

## NEWS RELEASE

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**Press Release: Drop in drowning deaths is encouraging but more must be done, says Water Safety Scotland**

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### **Drop in drowning deaths is encouraging but more must be done, says Water Safety Scotland**

Latest figures show a small drop in the number of accidental drowning deaths in Scotland in 2017, but more needs to be done, according to Water Safety Scotland.

Figures from the National Water Safety Forum show that in the country in 2017, there were 46 accidental fatalities – down from the average of 50 per year, which was the number of people who died in 2016.

However, the number of suspected or confirmed suicides in water increased from 22 to 26.

Water Safety Scotland (WSS) – an alliance of organisations including third sector, local authorities and emergency services – aims to reduce accidental drowning deaths in Scotland by half by 2026, and says more must be done to ensure this target can be met.

Michael Avril, chairman of WSS, said: “Scotland carries a disproportionate burden in terms of accidental drowning deaths when compared to the rest of the UK, so we’re pleased to see the number has gone down. We’re cautiously optimistic that this indicates a step in the right direction, but all stakeholders must now ensure that we are continuing, if not increasing, our efforts to drive this figure down even further.

“We also must ensure that we are tackling water-related suicide, which we are sad to see has increased over the past year.”

Men continue to be the most at-risk group by far (42 deaths in 2017, compared to just three for women), and particularly those aged 50-59 (seven), while recreational activities accounted for just over three out of every five deaths (63 per cent) – 13 people died while walking or running, the most common activity at the time of death.

In terms of geography, the majority of deaths happened at the coast (54 per cent) compared to inland waters.

For more on Water Safety Scotland and its Drowning Prevention Strategy, which was launched in January, see [www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk](http://www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk)

For more details on the National Water Safety Forum Statistics, see [www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk](http://www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk)

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