

# **Water Safety Ireland**

## ***National Awards Ceremony 2023***

Tuesday, 14th November 2023, 3pm

### **Running Order**

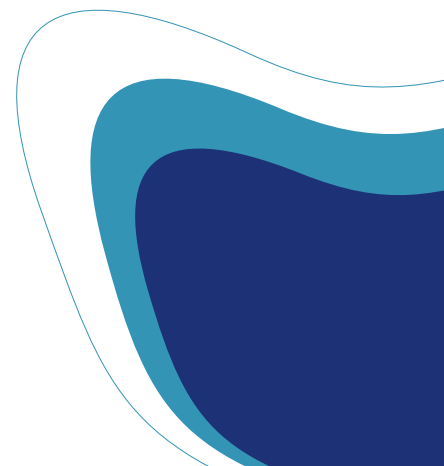
**3PM Welcome by Clare McGrath,**  
Chair, Water Safety Ireland

**Introduction by Joanne Walsh**  
CEO, Water Safety Ireland

**Address by Thomas Byrne, Minister of State**  
at Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht,  
Sport and Media (Sport and Physical Education)

### **Presentation of awards will take place in the following order:**

- Community and Social Responsibility Awards
- Media Appreciation Awards
- SEIKO Just In Time Awards & Rescue Appreciation Awards
- Des Kenny Awards
- The Leon Quinlan Memorial Award
- The Avery Greene Memorial Award
- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Sports Persons of the Year Awards
- Life Governor Awards
- Long Service Awards:
  - Certificate of Service 10 Years of Service
  - Service Medal of Honour (SMH) 15 Years of Service
  - Bronze Bar to the SMH 20 Years of Service
  - Silver Bar to the SMH 30 Years of Service
  - Gold Bar to the SMH 40 Years of Service
  - Gold Service Medal of Honour 50 Years of Service



## A Welcome from the Chair of Water Safety Ireland



Good afternoon and welcome to the Water Safety Ireland National Awards Ceremony 2023.

As Chair of Water Safety Ireland, I proudly welcome all our award recipients, their families and friends to Dublin Castle today. Today we honour our dedicated volunteers who have served this organisation from 10 years to over 50 years. We will be appointing new Life Governors – this is the highest accolade the organisation can bestow. We congratulate our Sports stars and we celebrate many Rescue awards. These rescue awards highlight great news stories that could have ended differently, except for true heroes who were in the right place at the right time.

Throughout 2023 WSI issued swimming and lifesaving certificates to 8796 young people. 718 certificates were issued to candidates who trained as beach and pool lifeguards. Local Authority lifeguards rescued 191 people from drowning at out lifeguarded locations, administered 3,886 first aids and reunited 141 lost children with their guardians. We must continue to encourage the public to use our lifeguarded waterways – it's the safest place to swim.

Tragically 85 people died from drowning in 2022 and I wish to convey our sympathies to all those families.

By identifying the key risks and targeting intervention appropriately, Water Safety Ireland hopes to achieve further reductions in drownings and improve emergency response and prevention activity.

I wish to thank all the Committees, Commissions, Working Groups and Water Safety Area Committees, as well as members of Council for all their contributions in 2023. Thank you to all the staff in HQ in Galway, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to guide our projects forward.

This awards ceremony is a celebration of our many volunteers throughout the country. Water Safety Ireland is built on the amazing achievements of all our hardworking volunteers. We hope you enjoy our celebration today.

Yours sincerely

**Clare McGrath**, Chairperson, Water Safety Ireland

## An Introduction from the CEO of Water Safety Ireland

Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Joanne Walsh and I am the CEO of Water Safety Ireland.

This afternoon I am delighted to have the opportunity to be here with you all on this wonderful celebratory occasion. This event is especially wonderful as we can finally celebrate in person in the magnificent surrounds of Dublin Castle.

Our celebration today brings together our volunteers, our members, our rescue heroes and a multitude of groups and supporting stakeholders throughout the country who work diligently to provide water safety services to our families, our friends and our communities. I want to especially take this opportunity to thank the invaluable contribution from our volunteers. Our volunteers are the unsung heroes of our organisation who selflessly dedicate their time, skills and energy for all water users in, on or near aquatic bodies. Our volunteers are the backbone of Water Safety Ireland, their impact is immeasurable, on behalf of Water Safety Ireland I wish to thank each and every one of you.

Today marks a momentous occasion, as it is our National Awards Ceremony. We honour our long service recipients who between them have given over 2000 amazing years of voluntary commitment to water safety. We also celebrate our newest life governors who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to water safety throughout their tenure. I would like to applaud our long service recipients and life governors and recognise the remarkable and dedicated service they have provided.

Today we will also honour our remarkable rescuers with our SEIKO "Just in Time", Rescue Appreciation and Des Kenny awards. Your brave and rapid responses saved many lives and provided immense solace to many families, you did fantastic work, very well done to you all. Other most notable awards include our prestigious volunteer of the year and community and social responsibility recipients, and we honour our superb memorial award recipients. Also, today we mark our superb Sports Persons of the Year awards and deliver our Media Appreciation awards.

Tragically 85 lives were lost due to drowning in 2022, this was five more lives lost in comparison to the previous year. However, we must be mindful that during the last few decades drowning rates have decreased significantly, in Ireland. We can attribute this reduction to many factors, not least our organisation's rich history of volunteerism and its deep-rooted commitment to drowning prevention initiatives nationwide.

Water Safety Ireland's Vision is "A water loving people where safety is second nature" and our foremost objective is Public Awareness and Education. We strive to reduce water related accidents and fatalities by changing attitudes and behaviours so that our aquatic environments can be enjoyed by all with confidence and safety. We all know that safety is a small investment required for the delivery of a rich future and in order to make this happen we need everyone to be water safety aware and water safety conscious.

Go raibh maith agaibh go léir. Ag obair le chéile,

**Joanne Walsh**, CEO Water Safety Ireland.



## Press Release

**Twenty-nine lives saved in near-drowning rescues.  
Water Safety Ireland honours remarkable rescuers.**

**National Awards Ceremony 2023**

**Printworks Event and Exhibition Centre, Dublin Castle**

**Tuesday, 14th November 2023, 3pm – 6pm**

### **A Note from Thomas Byrne, Minister of State**

**at Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media  
(Sport and Physical Education)**



“It is an honour to pay tribute to the courageous and deserving award recipients being recognised at Water Safety Ireland’s National Awards Ceremony. I want to commend the valiant efforts of these individuals who save others from drowning and to also pay tribute to the ongoing work of Water Safety Ireland volunteers who teach swimming and water rescue skills.”

