



water safety
Scotland

Partnership Approach to Water Safety

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Aim	1
3. Outcomes	2
4. Water Safety Scotland	3
5. Incident Reviews	4
6. Statistics	5
7. Suicide Prevention	7
8. Identified Risks	8
9. Action Plan	9
10. Appendices (Partner Assets)	11

Related Documents

[Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy \(SDPS\)](#)

[Drowning and Incident Review | Water Safety Scotland](#)

1. Introduction

(insert local authority area) is located

The area is (insert) square miles in size and is home to a population of approximately (insert) residents. Within the area there are various water environments including,

the dynamic nature of which present challenges to the agencies responsible for carrying out rescues and managing waterways safely. Meeting these challenges will require a commitment to strong partnership working and the sharing of information, good practices, and resources.

2. Aim

In recent years, water safety has gained increased focus both politically and publicly due to the 2018 release of [Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy](#).

The strategy has two overall targets:

- **reduce accidental drowning deaths in Scotland by 50 per cent by 2026 and reduce risk among the highest-risk populations, groups and communities**
- **contribute to the reduction of water-related suicide.**

PAWS has 3 key stages to assist in the delivery of these targets:

- Prevention
- Improved Incident Response
- Review

The aim of this PAWS document is to build upon existing good practices currently undertaken by partner agencies across and to allocate responsibilities in a clear framework agreeable to all agencies concerned and formalise them into agreed actions that are reported into the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). This co-ordinated and proactive approach will assist in the delivery of the 3 key stages of PAWS and is consistent with the targets of Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy.

This will require commitment from all partners, allowing for joint and individual tasking of partnership resources to ensure that all water safety concerns are addressed and those agencies best placed to manage risk are kept informed of any changing or newly emerging hazards or trends. Where applicable, this may also require the sharing of existing resources between partner agencies to meet the common goals in this document of delivering improved water safety throughout

3. Outcomes

A draft plan will be submitted to partners for review and approval in May of each year to tie in with the publication of the RoSPA Annual Trend Report. This annual review will keep the document current and reflect known risks, new practices and resource allocation. The agreed document will outline the approach for the forthcoming 12 months and seek to build on identified good practice and partner co-operation.

In the first year of the partnership, , a meeting with all partners will be arranged to ensure any issues arising are addressed and, where necessary, revisions made.

In the event of a water fatality, or a significant near miss involving water, in the Partnership will follow the Water Safety Scotland **Drowning & Incident Review (DIR)** process. This will ensure that local Partners gain an understanding of the incidents in their area and take measures to possibly prevent them reoccurring and at the same time capturing data for statistical analysis.

Any partner can reconvene the group at any point throughout the year should the need arise.

A focused approach to raising awareness via existing media and social media platforms will be adopted by all partners to ensure that water safety awareness messages reach as far as possible throughout the communities of

Agencies will take responsibility for delivering education and presentations on water safety within schools, youth groups, and clubs, and utilise any existing pathways that will assist in the provision of information to the communities of

In addition to the need to work in a multi agency setting, it may also be necessary on some occasions to utilise a single agency approach. Where this is the case, responsibilities will be clearly defined to enable effective delivery of the required outcomes.

The Chair of each PAWS Group will commit to maintaining an effective Information Flow with Water Safety Scotland to ensure an effective two-way exchange of information at both local and national level to allow for consistency in the delivery of Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy.

PAWS Chairs will receive minutes of the WSS Main Group meetings and a quarterly brief that will enable them to update their group on WSS activity.

PAWS Chairs will additionally receive a request in March and September of each year to report on activity in their group to keep WSS updated on local actions to deliver SDPS.

4. Water Safety Scotland (WSS)



Established in 2014 by RoSPA, Water Safety Scotland (WSS) is essential in bringing together individuals and organisations from all over the country who over many years have developed a variety of excellent water safety initiatives. These wide ranging and important activities have kept individuals and communities safe across Scotland.

