



Annual Report 2023



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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



Chair's Statement

Ms Clare McGrath

On behalf of our members, I am delighted and honoured to present the 2023 Annual Report for Water Safety Ireland.

Overall drowning rates have continued to decrease over the decades. Drowning statistics for 2023 indicate that 78 people drowned, which is down from 93 drownings in 2022. This continues a downward trend. In each of the ten years to 2021, 130 drowned. In each of the five years to 2021, 118 drowned. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to each of the Committees, Commissions, Working Groups, Water Safety Area Committees and Head Office staff who have remained focused throughout the year – however this remains a significant public health issue and it must remain our main focus to continue efforts to bring this figure down further.

Water Safety Ireland volunteers have been busy nationwide teaching swimming, lifesaving, basic life support, rescue skills and promoting water safety awareness to the public. Over 100,000 water safety certificates were presented to recipients throughout the year – enormous work from our team of teachers and instructors, who strive to change attitudes and behaviours in and around water. I commend our Water Safety Area Committees, and our Summer and Winter Course Organisers for their commitment to delivering essential training to the next generation of lifesavers. During 2023, WSI issued swimming and lifesaving certificates to 8,796 people. 2,266 candidates received certification as beach and pool lifeguards. Local Authority Lifeguards rescued 249 people from drowning at lifeguarded locations nationwide. These Lifeguards administered first aid on 5,390 occasions and reunited 187 lost children with their guardians.

The Sports Commission ran a packed programme of lifesaving competitions in 2023, culminating in the European Junior and Senior Championships, in Poland and Belgium. Record numbers of competitors participated in our competitions in 2023. Competitors ranged in age from eight years to sixty-five years – making lifesaving sport truly a whole-of-life “Sport for All”.

Water Safety Ireland had a strong presence across the media in 2023, with high profile campaigns taking place as part of the ‘Better Safe Than Sorry’ message. We coordinated efforts to deliver practical

water safety advice to the public via traditional and digital channels, reaching a range of at-risk groups nationwide.

Water Safety Ireland closed the year with presentations by WSI members at the World Congress on Drowning Prevention, a forum dedicated to highlighting water safety best practices from around the world. We are very proud that the activities of Water Safety Ireland featured strongly on this world stage in drowning prevention.

World Drowning Prevention Day featured strongly among WSI members and members of the public to raise awareness about Ireland's drowning burden. World Drowning Prevention Day took place on the 25th of July, incorporating the theme ‘Do One Thing, Improve One Thing, Add One Thing’ to prevent drowning. Water Safety Ireland volunteers once again went above and beyond to mark the day.

Our organisation has made many important strides in recent years. We continue our work implementing our five-year Strategic Development Plan that guides the work of Water Safety Ireland in conjunction with Ireland's ten-year National Drowning Prevention Strategy 2018-2027. Behind these plans are real people – our voluntary members who are driven to tackle water safety issues and promote the development of appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours. We are all working together on our first and foremost goal – to reduce drownings in Ireland.

Finally, I thank each and every member of our organisation for their efforts to bring drownings down in 2023. I look forward with confidence to the continued downward trend in drownings and to the development of the cohort of volunteers within our organisation.

Together we really can bring drownings down.

Clare McGrath

Clare McGrath
Chair, Water Safety Ireland

113,272

Certificates
issued

Summer Week
locations in
21 Counties

680

mentions in
national and
local media

50,292

Primary Aquatics Water Safety
certificates issued to primary
school pupils

249

people rescued by lifeguards
trained and assessed by
Water Safety Ireland

55

SEIKO Just In Time Award
and Rescue Appreciation
Award recipients honoured
for saving 29 lives at risk of
drowning

24

medals won at
the Junior
European
Championships
by Team Ireland

61

Risk
Assessments
completed

187

lost children
reunited with
their
guardians



Clare McGrath

Clare 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. Clare has been involved in the organisation of Regional and National lifesaving competitions, both pool and beach for 20 years. She works with Clare County Council, as the Water Safety Development Officer, within the Environment Section.



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 National Vice Chair and head of the Technical Commission.



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 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 a past President of St Patrick's Athletic FC and music (as a recording artist under the stage name Tommy Keyes).



Natalie McGuinness

Natalie McGuinness is a strategy and marketing professional with over 20 years of experience in professional services, education and technology. Currently, she works as a marketing director in Dublin. She previously worked for UCD and Vodafone in Ireland, the UK and Asia. She is dedicated to lifelong learning and is a three time graduate from UCD holding a BA, MBA and Diploma in Corporate Governance. Natalie also works as an Independent Non-Executive Director with Dublin Chamber, St. Patrick's Day Festival and Chambers Ireland boards.



Paul Devins

Paul is from County Dublin and has been involved with Water Safety Ireland for over 40 years. He is an active Water Safety Instructor, Examiner, Pool & Beach Lifeguard Provider / Tutor. During his tenure, Paul served as Chairman of the Lifeguarding Skills & Syllabus Development Commission and previously served on the Sports Commission. He continues to serve on the Dublin Water Safety Committee.



Simon McGarrigle

Simon is currently living in Galway, Ireland, with his wife and young daughter, and works in a Sales & Marketing role for Finol Oils. Simon hails from Donegal, where his passion for the sport of lifesaving began from an early age and continues to this day. Throughout his teenage and early adult years, he was a Water Safety Ireland Instructor, IRB Crew, Coxswain & Instructor, a lifesaving sport coach & team manager in Donegal. He also instructed for WSI Dublin while he lived in Dublin. He has competed, coached & refereed nationally, and has also been team manager and referee at European & World Championship lifesaving events. Simon has been involved in organising both pool and beach competitions nationally for ten years and is currently a member of the International Life Saving Federation of Europe Sports Commission as well as being the current chair of the Water Safety Ireland Sports Commission and a member of the WSI Technical Committee.



Leo Mahon

Leo is from Co. Kildare and has been involved in Water Safety for over 30 years. As current Chair of the Education Commission, Leo is spearheading the delivery of education programmes to schools throughout Ireland. He previously served on a number of Commissions and Working Groups, and was a founding developer of ringbuoys.ie which allows members of the public to report missing and damaged ringbuoys. In addition, Leo has been committed to outdoor Water Safety Training through the development of the first Inland Water Safety training venue at Blessington, Co. Wicklow. He is currently an active Water Safety Instructor and Examiner, as well as the PRO of Water Safety Ireland – Kildare.



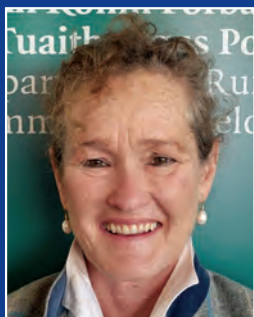
John Claffey

John has been an active committee member of WSI Kilkenny for over 20 years as an Instructor, Examiner, Swimming Teacher/Tutor and Cardiac First Responder Tutor, Pool, Beach and Inland Open Water Lifeguard Tutor, First Aid Responder Tutor and Pool Risk Assessor, Water Safety Awareness Tutor. During this time John has served as a member of the Lifeguard Commission and as Chair of the Water Safety Awareness Working Group. During his tenure, John served as an elected Council Member of Water Safety Ireland, and Chairman of the Rescue and Inshore Rescue Boats Commission and a member of the Technical Committee.



Paul Burke

Paul has been involved with water safety for nearly 40 years. He has held many positions since 1984 on the Cork Area Water Safety Committee such as Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Fund-Raising Officer. He spent seven summer seasons (1984 – 1990) working as a Beach Lifeguard on Inchydoney Beach. Paul is a qualified Examiner, Instructor, Risk Assessor, Poolguard Provider, Beachguard Provider, Surf Lifesaving Referee & Swim Teacher Tutor. During his tenure, Paul also chaired the WSI Swimming Commission and has sat on a number of Commissions of WSI and ILSE since 2000, such as the WSI Sports Commission, Lifesaving Commission, Education Commission, Audit & HR Commission, ILSE Development Aid Commission, ILSE Auditor and WSI internal auditor.



