



NEWS RELEASE

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Press Release: Minister hosting roundtable to explore reduction of drowning across Scotland

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Minister hosting roundtable to explore reduction of drowning across Scotland

The Scottish Government is meeting key partners to discuss how Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy can be supported in its aim to cut the number of drownings in half by 2026.

Hosted by the Minister for Community Safety, Annabelle Ewing MSP, the roundtable will include representatives from Water Safety Scotland – which produced and is leading on the Drowning Prevention Strategy – central government and sports governing bodies.

Issues such as the promotion of safe participation in recreational water activities will be discussed, as ways to support the implementation of the strategy, which was unveiled in January, will be sought.

Figures from the National Water Safety Forum show there were 46 accidental fatalities in Scotland in 2017. The country carries a disproportionate drowning burden when compared to the rest of the UK.

The Minister said: "This roundtable meeting is an excellent and timely opportunity to bring together colleagues from Water Safety Scotland and sporting governing bodies to consider how we promote and improve water safety.

"Water is one of Scotland's greatest natural resources and we want people to be able to enjoy it. It is vital that everyone is informed and aware of the potential hazards in and around water and that we do all we can to protect ourselves and our children from its dangers. The Drowning Prevention Strategy sets a clear framework for us to work collectively to reduce water-related incidents and tragedies and ensure the safe enjoyment of Scotland's diverse landscape."

The roundtable coincides with an initiative to raise awareness among school children of the dangers of drowning and how to prevent it.

The project, from Water Safety Scotland and the Scottish Government, will see kit bags featuring water safety messages handed out to children at schools in Fife and East Renfrewshire and at a number of summer community events in partnership with Inspiring Scotland's Link Up programme.

The bags can be used for swimming and sports gear to help children make the most of the outdoors during the summer holidays and they carry key safety messages about how to keep safe by water. Inside they include some resources from across the water safety

partners such as quizzes and magazines, aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of water.

Michael Avril, chairman of Water Safety Scotland, said: "We are delighted to be working with a range of partners, especially the Scottish Government, to ensure that the Drowning Prevention Strategy makes a difference to the people of Scotland. Water Safety Scotland is keen to promote the safe participation of recreational activities across the country and we are delighted that Annabelle Ewing will be hosting this roundtable discussion to help us reach our aims and objectives."

The roundtable is being held today, Wednesday, June 20, at the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Headquarters in Balloch.

For more on Water Safety Scotland, and its Drowning Prevention Strategy, see www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk

The Royal Life Saving Society UK Drowning Prevention Week is running until Monday, June 25. [Find out how you can get involved.](#)

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