



Water Safety Ireland 2020 Annual Report

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

An initiative within the Department of Rural and Community Development.





Annual Report 2020

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Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland
Patron of Water Safety Ireland

Chairman's Statement



As Chairman of Water Safety Ireland I take great delight in delivering the 2020 report.

I take particular gladness in thanking all members of Water Safety Ireland, old and new for the tremendous voluntary work you undertake nationwide throughout the year.

We will, I am sure, refer in future times to 2020 as the year of Covid-19. Across the entire country we were forced to postpone our regular classes in Swimming, Lifesaving and Basic Life Support. Like many organisations, we really had no choice but to follow the advice of Government and make this decision for our summer and winter programmes. I wish to thank our Water Safety Area Committees, our head office staff and all our volunteers for supporting the organisation, in such difficult, challenging times.

2020 was not all doom and gloom. Our Strategic Marketing Commission worked hard to deliver water safety messaging to the public at large. A range of media channels were used to communicate various messages to at-risk groups including themes such as open water swimming which had a significant rise in popularity. Inflatable toys also became a serious safety concern and examples of other campaigns run through this report.

Water Safety Ireland appealed to the public to wear a lifejacket when going afloat or angling from shore, to stay away from the water's edge when walking and to swim at lifeguarded waterways where Lifeguards are trained to spot dangerous rip currents and other hazards. We also worked with other organisations to encourage greater compliance with the need to wear a lifejacket when on the water.

The resulting change in public behaviour certainly had the desired effect as these warnings preceded the release of figures for 2020, when 76 people drowned. This compares to 105 drownings in 2019 and is the lowest number since 1936, when 73 drowned in Ireland. The majority, 50, were male. Suicide accounted for 28 deaths, 9 fewer than 2019. A total of 44 people drowned accidentally in 2020, 18 fewer than in 2019 when 62 drowned accidentally.

As Chairman I wish to extend my appreciation to the Commissions, the Committees, the Working Groups and the Water Safety Area Committees. They deserve the gratitude of the entire nation. Our range of programmes and courses expands each year which imposes ever increasing challenges on our volunteers and staff. In 2020 we made special efforts to target at-risk groups with specific marketing campaigns that promoted water safety awareness across a variety of media. We also further developed our Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS) programme for schools nationwide.

I wish to acknowledge our volunteers nationwide whether they serve on the Council, or they perform as Examiners, Instructors, Coaches, Trainee Instructors, Organisers and Helpers and our hardworking staff at our head office in Galway. The pillars upon which we deliver our drowning prevention strategy include our swimming and lifesaving training programmes, our education developments, our media messaging, our surf lifesaving and our water safety awareness courses. We can never fully enumerate the number of lives saved and the number of aquatic accidents prevented as a result of our many activities but we can be assured that lives have been saved as a result of the activities of our dedicated volunteers throughout the country.

I also wish to thank the Community Rescue Boats Ireland (CRBI), a nationwide group of independent voluntary rescuers, whose training and administration is coordinated by Water Safety Ireland. These Community Rescue Boat Stations, on foot of an undertaking with the Coast Guard, are categorised as a "Declared Resource", enabling them to be tasked to respond to emergencies by Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Centres. Selection as a declared resource is a matter for the Irish Coast Guard who determines the requirements for such resources nationwide. WSI is the designated body for administering the VAT refund scheme. Thanks to all those volunteers who have contributed, and to coordinating input of the WSI Rescue Commission.

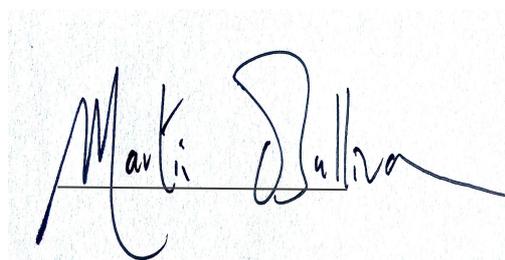
A significant and pleasing reflection of our growth as an organisation is the increase of our membership. Over 5,000 people are now contributing to our organisation nationwide and to each and every one of you, I extend my personal thanks. Pre-Covid, the Water Safety Ireland volunteers were busy nationwide teaching swimming, lifesaving, basic life support, rescue skills, surf lifesaving and promoting water safety awareness to the public. We can certainly attribute the 468 rescues by Lifeguards during the summer of 2020 as a reflection of their important work. These same Lifeguards, trained and assessed by Water Safety Ireland, administered first aid on 3,450 occasions, reunited with their loved ones a total of 251 lost children found wandering alone by the water's edge and gave advice on almost 108,000 occasions.

Throughout 2020, our Council members have demonstrated constant commitment and dedication to Water Safety Ireland's programme of work. I wish to thank each of them for their efforts.

I wish to thank all members of staff for their commitment to our organisation. They provide essential support all year around and without them we could not deliver our objectives.

As we reflect on the year, our thoughts are with the families whose members have passed away. We extend our deepest sympathies to all families who are feeling their loss. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

In conclusion, I urge you to make water safety part of the conversation you have with family and friends. Play a role in promoting water safety, in changing the skills, attitudes and behaviours of friends, family, colleagues and the general public and together we can bring drownings down. I thank you wholeheartedly and conclude by wishing you the safe and enjoyable use of our wonderful waterways.

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.

Martin O'Sullivan
Chairman, Water Safety Ireland

Water Safety Ireland Council

Martin O’Sullivan, Chairman



Martin has been involved with water safety since 1970, when he did his lifesaving tests with the Red Cross. Martin has served as Chairman of the Cork Water Safety Area Committee at various times since 1973 and is the WSI representative on the Blue Flag jury. He is an Examiner, Swimming teacher Tutor, Senior Risk Assessment Tutor with ILS (E). He has been involved internationally since 1990, is a member of the Board of Directors of ILSE and is the Chairman of the Rescue Commission of ILS. He has developed the ILSE Risk Assessment Project European.

Seamus O’Neill, Vice Chairman



Seamus started lifesaving at the young age of 10 and became an Instructor in 1975. Seamus is an Examiner, Lifeguard Provider, International Beach Referee and Tutor. He is the current Chairman of the Technical Committee and has served on the WSI Sports, Education and Swimming Commissions. He is also currently Summer Weeks Co-ordinator of the Donegal Water Safety Area Committee.

Michael Cuddihy



Michael “Buddy” Cuddihy has been a member of the board since 1987. During this time, he has served on many national and international committees, including the Lifeguard Commission, the European College of Referees and the Sports Commission, where he brought teams to mainland Europe, Australia, South Africa and the USA. He is currently the Chairperson of the Inshore Rescue Boats (IRB) Commission. He is also an active Water Safety Ireland Swim Teacher, Examiner, Senior Tutor with the IRBs, Referee, and Risk Assessor.

Anne Ryan



A Wexford native, Anne has been an Instructor and Volunteer with Water Safety Ireland since 1995. Among her many credentials within the volunteering ethos of Water Safety Ireland, Anne is also the Local Area Secretary, a Swimming Teacher and Examiner. In addition to working on FETAC updates, Anne works on all matters assigned to the Education Commission of which she is Vice Chair and is the QQI representative. In addition to these activities, Anne finds the time to organise Cahore Outdoor Water Safety Week, with which she has played an active role since 1996.

Paul Murphy



Paul is from Dublin and has been involved with Water Safety Ireland as a volunteer for over 40 years. He is an active Water Safety Ireland Lifesaving Instructor, Swimming Teacher, Examiner, Pool & Beach Lifeguard Course Tutor, and Swim Teacher Tutor. He has previously served on a number of Technical Commissions over the last 20 years. He is also the current Chairman of the WSI Lifeguard Commission.

