



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: 03 May 2019

Press Release: Progress being made on drowning prevention in Scotland

Friday, May 3, 2019

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Progress being made on drowning prevention in Scotland

Water Safety Scotland (WSS) has welcomed new figures that reveal that the number of water-related fatalities in Scotland is decreasing.

The latest statistics from the National Water Safety Forum's Water Incident Database (WAID) have revealed that there were 78 water-related fatalities in the country in 2018 – a 20 per cent decrease from the average of 97 in 2013-15.

WSS has cautiously welcomed the news, which comes 15 months after its launch of the [Scottish Drowning Prevention Strategy](#).

Michael Avril, chair of WSS, said: "We're delighted to see the number of water-related fatalities is showing a decrease from the benchmark set in our strategy, but we know there is still much more to do, as any death from drowning is one too many.

"We know that, in terms of the UK, Scotland carries a disproportionate burden of accidental drowning deaths. As the strategy sets out, we all have our part to play, from schools to local businesses, and members of WSS have also been working with local authorities to help them develop their own water safety policies."

A breakdown of the statistics shows that there were 46 accidental fatalities in the water (a decrease of eight per cent from the baseline three-year average of 50), and 25 suspected suicide fatalities (a 14 per cent decrease against the three-year average of 29).

Recreational activities accounted for more than half of all of the accidental fatalities (57 per cent), while "everyday" activities such as walking or running accounted for one in four deaths (26 per cent). As with every year on record, males account for the vast majority of the fatalities, with nine in every 10 accidental deaths in water. Men aged 40-49 are the most frequent age group represented in the statistics.

Carlene McAvoy, chair of the WSS Data Subgroup, said: "This kind of rich data really enables drowning prevention professionals to target their interventions where they are needed the most. The National Water Safety Forum has done a lot of work on improving the quality of data available, and as the Scottish strategy outlines, WSS is working hard to improve incident data and intelligence across Scotland, sharing WAID reports with all of our partners."

One of the Scotland Drowning Prevention Strategy's targets is to 'promote and develop learning to swim, water safety education and initiatives within early years, primary and secondary schools'.

Ahead of the school holidays, WSS' advice to children and parents is to:

- **Stop and Think** – Spot the dangers
- **Stay Together** – Stay close to a friend or family member
- **Float** – If you're in trouble in the water, float until you feel calm...then think what to do next
- **Call 999 or 112** – If you see someone in trouble in the water, call 999 or 112 immediately.

WSS aims to reduce the number of accidental drowning deaths in Scotland by 2026. Find out more at www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk

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