In 2014, The World Health Organization recommended that every country should have a National Water Safety Plan. The UK-wide National Water Safety Forum fulfilled this recommendation and created the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy. While WSS fully supports this strategy, it believes that it does not fully consider the unique situation within Scotland.

Subsequently, in March 2017, WSS launched a draft response followed by a three-month consultation of WSS members and other relevant bodies that resulted in the publication of **Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy** in 2018.

The Strategy requires everyone in Scotland to play their part – from the water safety community and emergency services to private, public and third sector organisations. Most importantly this Strategy is for the people of Scotland who, with the combined efforts of all organisations and communities, can engage to ensure a reduction in water-related deaths by 2026.

It is therefore the intention of the PAWS Group in to work in partnership with WSS to achieve their goals in drowning prevention, a reduction in water related suicides, and in the gathering of information on water-related fatalities and near misses.

5. Incident Reviews

PAWS supports the use of the **Drowning & Incident Review (DIR)** process to both understand water safety incidents and to ensure that relevant data is collected for statistical analysis by WAID (Water Incident Database).

WAID was specifically developed by the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) to bring together water-related incident data. Outputs from the DIR process will help to improve water-related fatality data in Scotland and produce higher quality evidence on which to focus national drowning prevention efforts.

In the event of a water fatality, or a significant near miss involving water in _____, Search & Rescue partners and Landowners/ Stakeholders will follow the DIR Process and hold a Scene and Outcome Review (SOR) meeting to establish the suspected outcome and determine if any immediate control measures are required that may prevent a possible recurrence.

The SOR meeting will be arranged as a matter of priority and should take place as early as possible, but no later than _____ days from the incident occurring to allow timeous actions. At the conclusion of the SOR meeting the lead SAR organisation will send the completed SOR form to dir@watersafetyscotland.org.uk to inform of the incident details and, where criteria have been met, confirm triggering of the DIR process.

If the DIR criteria have been met, the DIR meeting should be implemented within four weeks of the incident occurring. No actions or proactive measures identified at the time of the SOR meeting should be delayed pending the commencement, or outcome, of a DIR meeting.

Incidents with a suspected outcome of suicide will not be reviewed via DIR. In the event that partners wish to review such an incident further guidance can be sought from Public Health Scotland which has a suicide review process.

Further information on SOR and DIR is available in the **Drowning & Incident Review (DIR) Guidance Document** produced by WSS that provides a step by step guide on triggering, preparing for and carrying out reviews.

WSS support PAWS Groups with the DIR process and with reviews that require additional resources due to specific incident factors.

6. Statistics

Excerpt from the [Interim Review: Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy](#)

Progress made

Overall drowning figures

According to the WAter Incident Database (WAID), the number of water-related fatalities is decreasing in Scotland. Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy had an initial average baseline of 96 fatalities (2013–2015), which has decreased over a period of five years (2016–2020) to an average of 92. Although this has not been a year-on-year decrease, it does constitute a 4 per cent decrease since the implementation of the strategy.

The number of accidental drowning fatalities¹ and suspected suicides has also decreased in comparison to the initial baseline.

Using a five-year average, accidental drowning fatalities have reduced by 12 per cent in comparison to the baseline, while suspected suicides have reduced by 7 per cent.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the five-year averages against the baseline. This is broken down into overall water-related fatalities and type.