Tom Doyle



From Wexford, Tom has been involved with Water Safety since the early seventies having worked in Wexford Swimming Pool for over 30 years. He is currently the Chair of the Water Safety Ireland Audit Commission and has previously served as Chairman of the Wexford Water Safety Area Committee, Water Safety Development Officer for Wexford County Council, and served on the Lifeguard Commission. Tom is also on the board of Wexford Credit Union and is Vice-Chair of Chapter 9, a grouping of credit unions in the south-east of Ireland. His leisure interests include electrical design, scuba diving, and cycling.

Lola O'Sullivan



Lola is from Tramore, County Waterford and has been involved with Water Safety Ireland for 30 years. She is an active Instructor, Pool and Beach Lifeguard Course Provider, and Examiner in Waterford. Lola is very involved in Surf Lifesaving in Waterford and has competed in Surf Lifesaving both nationally and internationally. She is also Chair of the Waterford Water Safety Area Committee and is a Councillor with Waterford City and County Councils. She previously held the position of Sports Officer for Waterford and served as a crew member with the RNLI in Tramore.

Karen Morton



Karen lives in Dublin and is a Non-Executive Director, Strategic Marketing Consultant and Personal Branding expert. Karen's career spans a variety of multinationals (Dell, British Airways and Eir) and fast growth start-ups (Monster.com) in a wide range of sectors. Karen spent 10 years at Dell in Marketing leadership roles including Chief Marketing Officer of Dell Financial Services. Karen's areas of expertise include Governance, Leadership, International, Strategy, Marketing, Communications and Digital/Social. Karen led the Dell Women's Network for 3 years and sat on the Connecting Women in IT committee in Dublin. Karen is a graduate of the University of Limerick where she received an Honours Degree in Marketing and French. Karen has a keen interest in water safety and was a Lifeguard at University.

Peter Cleere



Peter Cleere is a native of Skeoughvosteen, Co. Kilkenny and has been a member of Kilkenny Water Safety since 2014. He is currently a county councillor for the Callan Thomastown Local Electoral Area for Kilkenny County Council. A former Mayor of Kilkenny, he is currently Chairman of Kilkenny County Council. He is also currently Chairperson of the Kilkenny Carlow Education Training Board (KCETB). Peter has 20 years experience in the financial services industry and is a Chartered Banker, fully Qualified Financial Adviser (QFA) and holds a Professional Diploma in Financial Services. His leisure interests include GAA, where he is currently a player and an underage coach with his local club.

Tom O'Mahony



Tom O'Mahony lives in Dunboyne, Co Meath. He is a retired civil servant and served as Secretary General of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. In a previous role in the Department of the Environment he was involved in the statutory establishment of Water Safety Ireland, then Irish Water Safety, in 1999. He is very active in the fields of sport (where he is President of St Patrick's Athletic FC and a member of the Board of the Federation of Irish Sport) and music (as a recording artist under the stage name Tommy Keyes).

Anastasia Ward



Anastasia, originally from Ballinasloe, County Galway, is a Barrister who qualified in 1994. She has worked as a consultant to the Office of the Attorney General and has lectured across a vast selection of subject areas in a wide variety of third-level institutions including the Law Society of Ireland and Griffith College Dublin. Since 2017, Anastasia has been Program Leader for both the MA in Dispute Resolution and Professional Law for Independent Colleges. She also runs a small pharmacy chain in partnership with her husband. Anastasia swam competitively for a number of years in the 1980s at a provincial level, and during this time, she also undertook lifesaving training. These experiences lead her to an appreciation of the importance of water safety generally, and of swimming as a life skill. Her leisure interests, apart from swimming, include cinema and classical music.

Philip Keleghan



Philip Keleghan is from County Wicklow and has been involved in Water Safety and other aquatic activities for over forty years. He is an active Water Safety Instructor, Examiner, and Swimming Tutor. He is currently the Chair of the Education Commission. He is also the Vice-Chair of Kildare Water Safety. He has a special interest in the development of strong local area committees and is currently working to develop an Inland Water Safety and Lifesaving Training Centre in Blessington.

Clare McGrath



Clare is a member of Water Safety, Clare, and is an active Water Safety Ireland Instructor, Examiner, Tutor, and International Referee and she has worked as a referee at the highest level at European and World competitions. She is the current Chair of the Sports Commission, having been a member of the sport commission for 12 years, and has been involved in the organisation of the Regional and National lifesaving competitions, both pool and beach, for 15 years. She works with Clare County Council, as the Water Safety Development Officer within the Environment Section.

Council Meetings 2020 Attendance Record

In addition to the Council meetings, members have also attended Commission meetings, conferences, exhibitions and other water safety events throughout the year on behalf of Council.

Martin O'Sullivan	5
Seamus O'Neill	5
Michael Cuddihy	5
Philip Keleghan	5
Anne Ryan	5
Peter Cleere	3
Paul Murphy	5
Tom Doyle	5
Lola O'Sullivan	3
Karen Morton	2
Anastasia Ward	3
Clare McGrath	5
Tom O'Mahony	4

Water Safety Area Committees

The organisation has thirty Water Safety Area Committees, arranged almost on a county basis plus the Defence Forces and the Garda Síochána Water Safety Area Committees. Much recognition must be afforded to these Water Safety Area Committees who devise a programme of events and courses to cover their areas for the year. In addition to delivering water safety promotional programmes and demonstrations at schools, colleges, businesses, exhibitions and community events, each Committee delivers an extensive programme of pool water safety sessions in the winter and beach, lake and river water safety sessions in the summer.

The official membership structure is of a voluntary nature with over five thousand members nationwide. It operates on a number of different levels: Life Governors, Examiners, Trainee Examiners, Tutors, Instructors, Trainee Instructors and Non-Technical Volunteer Organisers. Each Local Authority has a Water Safety Development Officer who is a member of Water Safety Ireland.

Thanks to all their efforts to promote water safety we have seen a significant increase in the development of water safety awareness in local communities.

Water Safety Ireland - Staff

- Lt. Cdr. John F.M. Leech, CEO
- Roger Sweeney, Deputy CEO & Marketing Manager
- Joan Harte, Office Manager
- Jocelyn Cunningham, Clerical Administrator
- Alison Elstone, Clerical Administrator
- Emer Gardiner, Clerical Administrator
- Oisín Foden, Education Development Officer
- Bernard Cahill, Development Executive - Education and Sport
- Padraig Judge, Marketing Executive

National Office

Water Safety Ireland
The Long Walk
Galway

Auditors

Comptroller & Auditor General
3A Mayor Street Upper
Dublin 1

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Mainguard Street
Galway

Solicitors

Alastair Purdy & Co. Solicitors
Corrib Castle
1 Waterside
Woodquay
Galway

Accountants

OMB (Chartered Accountants)
4th Floor
Steamship House
Dock Street
Galway

Websites:

www.watersafety.ie
www.iwsmembership.ie
www.iwsmemberinsurance.com
www.teachpaws.ie
www.holdhands.ie

Organisation Structure 2020



Council
 Martin O'Sullivan (Chair); Seamus O'Neill (Vice-Chair);
 Michael Cuddihy; Tom Doyle; Paul Murphy; Lola O'Sullivan; Clare McGrath; Anne Ryan;
 Philip Keleghan; Karen Morton; Anastasia Ward; Peter Cleere; Tom O'Mahony

National Office

Internal Auditor: RBK

External Auditor: G&AG

Company Secretary

Governance Working Group
 Clare McGrath & Philip Keleghan (Co-Chairs)

Technical Committee
 Seamus O'Neill (Chair);
 Michael Cuddihy (Vice-Chair); Paul Murphy;
 Ronnie Horan; Breda Collins; Clare McGrath