I know that among the other recipients to receive awards, are 101 volunteers who will be presented with Long-Service Volunteer Awards, recognising a combined total of 2,040 years of personal voluntary service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide. That is a remarkable achievement and I want to commend every volunteer who devotes their spare time to making our waters safer.

On my personal behalf and on behalf of the Government, I want to thank every member of Water Safety Ireland for your work. Thanks to Water Safety Ireland, communities around the country are enriched with individuals who can enjoy our wonderful waterways safely.”

**Minister Thomas Byrne**

Twenty-nine lives were saved from drowning by rescuers who will receive recognition at Water Safety Ireland’s National Annual Awards Ceremony at the Printworks Event and Exhibition Centre, Dublin Castle on Tuesday 14th 2023, 3pm – 6pm.

Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Sport and Physical Education), Thomas Byrne will acknowledge fifty-five recipients of the ‘Seiko Just in Time Award’ and rescue appreciation awards for saving twenty-nine lives at risk of drowning. “It is an honour to pay tribute to the courageous and deserving award recipients being recognised at Water Safety Ireland’s National Awards Ceremony. I want to commend the valiant efforts of these individuals who save others from drowning and to also pay tribute to the ongoing work of Water Safety Ireland volunteers who teach swimming and water rescue skills.”

“I know that among the other recipients to receive awards, are 101 volunteers who will be presented with Long-Service Volunteer Awards, recognising a combined total of 2,040 years of personal voluntary service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide. That is a remarkable achievement and I want to commend every volunteer who devotes their spare time to making our waters safer.”

Water Safety Ireland CEO Joanne Walsh stated:

“We all know that safety is a small investment required for the delivery of a rich future and in order to make this happen we need everyone to be water safety aware and water safety conscious. Drownings can happen quickly and silently but with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes everyone can avoid the hazards and take responsibility for their own safety. Start a water safety conversation with your family, friends and colleagues and encourage them to read Water Safety Ireland’s guidelines at [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie) so they can enjoy Ireland’s waterways safely.”

**Ends**

**Media Enquiries to:**

**Water Safety Ireland, The Long Walk, Galway.**

Tel: 091-564400;

[info@watersafety.ie](mailto:info@watersafety.ie), [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie)

**Joanne Walsh, 087-199.0339 / [joannewalsh@watersafety.ie](mailto:joannewalsh@watersafety.ie)**

**Roger Sweeney, 087-678.9601 / [rogersweeney@watersafety.ie](mailto:rogersweeney@watersafety.ie)**

**Padraig Judge, 087-459.0156 / [padraigjudge@watersafety.ie](mailto:padraigjudge@watersafety.ie)**



**BETTER  
SAFE**

**THAN  
SORRY**

**ALWAYS  
SUPERVISE  
CHILDREN IN  
AND AROUND  
WATER**



Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Supported by the Government of Ireland

## 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.

### Timemark

Timemark Limited is a distributor of leading watch and jewellery brands. Founded in 1979, and entirely Irish owned and managed, Timemark sponsors the SEIKO Just In Time Award, which they have supported since its inception in 2001 and for which we are deeply grateful.

### Margaret Nolan - The Galway Cartoon Festival

Water Safety Ireland uses cartoons to communicate water safety messages that may otherwise need many words. Cartoonist Terry Willers (RIP) simplified complex messages and lightened important topics for children and adults alike. He let the characters do the talking.

Water Safety is a serious topic - an average of 105 people drown in Ireland every year - yet Terry found a way to convey serious messaging in a way that lifts the mood and educates people on the importance of water safety in a fun and engaging manner.

Thank you Margaret and the Galway Cartoon Festival for focusing on water safety this year and prompting people to retain key messages in the way that Terry intended.

### Danielle Kenneally - Wix and Wax Ireland

Danielle has found a lovely way to honour her brother Jack and his good friend Shay, who both drowned in a quarry in County Clare, aged just 15. To cherish their memories and raise awareness about water safety, Danielle co-founded Wix and Wax Ireland with her friend Chantell. The company creates unique custom fragrances which has always been a passion for Danielle and Chantell. One of their products is a daisy fragrance which serves as a reminder of Danielle's brother Jack, who used to carry a daisy in his phone cover. Today we thank Danielle and Wix and Wax Ireland for donating profits from their products to Water Safety Ireland to fund awareness programmes at waterways nationwide.

### Dara McGee, Cormac Coyne, Emma O'Grady - Áras Éanna, Inish Oirr & Ellen Glynn

If you ever wonder, That you might be, Past the point of rescue, The answer my friend, Is always "NO"...

This is the opening line of a poem by Emma O'Grady, living on the island of Inis Oirr, the smallest of the three Aran Islands. Emma evokes her personal reflection on the harrowing ordeal of two Galway cousins, Ellen Glynn and Sara Feeney who went missing overnight after they went paddleboarding on Galway Bay.

After a harrowing night, they were spotted by a father and son brought safely onto the island. They had seized hold of buoys that were marking crab pots set by a fisherman off Inis Oírr. Those buoys that they held onto are similar to those recovered on a coastline cleanup and used this summer by the island's Arts Centre "Áras Éanna" for an artist's exhibition to mark World Drowning Prevention Day. Thanks to Dara McGee at Áras Éanna for arranging the exhibition, to Cormac Coyne for creating the video, to Emma O'Grady for her lovely poem and to Ellen Glynn for helping us to raise awareness for World Drowning Prevention Day. A good news story in which the arts prompted people to make water safety part of their conversations.



## Media Appreciation Awards

Presented in appreciation for covering drowning prevention issues throughout the year.

### **National Radio Broadcaster: Newstalk – Pat Kenny, Broadcaster**

We are grateful to Newstalk for liaising with Water Safety Ireland on many fronts to deliver important water safety messages to the public and for helping us to raise awareness and to change attitudes and behaviours around water. Well done Newstalk.

### **Local Radio Station Award: Radio Kerry**

Radio Kerry is broadcasting since 1990 with a focus on local news, current affairs, sports and music. Thanks to their ongoing coverage of water safety issues, listeners are more aware of the dangers at aquatic environments. Thank you Radio Kerry.

### **National TV Broadcaster: Virgin Media – Aisling Ní Choisdealbha, News Reporter**

Every summer, hundreds of thousands of people are attracted to Ireland's waterways nationwide. Many of those taking to our wonderful aquatic environments have very little experience of the dangers of open water. We are grateful to Virgin Media for helping us to raise awareness and to change attitudes and behaviours around water.

