



water safety
Scotland

Terms of Reference

Water Safety Scotland

Terms of Reference

- 1. Name of group:** Water Safety Scotland (WSS).
- 2. Background:** The group was established by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and was initially called the Scottish Water Safety Reference Group but later changed its name in June 2015 to Water Safety Scotland (WSS). A **Governance review of WSS** was undertaken in 2022, which led to changes to the structure of WSS and this second version of the Terms of Reference.
- 3. Purpose:** WSS is a voluntary association of organisations and individuals whose main purpose is to understand the risks around water in Scotland and engage with partners to develop a consistent approach to the prevention of water-related fatalities. WSS seeks to influence, coordinate and lead the aims set out in Scotland’s Drowning Prevention Strategy (2018–2026).
- 4. Status:** To provide advice and support to the Scottish Government on matters of water safety and provide a standing network in Scotland to address water safety and drowning prevention.
- 5. Links:** The National Water Safety Forum (UK) and Water Safety Wales.
- 6. Targets:**
 - Reduce accidental drowning deaths in Scotland by 50% by 2026 and reduce risk among the highest-risk populations, groups and communities.
 - Contribute to the reduction of water-related suicide.

Aims of WSS

Improve fatality incident data and intelligence across Scotland by advocating the Water Incident Database (WAID) and sharing WAID reports with partner organisations and local authorities.

Drive a generational change to facilitate greater safety education and enjoyment in and around water.

Promote public awareness of water-related risks and ensure a consistent message across campaigns and communications.

Develop water safety across Scotland’s 32 local authority areas and promote the development of water safety policies.

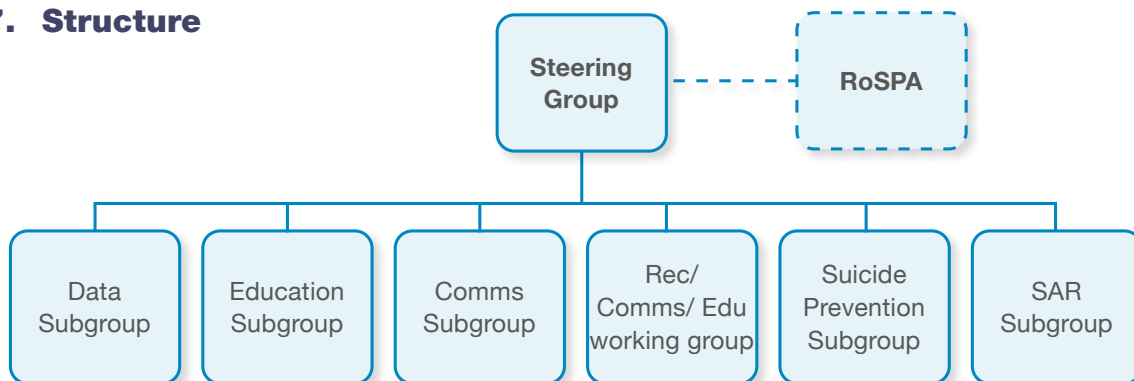
Promote the safe participation of recreational activities across Scotland.

Contribute to the reduction of water-related suicide.

Improve understanding, learning of resources and capabilities of Search and Rescue (SAR) water-related incidents.

Work with families that have been affected by water-related fatalities.

7. Structure



The Steering Group guides the WSS agenda and is coordinated and managed by the Secretariat.

Subgroups take forward the specific aims and objectives of Scotland’s Drowning Prevention Strategy, as well as the agenda set out by the Steering Group.

All members of WSS should join a subgroup. An information Exchange meeting will be held up to two times per year for networking and sharing of relevant aims and achievements.

8. Membership of WSS

Each member organisation of WSS is represented by at least one nominated representative who is responsible for contributing to WSS.

Members can access all of WSS’s resources using the password-protected area of the website.

Members are encouraged to join at least one subgroup to help drive and develop the collective work of WSS.

An Information Exchange meeting will be held annually for all WSS members (autumn). A shorter online meeting may also be held around the end of the financial year.

8.1 Role of members

The role of WSS members includes:

- attendance at the Information Exchange meeting
- active membership of at least one subgroup (exemptions allowed at the discretion of the Steering Group)
- active use of WSS outputs, including the Water Safety Code, Education package and Comms toolkit
- contribution to the outputs of WSS and Scotland’s Drowning Prevention Strategy.