WSDO's Working Group
 M Cuddihy; C McGrath; CEO;
 P Drumgoole; E Hanniffy;
 Tom Doyle;

Education Commission
 Philip Keleghan (Chair)
 Anne-Marie Kiernan
 Matthew Campbell
 Aishling Nesbitt (Nat DLP)
 Anne Ryan

Audit, Risk and HR Commission
 Tom Doyle (Chair)
 Anastasia Ward
 Paul Burke
 Peter Cleere
 Tom Keating
 Tom O'Mahony
 Joan Harte
 John Leech

Strategic Marketing Commission
 Karen Morton (Chair);
 Roger Sweeney (Sec)
 Donnchadh O'Sullivan;
 Aidan Collins

Rescue Commission
 Ronnie Horan (Chair);
 Valerie Stundon;
 Ger Keeling
 Fergus O'Neill

Sports Commission
 Clare McGrath (Chair);
 Simon McGarrigle;
 James Hassey;

Swimming Commission
 Breda Collins (Chair);
 John Farrell;
 Deirdre Webster
 Clive Seawright

Lifeguard Commission
 Paul Murphy (Chair);
 Sean O'Keefe;
 John Claffey;
 Eamon Owens

Inshore Rescue Boats Commission (IRB)
 Michael Cuddihy (Chair);
 Patrick O'Grady;
 Kevin McCloskey
 Paul Pearson

Marketing WG
 Leo Mahon, Fiona Lynch, Gerry Brennan

Internal Auditors
 Paul Burke;
 Alison Elstone

New Premises WG
 Peter Cleere; Seamus O'Neill; John Leech;
 Martin O'Sullivan

IRB WG
 Ger Keeling

Working Group

Working Group

PHECC WG
 Colm Dempsey (Chair); Ita Richardson;
 Paul Murphy; Pauline Jordan

Open Water Awareness Working Group
 John Claffey (Chair); Jim Riordan;
 Brendan Devlin

Water Safety Area Committees

Members of WSI

Members of the Public; Statutory and non-Statutory bodies

Regulatory Framework for Swimming Pools Working Group
 Martin O'Sullivan (Chair); Philip Keleghan;
 Ciara O'Sullivan; Gerry Brennan; Clive Seawright, John Leech.

CRM Working Group
 Philip Keleghan (Chair);
 Roger Sweeney; John Leech

Water Safety Ireland – Committees

1. The Technical Committee

Seamus O’Neill - Chairman
Michael Cuddihy
Paul Murphy
Ronnie Horan
Breda Collins
Clare McGrath

Duties:

- Co-ordinate and monitor the work of all Technical Commissions
- Review all Technical Commission recommendations and forward as appropriate all suitable recommendations to Council for approval
- Review all Technical procedures
- Review all Lifesaving syllabi & publications
- Manage the Annual WSI Examiner’s Conference
- Identify and prioritise new projects

2. Audit & HR Commission:

Tom Doyle - Chairman
Anastasia Ward
Tom Keating
Paul Burke
Peter Cleere
Conor Coyne
Joan Harte
John Leech

Duties:

- Monitoring Expenditure and Income
- Internal Financial Controls & Risk Management
- Internal Audits
- HR Matters
- Define an approach for the continuation of management development for both existing and new staff
- Health & Safety
- National & International Travel
- Develop strategies to increase membership
- Recommend National & International Appointments
- Improve links with Local Authorities, meet more County Managers and County Councillors

3. Strategic Marketing Commission:

Karen Morton- Chairman
Aidan Collins
Donnchadh O'Sullivan
Roger Sweeney
Padraig Judge

Duties:

- Promotion of the public awareness of water safety
- Manage national Marketing campaigns to promote water safety awareness
- Manage the WSI Digital and Social channels
- Communicate WSI Educational campaigns
- Produce marketing and promotional material as outlined within S.I. 56 of 2019 and Strategic Development Plan
- Ensure brand consistency across all merchandise such as certificates, books, manuals, leaflets, posters and online
- Manage the strategy for press releases and all external communications
- Conduct market research on water safety awareness and drowning prevention
- Ensure that WSI is well represented at exhibitions nationwide
- Liaise with external agencies
- Assist in organising national ceremonies, conferences & events
- Market the WSI Brand
- Monitor Press Cuttings
- Source sponsorship
- Promote the wearing of lifejackets and use of ringbuoys
- Develop the commercial strand to our organisation
- Analyse drowning statistics

4. Rescue Commission:

Ronnie Horan – Chairman
Valerie Stundon
Ger Keeling
Fergus O'Neill

Duties:

- Promote Blue Flag safety standards and other aquatic environmental issues
- Manage Risk Assessments at local, national & international level
- Manage the VAT Inspections and run the training courses for Community Rescue Boats Ireland (CRBI)
- Manage the SEIKO JIT Rescue Award
- Assist in Rescue on Inland and maritime Waters
- Liaise with Community Rescue Boats Ireland
- Test rescue equipment
- Liaison with Irish Marine Search & Rescue Committee
- Develop and rollout a Safety Awareness Programme for those employed near aquatic environments.

The Rescue Commission coordinated joint VAT shore-based inspections in 10 declared CRBI stations as part of a review of the inspection process. The Rescue Commission approved 42 applications for Just In Time Awards and 25 Rescue Appreciation Awards for members of the public who saved a life in the aquatic environment. 34 Risk Assessments

were carried out during 2020 on inland and coastal areas by Risk Assessors. A total of 14 Water Safety Awareness Courses were held for Government Departments, Local Authorities and other organisations during 2020. 184 were certified at the end of the courses. The formal establishment of the WSI-CRBI Liaison Group took place in 2020. The group works on a number of initiatives including providing advice and assistance to units, review of training requirements for individual units and the development of effective liaison between units and state bodies.

5. Sports Commission:

Clare McGrath – Chairman
Simon McGarrigle
Caroline Bentley
James Hassey

Duties:

- Liaison to Swim Ireland, Federation of Irish Sport and Coaching Ireland
- Manage National and International Competitions
- Develop Life Saving Clubs nationwide
- Train & appoint Coaches, Referees and Officials
- Ensure all WADA regulations are enforced for our athletes
- Recommend Sports Equipment
- Manage International Life Saving Sport & Competitions
- Promote and develop lifesaving sport in Ireland
- Liaison with the Olympic Council of Ireland
- Draw up procedures for all sports activities and competitions

6. Lifeguard Commission:

Paul Murphy – Chairman
Sean O'Keefe
John Claffey
Eamon Owens

Duties:

- The promotion of efficiency and standardisation of the Lifeguard Service
- The improvement of national standards for Lifeguards
- All matters dealing with Lifeguards (Pool, Beach, River)
- Recommend national standard for all lifesaving equipment
- Train Lifeguards in rescue crafts
- Water Safety Development Officers Conference
- The provision of instruction in water safety, rescue, resuscitation and recovery skills
- European Qualification Framework in Lifeguarding

7. Education Commission:

Philip Keleghan – Chairman
Anne Ryan
Ashling Nesbitt
Anne-Marie Kiernan
Matthew Campbell
Bernard Cahill

Duties:

- Promotion of measures, including the advancement of education, related to the prevention of accidents in the aquatic environment
- Maintain and develop training and water safety awareness programmes within the Irish Educational System.
- Develop a Transition Year water safety programme
- Manage the Teachers Training Courses
- Development of further FETAC awards
- Manage all Children's interests
- Review and update all Children's and educational documents
- Arrange seminars for Designated Persons
- Liaise with the Dept of Education to maximise water safety awareness training and public awareness programmes.
- Manage, monitor and enforce best practices in accordance with Children First and our own Code of Ethics for children.

