



Irish Water Safety

Sábháilteacht Uisce na hÉireann

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012 - 2017



MEMBER



MEMBER



MEMBER

Irish Water Safety is the statutory and voluntary body established to promote water safety in Ireland.
Tá Sábháilteacht Uisce na hÉireann ina bhord deonach reachtúil a bunaíodh le sábháilteacht uisce a chothú in Éireann.



Introduction by The Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government

We in Ireland are blessed that we have such a wealth of aquatic environments where our citizens and visitors can enjoy water – whether this is for work or pleasure purposes.

However, being in and around water environments also carries a responsibility for all those involved –swimmers, surfers, canoeists, anglers, people who work in or near water sources (e.g. fishermen, farmers, workers in reservoirs or pump stations, engineers, construction workers) and all water users. We all need to be aware of the dangers involved in such activities and take every possible precaution to prevent accidents. By doing so we can ensure that we contribute to saving lives: our own in the first instance and indeed others.

I welcome this new Strategic Development Plan for Irish Water Safety (IWS). It contains the goals and objectives that reflect best practice in the area. It will form the basis of the work to be undertaken by IWS over the coming years. As a Government, we are committed to ensure the Strategy works and we will continue to supply leadership and resources to make it work.

We will continue to make Ireland a leader in water safety, by continuing to educate our citizens and having in place world standard procedures, processes and guidelines for all aspects of water safety.

We have wonderful aquatic related environments. We will do everything in our power to make these environments safe for the benefit of those who use them. We will continue to educate people in how best to safeguard against accidents in these environments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Hogan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil Hogan T.D.
Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government

September 2012



Chairman's Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Breda Collins".

Breda Collins
Chairman
Irish Water Safety

September 2012

Setting the Context

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

Vision

Every person a swimmer - every person a lifesaver.

Mission

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

Irish Water Safety Structures

Council

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

Volunteers

The volunteers of Irish Water Safety shall:

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

Staff

The staff of Irish Water Safety shall:

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

Core Values

Irish Water Safety values the following:

- Our Volunteer Members
- Our Staff
- The protection of children
- Our independence as a Statutory Body
- Support from Central and Local Government
- Good will afforded to Irish Water Safety
- The co-operation of the Public in Water Safety Awareness
- Co-operation with other National Aquatic Organisations
- Equality of access
- Being a caring organisation.
- Good financial Management

Symbols and Acronyms

✓ = High Priority Colour coded

✓ = Medium Priority

✓ = Low Priority

CI = IWS Council

TC = Technical Committee

EC = Education Commission

AC = Audit Commission

MC = Marketing Commission

LC = Lifesaving Commission

RC = Rescue Commission

SC = Sports Commission

SWC = Swimming Commission

WSAC = Water Safety Area Committee

Strategic Goals

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

IWS will achieve its strategic goals as follows:



IWS Goal 1 - To promote the public awareness of water safety.												
Objectives		Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SW C	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
1	Develop further Strategies to help reduce suicide through drowning	Smaller number of suicide drownings	✓									✓
2	Increase opportunities to brand Irish Water Safety as the Statutory Governing Body responsible for the promotion of water	Greater recognition of IWS as the National Water Safety Body	✓								✓	✓
3	Apply new media techniques/initiatives to water safety awareness/education which are interactive and age-appropriate	Positive learning & awareness outcomes			✓						✓	
4	Develop a stronger relationship with Local Authorities	Improved working relationship & Finances	✓			✓						✓
5	Target at risk groups identified through statistical analysis and create relevant reports	Focussed media & Education campaigns			✓						✓	
6	Launch and certify an award programme for IWS approved swimming Pools and training centres	Greater recognition of IWS as an excellence provider	✓	✓								✓
7	Through promotional, sponsorship & marketing activities, increase the participation of volunteers by increasing communication with them and vice versa	Higher productivity from volunteers	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓
8	Promote for the erection of the ISO Sign for wearing Lifejackets at all slipways, harbours and piers in Ireland to help advise the public to wear them when going afloat	Reduction in drownings	✓	✓							✓	✓
9	Develop effective marketing, media, online and print campaigns	Clearer messages and reduced costs									✓	

Objectives Goal 1 continued		Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SW C	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
10	Produce guidelines to assist advertisers depict positive images and behaviour and to help them to avoid showing unsafe water safety behaviour in advertising	Improved image of water safety									✓	
11	Develop the commercial strand to our organisation; improve branding and PR	Better Service delivery and a new income stream	✓			✓					✓	
12	Improve the communication methods to promote our safety messages	Stronger & clearer messages	✓								✓	✓
13	Develop strategic partners with common interests in promoting water safety in all aquatic environments.	Improved Communications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