Dervla Quinn

Dervla is a practicing solicitor with over 30 years' experience. She has been a member of the Residential Tenancies Board disputes committee since its inception in 2004. She served on the Board of the Private Residential Tenancies Board from 2004 to 2008. She is a qualified tax consultant and a member of the Institute of Taxation since 1994. Dervla has been heavily involved in her local community and is a year-round sea swimmer, active in the Greystones, Co. Wicklow swim community. In 2018 she was rescued from the sea which inspired an interest in promoting water safety.



Christine Moloney

Christine is the CEO of Leisure World since 2001. She strategically leads, directs, and manages the six Leisure World sites on behalf of Cork City Council, ensuring the delivery of quality and value for money services. She has a wealth of experience in Public Sector service provision, strategy development, corporate governance, strategic HR, financial and internal controls, and a background in facilities management.



Mary Plunkett

Mary has worked in financial services for over 25 years across a diverse base of institutions in Banking, General Insurance, Life and Pensions and Funds. Working primarily within pillars of Strategic Planning and Governance, Mary has built vast experience having worked with leading financial services clients at executive level. Mary holds a Diploma in Company Direction with Distinction from the Institute of Directors, an MSc Investment & Treasury from Dublin City University and is a qualified accountant. Mary also holds the Association of Compliance Officers in Ireland leading qualification and is a qualified Data Protection Officer. Working in Risk management & Compliance for many years, Mary has in-depth experience in design of Risk & Compliance Governance Frameworks, monitoring upstream regulation, Compliance Monitoring Programmes, Compliance Roadmaps, setting Risk Appetite and Risk Policy and establishing governance programmes to manage same. Mary has valuable experience in engaging with diverse stakeholder groups to deliver transformation programmes, cultural change, offshoring, management of 3rd party suppliers and contractual commitments.



Melanie Cullen

Melanie is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland and runs her own accounting business. She has worked in Finance Management for many years in both Ireland and Australia. Melanie is an experienced Non-Executive Director, having spent time with South Connacht Citizens Information Service. She has a keen interest in open water swimming and was previously a lifeguard in the United States. Melanie also has a keen interest in volunteer work and sport.

Council Meetings 2023 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 the WSI Council. As of 31 December, the Council had 5 (55.5%) female and 4 (44.5%) male members, with four positions vacant. The Council therefore meets the Government target of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

Clare McGrath	9	
Philip Keleghan	9	
Tom O'Mahony	9	
Paul Burke	4	(Resigned 6/10/2023)
John Claffey	4	(Resigned 6/10/2023)
Paul Devins	3	(Resigned 2/10/2023)
Leo Mahon	5	
Simon McGarrigle	8	
Dervla Quinn	7	
Natalie McGuinness	8	
Melanie Cullen	0	(Resigned 20/01/2023)
Mary Plunkett	5	
Christine Moloney	8	



Water Safety Area Committees

The organisation has thirty Water Safety Area Committees, arranged almost on a county basis plus the Defence Forces and the Gárda 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.

Our Vision

A water loving people where safety is second nature

What We Do

Water Safety Ireland (WSI) 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 118 people drowned in Ireland per year from 2017 to 2021. We strive to reduce these fatalities by changing attitudes and behaviours so that our aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.

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 annual summer season each year;
- e) Trained Lifesavers compete in provincial and national Lifesaving Championships and at International level;
- f) Risk Assessments 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.

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 watersafety;
- c) Publications, courses, advice and campaigns in print and online that promote watersafety and target at-risk groups in all aquatic activities so that the public adheres to best practices;
- d) Supporting the work of over 7,000 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 Awards and other awards that recognise volunteerism and partnerships that promote water safety at national and local level.

Partnership

- 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 Communications 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.



Water Safety Ireland - Staff

- Joanne Walsh, CEO
- Roger Sweeney, Deputy CEO & Marketing Manager
- Joan Harte, Office Manager
- Lily Muldoon, Assistant Office Manager (July – October 2023)
- Jocelyn Cunningham, Executive Officer
- Alison Elstone, Executive Officer
- Frank Hughes, Business Development Executive
- Ciara Gleeson, Education Development Executive
- David Fitzpatrick, Education Development Officer & Technical Officer
- Pdraig Judge, Marketing Executive
- Paul McGowan, Marketing Assistant
- Jennifer O'Neil, Board Secretary, HR & Compliance Officer
- David Ruch, Data Officer
- Alanna Scully, Clerical Officer
- Emer Gardiner, Clerical Officer (January – March 2023)

Water Safety Ireland employees participated in 249 hours of training activities in 2023.

National Office

Water Safety Ireland
The Long Walk, Galway

Moore – Appointed in November 2023

Brian Hayes, Partner
Governance, Risk and Assurance
Ulysses House, Foley Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

Auditors

Comptroller & Auditor General
3A Mayor Street, Upper Dublin 1

Bankers

Bank of Ireland, Mainguard Street, Galway

Internal Auditors

RBK – Finished in March 2023
Park View House, Beech Hill Office Campus,
Clonskeagh, Dublin 4

Solicitors

Alastair Purdy & Co. Solicitors
Corrib Castle, 1 Waterside, Woodquay, Galway
Sheehan & Co. Solicitors
16 Merchants Road, Galway



Water Safety Ireland - Committees

The Technical Committee

Philip Keleghan - Chair
John Claffey
Paul Burke
Leo Mahon
Simon McGarrigle
Paul Devins

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 WSI Lifesaving syllabi & publications
- Oversee the arrangements for WSI Examiner's and Member's Conferences as required
- Identify and prioritise the new projects with Commissions



Audit, Risk & HR Commission

Tom O'Mahony - Chair
Tom Keating
Evan Duggan
Lorcan Maule
Mary Plunkett
Joan Harte
Jennifer O'Neil
Joanne Walsh

Duties

- Monitoring Expenditure and Income
- Monitor standards of Governance of WSI activities
- Internal Financial Controls
- Risk Management
- Oversight and management of Internal Audits
- Oversee the management of External Audits
- HR Matters appropriate to Council
- Approve all attendance at National & International meetings and conferences

Water Safety Ireland - Committees

Marketing Commission

Natalie McGuinness - Chair

Roger Sweeney

Aidan Collins

Andrea McKevitt

Padraig Judge

Paul McGowan

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

Rescue & Inshore Rescue Boats Commission

John Claffey - Chair

Valerie Stundon - Secretary

Ronnie Horan

Colm Dempsey

Patrick O'Grady

Kevin McCloskey

Graham Kerr

Duties

- Develop and implement a strategy for the Promotion of Blue Flag safety standards and other aquatic environmental issues
- Oversee the Management of Risk Assessments at local, national & international level
- Implement a programme of risk assessments in swimming pools adhering to Pool Safety Guidelines
- Manage the VAT Exemption Inspections as per S.I. 249 of 2013
- Development of a skilled trainer base to facilitate the Training of CRBI personnel in rescue on inland and maritime waters
- Development of a Inshore rescue syllabus in co-operation with CRBI.
- Liaise with Community Rescue Boats Ireland. Carry out usage tests on rescue equipment & review documentation
- Oversee the management of the Open Water Safety Awareness courses
- Develop a syllabus for training lifeguards in the use of IRB's and other power craft
- Arrange training courses for lifeguards in the use of IRB's
- Arrange rescue boat handling courses for WSI members
- Develop and deliver a syllabus to train WSI members as Rescue Boat Trainers
- Manage National & International IRB Competitions
- Arrange for safety cover at all WSI and ILS events & competitions where such cover is required.
- Organise VHF Radio short range courses for WSI members