8. Swimming Commission:

Breda Collins – Chairman
John Farrell
Deirdre Webster
Clive Seawright

Duties:

- The provision of instruction in swimming in order to teach lifesaving
- Liaise with Swim Ireland in relation to swimming standards
- Train & examine Swimming Instructors and Tutors
- Manage the Annual Water Safety Area Committee Officers Conference
- Improve membership and communication with WSAC's
- Monitor standards of Governance of WSAC's
- Represent WSI at IFSTA
- Ensure WSI is represented on the White Flag Jury
- Monitor Swimming Pool Standards
- Develop a document and template for Risk Assessment in swimming pools
- Evaluate the number of Swim Certificates in WSI
- Develop better communications with ILAM

9. Inshore Rescue Boat Commission

Michael Cuddihy – Chairman
Patrick O Grady
Kevin Mc Closkey
Paul Pearson

Duties:

- Maintain recognition and equivalency for IRB Driver and Crew Qualifications
- Promote the use of powered rescue craft for beach lifeguard patrol and rescue requirements
- Development of national training manuals and training records
- Provision of national and regional training courses for IRB instructors
- Provision of instruction in IRB rescue techniques to drivers and crew
- Review application of other powered craft in lifeguard/water rescue operations
- Promote the use of IRBs to support lifesaving sport competitions

Media Partnerships 2020

We are very grateful to the provincial and national media in helping us to target at-risk groups. Fourteen press releases issued:

PRESS RELEASES

- Supervision Near Home During COVID19 Restrictions
- St. Patrick's Weekend 2020
- COVID19 Phase 1 Road To Recovery
- June Bank Holiday Weekend
- Inflatable Toys Present A Drowning Risk
- National Water Safety Awareness Week
- Heightened Drowning Risk This New Moon Weekend
- August Bank Holiday 2020
- Discard Your Inflatable Floating Toys
- Finswim 2020 – Henry Hopes To Make History
- October Bank Holiday Weekend
- The Finman progress south down the Irish Sea
- National Award Ceremony 2020 – Fifty one lives saved in near drowning rescues
- Christmas and New Year Swims

PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS

- IPPN National Conference, Jan 23 – 24
- Holiday World, Jan 24 – 26
- Irish Skipper Expo, March 7 – 8
- WSI National Annual Awards Ceremony, Nov 24 (online)
- Below are examples of some of the campaigns we ran this year





National Water Safety Awareness Week (June 15th – June 21st)

National Water Safety Awareness Week 2020 coincided with the introduction of Water Safety Ireland’s new brand message ‘Better Safe Than Sorry’. The week offered our organisation the first of many opportunities to deliver a rallying cry and to communicate important, yet effective water safety messaging that resonates with all sections of Irish society. The campaign not only alerted people to best practices in various water-based scenarios – it challenged the public to go one step further and take appropriate safety action. In light of the unpredictable nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, Water Safety Ireland also amplified public health messaging in the context of increased outdoor activity at Ireland’s waterways.

The SEIKO “Just In Time” Award

Fifty-one lives were saved from drowning through the brave actions of rescuers who received recognition at Water Safety Ireland’s online National Awards Ceremony on Tuesday 24th of November 2020. For the first time in its history and in light of Covid-19 restrictions, the Award Ceremony was an online only event and was broadcast on Water Safety Ireland’s website and social media channels. WSI is grateful to Timemark for sponsoring the Seiko watches. Details of each rescue are listed in this report. Long-Service Volunteer Awards normally presented to volunteers, recognising their service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide were deferred for a period of one year as a result of Covid-19 public health measures.

WSI Water Safety Themed Calendar

Distributed to members nationwide thanks to financial support from sponsors.



Certification

There are two broad categories of certification – Swimming and Lifesaving. Certification reflects the efforts of our voluntary members who change skills, attitudes and behaviours by instilling water confidence and deep-water swimming and survival ability.

Water Safety Area Committees processed 3,006 Swimming, Lifesaving and Water Safety certificates in 2020. Prior to COVID 19 restrictions in March 2020, a total of 17,345 PAWS in the Classroom certificates were distributed to primary schools nationwide. With the closure of all schools, WSI transitioned to a PAWS at home programme where primary school children could be thought the PAWS programme and certified by their parents. This initiative was a huge success and over 27,588 students downloaded PAWS online certificates during this period ahead of what was a very busy summer on Irish beaches and waterways. This brings the total of Irish primary students to over 44,933 students for 2020. 1,525 of the Seal, Marlin and Orca certificates were issued, and 58 PHECC Awards were presented, giving a total certification by Water Safety Ireland of .

Aquatics Organiser	0	National Pool Lifeguard Level 2 Revalidation	280
Assistant Swimming Teacher	136	Pool Lifeguard Course Tutor	25
Beach Lifeguard	64	Rescue 1	122
Beach Lifeguard Revalidation	47	Rescue 2	84
BLS 1	360	Rescue 3	53
BLS 2	254	Rescue 4	52
BLS 3	161	Safety 1	84
Challenge 1	0	Safety 2	220
Challenge 2	0	Safety 3	128
Disabilities Aquatics Level 1	0	Safety 4	103
Disabilities Aquatics Level 2	31	Surf 1	0
Disabilities Aquatics Level 3	3	Surf 2	0
Disabilities Swimming Teacher Tutor	0	Surf Award Instructor	0
Endurance 1	30	Surf Instructor Beach Safety	10
Endurance 2	63	Surf Instructor Beach Safety Rev	1
Instructor	8	Survival 1	0
Inland Open Water Lifeguard	0	Survival 2	0
Inland Open Water Lifeguard Revalidation	5	Swim Teacher Lifesaving	0
WSI Code of Ethics	40	Swimming Teacher	24
Lifesaving Sport Coach Level 1	33	Swimming Teacher Tutor	5
In-house Pool Lifeguard Tutor	3	Water Safety Awareness	120
National Pool Lifeguard Level 1	52	Water Safety Awareness General & Pool	54
National Pool Lifeguard Level 1 Revalidation	61	Water Safety Awareness Tutor	1
National Pool Lifeguard Level 2	289	Total	3,006

Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS) is Water Safety Ireland's program of certification for

primary school children and a component of the physical education strand of the primary school curriculum, A total of over 44,933 PAWS Certificates were issued in 2020.

Summer Water Safety Weeks

WSI Water Safety Area Committees nationwide run an extensive series of swimming and water safety weeks throughout the summer in pools, rivers, lakes and beachfronts. Many of these classes extend beyond the summer in places that have pools and leisure centres.

Swim weeks consist of instruction in swimming and water safety weeks develop skills in rescue, water survival and basic life support. Details of these programmes are regularly updated on www.watersafety.ie.

All classes were cancelled for 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.



WSI National Representation

- Forum of Chairpersons of State Sponsored Bodies – Martin O’Sullivan
- An Taisce Blue Flag Jury – Ronnie Horan
- ACESA (Assoc Chief Executives of State Agencies) – John Leech
- Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee – John Leech
- Commissioner’s Irish Lights (Users Group) – John Leech
- Marine Safety Communications Working Group – Roger Sweeney
- Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) Jury – Roger Sweeney
- Community Rescue Boats Ireland – Ronnie Horan & Ger Keeling
- PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) – Paul Murphy
- ILAM White Flag Jury – John Farrell
- Green Coast Award – Gerard Keeling
- Federation of Irish Sports – Sports Commission Member
- Swim Ireland – NGB for Lifesaving Sport – Clare McGrath
- Charles Thomson Award Jury – Breda Collins and John Leech
- WSI Internal Auditor – Alison Elstone and Paul Burke
- National Designated Liaison Person – Ashling Nesbitt

WSI International Representation

- International Life Saving (ILS) board member - Martin O’Sullivan
- ILSE (Europe) Sports Commission - Seamus O’Neill
- ILSE (Europe) Management & Administration Commission - John Leech
- ILSE (Europe) Rescue Commission – Breda Collins
- International Federation of Swimming Teachers Association - John Farrell
- College of Referees Panel ILS Europe - Clare McGrath
- International Maritime Rescue Federation - John Leech

Risk Assessments

Water Safety Ireland volunteers carried out 34 Risk Assessments on bathing areas and waterways nationwide that may pose a particular risk to the public. In order to make these waterways safer, recommendations typically include the erection of public rescue equipment, signage and other necessary facilities. We also complete public rescue equipment usage checks and advise Local Authorities, state agencies and private enterprises on matters relating to water safety.