Accidental drowning fatalities have reduced, on average, by 12 per cent

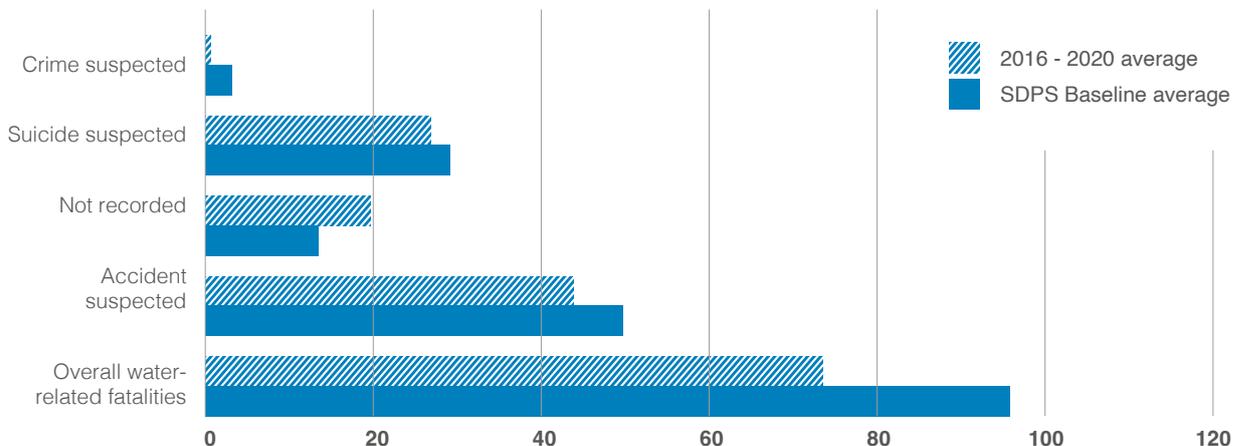


Figure 1: Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy baseline average (2013–2015) vs five-year averages (2016–2020)

Historically, Scotland has had a relatively high number of 'Not recorded' water-related fatalities due to the method used to capture data. WSS and its partners are committed to improving

data through the Data Subgroup, the Drowning and Incident Review, and through support of version 2 of WAID.

¹ In this document, 'accidental' refers to both accidental and natural causes.

Changing demographics

There have been some subtle changes to some of the demographics of accidental fatalities in Scotland since the first baseline analysis published in SDPS.

Males still account for approximately 9 in 10 of all accidental drownings. However, accidental drownings are now at their highest in the male 40 to 49-year-old age group. Among female, accidental drownings are most prevalent among those aged 20 to 29, closely followed by those in the 60 to 69-year-old age group.

Inland waters now account for 58 per cent of accidental fatalities, with recreational activities on or near the water accounting for 50 per cent of such fatalities. It should be noted, however, that in 36 per cent of accidental fatalities, the person had no intention of entering the water.

This information is summarised below in Table 1 in comparison to the SDPS baseline. Accidental drowning fatalities have also been mapped by location in Figure 2.

	SDPS baseline (2013 - 2015)	Five year data (2016 - 2020)
Gender	87 per cent male	87 per cent male
Age group	Ages 60–69 (male); Ages 20–29 (female)	Ages 40–49 (male); Ages 20–29 and 60–69 (female)
Location	54 per cent coastal; 46 per cent inland	42 per cent coastal; 58 per cent inland
Behaviour	41 per cent recreational; 38 per cent everyday activities	50 per cent recreational; 36 per cent everyday activities

Table 1: SDPS baseline (2013–2015) demographics vs five-year data (2016–2020) demographics²