Water Safety Ireland - Committees

Sports Commission

Simon McGarrigle - Chair

James Hassey

Kate O'Donovan

Caroline Bentley

Daniel Wrafter

Duties

- Promote and develop lifesaving sport in Ireland
- Improve liaison with Swim Ireland in relation to our NGB funding
- Improve liaison with the Federation of Irish Sport
- Improve liaison with Coaching Ireland
- Manage International and National Competitions
- Facilitate Training of Coaches, Referees and Officials.
- Appoint Coaches, Referees and Officials for competitions.
- Ensure all WADA regulations are enforced for our athletes
- Recommend Sports Equipment
- Manage International Life Saving Sport & Competitions
- Liaison with the Olympic Council of Ireland
- Draw up procedures for all activities and competitions

Lifeguarding Skills & Syllabus Development Commission

Paul Devins - Chair

Sean O'Keeffe

Pauline Jordan

Paul Murphy

Shane O'Brien

Duties

- The promotion of efficiency and standardisation of the Lifeguard Service
- Develop and implement a strategy for the improvement of national standards for Lifeguards
- Oversee all matters relating to the provision and training of Lifeguards (Pool, Beach, River)
- Recommend and publish national standards for all lifesaving equipment
- Develop and implement a national standard for the provision of instruction in water safety, rescue, resuscitation, and recovery skills
- Ensure European Resuscitation Council guidelines are adhered to by our membership
- Liaison with PHECC WG
- European Qualification Framework in Lifeguarding
- Implement training in Critical Incident Stress Management suitable for WSI members

Commercial & Membership Development Commission

Christine Moloney - Chair

Dervla Quinn

Mark Kiely

Seamus O'Neill

Duties

- Prepare and implement a strategy to increase the membership numbers
- Prepare and implement a strategy to commercialise the provision of WSI awards and qualifications
- Improve membership and communication with WSAC's

Water Safety Ireland - Committees

Education Commission

Leo Mahon - Chair

Matthew Campell

Philip Dorian

Caroline Casey

Ashling Nesbitt

Sinead Weldon

Ciara Gleeson

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 and implement Transition Year water safety programme.
- PAWS and Hold Hands: monitor and track and promote
- Liaise with the Department of Education on the implementation of the Leaving Certificate programme.
- Develop and implement the Teachers Training Courses
- Development of further QQI awards
- Review and update all Children's welfare, protection & educational documents
- Arrange seminars for Designated Liaison 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 and all relevant legislation pertaining to child welfare and protection
- Review and update the National Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children & National Volunteer Policies

Swimming Commission

Paul Burke - Chair

Breda Collins

Deirdre Webster

Clive Seawright

Amelia Reilly

Darren Ryan

Duties

- Oversea the provision of instruction in Swimming as a key element of the teaching of lifesaving
- Develop and implement a strategy for increasing the delivery of WSI Swimming awards
- Develop and implement a strategy for increasing the number of WSI swimming teachers.
- Develop a strategy to improve the teaching of water safety and lifesaving to individuals with disabilities.
- Oversea the provision of training and certification of Swimming teachers and Swimming Tutors to National Standards
- Liaise with the Education Commission on matters relating to swimming teaching and water safety awareness
- Represent WSI at IFSTA
- Ensure WSI is represented on the White Flag Jury
- Evaluate the number of Swim Certificates in WSI
- Review all swimming related documents and update as necessary
- Liaise with the Rescue Commission on the implementation on the Swimming Pool risk assessments programme.

Media Partnerships 2023

We are very grateful to the provincial and national media in helping us to target at-risk groups. Fifteen press releases were issued and WSI received 680 mentions.

PRESS RELEASES

- National Stillwater Pool Lifesaving Championships 2023
- St. Patrick's Day 2023
- Easter Bank Holiday 2023
- May Bank Holiday 2023
- Warm Air Does Not Mean Warm Water
- Water Safety Appeal from Coast Guard, RNLI & Water Safety Ireland for June bank holiday weekend
- National Water Safety Awareness Week 2023 Press Release
- World Drowning Prevention Day 2023
- August Bank Holiday 2023
- European Junior Lifesaving Championships
- European Junior Lifesaving Championships Results
- Agencies call for caution at waterways during warm weather weekend
- National Lifesaving Championships 2023
- National Lifesaving Championships 2023 Results
- Christmas and New Year 2023 Press Release

PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS

- Irish Skipper Expo, February 24 – 25th, 2023
- Ireland on the Water Expo, March 4th – 5th, 2023
- National Services Day Parade, Sept 2nd, 2023
- National Ploughing Championships, Sept 17th – 19th, 2023
- WSI National Annual Awards Ceremony, Nov 14th, 2023



National Water Safety Awareness Week (June 12th – June 18th)

National Water Safety Awareness Week took place from June 12th – June 18th 2023. To mark the week, Water Safety Ireland hosted a "Throw A Ringbuoy" demonstration for primary school students in Galway. This interactive and engaging session led by the Education team in Water Safety Ireland guided students through the process of effectively throwing a ringbuoy, while learning the importance of personal safety around waterways. Water Safety Area Committees hosted "Throw A Ringbuoy" events for school children in their area and delivered key advice in advance of the summer season. A national marketing campaign was run in media outlets nationwide throughout the week, which raised awareness of prominent water safety issues for the public.



Donegal Rescue Appreciation Awards. Garda Emmet Cassidy, Garda Noel Gavaghan and Sergeant Mark Colgan

Twenty nine lives were saved from drowning through the brave actions of rescuers who received recognition at Water Safety Ireland's National Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, 14th November 2023. The Award Ceremony was the first in-person event since 2019, following the Covid-19 pandemic. WSI is grateful to Timemark for sponsoring the Seiko watches. Details of each rescue are listed in this report. Long-Service Volunteer Awards were also presented to 101 volunteers, recognising a combined total of 2,040 years of service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide.



Cillian and Damien Ginty



Clare Rescue Appreciation Service. Ailish Collins, Conor Healy, Joe Garry and Jamie Malone



Rebecca Ebbs



Garda Sarah Lynam

*"He had the skills
and the strong swimming ability
to get out and knew what to do
when he got out there."*

Damien Ginty speaking about his son Cillian,
after both received the SEIKO Just In Time
Award at the 2023 National Awards Ceremony.

Source: Jack Power / www.irishtimes.com



*"So without a second
thought, the belt came off
and the stab vest came off and before
I knew it I was in the water and
thankfully then I was able to turn him
over and swim to a ledge and he made
a full recovery thank God."*

Garda Sarah Lynam, SEIKO Just In Time
Award Recipient at the 2023
National Awards
Ceremony.

Source: Laura Fletcher / www.rte.ie

*"We got a call a person
had gone into the water
very near our school as the school is
adjacent to the River Fergus."*

*"It really was a collective effort. It was a great
news story at the end of it. Because too often
in our river, no different from any other rivers,
it's a sad story at the end of the chapter."*

Joe Garry, SEIKO Just In Time Award
Recipient at the 2023 National Awards
Ceremony.

Source: Adrianna Wrona / www.independent.ie

*"The guards arrived as
we got the two girls onto
the beach. They told me if it had been
two or three minutes later, the outcome
would have been tragic. They said the
girls might have lost their lives if we
hadn't gone out."*

Rebecca Ebbs, SEIKO Just In Time
Award Recipient at the 2023
National Awards Ceremony.

Source: Catherine McGinty / www.derrynow.com

*"We're happy to be able to be in a
position to help."*

Sergeant Mark Colgan, Rescue
Appreciation Award Recipient at the
2023 National Awards Ceremony.

Source: Adrianna Wrona / www.independent.ie

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 14480 Swimming, Lifesaving and Water Safety certificates in 2023.

