2023 and provides the most comprehensive and reliable data for Scotland. Due to its recent introduction, DIR data are not available for earlier years; therefore, both WAID and DIR datasets are used to enable trend analysis across the full reporting period.

Classifications of outcome come from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. Not all confirmed accidental fatalities progress to a DIR meeting, where full data are captured. For more information, please read the **DIR guidance document**.

Where DIR data only are used, this is clearly indicated.

Population rate figures use NRS mid-year data from the mid-2024 edition of the data.



Appendix Two - WSS member organisations supporting the Strategy



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