

# IWS STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2018 - 2022



**Irish Water Safety**  
*Sábháilteacht Uisce na hÉireann*





# FOREWORD

**Martin O'Sullivan**

**Chairman – Irish Water Safety**

As Chairman, I present this document, the Strategic Development Plan, on behalf of the new Council of Irish Water Safety.

This Plan outlines the ambition and the expectation of the Irish Water Safety Council while working under the constraints of challenging economic times.

We have used this Plan to reflect our mission, vision, values, goals and objectives. We will use it as a method of ensuring that we are all aware of our objectives and that we are all working collectively towards the same goals. We will also regularly measure our progress in achieving the goals set out in the Plan.

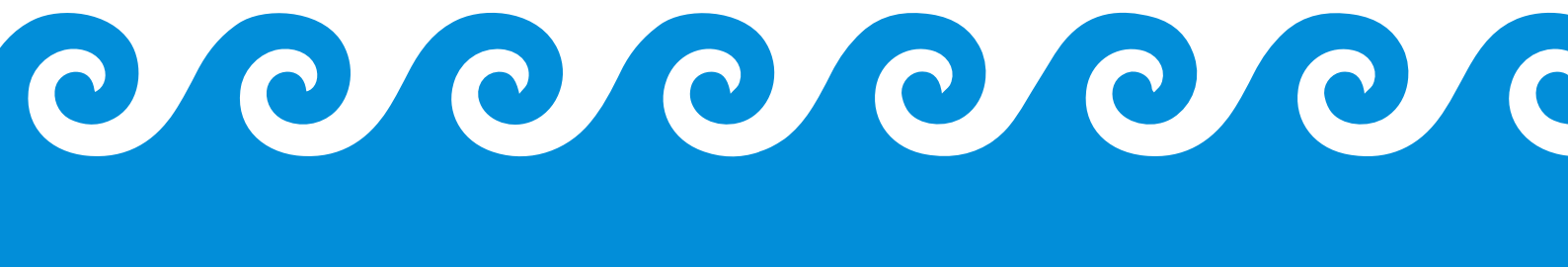
The new Council of Irish Water Safety has adopted this document under a planned work programme. The various talents of the Council members will target key areas of responsibility and drive the Plan forward with timed objectives and regular evaluation.

The methodology of achieving those objectives has been identified and assigned to the various commissions and working groups that have been established by the Council.

The participation of our most valuable resource, our volunteers, is paramount in the effective delivery of this plan.

This is not a Council Plan, it is an Irish Water Safety Plan, developed to guide the efforts of every member of the organisation to achieve the overall aim of Irish Water Safety: the promotion of water safety in Ireland, a reduction in the number of drownings and an increase in the public's awareness of best practices for all aquatic environments

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin O'Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.



# SETTING THE CONTEXT

Irish Water Safety's (IWS) roots extend back to 1945, when under the aegis of the Irish Red Cross it operated as the Water Safety Section. In 1971, it was moved to the Department of Environment and was named the Irish Water Safety Association (IWSA). The Water Safety Area Committee structure emerged in the early 1970's. In 1987, the IWSA was amalgamated with Fire and Road Safety under the aegis of the National Safety Council, and in 1999 was re-established as an independent statutory body, the Irish Water Safety Association (IWSA), operating under the aegis of the Department of Environment and Local Government. In 2006 Irish Water Safety's (IWS) remit was re-established with statutory Instrument No. 389 of 2006 which made some minor changes to more clearly define and expand our roles.

**VISION** *Every person a swimmer - every person a lifesaver.*

**MISSION** *Through education and training, promote a stronger safety culture, attitude and behaviour for people on, in or near water.*

## IRISH WATER SAFETY STRUCTURES

---

**COUNCIL** > The Council shall oversee and manage Irish Water Safety as defined in our Establishment Order, Statutory Instrument No. 389 of 2006.