Course	Certificates	Course	Certificates
Aquatics Organiser	0	National Pool Lifeguard Level 2	724
Aquatics Pool Assistant	0	National Pool Lifeguard Level 2 Revalidation	606
Assistant Swimming Teacher	571	Rescue 1	722
Beach Lifeguard	195	Rescue 2	567
Beach Lifeguard Revalidation	317	Rescue 3	347
BLS 1	1272	Rescue 4	106
BLS 2	809	Safety 1	971
BLS 3	385	Safety 2	1686
Challenge 1	133	Safety 3	1217
Challenge 2	158	Safety 4	1263
Disabilities Aquatics Level 2	28	Surf 2	54
Disabilities Aquatics Level 3	1	Surf Award Instructor	5
Endurance 1	163	Surf Instructor Beach Safety	43
Endurance 2	361	Surf Instructor Beach Safety Rev	186
In-House Pool Lifeguard Tutor	4	Survival 1	153
Instructor	42	Survival 2	425
Inland Open Water Lifeguard	17	Swim Teacher Lifesaving	6
Inland Open Water Lifeguard Revalidation	15	Swim Teacher	203
Introduction to Coaching	14	Swim Teacher Tutor	10
Lifesaving Sport Coach Assistant	21	Water Safety Awareness	148
Lifesaving Sport Coach Level 1	15	Water Safety Awareness General & Pool	93
National Pool Lifeguard Level 1	242	Total	14480
National Pool Lifeguard Level 1 Revalidation	182		



Certification

Land PAWS

Course	PAWS 1	PAWS 2	PAWS 3	PAWS 4	Land PAWS Total
Certificates	8986	10169	10116	8775	38046

PAWS in the Water

Course	PAWS 1	PAWS 2	PAWS 3	PAWS 4	PAWS 5
Certificates	794	1308	2399	3028	2398

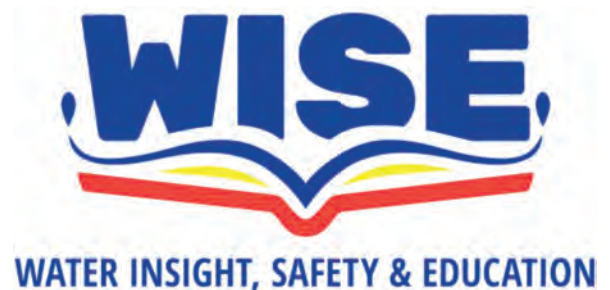
Course	PAWS 6	PAWS 7	PAWS 8	PAWS 9	PAWS 10
Certificates	1239	592	234	150	104

Total PAWS in the Water

12246

Wise

Water Safety Ireland issued 138 WISE (Water, Insight, Safety & Education) certificates in 2023 to Transition Year secondary school students. The programme builds on the lessons learned in the PAWS (Primary Aquatic Water Safety) programme and equips students with the knowledge they need to make the right decisions in all sorts of situations to keep themselves, and others, safe on, or near, water.



WISE involves a series of eight lessons that provide a solid introduction to Water Safety, with a focus on risk assessment and water safety strategies for all aspects of our daily lives, from specific water-based activities to hazards and the potential of unforeseen accidents.

The lessons look at different environments and highlight potential dangers so students can better assess the risks, and their ability, to determine the safest course of action in all types of situations for themselves and others.

A total of 48,500 Seal and Marlin swimming competency certificates were issued, giving total certification issued by Water Safety Ireland of 113,272.

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.

County	Location	Month	Course
Carlow	Bagnelstown	July	Swim
Carlow	Bagnelstown	August	Water Safety, Rescue
Carlow	Graigucullen	April & May	Water Safety, Rescue
Cavan	Greaghlonge Lake, Shercock	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Lough McNeen, Blacklion	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Annagh Lake, Butlersbridge	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Annagh Lake, Miltown	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Killykeen, Killeshandra	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Crover, Lough Sheelin	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Grownneys Wood, Lough Ramor	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Lavey Lake, Lavey	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Haltons River, Cootehill	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Fitzpatrick's Shore, Lough Gowna	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Brackley Lake, Bawnboy	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Garty Lough, Arva	July	Water Safety
Cavan	Riversdale Pool, Ballinamore	August	Water Safety
Clare	Miltown Malbay	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Clare	Cappa	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Clare	Flagmount	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Clare	Doonbeg	July	Swim & Safety
Clare	Labasheeda	August	Swim, Safety
Clare	Kilkee	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Clare	Mountshannon	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Clare	Ballyvaughan	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Ardgroom	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Sherkin	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Midleton	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Schull	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Ardfield	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Carrignavar Pool	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Cuil Aodha	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Ballibrannigan	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Skibbereen	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Adrigole	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue

Summer Water Safety Weeks

County	Location	Month	Course
Cork	Garrylucas	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Glengarriff	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Cuil Aodha	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Cuil Aodha	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Oysterhaven	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Bere Island	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Ballymacoda	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Courtmacsherry	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Youghal	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Union Hall	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Kilcrohane	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Rosscarbery	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Garnish Pier	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Glandore	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Urhan	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Cork	Ballycotten	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Mountcharles	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Portsalon	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Greencastle	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Kincasslagh	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Kincasslagh	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Bun An Inver	June	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Port Na Blaith	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Killybegs	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Donegal	Bundoran	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Dublin	Skerries	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue, Challenge
Galway	Cill Chiarán	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Carraroe	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Trí an Fhia	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Cornamóna	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Inish Mór	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Inish Oirr	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Inish Meán	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Portumna	August	Swim, Safety
Galway	Loughrea	August	Swim, Safety
Kerry	Brandon	June	Swim
Kerry	Minard	June	Swim
Kerry	Brandon	July	Safety
Kerry	Cromane	July	Swim
Kerry	Ceann Tra	July	Swim
Kerry	Portmagee	July	Swim

Summer Water Safety Weeks

County	Location	Month	Course
Kerry	Ceann Tra	July	Safety
Kerry	Templemore	July	Swim
Kerry	Bailen na nGall	July	Swim
Kerry	Portmagee	July	Safety
Kerry	Meenoghane	July	Safety
Kerry	Templenow	July	Safety
Kerry	Ballinskelligs	July	Swim
Kerry	Ballybunion	July	Swim
Kerry	Rossbeigh	July	Swim
Kerry	Castlecove	July	Swim
Kerry	Kells	July	Swim
Kerry	Kells	July	Safety
Kerry	Ballybunion	August	Safety
Kerry	Valentia	August	Swim
Kerry	Derrynane	August	Swim
Kerry	Derrynane	August	Safety
Kerry	Cuas Croum		Swim, Safety
Kilkenny	Graiguenamanagh	July	Swim, Safety
Laois	Ballinakill	July	Swim, Safety
Laois	Castletown Bridge	August	Swim, Safety
Leitrim	Keeldra	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Leitrim	Gulladoo	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Leitrim	Drumshambo	July & August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Leitrim	Cleighran Mor, Ballinaglera	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Leitrim	Rossinver	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Limerick	Askeaton	August	Safety, Rescue
Limerick	Askeaton	August	Safety, Rescue
Limerick	Glin Pier	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Limerick	Glin Pier	August	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Longford	Annagh	July	Swim, Safety
Louth	Gyles Quay	July	Safety
Mayo	Ballina	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Ballina	August	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Claremorris	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Castlebar	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Lacken	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Clare Island	August	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Inishturk Island	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Kilmovee	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Belmullet	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Belmullet	August	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue

Summer Water Safety Weeks

County	Location	Month	Course
Mayo	Castlebar	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Mayo	Charlestown	July	Swim, Safety, Endurance, Survival, Rescue
Offaly	Birr	July	Swim, Safety
Offaly	Banagher	July	Swim, Safety
Sligo	Aughris Pier	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Sligo	Enniscrone	July	Swim, Safety, Rescue
Sligo	Enniscrone	August	Safety
Tipperary North	Thurles	July	Safety
Tipperary North	Nenagh	August	Safety & Rescue
Waterford	Boatstrand	July	Safety, Rescue
Waterford	Ardmore	July	Safety, Rescue
Waterford	Ardmore	August	Safety, Rescue
Westmeath	Athlone	April	Safety, Rescue
Westmeath	Athlone	July	Safety, Rescue
Westmeath	Athlone	July	Safety, Rescue
Wexford	Rosslare	July	Swim, Safety
Wexford	Courtown	July	Safety, Rescue
Wexford	Bunclody	August	Safety, Rescue
Wexford	Cahore Pier	July	Safety, Rescue
Wexford	Kilmore	July	Swim. Safety
Wexford	Fethard	July	Safety, Rescue
Wicklow	Bray Seafront	July	Safety
Wicklow	Greystones Harbour	July	Safety
Wicklow	Wicklow Harbour	July	Swim



World Drowning Prevention Day

In 2023, the World Health Assembly adopted its first ever resolution on "Accelerating Action on Global Drowning Prevention" under the Agenda Item 16.3 "Social Determinants of Health".