### **Provincial Press Award: The Leinster Leader – Senan Hogan, Managing Editor**

Based in Kildare, the Leinster Leader was founded in 1880. This weekly newspaper contains a mix of the latest local and national news, sports, features and opinion pieces, as well as providing a successful online offering to its readers. It has promoted many of Water Safety Ireland's safety messages and warnings to the public. Thank you to the Leinster Leader for raising awareness of water safety and drowning prevention.

### **National Press Award: The Irish Times – Ellen O'Donoghue, Journalist**

The Irish Times is an Irish daily broadsheet newspaper launched in 1859. Their printed and digital editions have covered many topical water safety issues throughout the year, including World Drowning Prevention Day and bank holiday weekend water safety warnings. We are truly grateful for this support which keeps water safety in the public consciousness all year round.

### Online Broadcasting: Irishexaminer.com – Mairead Sheehy, Digital Journalist

The Irishexaminer.com is one of Ireland's leading digital news websites. It has covered topical water safety issues that are important to their readers and raised awareness of the dangers at Ireland's aquatic environments nationwide. For reaching at-risk groups in every part of the country with news and advice, we are very thankful.

### Community Radio Station Award: Connemara Community Radio

Connemara Community Radio is a community-based radio station broadcasting throughout the north-west Connemara region of Ireland. It's one of the smallest radio stations operating in Ireland but listenership doubles during the summer period when people take to a range of aquatic activities on Connemara's many waterways. They have enjoyed strong commitment by 85 volunteers for nearly 30 years and we wish them every success on this level of voluntary activity into the future.



## SEIKO Just In Time Awards and Rescue Appreciation Awards

Kindly sponsored by SEIKO, these awards recognise courageous rescue interventions to assist persons in immediate danger in the water. Congratulations to all 55 rescuers for helping to save 29 lives in the following 24 incidents.

### Garda recipients:

#### 1. Garda Conor O'Keefe (JIT), Co. Wicklow (rescued: 1)

In July this year, Gardaí responded to a call for emergency help to the Promenade, Bray. Upon arrival, they were alerted to a woman in distress in the water. Garda O Keefe retrieved a lifebuoy and entered the water. He managed to swim out to the woman and utilising his Water Safety Ireland beach lifeguard training he put the woman in a cross chest carry and brought her to safety. Thank you, Garda O'Keefe.

#### 2. Garda Denis Costello (RA), Garda Niamh Fitzgerald (RA) and Garda Mark Power (RA), Co. Wexford (rescued: 1)

In September just past, Garda Power received a call from Garda Costello regarding a woman attempting to enter the water at Wexford bridge. Gardaí Costello and Fitzgerald managed to lift the woman over the railing to safety. Thank you all.

#### 3. Sergeant Alan Commons (RA), Garda Tom Currid (RA) and Garda Paul Mannion (RA), Co. Leitrim (rescued: 1)

In June of this year, at Carrick-on Shannon, Gardaí were alerted to a man in distress in the water. Upon arriving to the area, Sergeant Commons decided to enter the reed bank, and all three Gardaí waded in where visibility was very poor. After some searching Sergeant Commons observed bubbles rising and noticed a faint outline of human body beneath the surface of the water. All three Gardaí managed to lift the person out of the water to safety. Thank you all.

#### 4. Garda Brendan Byrne (RA), Garda Adrian O'Reilly (RA), Garda Stephen Murray (RA) and Garda Finbarr Thompson (RA), Co. Dublin (rescued: 1)

This September at O'Connell Street bridge, Gardaí were on patrol when they became aware of a female in distress in the water, clinging to the side of the bridge. Garda Murray & Thompson retrieved ring buoys and Gardaí Byrne & O'Reilly proceeded to the water. Garda O'Reilly held onto Garda Byrne as he entered the water. Garda Byrne threw the ring buoy towards the lady however a second successful attempt was required as the lady lost her initial first grip. The lady was brought to safety and made a full recovery. Thank you all.

**5. Garda Mark Cullen (JIT), Co. Dublin (rescued: 1)**

Last July, at the Royal canal in Phibsborough, a man suffered a seizure and subsequently fell into the water. Off duty Garda Mark Cullen was at the scene, he entered the water and reached out for the man who had gone underwater. Mark pulled him onto the bank to safety and realised the man was not out of his seizure state. Mark placed him into the recovery position, and after some time he recovered. Mark waited with him until emergency services arrived. He made a full recovery. Thank you, Mark

**6. Garda Eoin O'Connor (JIT), Co. Dublin (rescued: 1)**

Last September at Ushers Quay Garda O'Connor was off duty and driving home when he observed a gathering of people at the wall of the river Liffey. After stopping, he went over to discover a male was in difficulty in the water. Garda O Connor entered the water and assisted the male. He managed to reach him and hold onto him until Dublin Fire Brigade rescue boat assisted them both. The male was taken to safety. He made a full recovery. Thank you, Garda O'Connor

**7. Garda Ian Kelly (JIT) & Garda Bryan Roche (RA), Co. Dublin (rescued: 1)**

Earlier this year in April Gardaí Kelly & Roche, while on patrol became alerted to a female unconscious in Burgh Quay. Garda Roche immediately radioed for assistance and Garda Kelly threw a lifebuoy, however the lady was too distressed to grab on and he entered the river. He managed to carry the lady, assisted by the lifebuoy to the canal ladder and waited for the fire brigade unit to arrive. The female was taken to hospital where she made a full recovery. Thank you Garda Kelly & Roche.

**8. Garda Emmet Cassidy (RA), Garda Noel Gavighan (RA) and Sergeant Mark Colgan (RA), Co. Donegal (rescued: 1)**

In March of this year, Gardaí Cassidy, Gavighan & Colgan received a call regarding a male in difficulty in the water in Glenties. On arrival, they located a male lying on the riverbank on the other side of the river. Gardaí Cassidy & Gavighan tied crime scene tape onto Sergeant Colgan. He entered the water and waded across the river. The male was conscious and indicated that he was cold and injured. Sergeant Colgan placed the male onto his shoulder and brought him across the water to safety. They subsequently took him to the garda station for care until the paramedics arrived. He made a full recovery. Thank you all.