IWS Goal 2 - The promotion of measures, including the advancement of education, related to the prevention of accidents in water.												
Objectives		Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
1	Promote the wearing of Lifejackets, particularly in the fishing industry	Reduced drownings									✓	
2	Increase the number of Summer Weeks and winter training programmes Nationwide	More children trained in open water		✓								✓
3	Develop a Risk Assessment Programme for Swimming Pools	Safer Swimming Pools		✓					✓			
4	Lead the implementation of a comprehensive integrated water safety certified education programme in, Primary, Post-Primary, Third Level and in the Community	Increased interaction at all these levels			✓							✓
5	Analyse drowning statistics to identify at-risk groups with a view to reducing the number of drowning fatalities	Targeting at risk groups									✓	✓
6	Advance awareness of water safety amongst those travelling overseas	Reduced drownings overseas									✓	
7	Work with the Department of Education to promote awareness of Water Safety within all levels of the Irish educational system	Improved communication with the Department			✓							

Objectives Goal 2 continued		Result	CI	T C	EC	A C	LC	SW C	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
8	Produce a Library of teaching programmes for all IWS Courses	Educational packs available for all courses			✓							
9	Continue to develop a corps of examiners to support IWS	Maintain an adequate number of in date Examiners		✓								
10	Develop a template for employers on employee water safety awareness and education which can be rolled out nationally	Safer working environments		✓					✓			
11	To promote the maintenance of public rescue equipment by Local Authorities and site owners	Improved Public Rescue Equipment		✓					✓		✓	
12	Develop an Open Water Safety Awareness course for the aquatic workplace	Safer working environments		✓					✓			
13	Ongoing review of WSAC's to encourage new members with logical succession planning for Officers and Committee appointments	Improved governance at Local level		✓						✓		✓
14	Translate our education & awareness policies for ethnic minority groups	Improved communication of our water safety messages									✓	
15	Continue to develop the on-going inspections of Community Rescue Boats Ireland stations in order to promote best practices	Stations inspected every second year		✓					✓			
16	Support the ongoing Risk Assessment Programme for open water sites	Meet the requirements of the Local Authorities & agencies		✓					✓			
17	To explore the possibilities of developing an inland community rescue boat service	Reduce the number of drownings inland	✓	✓					✓			
18	Continue to develop accredited training for education bodies and maintaining quality assurance	Greater range of Education Courses		✓	✓							

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

Objectives		Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
1	Liaise with Swim Ireland in relation to Sports Grants	Increased funding for sport		✓						✓		
2	Continue to develop Rescue Boat training with the Community Rescue Boats Ireland (CRBI), National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) and other relevant organisations	More personnel qualified in Boat Training		✓					✓			
3	Develop Coaching structures and training in accordance with Coaching Ireland's Development Programme	Professional Coaching Standards		✓						✓		✓
4	Instruct, train and certify IWS personnel to best International practice	Higher instructional standards		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
5	Develop a College of Referees of sufficient size to meet the needs of the sport in Ireland and to meet our International Commitments	Maintain adequate number of referees		✓						✓		
6	Encourage participation in Sport	Increased participation in Lifesaving		✓						✓		✓
7	Review, update and develop all swimming syllabi and awards	Maintain best practices		✓						✓		
8	Continue to develop the status of IWS Swim Awards	Greater recognition of our awards		✓						✓		✓
9	Provide instruction in water safety, rescue, swimming and recovery drills	Increased numbers in weekly classes		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓

IWS Goal 4 - The promotion of efficiency and standardisation of the lifeguard service and the establishment of national standards for lifeguards, lifesaving and water safety.												
Objectives		Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
1	Develop and implement a Sports Appeal Procedure	Best International practice		✓						✓		
2	Review all lifesaving syllabi	Up to date Syllabi best International practice		✓			✓					
3	Review, update and promote a Code of Conduct for all Surf Lifesaving Athletes	Highest standards to be achieved by athletes representing IWS		✓						✓		
4	Develop and standardise Lifeguard training to international best practices including oxygen delivery, first aid and Rescue Boat training	Higher standard of Lifeguarding		✓			✓					
5	Continue to develop Cardiac First Responder (CFR) training programmes under Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC)	CFR to be included in all Basic Life Support (BLS) training		✓			✓					
6	Train a corps of Pool Lifeguard Providers who can deliver requisite courses nationally, both voluntarily and commercially	Improved response to the demands of industry		✓			✓					
7	Ensure enough Lifeguards are trained to meet market demand	Sufficient Lifeguards for the Industry		✓			✓					✓
8	Continue to develop the standards for testing Rescue Equipment	Improved National Standards		✓			✓					
9	Continue to carry out usage tests on rescue equipment when required	High standard of Rescue equipment		✓			✓					
10	Review procedures for selection of Irish Teams	Best International practice		✓						✓		