This followed the approval of the first ever resolution on Drowning Prevention in 2021 by the United Nations General Assembly which designated July 25th as World Drowning Prevention Day. WSI was invited to speak at two events, supporting the Resolution and a WHO Information Webinar for World Drowning Prevention Day. Lifeguards, children and Water Safety Ireland members around the country answered the call to 'Go Blue for World Drowning Prevention Day' as did many heritage sits by illuminating their buildings in blue.



L-R: Noel White Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations Geneva, Roger Sweeney Deputy CEO WSI, Dr Joanne Walsh CEO WSI, Professor Breda Smyth Chief Medical Officer Ireland, and Dr David Meddings Lead on Drowning Prevention World Health Organization.



Hugo Halligan goes blue for World Drowning Prevention Day



Ellen Glynn survived an overnight at sea on her paddleboard after being swept out from the Galway shoreline

Past the Point of Rescue

Written by Emma O'Grady for World Drowning Prevention Day

If you ever wonder that you might be past the point of rescue,
The answer my friend is always 'no'.
No matter how far you have drifted,
You are not gone,
You are not lost,
You are not beyond hope.
Right at this very moment your rescuer is putting on his boots and following his gut.
Don't panic,
Have faith,
And trust that while you wait, there will always be something, something to cling to.
And when you see it, cling on, for your dear dear life.
To a buoy, your best friend, your broken heart, your dark sense of humour.
Cling on.
In the darkness, you will see shooting stars.
In the cold, you will sing.
You will never go so far out to sea that you can't be saved, by someone.
Maybe a stranger who happens to be paying attention.

WSI Representation at National Level

- An Taisce Blue Flag Jury – Ronnie Horan
- ACESA (Assoc Chief Executives of State Agencies) – Joanne Walsh
- Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee – Roger Sweeney
- Commissioner's Irish Lights (Users Group) – Roger Sweeney
- Marine Safety Communications Working Group – Roger Sweeney
- Community Rescue Boats Ireland – Ronnie Horan
- PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) – Paul Murphy
- ILAM White Flag Jury – Breda Collins
- Green Coast Award – Ronnie Horan
- Federation of Irish Sports – Clare McGrath
- WSI Internal Auditor – Alison Elstone and Paul Burke
- National Designated Liaison Person – Ashling Nesbitt



WSI Representation at International Level

- International Life Saving (ILS) board member – Martin O'Sullivan
- ILSE (Europe) Sports Commission – Simon McGarrigle
- ILSE (Europe) Management & Administration Commission – Roger Sweeney
- ILSE (Europe) Rescue Commission – Breda Collins
- International Federation of Swimming Teachers Association – Breda Collins
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) – Ciara Gleeson
- College of Referees Panel ILS Europe – Clare McGrath
- ILS World Competition Rules Committee – Clare McGrath
- International Maritime Rescue Federation – Roger Sweeney
- World Health Assembly Side Event – Joanne Walsh and Roger Sweeney
- World Drowning Prevention Conference – Roger Sweeney, Ciara Gleeson and Brendan McGrath
- WHO World Drowning Prevention Day Working Group – Roger Sweeney

Conferences

- National Pool Championships, UL, Limerick 18th February
- WSI Members Conference, Portlaoise 4th March
- WSDO Conference, Fota Island, Cork, 13th & 14th April
- Nippers/Juniors National Championships, Mullaghmore, Sligo 2nd September
- WSI Examiners Conference, Mullingar, Westmeath 14th October
- WSI ILSE RA Course, Milltown Malbay, Clare 28th/29th October & 18th/19th November
- WSDO Post-Summer Meeting 26th September
- WSI National Annual Awards Ceremony, The Printworks Event Centre, Dublin Castle, Nov 14th

Risk Assessments

Water Safety Ireland volunteers carried out 61 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.

Location	County
Coosan Point	Westmeath
Garrylucas	Cork
Fountainstown	Cork
Trá an Dóilin	Galway
Trá Chill Mhuirbhigh	Galway
Enniscrone Beach	Sligo
River Amenity dev. Middleton	Cork
An Trá Mhór	Waterford
Portumna Bathing Area	Galway
The Long Point	Galway
Tra Inish Oir, Galway	Galway
Traught	Galway
Malahide Beach	Dublin
Carrowmore	Mayo
Bertra	Mayo
Culleton's Gap	Wexford
Oldbawn	Wexford
River Barrow	Kildare
Coliemore Harbour	Dublin
Corbawn Strand	Dublin
Greystones Beach (South)	Wicklow
The Cove Greystones	Wicklow
Spanish Point	Clare
Miltown Malbay	Clare
Kilkee Beach	Clare
White Strand, Doonbeg,	Clare
Bishops Quarter	Clare
Seafeld beach	Clare
Ballyalla lake	Clare
Lahinch beach	Clare
Ballyrisode beach	Cork

Location	County
Oldhead beach	Mayo
Inchydoney Beach	Cork
Carne	Wexford
Fenit Beach	Kerry
Mulranny beach	Mayo
Gallanes Lake, Clonakilty	Cork
Whitestrand beach	Kerry
Ballinskelligs beach	Kerry
Clougherhead beach	Louth
Port beach	Louth
Gormanstown Beach	Meath
Monkstown Pedestrian Walkway	Cork
Long Beach	Kerry
Cahore beach	Wexford
Yellow strand	Sligo
Ballycroneen beach	Cork
Fintra beach	Donegal
Portnoo, Narin	Donegal
Culdaff beach	Donegal
Murvagh beach	Donegal
Shroove beach	Donegal
Marblehill	Donegal
Downings beach	Donegal
Derrynane beach	Kerry
Bundoran	Donegal
Strandhill	Sligo
Arklow	Wicklow
Leitrim Quay	Leitrim
Templetown	Louth
Dromineer	Tipperary



The Wicklow Nipper Team with some Irish team members from Wicklow and their coaches

Lifesaving Sport

Overall Combined Still & Open Water Competitions 2023

National Nipper Champions	Waterford
National Junior Champions	Wicklow
National Senior Champions (Presidents Trophy)	Wicklow Ladies A
National Masters Champions	Waterford

National Senior Open Water Championships

Number of Competitors
145

Team Results

Ladies

1. Wicklow A
2. Clare A
3. Donegal A

Men

1. Clare A
2. Waterford A
3. Wicklow A

All team scores and individual event results available online.

National Senior Still Water Championships

Number of Competitors
124

Team Results

Ladies

1. Wicklow A
2. Clare A
3. Cork A

Men

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

All team scores and individual event results available online.

National Masters Open Water Championships

Number of Competitors
62

Team Results

1. Waterford
2. Sligo
3. Wicklow

All team scores and individual event results available online.

National Masters Still Water Championships

Number of
Competitors
68

Team Results

1. Waterford
2. Cork
3. Wicklow

All team scores
and individual
event results
available online.

