

Press release

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Water-based deaths decreased in 2022, reports Water Safety Scotland

The latest figures from the Water Incident Database (WAID) indicate that drowning fatalities in 2022 decreased in Scotland.

The database, which is maintained by the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) and focuses on gathering information related to water-based incidents, also shows a decrease in accidental drownings last year. The figures show that there were 45 accidental water-related fatalities in Scotland. This forms part of the total water-related fatalities in Scotland which stands at 96 for last year.

Water Safety Scotland (WSS) produces an annual trend report which provides detail on the latest figures in comparison to previous years and the baseline figures in Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy (SDPS).

Carlene McAvoy, Founder of WSS and the Data Subgroup Chair, said:

“The recent figures for accidental water-related fatalities shows a 10 per cent decrease in comparison to the SDPS baseline – bringing the number of accidental water-related fatalities back down after a particular difficult year in 2021.

“WSS continues to work hard and has taken a number of significant steps to help reduce accidental water-related fatalities, including the introduction of the [Drowning and Incident Review](#) (DIR), the creation of free education resources for teachers and practitioners, and free consistent water safety messaging for partners to use across Scotland.”

DIR is a new process introduced in Scotland which aims to gather all relevant data and information in order to systematically and rigorously review each accidental water-related incident with a view to preventing a future occurrence. DIR is envisioned to provide practitioners and local partners with much more comprehensive information about each incident, which can be used to help inform local and national prevention efforts. DIR is now

available across Scotland for use by local Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) groups and is the only UK nation with such a process.

[WSS education resources](#), which have been created with Education Scotland, are free to use and are age and stage appropriate. Linked intrinsically to the Water Safety Code, the resources are consistent across curriculum levels for use with pupils from nursery to S6 and aim to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to make wise and informed choices around water. WSS has also created a full communications toolkit which local partners can use to again provide greater awareness of water safety and consistency across the board.

As summer approaches, Water Safety Scotland wants to remind the public to stay safe and follow the three part [Water Safety Code](#):

- Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers
- Stay Together, Stay Close
- In an Emergency, Call 999

James Sullivan, Chair of Water Safety Scotland, said: “The decrease in the 2022 figures is as a result of the combined efforts of partners across the country working collectively to raise awareness of water safety. Water Safety Scotland will continue to coordinate these efforts to further improve safety and reduce drowning incidents in and around Scotland’s waters.”

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Notes to editors

- Scotland’s Drowning Prevention Strategy targets a reduction of 50 per cent in the number of accidental drowning deaths, against a three-year average baseline of 96(from 2013-2015). The strategy can be viewed at <https://www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk/media/1213/scotlands-drowning-prevention-strategy.pdf>
- The Interim Review of the strategy was led by RoSPA and can be accessed here: <https://watersafetyscotland.org.uk/media/1985/interim-review-scotlands-drowning-prevention-strategy.pdf>
- The 2022 trend report can be accessed online here: <https://www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk/practitioners-hub/water-safety-data/data-reports/>
- The WAID tables can be accessed online here: <https://nationalwatersafety.org.uk/waid>
- The total figures for Scotland in 2022 (96 fatalities) include: accidental: 45, crime suspected: 0, not recorded: 14, suicide suspected: 37