**VOLUNTEERS** > The volunteers of Irish Water Safety shall:

- > 1. Respect the values and aims of Irish Water Safety;
- > 2. Undertake essential training in order to maintain the highest standards of delivery;
- > 3. Adhere to all defined Codes of ethics, conduct, practice and good behaviour;
- > 4. Promote the teaching of swimming, lifesaving and rescue.

**STAFF** > The staff of Irish Water Safety shall:

- > 1. Support the voluntary commitment of members;
- > 2. Provide a Quality Customer Service to the public;
- > 3. Provide ongoing measurement of outcomes to ensure that both internal efficiencies are achieved and customer's expectations are assessed and needs met;
- > 4. Assist the Council with all their duties and responsibilities.

## IRISH WATER SAFETY HOLDS AS ITS CORE VALUES THE FOLLOWING:

- The protection of children
- Our independence as a Statutory Body
- Good will afforded to Irish Water Safety
- Equality of access
- Being a caring organisation.
- Good financial Management

---

## IRISH WATER SAFETY STAKEHOLDERS

- The Public
- National & International Aquatic Organisations
- Central and Local Government
- Government agencies
- NGO's
- Charities

---

## STRATEGIC GOALS

1. To promote the public awareness of water safety.
2. The promotion of measures, including the advancement of education, related to the prevention of accidents in water.
3. The provision of instruction in water safety, rescue, swimming, resuscitation and recovery drills.
4. The promotion of efficiency and standardisation of the lifeguard service & the establishment of national standards for lifeguards, lifesaving and water safety.
5. Conduct our business in accordance with codes of practice and guidelines for statutory bodies.

---

## SYMBOLS AND ACRONYMS:

CI = IWS Council	RC = Rescue Commission
TC = Technical Committee	IRB = Inshore Rescue Boat Commission
EC = Education Commission	SC = Sports Commission
AC = Audit Commission	MC = Marketing Commission
LC = Lifesaving Commission	WSAC = Water Safety Area Committee
SWC = Swimming Commission	

HIGH PRIORITY

MEDIUM PRIORITY

LOW PRIORITY

# IWS will achieve its strategic goals as follows:

## *IWS Goal 1 - To promote the public awareness of water safety.*

### OBJECTIVES

1. Increase opportunities to brand Irish Water Safety as the Statutory Governing Body responsible for the promotion of water safety.
2. Apply new techniques/ initiatives to water safety awareness/ education which are interactive and age-appropriate.
3. Continue to develop a stronger relationship with Local Authorities.
4. Target at risk groups identified through statistical analysis.
5. Assist the development of further Strategies to help reduce suicide through drowning.
6. Support and assess the promotional work of volunteers through promotional, sponsorship & marketing to help increase their participation in activities.
7. Promote the erection of the ISO Sign for wearing Lifejackets at all slipways, harbours and piers in Ireland to help advise the public to wear them when going afloat.

### RESULT

Greater recognition of IWS as the National Water Safety Body.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Positive learning & awareness outcomes.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Improved working relationship & Finances.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Focussed media & Education campaigns.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Smaller number of suicide drownings.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Measure the activity of volunteers.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Public Awareness and a reduction in drownings.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

- 8. Develop effective marketing, media, online and print campaigns.
- 9. Conduct Research and Development on drowning prevention.
- 10. Produce guidelines to assist media depict positive images and behaviour and to help them to avoid showing unsafe water safety behaviour in advertising & media.
- 11. Develop the commercial entity to our organisation to improve branding and PR.
- 12. Develop strategic partnerships with common interests in promoting water safety in all aquatic environments.
- 13. Establish a communications policy for IWS.

Strong and clear messages promoting our activities.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

---

Provide up to date data for promoting water safety to reduce drownings.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

---

Improved image of Irish Water Safety.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

---

Better Service delivery and a new income stream.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

---

Improved Communication of water safety information through diverse channels.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

---

The public will be more aware of water safety messages.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

*IWS Goal 2 - The promotion of measures, including the advancement of education, related to the prevention of accidents in water.*

- OBJECTIVES**
- 1. Continue to promote the wearing of Lifejackets.
  - 2. Increase the number of Instructors for Summer Weeks and winter training programmes Nationwide.