National Junior Open Water Championships

Regional Qualification Competitions

- Ulster/Connaught: 57 Competitors
- Munster: 122 Competitors • Leinster: 56 Competitors

National Championships

Number of
Competitors
190

Team Results

Ladies

1. Wicklow
2. Clare
3. Cork

Men

1. Cork
2. Wicklow
3. Clare

All team scores
and individual
event results
available online.

National Junior Still Water Championships

Number of
Competitors
127

Team Results

Ladies

1. Cork A
2. Wicklow A
3. Waterford A

Men

1. Waterford A
2. Wicklow A
3. Cork A

All team scores
and individual
event results
available online.

The National Team medal winners
at the European Lifesaving
Championships in Poland



National Nipper Open Water Championships

Regional Qualification Competitions

- Ulster/Connaught: 162 Competitors
- Munster: 269 Competitors • Leinster: 138 Competitors

National Championships

Number of Competitors
345

Team Results

Junior Nipper

1. Clare
2. Sligo
3. Waterford

Senior Nipper

1. Waterford
2. Clare
3. Wicklow

All team scores and individual event results available online.

National Nipper Still Water Championships

Regional Qualification Competitions

- Ulster/Connaught: 88 Competitors
- Munster: 229 Competitors • Leinster: 122 Competitors

National Championships

Number of Competitors
273

Team Results

Junior Nipper

1. Clare
2. Waterford
3. Wicklow

Senior Nipper

1. Clare
2. Waterford
3. Cork

All team scores and individual event results available online.



Junior European Championships, Poland

Overall Team Result

6th

Medals

Gold

5

Silver

10

Bronze

9

Medal Winners

Gold

- Leana Liddane won Gold in the Swim Race
- Oisín O'Grady and Ferdia Hayes won Gold in the Board Rescue
- Amy Noble and Leana Liddane won Gold in the Board Rescue

Silver

- Leana Liddane won Silver in the Board Race
- Leana Liddane won Silver in the Oceanman/Oceanwoman
- Amy Noble, Katie Cotter, Elin Blake and Lily Sheehy won Silver in the Tube Rescue
- Amy Noble, Jamie Flynn, Leana Liddane and Finn Harris won Silver in the Mixed Ocean Relay

Bronze

- Ferdia Hayes won Bronze in the Oceanman/Oceanwoman
- Jamie Flynn, Charlie Brennan, Oisín O'Grady and Cailim Van Dam won bronze in the Tube Rescue
- Oisín O'Grady, Finn Harris, Jamie Flynn and Cailim Van Dam won bronze in the Beach Sprint Relay

Senior European Championships, Poland

Overall Team Result
8th

Medals

Gold
1

Bronze
4

Medal Winners

Gold

- Leana Liddane won Gold in the Swim Race

Bronze

- Leana Liddane & Bea Greenberg won Bronze in the Board Rescue
- Tom Breen & Odhran Savage bronze in the Board Rescue



The National Team at the European Lifesaving Championships in Poland

Referees

National C Stillwater
Referee course:
19 Candidates

- 3 Irish International B Referees upgraded to International A Referees
- Pamela McGrath - Clare
 - Patrick 'Grady - Clare
 - Andrew Lally - Galway

International referee appointments, including:

- European Championships Chief Referees: Daniel Wrafter and Clare McGrath.
- European Championships Officials: Patrick O'Grady, Pamela McGrath, and Sinead Weldon.

Coaches

- 7 Assistant Coach Course: 92 Candidates
- 1 Level 1 Coach Course: 15 Candidates

National Awards Ceremony

Twenty-nine lives were saved from drowning by rescuers who received 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.

The Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD acknowledged recipients of a range of Awards including the SEIKO Just in Time Awards, Long Service Awards, and Recognition Awards for services rendered to Water Safety Ireland and also the Volunteer of the Year Award. Among the recipients are members of the public, members of Water Safety Ireland and other individuals and organisations who assist in the reduction of drownings by supporting the work of Water Safety Ireland throughout the year.

Long-Service Volunteer Awards were presented to 101 volunteers, recognising a combined total of 2040 years of service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide.



Gerardine Deasy receiving 20 Year Service Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).



James McLoughlin receiving Gold Service Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).



Seamus O'Neill receiving Life Governor Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).



Sheila Mollahan receiving Bronze Service Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).

Community & 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 118 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. 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 Oírr, the smallest of the three Aran Islands. Emma evokes her personal reflection on the harrowing ordeal of two Galway cousins, Ellen Glynn (pictured) 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.



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.





Lola O'Sullivan
Chair, Water Safety Ireland - Waterford

What do you most enjoy about volunteering/working with Water Safety Ireland?

"Teaching people to swim and seeing the pleasure they get from learning. Also knowing that someone I have trained as a lifeguard can save a life and make a difference."



Bernie Gaines
Chair, Water Safety Ireland - Dublin

What would be your advice to someone looking to volunteer with Water Safety Ireland?

"The first step is approaching their deck manager or instructors stating an interest to progress. As instructors we often become mentors to those that have attended our classes and with pride we enjoy passing on and encouraging those around us."



Patricia Flynn
Water Safety Development Officer
Mayo County Council

Where would be the best place for someone to get started should they wish to become a lifeguard?

"Start with your local Swimming Club to build up your strength and fitness. Our Water Safety Area Committee will work hard to get you trained and ready for work as a Lifeguard by providing all the training and knowledge you require for the job."

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.



Anne Ryan receiving Life Governor Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).



Peadar O'Lamhna receiving Bronze Service Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).



Aoife Heeran receiving 15 Year Service Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).



Noreen Ormsby receiving 20 Year Service Award from Minister Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).

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.



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.

First Name	Last Name	County	Years of Service
Susan	Cook	Kilkenny	10
Aoife	Claffey	Kilkenny	10
Lisa	O'Sullivan	Bantry	10
Kieran	Meehan	Clare	10
Jan	Hillery	Clare	10
Ciara	Gleeson	Clare	10
Kate	O Donovan	Cork	10
Jonathan	Hughes	Derrynane	10
Michael	Martin	Derrynane	10
Grania	Costello	Banna	10
Thomas	Fitzgerald Jr	Banna	10
Colleen	Trant	Banna	10
Mike	Ashe	Banna	10
Aidan	Duggan	Banna	10
Donal	Higgins	Kilkenny	10
Ciaran	Cuddihy	Waterford	10
Zac	Cuddihy	Waterford	10
Aoife	Murphy	Dublin	10
Dónal	Brereton	Dublin	10
Síofra	Collins O Regan	Dublin	10
Muireann	Collin O Regan	Dublin	10
Graham	Malone	Defence Forces	10
Ryan	Burke	Defence Forces	10
Clare	McGinty Ryan	Galway	10
David	Kelly	Galway	10
Amanda	Brown	Galway	10
Ashling	Nesbitt	Kildare	10
Donal	Horgan	Kilkenny	10
Robin	Newsome	Kilkenny	10
Rena	O Dwyer	Kilkenny	15
Sinead	Mortell	Kilkenny	15
Aine	Purcell	Clare	15
Caren	Pfiffer	Clare	15
Richard	Frewin	Derrynane	15
Josephine	Rockett	Waterford	15
James	Hassey	Waterford	15
Joan	Foran	Waterford	15
Matthew	Silis	Waterford	15
Siobhan	Douglas	Monaghan	15
Gearóid	McCarthy	Monaghan	15
Matthew	Campbell	Dublin	15
Elizabeth	O Reilly	Dublin	15
Mark	Ward	Leitrim	15
Aoife	Heeran	Leitrim	15
Gary	Knox	Kilkenny	20
John	Claffey	Kilkenny	20
Michael	Turner	Derrynane	20