**9. Garda Kevin Fitzpatrick (JIT) and Sergeant John O'Sullivan (JIT), Co. Kilkenny (rescued: 2)**

Last November, Garda Fitzpatrick & Sergeant O'Sullivan were notified of a male and female in distress in the River Barrow. Sergeant O'Sullivan, who is a strong swimmer entered the water in a bid to reach the male. Garda Fitzpatrick retrieved a lifebuoy and swam over to both the male and Sergeant O'Sullivan. Both Gardaí pulled the male onto the bank to safety. The female had managed to make her way safely onto the riverbank on the opposite side of the river. The male and female were both taken to hospital and treated appropriately. Both made a full recovery. Thank you Garda Fitzpatrick and Sergeant O'Sullivan.

**10. Garda Lynam (JIT) and Garda Duhova (RA), Co. Dublin (rescued: 1)**

Last August, at the River Liffey, Garda Lynam became alerted to a male in distress in the water. She went to the scene and observed the male face down in the water. She entered the water and swam towards the male. She turned him onto his back and swam towards the edge. Garda Duhova and passers-by threw a rope to Garda Lynam. They managed to remove the male from the water and bring him to safety. The male was taken to hospital and made a full recovery. Thank you Garda Lynam and Garda Duhova.

**11. Garda Claire Davis (RA) & Garda Nora Cloherty (RA), Co. Westmeath and Kieran Milnar (RA) and Pat McArdle (RA) from Mullingar Sailing Club (rescued: 1)**

In June of 2021, at Lough Owel, Mullingar, Gardaí Davis, and Cloherty were alerted to a male that had entered the water. They contacted a member of the local sailing club and requested their urgent assistance. They then accompanied two members of the club and launched a Rib. On locating the person in the water, both Gardaí managed to drag him out of the water. The quick action of all involved led to the safe removal of this male from the water. The man was taken to hospital where he made a full recovery. Thank you, all.

**12. Sergeant Cathal McGeoghan (RA), Co. Waterford. (rescued: 1)**

In June of this year Sergeant McGeoghan was returning home off duty, when he noticed a female in distress in the water at Grattan Quay. He immediately called for assistance, retrieved a ring buoy, and threw it to the woman while giving her instructions to grab onto it. He was able to use the rope to drag the woman to safety. He reassured her and stayed with her until the Waterford Fire Brigade boat arrived and took over. The woman was taken to hospital, where she made a full recovery. Thank you, Sergeant McGeoghan,

**13. Garda Keith Keating (RA), Co. Wicklow** (rescued: 1)

In July of this year, at Bray Harbour, Garda Keating became alerted to a woman in distress in the water. He utilised a dingy boat in the harbour and upon reaching the woman, managed to pull her from the water and took her to safety. The woman received medical attention and made a full recovery. Thank you, Garda Keating.

**14. Garda Gary McDonald (JIT), Garda Kieth Keating (JIT), and Garda reserve Ivan Keogh (RA), Co. Wicklow.** (rescued: 1)

Again, in July of this year Gardaí received a call regarding a man in distress in the water at the Cove, Greystones. Upon arriving to the area, Garda Reserve Keogh retrieved a lifebuoy and a blanket and Gardaí Keating and McDonald waded out towards the male, they placed him into an arm carry and brought to safety onto the shore. They took him to the garda station, where he received medical treatment. The man made a full recovery. Thank you all.

**15. Garda Ciara Hayes (RA) and Garda David Power (RA), Co. Wicklow** (rescued: 1)

In August this year at Strand Road, Bray, Gardaí Hayes & Power were alerted to a female in distress in the water. After an extensive search of the area, they spotted a body floating in the water. Both Gardaí waded into the water and managed to bring the person to safety. She made a full recovery. Thank you, Garda Hayes and Garda Power.

**Public Recipients:**

**16. Antonia Williams (JIT), Co. Antrim** (rescued: 1)

In July this year, while in Madeira, Antonia observed a young male in difficulty in the water. She sprinted towards the sea, while instructing others to call for help and an ambulance. She saw two males trying to keep the young man's head above water and could see he was beginning to lose consciousness. As soon as she reached them, she turned the young male onto his back, cupped his chin and pulled him towards the beach. She successfully performed CPR with the help of another person. The emergency services arrived, and he made a full recovery. Thank you, Antonia.

**17. Cillian Ginty (JIT) and Damien Ginty (RA), Co. Kerry** (rescued: 1)

This September, at Banna Beach, Cillian noticed a surfing kite drifting out to sea and the kite surfer appeared missing. He then observed a woman entering the water with a ring buoy and it appeared she was not a strong swimmer. With the lend of a surfboard, Cillian and his father Damien paddled out. Damien advised the lady not to swim out any further and swam back to shore. As Cillian approached the kite, he noticed a man extremely fatigued, holding onto the remaining float. Cillian tied the surfboard leash to his ankle and assisted the surfer into shore by towing. Thank you, Cillian and Damien.

**18. Michael Kavanagh (JIT), David Mulchay (JIT), Eamon O'Grady (JIT) and Antonio Deramo (RA), Co. Sligo** (rescued: 3)

This June, at Strandhill beach slipway, Eamon, a non-swimmer, noticed three girls in difficulty in the water. Luckily Michael and David (off duty surf instructors) were close by when Eamon raised the alarm. They both responded by retrieving rescue boards and entered the water. Antonio, who was surfing in the area, also noticed the girls in difficulty. Each gentleman managed to take one of the girls onto their boards and made their way back to shore. All three girls were successfully rescued and made a full recovery. Thank you all.

**19. Donncha Maguire (JIT) and Darragh Flanagan (JIT), Co. Donegal** (rescued: 1)

In June of this year, Donncha and Darragh were on the rocks at Bundoran beach when they heard a cry for help. They immediately assessed the situation, entered the water and swam towards the scene where they noticed a person was unresponsive. Using the cross-chest technique they successfully brought the casualty to safety, where an off-duty nurse and fireman performed CPR while the emergency services arrived, he made a full recovery. Thank you Donncha and Darragh.





**20. Rebecca Ebbs (JIT) and Zara Reid (JIT), Co. Donegal** (rescued: 2)

In May of this year at the Shorefront, Buncrana, Rebecca and Zara became alerted to two females in distress in the water. Both Rebecca and Zara entered the water, which was very choppy, however they both managed to swim out to the females. On reaching the swimmers they turned them onto their backs, placed their arms under the swimmers' arms and brought both females to safety. Both females were taken to hospital and made a full recovery. Thank you, Rebecca and Zara.