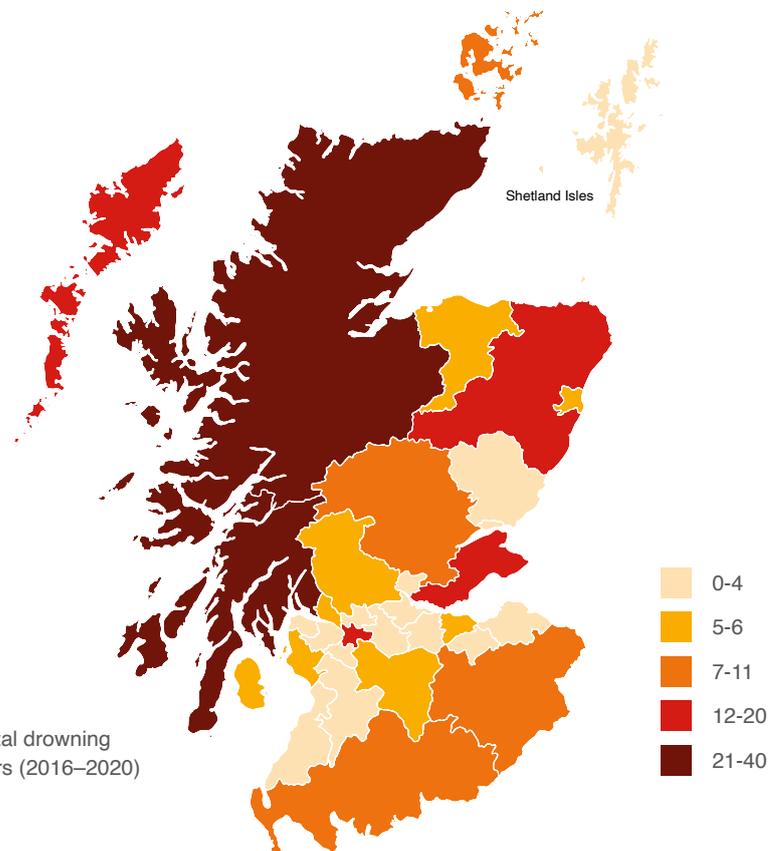


Figure 2: Map of accidental drowning fatalities over the five years (2016–2020)

² Notes: The 2013–2015 data totals 150 fatalities, with the following exceptions due to incomplete data: age/gender data excludes 22 records, activity data excludes 12 records, and location data excludes three records. The 2016–2020 data totals 220 fatalities, with the following exceptions: age/gender excludes 12 records, activity data excludes 13 records, and location data excludes three records.

7. Suicide Prevention

According to Water Incident Database (WAID) data, an average of 27 people take their own lives in water related suicides in Scotland each year. Suicide is not inevitable, however; it is preventable.

WSS promotes the importance of working together and asserts that progress in tackling water-related suicide is possible with the right attitudes, skills and actions, from increasing confidence in approaching vulnerable people to identifying problematic locations.

Interventions, no matter how small, interrupt the suicide thought process and can stall decision making, urge people to reconsider, and increase the chances of help reaching them.

Suicide is a difficult issue to face and is one that is best addressed in partnership where the combined expertise of a range of agencies can begin to deal with this complex issue, not only to prevent vulnerable people taking their own lives, but to support staff and volunteers who can be left feeling distressed and helpless after an incident.

To achieve the aim within Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy of **contributing to the reduction of water-related suicide**, the PAWS Group will work with Water Safety Scotland and local suicide prevention partners to achieve the following objectives:

- raise awareness among agencies that could play a role in the reduction of water-related suicide
- support the understanding that suicide is preventable and encourage discussion on further action.

Location(s) of Concern (LOC)

An LOC is any location at which 2 or more incidents have occurred where people become involved in a water emergency, or where people attempt to enter the water, with the intention of causing themselves harm. If an intervention is made that prevents entrance into the water this should still be considered as an incident at that location. Partners should consider actions that can be taken for any sites identified within their area.

8. Identified Risks

Partners have identified the following risks in and near:

Locations

Human factors – (edit as applicable)

Additional considerations – (edit as applicable)

Water Safety Hot Spots

Where a water safety hot spot location has been identified, partners should consider introducing a site-specific Water Safety Hot Spot Action Plan to reduce the activity in that area.

A hot spot can be categorised as follows:

- any location (5km radius) that has two or more water fatalities in a calendar year.
- any location (5km radius) that has three or more fatalities in a five year period.
- any location that local partners have specific concerns over due to geographic or behavioural characteristics.