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

Objectives		Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
1	To continually operate with child safety procedures always in mind and the continued development of child safety best practices in line with Government guidelines and legislation	A safe environment for our children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	To conduct our business activities in a financially prudent manner due to the financial restraints within our organisation, whilst efficiently managing and allocating our resources effectively	Achieving greater value for money within all our activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Develop and support the volunteer base of IWS and develop policies to increase our membership	Increased delivery of our services	✓									✓
4	Improved communication between the Council, the Executive and IWS members	Stronger organisation with greater efficiencies	✓			✓						✓
5	Audit WSAC activities on an annual basis e.g. pool/ summer weeks activity; courses, events, exhibitions	More accurate details of our outputs	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		

	Objectives	Result	CI	TC	EC	AC	LC	SWC	RC	SC	MC	WSAC
6	Implement an online Membership system to assist greater recruitment of members	Greater efficiency in recruitment	✓			✓		✓				✓
7	Implement an online Insurance scheme for our members	Improved service to our members	✓			✓						✓
8	Implement Succession Planning for IWS personnel	Smoother transition in all appointments	✓			✓						
9	Maintain our affiliations with other international lifesaving organisations	Best International Practices	✓			✓						
10	Support the role of the WSDO within IWS, Local Authorities & WSAC's	Strengthened role of the Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO)	✓			✓						✓
11	Continue to develop and support staff to reach their full potential	Improved staff performance	✓			✓						
12	Maintain a Risk Register on all IWS activities	Minimise risks to IWS				✓						
13	Review current service, recognition and merit Awards System	Specific Criteria for all awards				✓					✓	

Monitoring and Review

- Keep the plan on the table with regular reviews at Council meetings.
- Once a year, a dedicated Council meeting will review the plan.
- Commissions will create an action plan for their own designated objectives.

Appendices

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

IRISH WATER SAFETY the statutory voluntary body established to promote water safety in Ireland.



Our focus is on Public Awareness and education. Tragically, an average of 140 people drown each year in Ireland. We feel that this is simply unacceptable considering that most fatalities are avoidable. We strive to reduce these fatalities by increasing water safety awareness and by changing attitudes and behaviors so that our aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.

WHAT WE DO:

Teach swimming, lifesaving, water confidence, safety, survival, rescue skills and basic life support. Courses are provided nationwide to the general public and also to children as part of the primary school curriculum. Many qualifications such as our Pool and Beach Lifeguarding Awards are recognised internationally.

Arrange conferences, lectures and demonstrations to Local Authorities, Government Agencies, NGO's, schools, Colleges and members of the public.

Publish literature to promote water safety and target at-risk groups. We provide publications for all aquatic activities to assist the public adhere to best practices.

Our volunteers carry out Risk Assessments on bathing areas and waterways nationwide that may pose a particular risk to the public, in order to make them safer by the erection of Public Rescue Equipment, signage and other necessary facilities. We also advise and assist Local Authorities, state agencies and private enterprises on matters relating to water safety and we complete Public Rescue Equipment checks.

Our staff support the work of approximately 3,000 volunteer members and we also administer approximately 250 people who are commercially delivering swimming, lifesaving and CPR training.

Beach Lifeguards are trained and tested by our examiners for the Local Authorities, prior to the annual summer season each year.

Train and examine rescue boat crews for the Community Inshore Rescue Services.

Promote marine safety along with other members of the Marine Safety Working Group and the Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee.

National and local media help build public awareness by actively communicating our safety messages to the public.

Press releases target the seasonal hazards at sea, on our inland waterways and other aquatic environments.

Analysis and provision of drowning statistics that enables effective targeting of "at risk" groups in Ireland.

Work with a range of organisations to help reduce the high number of drownings by suicide annually.

Organise the Annual National Lifesaving Championships; some of our members then go on to compete in international events each year.

Organise the National Water Safety Awards Ceremony. The "JUST IN TIME" Rescue Award and other awards recognize people's work, providing training and promoting Water Safety in Ireland.

Partners from the private sector sponsor the delivery of messages to key "at risk" groups.

Provide information on the locations of Lifeguarded waterways in Ireland.

Public and private bodies call on us to make submissions on water safety related matters.

Maintain a comprehensive websites of water safety advice, publications and courses.

IWS is registered charity CHY 16289

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