**21. Bernard Deegan (JIT), Philip Lavery (JIT), John Fitzmaurice (JIT) and Colin Fanning (JIT), Co. Waterford** (rescued: 2)

In July this year at Guillamene, Tramore, Colin noticed some people in difficulty in the water and obtained a ring buoy; Bernard called the emergency services. The swells were very large, it was difficult to throw the ring buoy, so Colin entered the water with the ring buoy and swam towards the people in distress. Upon approaching the two people, Colin took the responsive person and brought her safely back to shore. Philip & John entered the water and took charge of the unresponsive man and John began CPR on the man in the water. Colin and Bernard then re-entered the water and they all helped John by keeping him afloat as he administered CPR. The RNLI boat came on the scene and took over. Thank you all.

**22. Orla Cosgrave Kirwan (JIT), Co. Wexford** (rescued: 1)

In September this year, at Cahore beach, Orla was alerted to a lady in distress in the water. She called out to the lady and then entered the water. Orla swam out and upon reaching her discovered she was unresponsive. Orla managed to take the lady to shore, began CPR, called out for an AED and ensured the ambulance was on its way. She was assisted by another person. The ambulance arrived and began advanced care. Thank you Orla.

**23. Ailish Collins (JIT), Conor Healy (JIT), Joe Garry (JIT) and Jamie Malone (JIT), Co. Clare** (rescued: 1)

Also, in June this year the staff and students of Cloughleigh school were returning from a sports day by the River Fergus walk, when they became alerted to a woman calling for help for her daughter. All four teachers, Ailish, Conor, Joe and Jamie entered the water and managed to keep the girl afloat, while another got a paddle board from the school store. They successfully brought the girl ashore; emergency services arrived and took the girl to hospital. She made a full recovery. Thank you all.

**24. Michael Slabosz (JIT) and John O'Rourke (JIT), Co. Kilkenny** (rescued: 1)

In August of this year, at the River Nore, Bateman Quay, Michael and John became aware of a woman in distress in the water. They both entered the water, came to her aid and managed to bring her to safety. She made a full recovery. Thank you, Michael and John.



Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Supported by the Government of Ireland

## Des Kenny Awards

The Des Kenny award is presented in national recognition to Water Safety Ireland members who perform Basic Life Support outside of their occupation or official voluntary activities.

### **John Claffey, Co. Kilkenny**

Early in 2022, while attending a meeting in a Kilkenny hotel, John observed a woman calling for help from the pool deck. He instructed another person to obtain an AED and call for an ambulance. A child had become unconscious and was unresponsive. John began to administer CPR immediately. Through John's decisive interventions, the child regained consciousness, the ambulance arrived and took over. The child made a full recovery. Thank you, John.

### **Jay Leonard, Co. Carlow**

In October just gone at a Carlow Hotel, Jay became aware of a man in difficulty in the pool, the man was unresponsive. Jay requested an AED, immediately called emergency services and began CPR while on the phone with emergency services. Jay was also assisted by some very helpful club members. Through Jay's vital interventions, emergency services were able to take over care on arrival. The gentleman was taken to hospital and made a full recovery. Thank you, Jay.

## Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award

### **St. Thomas' Junior National School, Dublin**

The Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award is presented to a primary school that has been particularly attentive to the need for pupils to learn water safety skills. When young Leon Quinlan drowned in 2004, his mother Lynn contacted Water Safety Ireland about running an event to raise awareness about water safety. St. Thomas Junior National School in Dublin showed great commitment to delivering Water Safety Ireland's Primary Aquatics Water Safety Programme to their pupils. The enthusiasm and energy from the children to learn about local hazards in the home, on the farm and other aquatic environments nearby was a testament to the school. Congratulations to the school for ensuring that the children in their care have the knowledge and skills necessary to stay safe from drowning.

## Avery Greene Memorial Award Sponsored by Turtle Tots

### **Wicklow Montessori Primary and Pre-School, Wicklow**

Avery Greene was just three years old when, in 2019, he tragically drowned while on holiday in Spain. Avery's mother Amanda became an enthusiastic promoter of an education resource called Hold Hands that was developed by Water Safety Ireland and distributed to more than 4,000 Early Learning Centres nationwide. The programme teaches young children how to stay safe in a variety of aquatic environments. Wicklow Montessori Primary and Pre-School played a key role in helping Water Safety Ireland further develop the resources for Hold Hands, to include additional games, activities, and resources to encourage this young age to talk about the importance of water safety.

### **A message from Turtle Tots**

Turtle Tots are delighted to sponsor the Avery Greene Memorial Award. This award is very close to our hearts as one of the corner stones of our Baby and Toddler Swimming programme is water safety. We teach over 10,000 children under five years old per year all over Ireland and ensure we work with local communities and charities to help raise awareness for lots of different causes every year. As part of our ongoing charity work as well as sponsoring amazing awards like this, we also donate 1% of our turnover to charities in Ireland each year. We stand together with the Avery Greene Award to show our focus and commitment to both water safety and our communities throughout Ireland.

## Volunteer of the Year Award

### **Bernie Gaines, Dublin – Volunteer of the Year**

Bernie is the current Chairperson of the Dublin Water Safety Area Committee and is an extremely active and passionate member. To describe Bernie in a few words, she would be an enthusiastic, creative, dedicated, innovative, inspirational, supportive and a very generous person – all the traits of a volunteer committed to the cause.

Bernie's work, home, family and water safety lives are intertwined on a daily basis.

Bernie's immense positivity drives her vision and determination for the promotion of Water Safety in Dublin and Ireland.

She attends every open day that she possibly can, and normally takes on the mantle of Volunteer Organiser for these events within the Dublin area. For example, she played a pivotal, leading role in the promotion of water safety at Dublin Fire Brigade Station Open Days, Dublin South County Council - Active Volunteer Groups Day and the Annual National Services Day Parade.

Bernie is also a Water Safety Instructor and Examiner, a Pool, Beach and Inland Open Water Lifeguard Tutor, a Swim Teacher and Tutor, a Water Safety Awareness Course Tutor, the Senior Designated Liaison Person for Dublin and a PAWS (Primary Aquatics Water Safety) Provider. As if this isn't enough, Bernie is also currently training to be a Risk Assessor certified by International Life Saving Europe (ILSE).

Other roles she has held in the past include Sports Referee, Sports Team Coach and Pool Deck Manager. Bernie is an integral part of the annual Skerries Water Safety Week where she, along with the local Admin Team, manage the Swimming Classes on the Beach, numbering on average 400 in a week.