County	Area	Cork	Clonakilty FRS
1.Carlow	River Barrow	17.Donegal	Murder hole beack
2.Clare	Carrigaholt Beach	18.Dublin	Dollymount Beach
3.Cork	Youghal Frontstrand	19.Fingal	Lusk Sports Hub
4.Cork	Youghal Claycastle	20.Galway	Tarrea Pier
5.Cork	Inchydoney East	21.Galway	Kinvara Pier
6.Cork	Inchydoney West	22.Galway	Gurteen Bay
7.Cork	Owenahincha West & East	23.Galway	Renville Pier
8.Cork	Tragumna	24.Kerry	Derrynane
9.Cork	Inch	25.Kerry	Maherabeg
10.Cork	Coolmaine	26.Kerry	Whitestrand BF
11.Cork	Cadogens	27.Kerry	Ventry
12.Cork	Ballyrisode	28.Kildare	Greenway
13.Cork	Galleycove	29.Kilkenny	Goresbridge
14.Cork	Redstrand	30.Louth	Carlinton Re-issue
15.Cork	Oysterhaven	32.Louth	Seapoint beach Termonfeckin, County Louth.
16.Cork	Rocky Bay	33.Louth	Salterstown Pier
16.Roscommon	Tarmonbarry		

Lifeguard Rescues and Preventive Actions

Our Local Authorities employ Water Safety Ireland assessed lifeguards during the bathing season at popular bathing sites nationwide. The table below gives a clear picture of the effectiveness and value they contribute to saving lives each year and we commend them for this work in drowning prevention.

	Non Fatal Drowning	Rescue Without Craft	Rescue using Craft	First Aid	Lost Child	Advice Given	Accident prevented	Other Incident
Carlow*	0	0	0	18	0	4,189	0	0
Cork	0	1	11	465	15	19,961	5,275	12
Clare	0	56	189	730	41	9,340	5,027	75
Donegal	0	1	6	295	18	17,051	1,912	102
Dublin	0	7	1	147	4	436	376	12
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	0	55	19	254	6	190	87	0
Fingal	0	6	7	80	17	2,170	183	106
Galway	0	6	6	290	13	8,874	613	264
Kerry	4	14	19	539	92	5,994	1,570	2,724
Kilkenny*	0	5	0	100	0	650	150	0
Limerick Co.*	15	23	10	87	0	752	696	0
Louth	0	0	2	56	1	826	7	0
Mayo	0	5	11	160	7	6,731	22	12
Meath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roscommon*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sligo	0	0	0	47	25	20,697	1,851	2,218
Tipperary	0	0	0	4	0	2,943	0	0
Waterford	0	3	5	178	12	7,090	2,281	1,081
Wexford	0	12	6	580	44	1,442	370	69
Wicklow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	182	286	3,450	251	107,894	20,050	6,606

Lifesaving Sport

Competitions

Only one competition was held in 2020 before the Covid-19 pandemic struck. The National Stillwater Championships ran in the UL Sports Arena on the 16th of February and was a big success. Water Safety Ireland would like to thank all officials, event organizers and helpers that made everything run so smoothly on the day.

Results are as follows

Senior Men

1. Clare Men A
2. Cork Men A
3. Kilkenny Men A

Senior Ladies

1. Clare Ladies A
2. Wicklow Ladies A
3. Kilkenny Ladies A

Junior Girls

1. Wicklow Girls A
2. Wicklow Girls B
3. Waterford Girls A

Junior Boys

1. Donegal Boys A
2. Wexford Boys A
3. Clare Boys A

Masters

1. Waterford Masters
2. Cork Masters
3. Wicklow Masters

Event Cancellations ; Covid - 19

Unfortunately, after this event, all other competitions were cancelled for 2020 including all nipper events, beach competitions, national team trials and of course the World Lifesaving Championships which were due to take place in Italy (Riccione).

Coaching Awards

2020 saw the completed development of Water Safety Ireland's Lifesaving sport assistant and level 1 coaching awards. This is a huge leap forward for Lifesaving Sport in Ireland and will greatly increase the levels of participation and performance of lifesaving athletes both nationally and internationally. The Sports Commission ran a number of assistant and level one coaching awards over the year (mostly online of course) and there is now a large cohort of coaches nationally that can train athletes all over Ireland. Water Safety Ireland would like to extend their appreciation of all the work completed by Mr. Brendan Mc Grath (National Coach) to make this project happen, and to the Sports Commission for their commitment to develop the sport in Ireland.



National Awards Ceremony

Online due to Covid-19 related restrictions. Available to view at www.watersafety.ie.

Fifty-one lives were saved from drowning by rescuers who received recognition at Water Safety Ireland's National Annual Awards Ceremony, which broadcasted online on Tuesday 24th November at 7pm.

The Minister for Rural & Community Development, Heather Humphreys acknowledged recipients of the 'Seiko Just in Time Rescue Award' and other rescue awards which were presented to 67 rescuers in appreciation for saving 51 lives in 32 incidents. Long-Service Award, usually presented to volunteers in recognition of their service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide, were deferred until next year, due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Community and Social Responsibility Awards

In recognition of the support given to Water Safety Ireland's community work, charitable activities and commitment to drowning prevention initiatives and the reduction of aquatic related injuries.

1. Henry O'Donnell.

Henry is well on his way to becoming the first person in history to circumnavigate Ireland by fin swimming the entire coastline. He started from his home in Carrickfinn, Co Donegal on the 17th of September and has already managed to swim the entire Ulster coast and down into Leinster. Henry's expedition is a unique approach to raising awareness about water safety and you can track his progress at finswim2020.com.

2. Mary O' Donnell.

Mary is a Beach Lifeguard in Cork. She has illustrated fun educational resources that show children the do's and don'ts of water safety on the beach. She also filmed a Story Time Piece with the Cork Beach Lifeguards for use in online safety education sessions with primary schools throughout the Cork area.

3. Claudiu Potlog

Claudiu is a Graphic Design student in Technological University Dublin. As part of his Master's programme, Claudiu researched effective methods to communicate important water safety messages to children and parents and developed animations with Water Safety Tips and advice for children.

Sports Persons of the Year Award

Catriona McMahon, Co Clare

Catriona is a volunteer for more than 10 years. She is the lady permanently sitting at the recorder's table at all National pool and beach competitions. She is the "meet manager" expert and has spent many days in the rain, ensuring that results are processed correctly and accurately. Her experience was invaluable when Water Safety Ireland hosted the European Junior Lifesaving Championships in 2018 where she ensured that all European and World records were correctly processed and agreed.



John Shannon, Co Clare

John is a volunteer for more than 15 years. He organises the equipment that is needed for all pool and beach competitions and is the expert when it comes to the correct layout and preparation of all courses and events.



Volunteer of the Year Award

Matthew Sills, Waterford

Matthew worked as a Lifeguard on Tramore Beach and still provides training in a range of water safety disciplines from Surf Lifesaving Sport to Rescue Boats. He qualified as a doctor and in his role as Water Safety Ireland's National Medical Advisor, he has been instrumental in providing guidance throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. He helps at all local and national competitions and still volunteers with the local committee that developed a new National Lifeguard Training Centre in Tramore.