**RESULT**

Reduction of boating accidents & drownings.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

---

More children trained in pool & open water safety.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

3. Implement a Risk Assessment Programme for Swimming Pools.

Safer Swimming Pools.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

4. Lead the implementation of a comprehensive integrated water safety certified education programme in, Primary and Post-Primary.

Increased interaction at all stages of education leading to a greater level of water safety awareness.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

5. Analyse drowning statistics to identify at-risk groups with a view to reducing the number of drowning fatalities.

Robust and reliable statistics.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

6. Promote awareness of water safety amongst those travelling overseas.

Reduced drownings overseas.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

7. Work with the Department of Education to promote awareness of Water Safety at primary and secondary levels.

Improved communication with the Department.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

8. Review the Library of teaching programmes for all IWS Courses.

Educational packs available for all training courses.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

9. Continue to develop a corps of suitably trained personnel to support IWS.

Maintain an adequate number of suitable trained persons.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

10. To promote the maintenance of public rescue equipment by Local Authorities and site owners.

Improved Public Rescue Equipment.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

11. Implement the Open Water Safety Awareness course for the aquatic workplace.

Safer working environments.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

12. Review the governance of WSAC's.

Improved governance & development at Local level.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

- 13. Translate our education and awareness material for non national and minority groups.
- 14. Continue to develop the on-going inspections of Community Rescue Boats Ireland stations in order to promote best practices.
- 15. Support the ongoing Risk Assessment Programme for open water sites.
- 16. Review the syllabi for internal education programmes and simplify the structures.

Improved communication of our water safety messages.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------

Stations inspected every second year.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------

Meet the requirements of the Local Authorities and agencies.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------

Increase in availability of Instructors & Examiners.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------

*IWS Goal 3 - The provision of instruction in water safety, rescue, swimming, resuscitation and recovery drills.*

- ### OBJECTIVES
- 1. Continue to develop Rescue Boat training with the Community Rescue Boats Ireland (CRBI), National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) and other relevant organisations.
  - 2. Develop coaching structures and training in accordance with Coaching Ireland’s Development Programme.
  - 3. Instruct, train and certify IWS personnel to best International practice.

### RESULT

More personnel qualified in Boat Training.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------

Professional Coaching Standards.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------

Improved Public Rescue Equipment.

CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	IRB	SC	MC	WSAC
----	----	----	----	----	-----	----	-----	----	----	------



<p>4. Maintain a College of Referees of sufficient size to meet the needs of the sport in Ireland and to meet our International Commitments.</p>	<p>Adequate number of referees.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>5. Encourage participation in Sport.</p>	<p>Increased participation in Lifesaving.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>6. Periodically review, update and develop all swimming syllabi and awards.</p>	<p>Maintain best practices.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>7. Continue to roll out IWS Swim Awards.</p>	<p>Greater recognition of our awards.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>8. Provide instruction in water safety, rescue, swimming and recovery drills.</p>	<p>Increased numbers in weekly classes.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>9. Continue to encourage WSAC's and Local Authorities to build Lifesaving Training Centres.</p>	<p>Improved training facilities for members and the public.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>10. Continue to encourage WSAC's to purchase vehicles and lifesaving equipment to support the work of our members.</p>	<p>Greater logistical and training supports for our members</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>

*IWS Goal 4 - The provision of instruction in water safety, rescue, swimming, resuscitation and recovery drills.*

<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> <p>1. Review all lifesaving syllabi by 2020.</p>	<p><b>RESULT</b></p> <p>Syllabi updated to best International practice</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>
<p>2. Review and promote a Code of Conduct for all Surf Lifesaving Athletes.</p>	<p>Highest standards to be achieved by athletes representing IWS by May 2018.</p> <p>CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC</p>

3. Develop and standardise Lifeguard training to international best practices and Rescue Boat training.

Higher standard of Lifeguarding. Lifeguard Training Manuals by March 2018.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

4. Continue to develop Cardiac First Responder (CFR) training programmes under Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC).