She continues to offer her help on nationally run courses and has been part of the Tutor Team for National Pool Lifeguard Tutor courses and National Trainee Examiner Courses over many years. While her support and help are recognised on these courses, the personalised presentation she gives on disability awareness, in one of her expertise areas, is second to none.

In short, excels as a Water Safety Ireland Volunteer and role model for others. Congratulations Bernie, you are a deserving recipient of the 2023 Volunteer of the Year Award.

## Sports Persons of the Year Award

### **Leana Liddane – Co. Clare**

Leanna is a remarkable young athlete hailing from Co. Clare, who has left an indelible mark on the world of lifesaving this year. She has not only earned her spot on both the Junior and Senior National teams for the European Lifesaving Championships in Poland and Belgium, respectively, but has also showcased her prowess by competing vigorously in both age groups at our national championships.

Leanna was a vital member of our formidable Junior team that triumphed in Poland, and she returned home adorned with a staggering collection of 5 medals. Among these were 2 individual silver medals, 1 individual gold medal, in addition to securing gold and silver medals in team events. Her extraordinary performance continued at the Senior Europeans in Belgium a few weeks later, where she not only established new Irish records in the pool but also clinched another individual gold medal and a team event bronze medal.

Leanna's success this year is a testament to her unwavering dedication to lifesaving, a commitment she has displayed through years of rigorous training. She has also demonstrated remarkable teamwork, wholeheartedly embracing our national training squad program and national team program. Leanna's achievements shine brightly as a reflection of her extraordinary talent and unrelenting determination in the world of lifesaving.

### **Ferdia Hayes – Co. Clare**

Ferdia is another shining star hailing from Co. Clare, who has left an indelible mark in the world of lifesaving. Ferdia secured his well-deserved spot on both the Junior and Senior National teams, which embarked on the journeys to Poland and Belgium for the European Lifesaving Championships earlier this year. Despite the fierce competition at these prestigious events, Ferdia demonstrated his unwavering determination and remarkable skill, delivering strong performances for the teams. During his time in Poland, he achieved an individual bronze medal and contributed to the team's glory with a gold medal in a team event.

Ferdia's excellence extended beyond the international stage to our National competitions, where he continued to shine. It is abundantly clear that his success is a direct result of his steadfast dedication to the sport and the rigorous training regimen he has embraced. Ferdia is not only a gifted individual performer but also a valuable team player, seamlessly integrating into the National training squads and teams throughout the year. His remarkable achievements in lifesaving serve as a testament to his talent and unwavering commitment to excellence.

## Sports Persons of the Year Award

### Leana Liddane – Co. Clare

Leanna is a remarkable young athlete hailing from Co. Clare, who has left an indelible mark on the world of lifesaving this year. She has not only earned her spot on both the Junior and Senior National teams for the European Lifesaving Championships in Poland and Belgium, respectively, but has also showcased her prowess by competing vigorously in both age groups at our national championships.

Leanna was a vital member of our formidable Junior team that triumphed in Poland, and she returned home adorned with a staggering collection of 5 medals. Among these were 2 individual silver medals, 1 individual gold medal, in addition to securing gold and silver medals in team events. Her extraordinary performance continued at the Senior Europeans in Belgium a few weeks later, where she not only established new Irish records in the pool but also clinched another individual gold medal and a team event bronze medal.

Leanna's success this year is a testament to her unwavering dedication to lifesaving, a commitment she has displayed through years of rigorous training. She has also demonstrated remarkable teamwork, wholeheartedly embracing our national training squad program and national team program. Leanna's achievements shine brightly as a reflection of her extraordinary talent and unrelenting determination in the world of lifesaving.

### Ferdia Hayes – Co. Clare

Ferdia is another shining star hailing from Co. Clare, who has left an indelible mark in the world of lifesaving. Ferdia secured his well-deserved spot on both the Junior and Senior National teams, which embarked on the journeys to Poland and Belgium for the European Lifesaving Championships earlier this year. Despite the fierce competition at these prestigious events, Ferdia demonstrated his unwavering determination and remarkable skill, delivering strong performances for the teams. During his time in Poland, he achieved an individual bronze medal and contributed to the team's glory with a gold medal in a team event.

Ferdia's excellence extended beyond the international stage to our National competitions, where he continued to shine. It is abundantly clear that his success is a direct result of his steadfast dedication to the sport and the rigorous training regimen he has embraced. Ferdia is not only a gifted individual performer but also a valuable team player, seamlessly integrating into the National training squads and teams throughout the year. His remarkable achievements in lifesaving serve as a testament to his talent and unwavering commitment to excellence.



**BETTER  
SAFE**

**THAN  
SORRY**

**NEVER MIX  
ALCOHOL  
AND WATER  
ACTIVITIES**



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Supported by the Government of Ireland

## Life Governor Awards

The Award of Life Governor is presented to an individual who has demonstrated a particular dedication towards the humanitarian goal of saving life from drowning. Thank you and congratulations Life Governors.

- **Winnie Foran, Waterford - awarded Life Governorship by Council on October 27, 2023**

Winnie has given more than fifty years' service to Water Safety Ireland. Her commitment started as a young teacher in her early thirties in Ballyduff National School, Waterford where she taught water safety to her pupils who lived in close proximity to the sea near Boatstrand. Winnie began her water safety journey in the 1970s and qualified through the various grades, eventually becoming a WSI Examiner. She taught swimming and lifesaving during winter and summer programmes and remains that chief organiser for the Boatstrand water safety weeks where thousands of children have learnt swimming and lifesaving over the years. Winnie continues to serve on the Waterford Water Safety Area Committee.

- **Jim Cushen, Dublin - awarded Life Governorship by Council on October 25, 2023**

Jim has been a member of Water Safety Ireland since 1970. He has taught lifesaving and Basic Life Support CPR to thousands of children and adults since 1973 when he became a Trainee instructor. Two years later, Jim qualified as an Instructor in 1975. He qualified as a Swimming Instructor in 1982, joined the Dublin Water Safety Area Committee in 1983 and was appointed an Examiner in 1983. Over the years, Jim has lectured to many groups on Water Safety matters and run Basic Life Support classes to many local groups including golf clubs in the Dublin and Kildare region. He has consistently supported WSI promotional activities, exhibitions, conferences, AGMs, Examiners conferences, and Continuous Professional Development events over the years. Jim remains an outstanding member of WSI at committee and community level and is well known for promoting water safety in his local community, and for training many committee members.