9. Action Plan

Points for completion: *(edit as appropriate)*

Types of events	Who deals with them	Action plans, best practice	Time for completion	Who will lead
Agree the working group's terms of reference and agree an action plan				
Date the plan will be enacted and for how long				
Sub groups	Allocated below			
Agency lead person				

Sub Group Leads					
Sub group	Agency leading sub group	Person chairing sub group	Agencies involved	Agreed actions	Agreed timescale
Suicide prevention					
Media					
Signage/PRE					
Leaflets					
Schools engagement					
Community engagement					
Multi agency training					
CPP engagement					
Targeted locations and types of incidents					

10. Appendices

Appendix A

Partner Assets (edit as appropriate)

A1	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	12
A2	RoSPA	14
A3	RNLI	15
A4	Scottish Ambulance Service SORT	16
A5	Scottish Water	17
A7		
A8		
A9		
A10		
A11		
A12		
A13		
A14		

Appendix A1

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS)

- **Current Resources**

Swift Water Rescue Teams (SRT) are based in the following locations:

West

- Knightswood Fire Station *
- Polmadie Fire Station *
- Clydesmill Fire Station
- Motherwell Fire Station
- Ayr Fire Station
- Oban Fire Station
- Dumfries Fire Station
- Newton Stewart Fire Station

East

- Marionville Fire Station
- Bathgate Fire Station
- Galashiels Fire Station
- Hawick Fire Station
- Stirling Fire Station
- Glenrothes Fire Station

North

- Perth Fire Station
- Kingsway Fire Station (Dundee)
- Central Fire Station (Aberdeen)
- Elgin Fire Station
- Inverness Fire Station
- Fort William Fire Station

* Fire Stations have dedicated River Clyde Rescue Boats.

An SFRS SRT consists of a minimum of five Swift Water Rescue Technicians trained and equipped to enter swift water environments for the purpose of rescuing people. They carry various rescue equipment including a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) and inflatable pathways for mud and ice rescues.

SFRS also has additional Flood Responders (FR) located in strategic locations who are equipped to respond to flooding incidents where the need for an SRT is not required.

Adverts / Engagement

- Thematic Action Plans delivering targeted education and awareness sessions to Schools & Youth Groups
- Dedicated Section on Water Safety within SFRS “Your Safety” website
- Social Media utilised to promote safety messages and guidance

Best practice for event

- SFRS Standard Operating Procedures cover aspects of all foreseen incidents based on operational information and experience.
- Maintenance of skills of all SRT members including 3 yearly Re-Accreditation
- Training in controlled environment at Pinkston Water Sports Facility
- Training in realistic conditions within the identified risks to gain vital knowledge of topography and hydrology in area prior to any incidents occurring
- All frontline fire appliances equipped with life jackets and throwlines

Joint Working

- Police Scotland
 - Helicopter Resource
 - Police Specialist Water Resources
- Scottish Ambulance Service
 - SAS SORT Teams
- Coastguard
- RoSPA
- Loch Lomond Rescue Boat
- Rescue 3
- Open Water Rescue
- Water Safety Scotland
- RNLI
- Scottish Canals
- Local Authority Partners
- Scottish Water
- Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park

Appendix A2

RoSPA

RoSPA is a charity with a proud history dating back to 1916. Our vision is for *life, free from serious accidental injury*. We provide the secretariat for both the National Water Safety Forum and Water Safety Scotland. Our staff are lead authors and contributors to meeting the targets of the UK's and Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy.

Current Resources

- Dedicated water safety section on RoSPA website: www.rospa.com/leisure-safety
- Key Inland guidance: Managing Safety at Inland Waters: www.flipsnack.com/RoSPACatalogue/rospa-managing-safety-at-inland-waters.html
- The Water Incident Database (WAID): nationalwatersafety.org.uk/waid
- Support for authorities in developing leadership, policy and risk insights for communities.