CFR included in all Basic Life Support (BLS) training.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

5. Continue to train a corps of Pool Lifeguard Providers who can deliver requisite courses nationally, both voluntarily and commercially.

Improved response to the demands of industry.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

6. Ensure enough Lifeguards are trained to meet market demand.

Sufficient Lifeguards trained for the Industry.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

7. Continue to carry out usage tests on rescue equipment .

High standard of Rescue equipment.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

8. Continue to review procedures for selection of Irish Teams .

Best International practice.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

9. Draft a Regulatory Framework for swimming pools for submission to the relevant Minister with a view to potential implementation.

Improved standards of safety in the industry.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

10. Review and reprint the Swimming Pool Safety Guidelines.

Up to date guidelines to include ILSE Risk Assessment and Regulatory Framework for the industry.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

11. Promote IWS as sole recognized statutory provider of professional lifeguard services.

Increase in IWS Qualified lifeguards employed in the industry.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

## *IWS Goal 5 - Conduct our business in accordance with codes of practice and guidelines for statutory bodies.*

### OBJECTIVES

1. To continually operate with child safety procedures always in mind and the continued development of child safety best practices in line with Government guidelines and legislation.

2. To conduct our business activities in a financially prudent manner; efficiently managing and allocating our resources effectively.

3. Develop and support the volunteer base of IWS and develop policies to increase our membership.

4. Improve and expand communication channels between the Council, the Executive and IWS members.

5. Audit WSAC activities on an annual basis.

6. Establish best practice Guidelines for and Implement Succession Planning for IWS personnel.

7. Maintain our affiliations with other international lifesaving organisations.

### RESULT

A safe environment for children and adults participating in IWS activities.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Achieving greater value for money within all our activities.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Increased delivery of our services.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Stronger and more active organisation.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

More accurate analysis of our outputs.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Smoother transition in all appointments and stronger continuity of appointments

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

Best International Practices.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

8. Support the role of the WSDO within IWS, Local Authorities & WSAC's.	Strengthened role of the Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO). CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
9. Continue to develop and support staff to reach their full potential.	Improved staff performance. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
10. Move the HQ to a larger Office Space.	Allow the organisation grow. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
11. Maintain a Risk Register on all IWS activities.	Minimise risks to IWS & to people engaging in IWS activities. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
12. Review current service, recognition and merit Awards and develop and implement an online system.	Streamlined management & administration of the Awards System. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
13. Implement recommendations and actions of independent reviews and audits.	Improved organisational governance & Performance. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
14. Complete a review of the staff establishment and make recommendations to the Minister.	Adequate staffing levels to allow for the future development of IWS. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
15. Support Volunteers to reach their full potential.	Increased engagement & empowerment. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
16. Conduct an annual review of Council effectiveness.	Improve our governance. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
17. Every 3 years seek an external review of Council effectiveness.	Have our governance checked against best practice. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC
18. Prepare for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	Be fully compliant by the 25th of May 2018. CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

19. Establish an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy.

Ensure fraud and corruption does not occur in IWS.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

20. Develop a performance delivery agreement with the department including a Service Level Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding.

Strengthen our relationship with our sponsoring Department and clearly state what our roles and goals are.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

21. Develop a national water safety plan for Ireland in accordance with the terms of the WHO Global Drowning Report 2014.

Reduction in drownings nationwide.

CI TC EC AC LC SWC RC IRB SC MC WSAC

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

- Keep the plan on the table with regular reviews at Council meetings.
- Ensure that the Staff Annual Work Plan is in keeping with achieving these objectives.
- Once a year, a dedicated Council meeting will review the plan.
- Commissions will create an action plan for their own designated objectives.

## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Profile of IWS
- Appendix 2: IWS Commission Structures