- **Ronnie Horan - awarded Life Governorship by Council on October 25, 2023**

Ronnie has dedicated over 40 years of continuous voluntary service to WSI. Ronnie began his journey in lifesaving as a trainee instructor in 1977 and quickly followed this accolade when he became a full instructor in 1979 and an Examiner in 1984. Ronnie continued his WSI training by qualifying as a tutor, a risk assessor and a lifeguard provider. Over the last four decades Ronnie has been involved in a wide range of drowning prevention roles. Ronnie has been a voluntary crew member of his local RNLI, and CRBI for more than 20 years. He became a member of the Dublin WSAC in the 1980's and taught summer weeks throughout the eighties. Ronnie has been a committee member, Council member, Commission Chairman, Commission member and an ILSE sub-committee member. Ronnie is also a Senior Risk assessment tutor with ILSE and is a member of ILSE Disaster Flood Operations Committee. Ronnie has committed his time and energy in the promotion of

safety in and around all aspects of water and he continues to deliver with passion and dedication on behalf of WSI.

The following Life Governor recipients have served two five-year terms on the Council of Water Safety Ireland, and we are truly grateful for their voluntary service, shaping and guiding the work of the Council over those two terms.

- **Tom Doyle, Wexford - awarded Life Governorship by Council on December 1, 2021**
- **Lola O'Sullivan, Waterford - awarded Life Governorship by Council on Dec. 1, 2021**
- **Paul Murphy, Dublin - awarded Life Governorship by Council on June 1, 2022**
- **Anne Ryan, Wexford - awarded Life Governorship by Council on June 1, 2022**
- **Seamus O'Neill, Donegal - awarded Life Governorship by Council on June 1, 2022**



## Long Service Awards

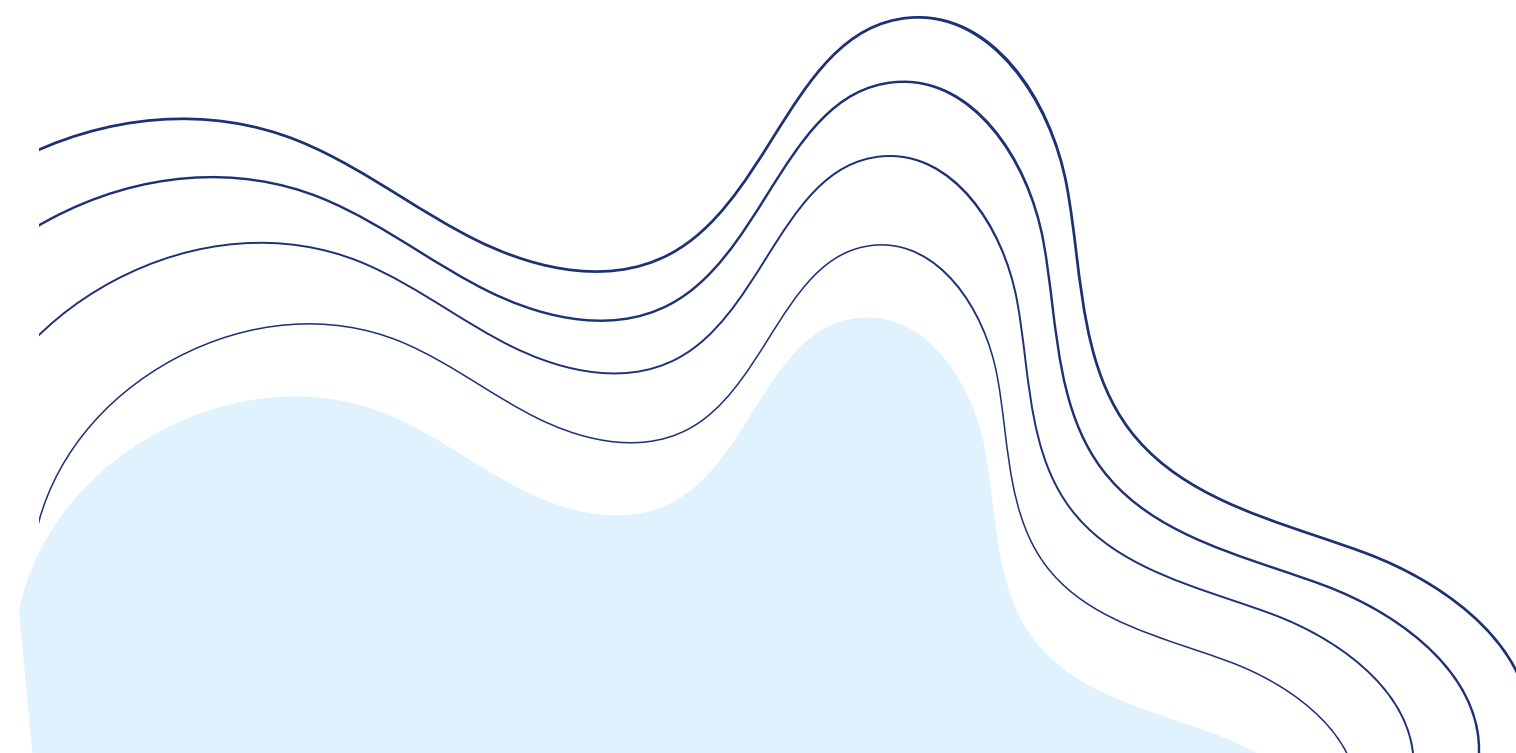
Long Service Awards are presented in recognition of a voluntary commitment to promoting a public awareness of water safety and rescue based on the humanitarian goal of saving life. Water Safety Ireland extends a sincere debt of gratitude to the following volunteers.