Adverts/Engagement

- Themed water safety campaigns – principally #RespectTheWater
- Research into specific water safety issues in Scotland: www.rospa.com/about/around-the-uk/scotland/water-safety
- Advocacy for drowning prevention as a national policy issue
- Award winning behavioural campaigns and support
- Joint partnership messaging

Joint Working

- Water Safety Scotland
- Water Safety Wales
- National Water Safety Forum
- RNLI
- RLSS UK
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- SCSN
- Building Safer Communities
- Scottish Government
- Cross Party Group on Accident Prevention and Safety Awareness

Appendix A3

RNLI

Current Resources

- The RNLI is a charity, primarily for the saving of lives at sea.
- The crew of the boat are volunteers from varied backgrounds and hold certifications in all aspects to allow safe operation of the lifeboat combined with advanced life saving techniques.
- The RNLI also have a water safety prevention team that are tasked with education of water safety and early intervention to break the drowning chain.
- A local water safety officer (Volunteer) operates within the area with the responsibility to deliver the RNLI's key messages.

Adverts / Engagement

- Online safety resource at rnli.org/safety
- The RNLI have run national campaigns for several years such as Respect the Water and FLOAT, with the objective to increase water safety awareness
- Lifejacket clinics are run frequently at yachting club and boat jumbles to give a free lifejacket check.
- Water safety messages are delivered via activity specific messaging, such as Kayaking, at many events
- RNLI have produced many leaflets and handout materials that can be distributed to groups, including schools or youth clubs.
- Open days are held at stations to deliver safety messages

Best practice for event

- RNLI's principal function is to provide a SAR water service at sea.
- HMCG oversees the mobilisation and coordination of the lifeboat tasking.
- Crew are tasked via a paging system and proceed to launch boat.
- The lifeboat has a speed of 35 knots and can operate in up to a force 8
- Once tasked the lifeboat will liaise with other organisations to bring to a successful end the tasking.

Joint Working

- HM Coast Guard
- Scottish Fire & Rescue
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Ministry of Defence

Appendix A4

Scottish Ambulance Service - Special Operations Response Team (SORT)

Current Resources

Swift Water Rescue Teams in East, West and North of Scotland

An SAS Swift Water Rescue Team (SRT) consists of Swift Water Rescue Technicians who are trained and equipped to enter swift water environments for the purpose of rescuing people. They carry various rescue equipment in a 4-wheel drive vehicle including inflatable craft, throwlines, wading poles, and can deliver medical interventions directly to casualties within wet environments.

Adverts / Engagement

- Targeted Awareness on water safety via engagement events in the community
- Social Media utilised to promote safety messages and guidance

Best practice for event

- SAS Standard Operating Procedures cover aspects of all foreseen incidents based on operational information and experience.
- Maintenance of skills of all SRT members including periodic re-accreditation
- Training in controlled environment at Pinkston Water Sports Facility
- Training in realistic conditions within identified risks to gain vital knowledge of topography and hydrology in area prior to any incidents occurring

Joint Working

- HM Coastguard
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Rescue 3
- Police Scotland

Appendix A5

Scottish Water

Current Resources

- Dedicated water safety section on Corporate Website:
[Water Safety - Scottish Water](#)
- Dedicated section on responsible access on Corporate Website:
www.scottishwater.co.uk/takecare
- Take Care Be Aware leaflet provides information on accessing reservoirs.
- Water safety / responsibly access film available on Website.

Adverts/Engagement:

- Themed water safety campaigns delivered across all platforms
- Summer water safety campaign, urging people to stay safe, behave responsibly and not take risks around reservoirs
- Winter Water Safety campaign as above
- Use of partner content, such as RNLI and Welsh Water collaborations. The Welsh Water video “One Last Breath”, which we received special permissions from Welsh Water to use, is linked on our website and is used as part of Scottish Water’s campaign.

Best practice for event

Insight research to investigate reasons for attitudes and behaviours around water safety and tailor campaigns to target audiences

Joint Working

- Learn To Swim
- Go Safe Scotland
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- RNLI
- RLSS
- Outdoor Access Scotland
- Police Scotland
- Royal Life Saving Society Scotland
- Water Safety Scotland

Appendix A6

Appendix A7

Appendix A8

Appendix A9

Appendix A10

Appendix A11

Appendix A12

Appendix A13

Appendix A14