Long Service Awards

First Name	Last Name	County	Years of Service
Tracey	McBride	Donegal	20
Shane	Begley	Bantry	20
Diarmuid	Murphy	Bantry	20
Martin	O Mahony	Bantry	20
Noreen	Ormsby	Tipp North	20
Paddy	Collins	Tipp North	20
Patrick	O Grady	Clare	20
Ann	Downes	Clare	20
Kathleen	McNamara	Clare	20
Karl	Toomey	Dublin	20
Noel	Donnelly	Derrynane, CRBI	20
Gerardine	Deasy	Derrynane, CRBI	20
Paul	O Sullivan	Derrynane, CRBI	20
Stephen	Baker	Banna, CRBI	20
Thomas	Ward	Banna, CRBI	20
Jim	Riordan	Banna, CRBI	20
Liam	Taylor	Dublin	20
Orla	Cosgrave Kirwan	Wexford	20
Darrell	Evans	Waterford	20
Peadar	Ó Lamhna	Monaghan	20
Paul	Hayes	Dublin	20
Seán	Devins	Dublin	20
Ciarán	Devins	Dublin	20
Bernward	Schuermann	Dublin	20
Dynpna	Creegan	Leitrim	20
Sheila	Mollahan	Leitrim	20
Michael	Brogan	Defence Forces	20
Antonia	Darbey	Dublin	20
Eleanor	Burke	Galway	20
Simon	McGarrigle	Donegal	20
Máire	Jones	Dublin	20
Tanya	Carroll	Clare	30
Jackie	Coote	Clare	30
John	Casey	Banna	30
Thomas	Fitzgerald	Banna	30
Lynn	Travers	Wexford	30
Helen	Hennessy	Waterford	30
David	Byrne	Dublin	30
Sinead	Murphy	Dublin	30
John	Egan	Dublin	30
Liam	Costigan	Kilkenny	40
Norma	Cahill	Clare	40
James	O Loughlin	Banna	40
Pat	Lawlor	Banna	40
Maureen	Creagh	Waterford	40
Mary	O Brien	Waterford	40
Conor	Dodd	Dublin	40
Alice	Doorly	Dublin	40
Bridie	Giles	Galway	40
James	McLoughlin	Mayo	50
Jerry	O Sullivan	Cork	50
Brendan	McGrath	Clare	50
Stan	MacEoin	Galway	50

Volunteer of the Year Award

Bernie Gaines, Dublin - Volunteer of the Year



Bernie Gaines receiving Volunteer of the Year Award from Minsiter Thomas Byrne and Clare McGrath (WSI).

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, Bernie 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.

Community & Social Responsibility 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 December 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

The SEIKO “Just In Time” Award & Rescue Appreciation Award



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.

Presented to those who came to the assistance of person(s) in difficulty in water and in danger of drowning. Without their quick thinking, the outcomes could have been very different.

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.





The SEIKO “Just In Time” Award & Rescue Appreciation Award

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) & Sergeant John O'Sullivan (JIT), Co. Kilkenny (rescued: 1)

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.





The SEIKO “Just In Time” Award & Rescue Appreciation Award

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.





The SEIKO “Just In Time” Award & Rescue Appreciation Award

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.



The SEIKO “Just In Time” Award & Rescue Appreciation Award

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.



Media Appreciation Awards

Presented in appreciation for covering drowning prevention and water safety 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.

Analysis of Drownings 2023

Water Safety Ireland - targeting at-risk groups with drowning prevention initiatives.

The total number of drownings in Ireland in 2023 was 78, 15 fewer than in 2022 when 93 drowned. The average number of drownings each year over the five years (2017-2021) is 118. 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:

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.

Analysis of Drownings 2023

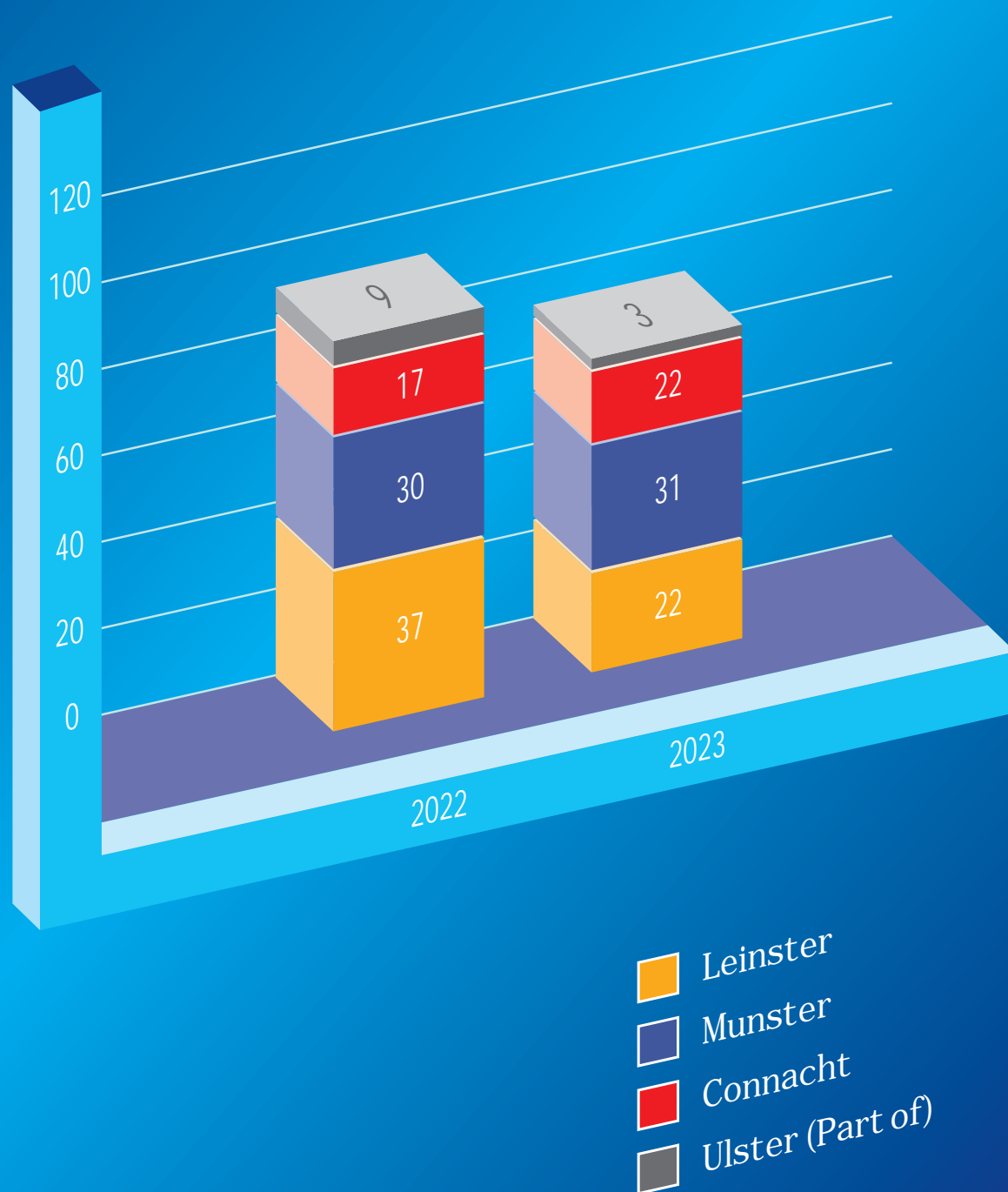
A synopsis of some general preventive and management actions:

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. The training and assessment of Lifeguards by WSI;
7. Teaching swimming and lifesaving skills from the WSI syllabus;
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 and angling from shore;
12. Fencing and doors to isolate outdoor aquatic environments.
13. Maintaining a safe distance from water's edge (S.A.F.E. - Stay Away From Edges).

*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.