### 10 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

|                      |                      |                          |                |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Susan Cook           | Kilkenny             | Aidan Duggan             | Banna          |
| Aoife Claffey        | Kilkenny             | Donal Higgins            | Kilkenny       |
| Lisa O Sullivan      | Bantry               | Ciaran Cuddihy           | Waterford      |
| Brian Fitzgerald     | Waterford Marine SAR | Zac Cullinane            | Waterford      |
| Tom Burtchell        | Waterford Marine SAR | Aoife Murphy             | Dublin         |
| Jamie Blanche        | Waterford Marine SAR | Dónal Brereton           | Dublin         |
| Kieran Meehan        | Clare                | Síofra Collins O Regan   | Dublin         |
| Jan Hillery          | Clare                | Muireann Collins O Regan | Dublin         |
| Ciara Gleeson        | Clare                | Graham Malone            | Defence Forces |
| Kate O Donovan       | Cork                 | Ryan Burke               | Defence Forces |
| Jonathan Hughes      | Derrynane            | Clare McGinty Ryan       | Galway         |
| Michael Martin       | Derrynane            | David Kelly              | Galway         |
| Grania Costello      | Banna                | Amanda Browne            | Galway         |
| Thomas Fitzgerald Jr | Banna                | Ashling Nesbitt          | Kildare        |
| Colleen Trant        | Banna                | Donal Horgan             | Kilkenny       |
| Mike Ashe            | Banna                | Robin Newsome            | Kilkenny       |

### 15 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

|                   |                      |                    |           |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Justin Crowley    | Cork                 | James Hassey       | Waterford |
| Rena O Dwyer      | Kilkenny             | Joan Foran         | Waterford |
| Declan Barry      | Waterford Marine SAR | Matthew Sills      | Waterford |
| Darryl Barry      | Waterford Marine SAR | Siobhan Douglas    | Monaghan  |
| Sinead Mortell    | Clare                | Gearóid McCarthy   | Monaghan  |
| Aine Purcell      | Clare                | Matthew Campbell   | Dublin    |
| Caren Pfiffer     | Clare                | Elizabeth O Reilly | Dublin    |
| Richard Frewin    | Derrynane            | Mark Ward          | Leitrim   |
| Josephine Rockett | Waterford            | Aoife Heeran       | Leitrim   |



### 20 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

|                   |                |                      |                |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Gary Knox         | Kilkenny       | Thomas Ward          | Banna CRBI     |
| John Claffey      | Kilkenny       | Jim Riordan          | Banna CRBI     |
| Michael Turner    | Derrynane      | Liam Taylor          | Dublin         |
| Tracey McBride    | Donegal        | Orla Cosgrave Kirwan | Wexford        |
| Shane Begley      | Bantry         | Darrell Evans        | Waterford      |
| Diarmuid Murphy   | Bantry         | Peadar Ó Lamhna      | Monaghan       |
| Martin O Mahony   | Bantry         | Paul Hayes           | Dublin         |
| Noreen Ormsby     | Tipp North     | Seán Devins          | Dublin         |
| Paddy Collins     | Tipp North     | Ciarán Devins        | Dublin         |
| Patrick O Grady   | Clare          | Bernward Schuermann  | Leitrim        |
| Ann Downes        | Clare          | Dynpna Creegan       | Leitrim        |
| Kathleen McNamara | Clare          | Sheila Mollahan      | Leitrim        |
| Karl Toomey       | Dublin         | Michael Brogan       | Defence Forces |
| Noel Donnelly     | Derrynane CRBI | Antonia Darbey       | Dublin         |
| Gerardine Deasy   | Derrynane CRBI | Eleanor Burke        | Galway         |
| Paul O Sullivan   | Derrynane CRBI | Simon McGarrigle     | Donegal        |
| Stephen Baker     | Banna CRBI     |                      |                |

### 30 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

|                   |         |                |           |
|-------------------|---------|----------------|-----------|
| Tanya Carroll     | Clare   | Helen Hennessy | Waterford |
| Jackie Coote      | Clare   | David Byrne    | Dublin    |
| John Casey        | Banna   | Sinead Murphy  | Dublin    |
| Thomas Fitzgerald | Banna   | John Egan      | Dublin    |
| Lynn Travers      | Wexford |                |           |

### 40 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

|                  |           |              |           |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Liam Costigan    | Kilkenny  | Mary O Brien | Waterford |
| Norma Cahill     | Clare     | Conor Dodd   | Dublin    |
| James O Loughlin | Banna     | Alice Doorly | Dublin    |
| Pat Lawlor       | Banna     | Bridie Giles | Galway    |
| Maureen Creagh   | Waterford |              |           |

### 50 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

|                  |      |                 |        |
|------------------|------|-----------------|--------|
| James McLoughlin | Mayo | Brendan McGrath | Clare  |
| Jerry O Sullivan | Cork | Stan MacEoin    | Galway |

# WATER SAFETY IRELAND

## What We Do

Water Safety Ireland is the statutory, voluntary body and registered charity established to promote water safety and reduce drownings in Ireland. Our focus is on public awareness and education. Tragically, an average of 105 people drown in Ireland each year, nine every month. We strive to reduce these fatalities by increasing water safety awareness and by changing attitudes and behaviours so that our aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.

### 1. Education:

a) An education syllabus that teaches swimming, lifesaving, water confidence, safety, survival, rescue skills and basic life support;

b) Courses are provided nationwide to the general public and also to children as part of the primary school curriculum in classrooms, pools and open water nationwide;

c) Many qualifications such as our Pool and Beach Lifeguarding Awards are recognised internationally;

d) Beach Lifeguards are trained and tested by our examiners for the Local Authorities prior to the summer season each year;

e) Trained Lifesavers compete in provincial and national Lifesaving Championships and at international level;

f) Risk Assessments are carried out on bathing areas and waterways nationwide that may pose a particular risk to the public, in order to make them safer;

g) Train and examine rescue boat crews for the Community Inshore Rescue Services and administer associated VAT refunds.

h) Water safety training for those working near aquatic environments in the public and private sector.



### 2. Promotion:

a) Research, analysis and publication of drowning statistics that inform policy and enable effective targeting of those at risk of drowning;

b) National and local media to build a public awareness of coastal and inland water safety;

c) Publications, courses, advice and campaigns in print and online that promote water safety and target at-risk groups in all aquatic activities so that the public adheres to best practices;

d) Supporting the work of over 5,200 volunteer members and those volunteering and commercially delivering swimming, lifesaving and basic life support training;

e) A National Water Safety Awards Ceremony that includes the "Seiko Just-In-Time" Rescue Award and other awards that recognise volunteerism and partnerships that promote water safety at national and local level.

### Partnerships:

a) Local Authorities, state agencies, private enterprises and coroners on matters relating to water safety, the provision of Public Rescue Equipment and Lifeguarding locations nationwide;

b) The Marine Safety Working Group and the Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee to promote maritime safety;

c) A range of organisations to help reduce the high number of drownings by suicide;

d) Conferences, lectures and demonstrations to Local Authorities, Government Agencies, NGO's, schools, Colleges and members of the public.





World  
Drowning  
Prevention  
Day 25 July

Anyone can drown,  
no one should.



**WE'RE GOING BLUE  
FOR WORLD DROWNING  
PREVENTION DAY.  
WILL YOU?**



Supported by the Government of Ireland