In order to retain full membership (including voting rights), an organisation must attend the Information Exchange meeting or be an active member of a subgroup.

The Secretariat will monitor membership and any member who does not meet the membership criteria will be subject to review by the Steering Group.

8.2 Becoming a member

Membership follows a protocol, which can be found in Appendix 2. Each potential member organisation must complete a pro forma, via a short meeting, with a member of the Steering Group. Occasionally, it may be necessary for the Steering Group to request references from the individual or organisation seeking membership.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be initiated with all multi-agency partnership groups. Occasionally, individual organisations may need a Memorandum of Understanding or references if deemed appropriate (or if there is a perceived conflict of interest).

All potential WSS members need to be approved by the Steering Group.

Group Chairs of the Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) will be asked to become WSS members. They do not have to attend the Information Exchange meetings or a subgroup, but will be asked to complete a survey twice a year detailing the activities of their PAWS group.

8.3 Accountability

All WSS members must follow specific governance rules set out in this document and in the:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Branding guidelines and external events guidelines.

WSS members are asked to use the WSS brand, where appropriate, but must have the prior agreement of the Steering Group.

All press releases that mention WSS or Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy must be agreed by the Steering Group in advance. There is a full protocol in Appendix 3 that covers relations with the press.

8.4 Resignation

If a member wishes to leave WSS, they should inform the Secretariat in writing.

9. Steering Group

WSS is governed by a Steering Group that guides the work and agenda of the organisation.

The Steering Group comprises five organisations, including a Chair and the Secretariat. See Table 1 for current membership.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) – Secretariat
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) – Chair
Police Scotland
Loch Lomond National Park Authority (LLNPA)
Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

Table 1: Current membership of the Steering Group

Although the Steering Group is responsible for WSS, the Secretariat has overall management and accountability.

9.1 Appointment of Steering Group

The Steering Group is elected by the members of WSS every 24 months at the start of the financial year. Appendix 1 shows this process in detail.

The Chair is elected by the Steering Group. See Appendix 4 for role descriptions of Chair, Secretariat and Steering Group members. The Chair role can be held from one year to the next (with the agreement of the full Steering Group) up to a maximum of four years. Appendix 1 shows the election process.

By providing the Secretariat function, RoSPA holds accountability for WSS.

9.2 Decision making within the Steering Group

Decisions that impact on WSS must involve all members of the Steering Group. In circumstances where the Steering Group fails to reach a satisfactory decision or the subject matter requires extra insight, the Secretariat will have the final casting vote.

9.3 Conflicts of Interest

No organisation (including people and members affiliated to that organisation who have decision-making capabilities or conflicts of interest) can hold more than one position in the Steering Group.

9.4 Resignation

A member of the Steering Group may resign at any point by notification to the Secretariat in writing.

10. Subgroups

Any new subgroup or working group needs approval from the Steering Group.

Each subgroup should elect a Chair annually. The Terms of Reference of each subgroup should be approved by the Steering Group. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the subgroup to update the Terms of Reference annually.

A minute taker should be elected by the Chair. An agenda, short minutes/actions and a position table are requirements of each subgroup. Templates for the position table, minutes and agendas can be obtained from info@watersafetyscotland.org.uk

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the subgroup to ensure that minutes and a position table are recorded and sent to the Steering Group for approval.

To ensure accountability, a member of the Steering Group will sit on each subgroup. See Table 2 for a list of organisations that sit on each subgroup.

If the accountable Steering Group member cannot attend, another member of the Steering Group will attend. If no member can attend, a debrief meeting will be held with the Chair of the subgroup and the responsible member of the subgroup.

Subgroup/Working Groups	Steering Group member
Data	RoSPA/SFRS
Education	RoSPA/SFRS
Communications	LLNPA/RoSPA
Search and Rescue	Police Scotland
Suicide Prevention	RNLI/LLNPA
Rec/Comms/Edu working group	LLNPA

11. Conduct and procedures

11.1 Working methods

For clarity, transparency and consistency, all WSS work (including subgroups) must be prioritised in a position table and published on the WSS website. Work listed within the position table is recognised as “Water Safety Scotland”.