Life Governor Award

Brendan McGrath, Co Clare

Brendan has been teaching lifesaving and swimming for 50 years. He has coached lifesaving sport at all levels and trained many pool and beach lifeguards, swim teachers and coaches. Brendan also carries out risk assessments at waterways nationwide to ensure that they are safe for the public and he continues to deliver safety classes to employees in the workplace. He is an active member of the Clare Committee since the 1980s and played a major role in the building of a Lifesaving Training Centre in Whitestrand. Brendan served as a member of Water Safety Ireland's National Council for 20 years and has dedicated a lifetime to Water Safety.



The SEIKO “Just In Time” & Rescue Appreciation Awards

Presented to those who came to the assistance of person(s) in difficulty in water and in danger of drowning.

1. **Sam Rodden and Patrik Orals.** Roscommon, River Boyle, 11 Oct 2019

Students Sam and Patrik were returning to school when they saw somebody in the river. They ran along the riverbank, throwing a ringbuoy as the current took him away but the person submerged and did not resurface so they got into the river and pulled the unconscious person out. The boys put him in the recovery position and got blankets to keep him warm. He regained consciousness just as the emergency services arrived and he made a full recovery.

2. **Jack Nolan.** Cork, Youghal, 8 Jan 2020

Jack was returning to the harbour from a fishing trip. As he passed a lighthouse, he saw a woman in the water. He was wearing a lifejacket so he jumped in and saved her until emergency services arrived.

3. **Niamh McMahon, Lynn McCarthy, Beth Darrer.** Cork, Incidoney, 27 May 2020

Niamh was surfing when she saw four friends in danger of drowning. She paddled over and pulled one person onto her board while another held on tightly. Beth and Lynn were walking the shoreline and after getting people to call emergency services, they grabbed a ringbuoy and swam out to help Niamh. Exhausting for everyone but they all got back to shore safely.

4. **Jamie Venner, Cillian Foster, Richard McSweeney, Kate Horgan and Harry Pritchard.** Cork, Fountainstown, 28 Aug 2020

These five teenagers were fishing in a Rigid Inflatable Boat when they saw a nine-year-old boy on an inflatable toy being swept out to sea by a strong current, along with the boy's father who was swimming to save him. The boy made it back to shore but the father was left exhausted and clinging to a marker buoy in the strong current. Thankfully, the teenagers were in the right place at the right time to save him.

5. **Conal Dolan.** Westmeath, River Shannon, June 2019

Conal certainly put his training as an Emergency Medical Technician to good use when he saw a woman in danger of drowning. Without hesitation, he got into the water and brought her safely to shore where he checked her vital signs and put her in the recovery position in an effort to drain excess water. She made a full recovery.

6. **Nathan Holding, Cathal Keohane and Connell O’Herlihy.** Cork, Inchidoney, 24 June 2019

A father and son were caught in a very strong rip current but thankfully the three boys were able to use their boards to help. The father had become exhausted fighting the current but after a time the boys broke free of the rip and got safely back to shore.

7. **Gardai Adrian Corcoran, Mick O’Connell, Dave Coughlan.** Laois, River Barrow, 8 March 2020

Adrian got into the high and fast flowing river to save a woman in danger of drowning. Sergeant O’Connell soon arrived and got in to help Adrian bring the woman to the riverbank where Garda Coughlan also helped to pull the woman to safety.

8. Gardai Niall Lennon, Mark Murphy & Sergeant Leo Kiernan. Galway, Loughrea, 9 May 2020

These three Gardai came to the rescue, not of a person, but a dog that had become entangled in a water buoy and was drowning. Luckily they were able to avail of a local fisherman's lake boat to rescue the dog and get it back to its worried owner.

9. Garda Nigel Desmond. Cork, Lancaster Quay, 12 Feb 2020

Nigel arrived at the scene to find a man semi-submerged in freezing cold water, holding onto a ringbuoy that had been thrown to him. Nigel jumped in straight away and kept the man's head above water and with some help, managed to get close to the riverbank until Cork Fire Brigade's Swift Water Rescue Team arrived.

10. Garda Fergal O'Connor. Carlow, River Barrow, 28 Oct 2019

Fergal arrived to the riverbank to find that several people had attempted to save a drowning man by throwing ringbuoys but none of the ringbuoys reached him. Fergal immediately jumped in and used a ringbuoy to keep the man afloat while his Garda colleagues pulled them both back to the riverbank and out of the river.

11. Sergeant Cathal O'Neill. Limerick, River Maige 31 August 2019

Cathal's local knowledge came in handy to find a woman who was brought nearly 200 metres away from where she was first spotted in the water. He called emergency services and got into the strong current and in poor visibility, managed to find her and bring her to the riverbank where first aid was performed successfully.

12. Gardai Karl Carroll and Evan Guilfoyle. Dublin, River Liffey, 31 Dec 2018

Both Karl and Evan used a temporary ladder to access a pontoon where they managed to bring a man to safety from a strong current.

13. Gardai Dean O'Sullivan and Darragh Khan. Carlow, Knockroe, 6 Oct 2019

Dean and Darragh managed to avoid rocks as they swam a strong current to reach a drowning man and bring him to shore where Dean performed CPR.

14. Gardai James Brennan, Breda Fahy, Tom Kelly, Aidan Hynes, Joyce O'Grady and Ken Warney. Westmeath, Athlone. 29 Sept 2018

James used a rowboat to get to a drowning woman and hold onto her while Breda and Tom used another boat to assist. They pulled the woman into a boat and then Aiden, Joyce and Ken threw them a rope and pulled them all safely back to safety.

15. John Boyle and - posthumously to Dan Boyle and Brian Friel. Donegal, Mullaghduff, July 1975

People out walking Mullaghmore noticed from a distance that two men in a boat had lost an oar on their wooden boat and were in extreme difficulty. Brian Friel and Dan Boyle, local residents at the time, along with John Boyle, launched a boat and lifted the casualties on board. They were shaken and hypothermic but thankfully made a full recovery.

16. Jane Friel. Donegal, Port Salon, 28 July 2020

Jane ran to a mother's cries for help and saved FOUR people from drowning in a strong rip current. She ran with a ringbuoy into the water and after rescuing the nine year old girl, went back out to reassure two more girls and their father, encouraging them to help by kicking their legs as she helped them to shore and out of the rip current.

17. Gardai Pearse Murphy & Gary O'Donohoe. Louth, Drogheda, 3 May 2019

Pearse and Gary used a ringbuoy to pull a heavily bleeding man to shore where they administered first aid and got him to hospital where he made a full recovery.

18. Garda John O'Brien and Reserve Garda Brian Murray. Wicklow, Arklow, 22 Sept 2019

John arrived to a river that was heavily swollen due to heavy rainfall and could see a woman face down in the middle of the waterway. He swam with a ringbuoy while his colleague Brian held the rope however the rope was not long enough but nonetheless John continued swimming with the ringbuoy until he reached the drowning woman. He pulled the woman towards him and used the ringbuoy to help him swim 20 metres back to shore where both Gardai administered CPR.

19. Callum Keane. Meath, Navan, 12 Aug 2020

Callum was out for a walk when he saw two boys shouting for help. They got into difficulty in the rushes growing in the river. He swam to the first boy and brought him safely through the rushes to the riverbank. He then went back into the river to rescue the second boy trapped in the rushes.

20. Garda Liam Glendon. Cork, Mallow, 16 May 2020

Liam, who is also a volunteer with Mallow Search & Rescue, received an alert that someone was drowning in the river Blackwater. He got to the scene quickly and swam to the drowning man who soon made a full recovery.