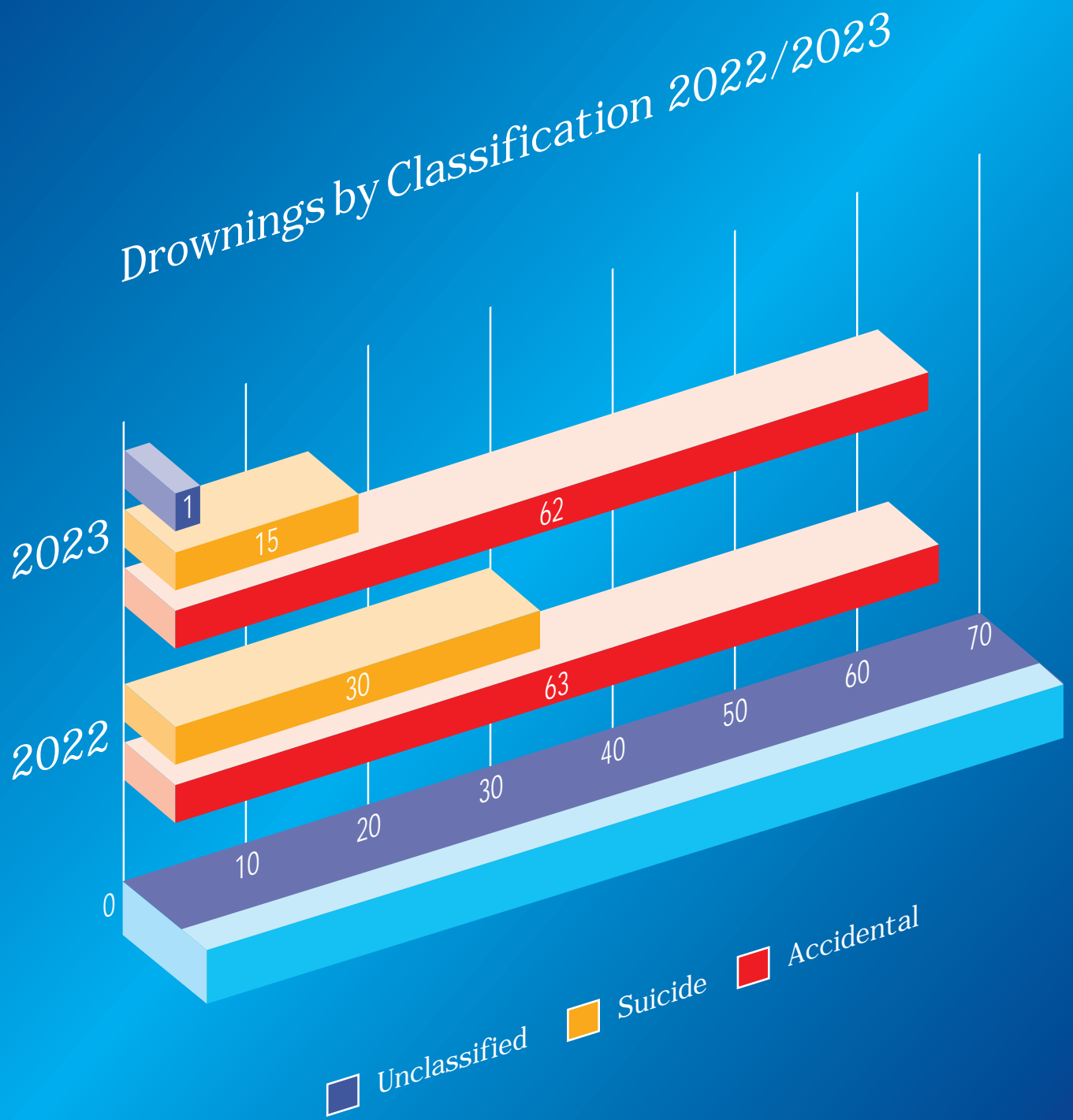


Drownings by Province 2022/2023

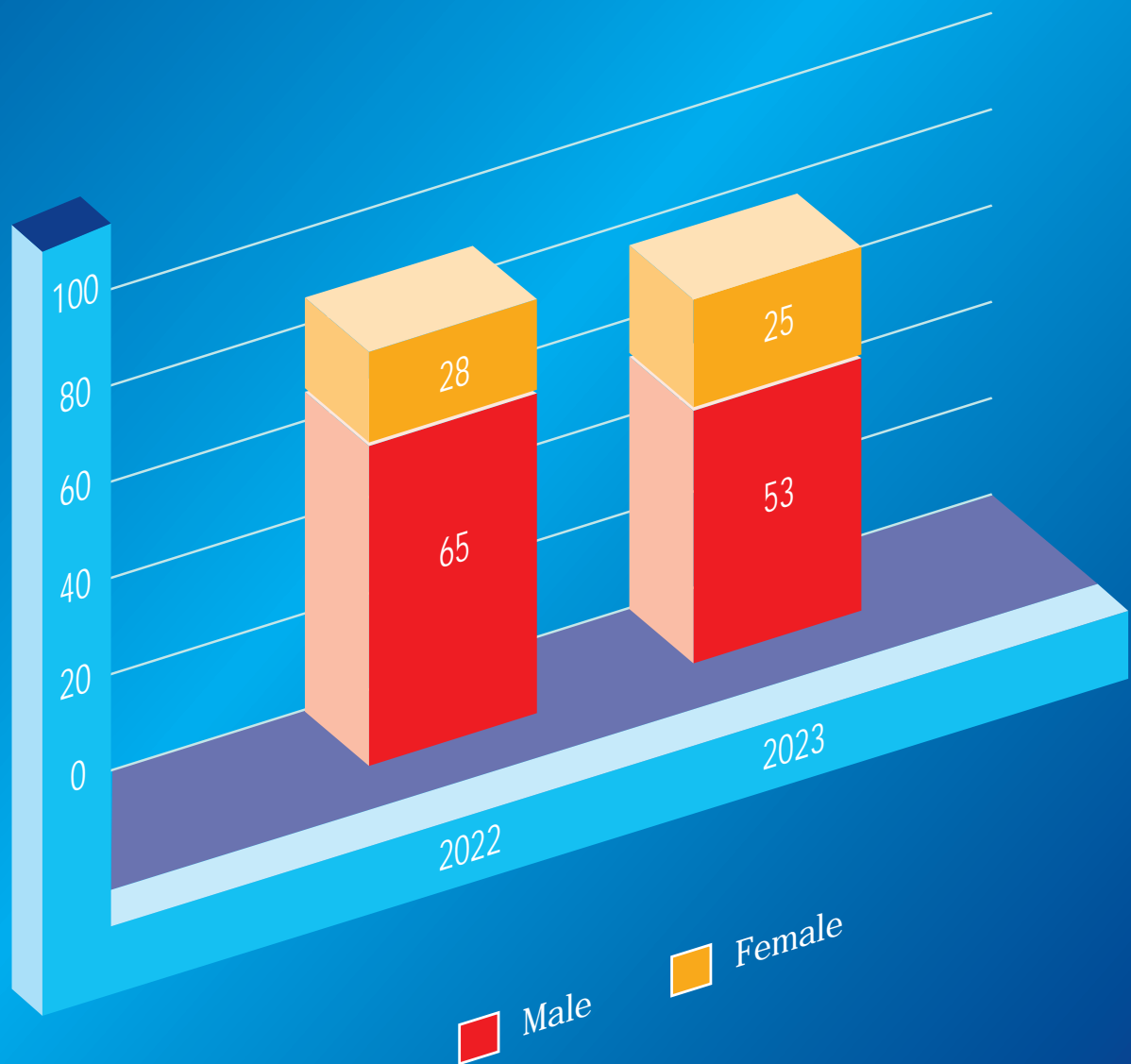


Drownings by Age 2022/2023





Drownings by Reported Gender 2022/2023



Protected Disclosures

Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

An Annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published. From 01 January to 31 December 2023. The Chief Executive of WSI, in the context of their role as a prescribed person under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, received no protected disclosures from parties external or internal to WSI and relating to third parties.



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