Only members’ activities recorded in a WSS position table will be recognised as being part of the work of WSS and to furthering Scotland’s Drowning Prevention Strategy.

All minutes, position tables and information regarding the group and subgroups will be available to members through the website at www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk.

The WSS website is owned, maintained and updated by RoSPA.

The member-only section of the WSS website is password-protected.

11.2 Correspondence

Members are encouraged to share information and resources. If members wish to share something with all members of WSS, this should go through the Secretariat in the first instance.

Members are also encouraged to provide resources and information for upload to the website.

All WSS correspondence, e.g. subgroup minutes and invites, should include the Secretariat email address: info@watersafetyscotland.org.uk

The Chair of WSS and Chairs of subgroups may send external letters and emails. Any communications must be approved by the Steering Group and sent via the Secretariat.

11.3 Voting

Where a vote is required by the members of WSS, organisations will receive one vote. Any individuals not affiliated with an organisation will also receive one vote.

In the case of equality of votes, the Steering Group will have the casting vote.

12. Communications and use of branding

12.1 Branding

WSS has full branding guidelines that individuals and organisations should adhere to. WSS must pre-approve any proposed use of the logo or brand elements; individuals and organisations should contact the Secretariat via info@watersafetyscotland.org.uk

Member organisations within WSS shall not:

- alter or amend the brand for use in any respect or situation without written agreement
- sub-let or permit third parties to use the brand, or enter into any agreement that enables this, without written agreement from the Steering Group and Secretariat
- use or associate the brand for endorsement or promotion of commercial services or products
- speak on behalf of, or act as a representative of, WSS without the prior knowledge and agreement of the Steering Group.

12.2 External representation

The Secretariat should be informed of any invitations to represent WSS. The Chair of WSS is usually the main representative to attend meetings with external bodies and partnerships. This may be delegated to the other members of the Steering Group. All correspondence and information pertaining to documentation and decisions made in relation to external bodies and partnerships will be shared with and reached by the entire Steering Group and, where appropriate, with the WSS membership as a whole.

Where decisions and representation require the input of external organisations or forums, this will have prior agreement by members of the Steering Group. Material relating to the work of WSS and shared with an individual member of the Steering Group must be shared with all other Steering Group members.

13. Reporting and risk management

13.1 Reporting

WSS reports to the Scottish Government via the Secretariat in quarterly reports. Reports are also provided to the Ministers' RoundTable via the Secretariat. These reports are approved by the Steering Group.

13.2 Feedback on WSS

If any member wishes to raise a concern, issue or complaint about anything to do with WSS, they should do so via the Secretariat. If the issue involves the Secretariat, the Chair of WSS should be informed. The issue will then be investigated by the Steering Group and a response provided.

13.3 Data access

WSS agrees to only use WAID data which is approved by the National Water Safety Forum, or Drowning and Incident Review (DIR) data.

General Data Protection Regulation: WSS will only use personal data for safety research and accident prevention purposes. Individual or organisational data may therefore be shared with RoSPA and the Steering Group members, but will not be used for any other purpose.

13.4 Finance and accountability

All contractual and financial risks are held and managed by the Secretariat, on behalf of WSS.

13.5 Contingency measures

There are certain circumstances under which contingency arrangements come into force:

- Chair incapacitated or unable to perform normal duties.
- Chair resigns.
- Secretariat incapacitated, unable to perform duties or resigns, or RoSPA withdraws secretarial support.
- Steering Group member breaches the Terms of Reference or any other governance document.
- Member of WSS breaches the Terms of Reference or any other governance document.

13.5.1 Contingency arrangements

Chair incapacitated or unable to perform normal duties:

- The remaining members of the Steering Group will appoint temporary representation until the Chair is able to resume.

Chair resigns:

- The Steering Group will appoint a new Chair from the remaining members of the Steering Group.

Secretariat incapacitated, unable to perform duties or resigns, or RoSPA withdraws secretarial support:

- The remaining members of the Steering Group will appoint temporary representation until a new Secretariat has been decided.

Steering Group member breaches the Terms of Reference or any other governance document:

- The remaining members of the Steering Group will investigate the matter. The member under investigation can be present along with a representative from their organisation.
- The outcome of the breach can range in severity, from support to expulsion from WSS. If the breach is deemed severe by majority vote of the Steering Group, the member will be suspended from WSS until the matter is fully investigated and resolved.