21. Garda David Fenton. Cork, Castletownbere.

David, who is also a volunteer with the RNLI, received an alert that a woman was drowning near the pier. He swam to the woman and kept her calm and safe in the water until a boat arrived to take her to shore where she was brought to hospital and made a full recovery.

22. Garda Dean Phelan. Wicklow, Bray Head, 22 August 2020

Dean received an alert that a man was drowning at The Cove in Bray Head. He swam to the unconscious casualty, brought him to shore and placed him in the recovery position. He made a full recovery thanks to Dean and the ambulance service.

23. Garda Micheal Carroll. Wexford, Wexford Quay, 12 April 2020

When Micheal received an alert that a man was drowning near the quay, he rushed to the scene, swam to the rescue and brought the man to safety.

24. Gardai Brendan Crawford, Ciaran Murray & Ciara Galvin. Dublin, Clondalkin, 17 June 2020

When a woman was pulled into the water by her dog, Brendan and Ciaran tied a rope to each other and entered the water to rescue the lady while Ciara held the rope securely on the river bank to help them all back to shore.

25. Jack Groves & Gardai Christopher Smith & Jamie Lillis. Dun Laoghaire, 8 Feb 2019

Christopher and Jack swam to the rescue of a drowning man, using a ringbuoy to keep him afloat while they all waited on rocks for the Irish Coast Guard which was called by Jamie from shore. The man was brought back to the pier and treated at the scene.

26. Gardai Roisin O'Donnell and Keenan McGavisk. Louth, Ardee, 30 March 2020

Roisin and Keenan entered the water and crossed the entire river. using a torch to locate a man at risk of drowning. They found him, rescued him, and got him to hospital where he made a full recovery.

27. Callum Curtin & Kevin Sharkey. Clare, Spanish Point, 20 Sept 2020

When a child was swept out to sea, Callum and Kevin grabbed their surfboards and rescued both the child and a person who tried to rescue the child but got into difficulty. Within moments, they saved three more children who were swept out by a strong current. Shortly after that, they saved another young girl and two adults trying to save her. Within 45 minutes, they had saved eight people from drowning.

28. Joe Breen. Waterford, Tramore, 3 June 2020

Joe paddled to help rescue two very distressed paddleboarders drifting out to sea on an offshore wind. As emergency services were called, Joe placed the lady on his paddleboard as her husband paddled alongside, eventually helping to get them both safely back to shore.

29. Jim Swift. Waterford, Tramore, 28 May 2020

Jim used his surfboard to help a young girl caught in a strong rip current at Tramore beach. His quick response as the lifeboat arrived, helped to ensure that the girl was taken to safety and assessed by emergency services.

30. Clodagh West Keogh & Lorna Keogh. Kilkenny, River Dinan, 01 June 2020

Clodagh and Lorna were painting on the side of the riverbank when they heard two men shouting for help downstream. Clodagh grabbed a ringbuoy and ran towards the men who were struggling in the water. Lorna swam across the river to calm their young children who were panicking. Clodagh entered the water and twice used the ringbuoy to sav both men.

31. Tony Collins, Paddy Collins, Conor Hayes and Ben Tennyson. Kilkenny, River Nore, 6 November 2019

Tony, Paddy, Conor and Ben were walking across St John's bridge when they saw a man bobbing up and down in the water in distress. They grabbed a nearby ringbuoy and threw it a number of times until they reached the man and pulled him to safety.

32. Patrick Oliver and his son Morgan. Galway Bay, 13 August 2020

Patrick and Morgan rescued two paddleboarders, Ellen Glynn and Sara Feeney who were swept out to sea and spent fifteen hours lost overnight. As a massive search and rescue effort involving the Irish Coast Guard, the RNLI, local fishing vessels, and many onshore walkers continued, Patrick and Morgan took to their fishing boat and found the girls clinging to a lobster pot south west of Inis Oírr, after using their local knowledge to estimate where the currents might have carried them.

Analysis of Drownings 2020

The total number of drownings in Ireland in 2020 was 76, 29 fewer than in 2019 when 105 drowned. The average number of drownings each year over the past ten years is 115. Each figure in the following graphical analysis, be it accidental, suicide or of undetermined cause, reflects a preventable tragedy that affects so many lives. Water Safety Ireland continues to target at-risk groups with initiatives to highlight best practices so that drownings are reduced.

A synopsis of some general contributory factors over the years:

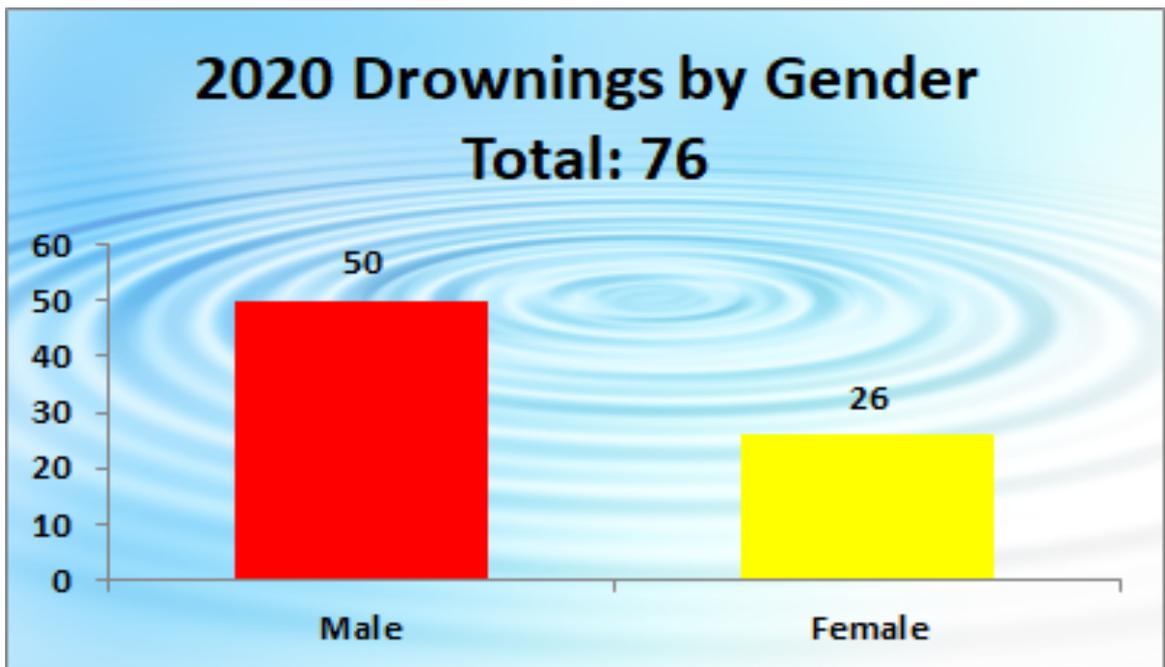
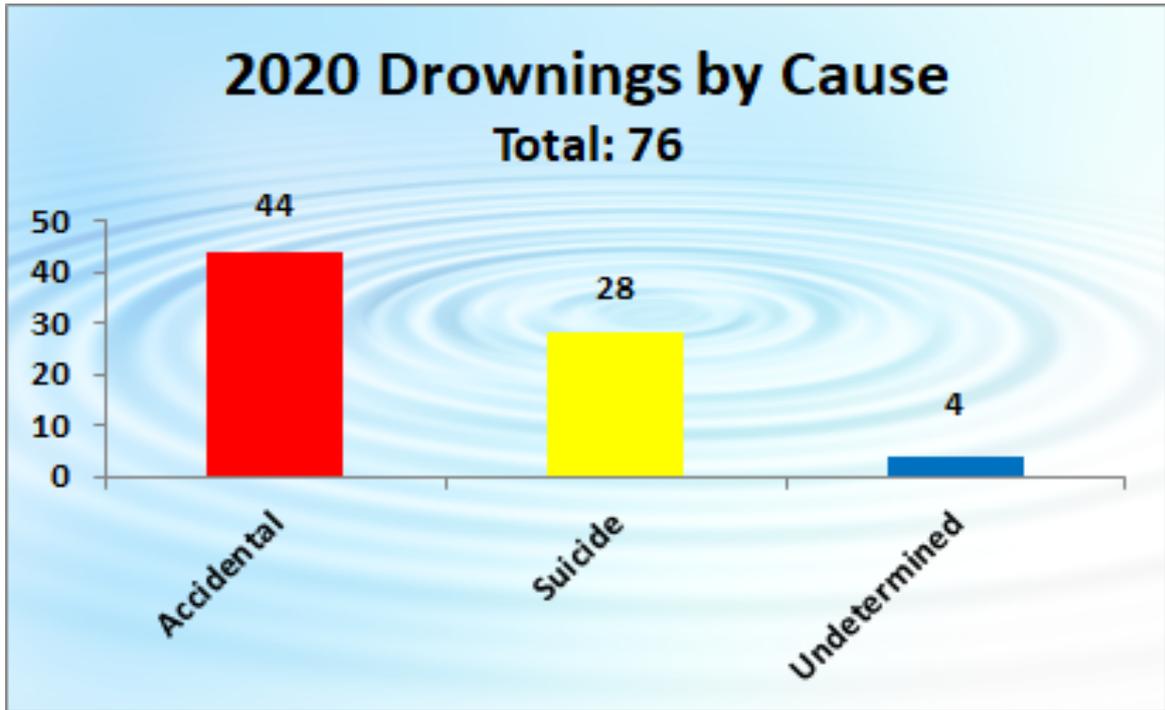
A synopsis of some general contributory factors over the years:

1. Poor or inadequate equipment (e.g. boats or lifejackets);
2. Not wearing a correctly fitting lifejacket;
3. Alcohol consumption;
4. Falling unexpectedly into water;
5. Improper use of boats and equipment;
6. Overestimation of skills; underestimation of ability;
7. Lack of local knowledge when travelling in Ireland and abroad;
8. Not being able to swim or not having lifesaving and water survival skills;
9. Easy unauthorized access to waterways;
10. Cold water shock and hypothermia;
11. Current (including rip currents, river currents, and tidal currents);
12. Offshore winds (including flotation devices);
13. Pre-existing diseases;
14. Underwater entanglement;
15. Bottom surface gradient and stability;
16. Waves (coastal, boat);
17. Water transparency;
18. Impeded visibility (including coastal configuration, structures and overcrowding);
19. Lack of parental supervision (infants and children);
20. Change in weather conditions;
21. Excessive "horseplay" or over exuberant behaviour;
22. Swimming outside the depth of the user.

A synopsis of some general preventive and management actions:

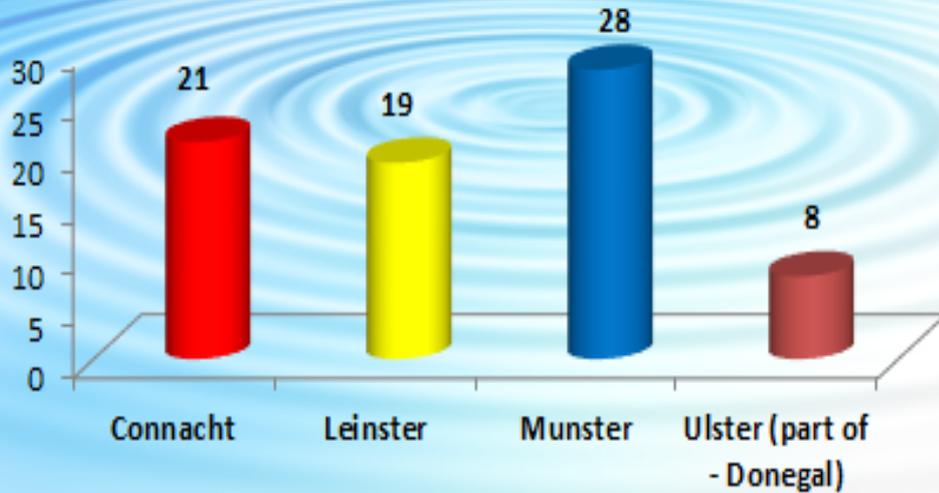
1. Public education by Water Safety Ireland regarding hazards and safe behaviours;
2. Teaching children to stay away from water when unsupervised through the WSI PAWS (Primary Aquatics Water Safety) programme;
3. Continual adult supervision of children;
4. WSI media campaigns that drowning can happen quickly and quietly;
5. Promote in WSI press announcements, the restriction of alcohol provision before or during aquatic activities;
6. Provision by Water Safety Ireland of properly trained and equipped lifeguards;
7. Provision of rescue services;
8. Water Safety Ireland Risk Assessments that include assessments of local hazard warning notices, access to emergency response and availability of resuscitation skills/facilities and other factors;
9. Development by Water Safety Ireland of rescue and resuscitation skills among general public and user groups;
10. Coordination by Water Safety Ireland with user group associations concerning hazard awareness and safe behaviours;
11. Wearing of adequate lifejackets and Personal Flotation Devices when boating;
12. Fencing and doors to isolate outdoor aquatic environments.

*Any interpretation of the figures must be exercised with caution because they are provisional, pending supplementary documentation and therefore subject to change pending further correspondence.



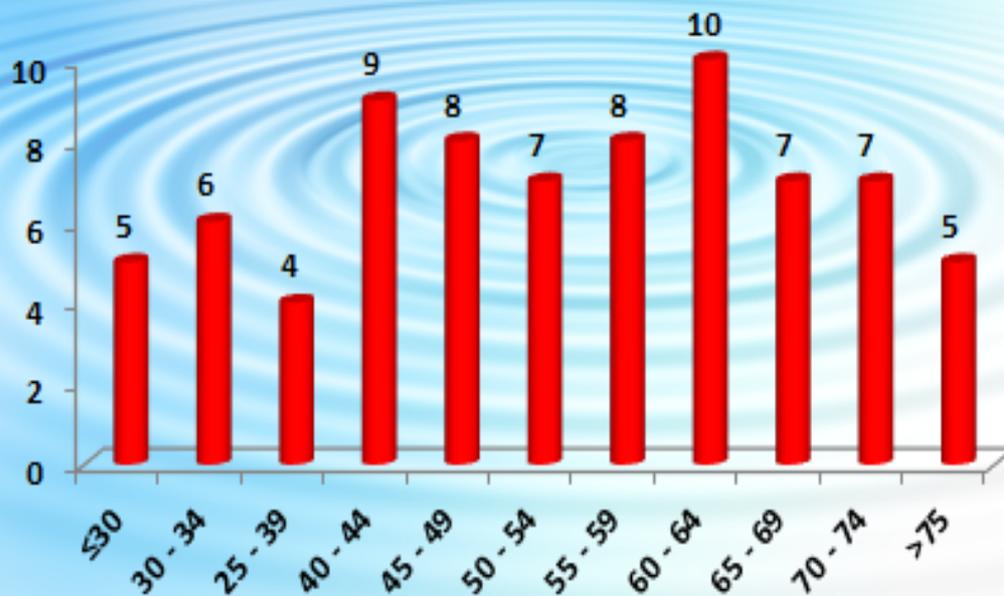
2020 Drownings By Province

Total: 76



2020 Drownings by Age

Total: 76





Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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