Member of WSS breaches the Terms of Reference or any other governance document:

- The Steering Group will investigate the matter. The member under investigation can be present during the investigation along with a representative from their organisation.
- The outcome of the breach can range in severity, from support to expulsion from WSS. If the breach is deemed severe by a majority vote of the Steering Group, the member will be suspended from WSS until the matter is fully investigated and resolved.

14. Review

This is a live document and will be reviewed annually (as a minimum) for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Any changes that would warrant an early review should be sent to the Secretariat (via info@watersafetyscotland.org.uk), where the issue will be escalated for the attention of the Steering Group. If deemed appropriate, a review will take place.

Appendix 1: Election process

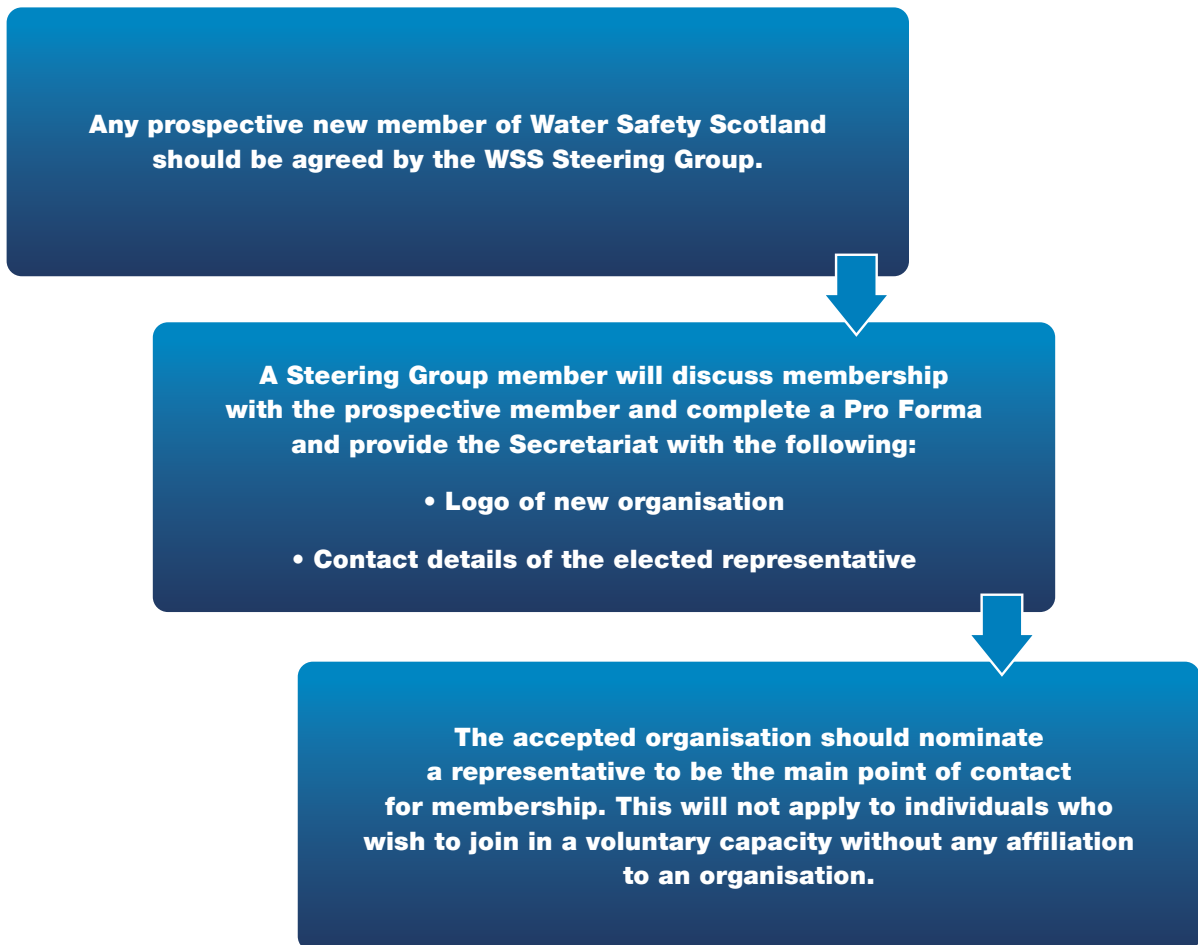
Elections take place every 24 months. The election process takes 6 weeks. Notice of Steering Group positions will be made available to Water Safety Scotland members for 28 days.

Interest in positions must be received within 28 days to the Secretariat.

If there are several candidates nominated for the Steering Group, the members will be asked to vote for the top four within 7 days.

The new Steering Group will then be elected based on the votes. The Steering Group will decide on the Chair.

Appendix 2: Membership process



Appendix 3: Press interest protocol

**All press interest in WSS must be directed to RoSPA at:
pressoffice@rospa.com**

**The WSS Secretariat then decides the most appropriate person
to respond, from the following:**

WSS Chair

Secretariat

Steering Group representative

Comms subgroup Chair

Subgroup Chairs

Appendix 4:

Steering Group roles and responsibilities

Secretariat

The Secretariat's purpose is to support the functionality of, and to help lead, WSS. The Secretariat is the reference point for the Chair, Steering Group members and other WSS members. The Secretariat (via RoSPA) holds overall accountability for WSS.

Key responsibilities

- Supporting the planning of main meetings, agendas and reviewing minutes
- Ensuring effective communication with members
- Maintaining effective records and membership lists in line with the membership process
- Leading the Steering Group and tracking all work
- Tracking main meetings' action items and reporting on their progress at meetings
- Commissioning and tasking subgroups
- Commissioning and completing projects (as agreed)
- Responsible for Drowning and Incident Review research and process (jointly with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)
- Responsible for social media (Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn) and WSS comms
- Contractual and budget accountability for WSS
- Monitoring and updating all Work in Progress logs for the subgroups and any working groups of WSS
- Monitoring and updating all group position tables (where agreed with subgroup Chairs)
- Ensuring all WSS work falls within the targets of Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy
- Representing the WSS to Scottish Government and updating on WSS work

Independent Chair

The WSS Chair's purpose is to provide leadership and promote consensus in order to ensure that WSS's objectives are achieved in line with its governance.

The Chair will be an independent role and the post holder should be able to differentiate between their organisational view and the collective policy of WSS.

The Chair will be expected to co-ordinate a multi-organisation meeting and help shape a prevention programme. The role will include working with the Secretariat to ensure accurate briefings and discussions with senior civil servants, MSPs, and executives

Key responsibilities

- Work closely with Secretariat to help lead WSS
- Act as a spokesperson and figurehead, where appropriate
- Plan and prepare for Steering Group meetings
- Plan and prepare for Information Exchange meetings
- Implement decisions and ensure tasks are clearly assigned and monitored
- Ensure all WSS work falls within the targets of Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy
- Promote consensus among members
- Monitor subgroup activity and approve the creation of new subgroups and working group
- Ensure strict adherence to WSS governance documents

Steering Group member

The Steering Group supports WSS and works to plan and promote its main objectives. The Group comprises five organisations (including the Chair and Secretariat) that, in addition to their individual roles, function as a Steering Group and share overall responsibility for WSS.

Key responsibilities

- Responsibility for WSS and the implementation of Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy
- Ensuring the successful delivery of all agreed workstreams/outputs
- Critically evaluating the governance framework and documents, and ensuring that guidelines are complied with
- Reviewing and refining the Terms of Reference and other governance documents (when indicated to do so in said documents)
- Managing and monitoring the WSS brand in line with guidelines and governance
- Reviewing minutes for all subgroups and working groups
- Sharing WSS communications with the Steering Group, e.g. events, key meetings, within five working days of receiving communication
- Engaging with prospective members and facilitating the membership process
- Approving and supporting new subgroups and working groups
- Ensuring that social media accounts are relevant and fair, and promote the ethos of WSS
- Carrying out ad hoc tasks, as agreed with the Steering Group members

Any member of the WSS Steering Group who is engaged in an activity which could be perceived as lobbying and includes reference to WSS must ensure that other members of the Steering Group are made aware within five working days.

Revision

Date	Version
22/06/2023	2.0