



ROYAL
LIFE SAVING
SOCIETY UK

Enjoy Water **Safely**

CHARITY IMPACT REPORT 2020

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY UK

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



198,654
unique views of
COVID-19 guidance pages



7,246
attended RLSS UK and
industry-specific webinars



244,345
online learning
modules completed



79 MILLION
The reach of our
Drowning Prevention Week
campaign



55.6%
The increase of our
social media engagement
(on 2019)

Following a period of strategic assessment and planning, at the start of 2020 we were ready to launch our new strategic framework; an ambitious plan to develop the charity and the impact we have to reduce drownings. However, just like the rest of the world, in the wake of the pandemic our well laid plans had to adapt considerably at pace. Our mission quickly became ensuring the survival of not just members of the public but also the organisation itself.

One significant step in the strategic framework was the identification of the need to diversify income into the charity to become less reliant on solely one industry. This could not have been better illustrated with the overnight closure of the leisure industry due to the pandemic, in the same week as our new plans were set to be announced.

However, we are pleased to say that the team at RLSS UK were able to react quickly, making the extremely difficult but necessary decisions to protect the organisation for our members and supporters, so that as the pandemic passes, we are all in a position to thrive once again.

We owe a great deal to the support, dedication of members, supporters, staff, and trustees during an unprecedented year. Despite adversity what was achieved in 2020 was truly remarkable. We all came together to weather the storm and we look forward to great times ahead.

Our work has never been so important. Millions of children missed out on essential swimming and water safety training in 2020, we are now at risk of a generation of children not having the vital skills to enjoy water safely.

Our new 5-year strategic framework has come at a good time to redirect our efforts behind a positive and

ambitious framework. A framework that addresses these topics and more, recognising that different communities have diverse needs around water and that local engagement by building our own community is fundamental to the delivery of education that enables everyone to enjoy being in, on or near water safely - because every life is worth saving.

We can only achieve the ambitions set out in this document by all of us working together towards the same vision, of nations without drowning where everyone can safely enjoy being in, on or near water.

We look forward to continue working with you all.

Robert Gofton
RLSS UK CEO



Mark Smith
RLSS UK President



THE CURRENT UK FATAL ACCIDENTAL DROWNING LANDSCAPE

Lee Heard, our Charity Director and Chair of the National Water Safety Forums Data and Insight Group, provides us with an overview of the current landscape.

We fundamentally believe that every life is worth saving and that every accidental drowning is preventable. Whilst there is ongoing work to look at data that is excluded from the accidental drowning situation, I want to give a snapshot of the impact ongoing work on UK accidental drownings, is having.

In 2020, there were 254 accidental UK drownings recorded. For several consecutive years, there has been a consistent decline in the number of people accidentally losing their life to drowning. This is testament to the dedication of everyone involved in water safety. However, in 2020 despite best efforts, there was a 31 per cent increase on the previous year (254 vs 223).

The reason for the increase varies, but with a significant increase in outdoor swimming due to pool closures, it came as no surprise that drowning related to swimming increased by over 20 per cent (53 vs 44). Proportionally, compared to the increase in outdoor swimming, this is promising, as a large number of individuals were embarking on this extremely beneficial exercise, safely and without fatal incident.

Lifesavers and lifeguards worked tirelessly to prepare for a return to their duties in 2020, and whilst there is no doubt their efforts saved lives, there was a clear increase in incidents and fatalities. As lockdown measures started to ease, the public flocked outdoors and found ways to distance themselves from the crowds. In the period from May to August, there was a 20 per cent increase in fatal accidental drownings from 2019 (118 vs 98).

The picture for 2020 was a blip in the ongoing work from both RLSS UK and the collaborative efforts across the water safety sector. The UK Drowning Prevention Strategy baselines annual accidental drowning at 400 per annum, so the direction is still positive and we have to reflect on an unprecedented year. Whilst it provides us with a good picture, especially as COVID-19 remains an ongoing pandemic, it is important that trends across a number of annual reports lead our interventions.

This data and insight helps us to design interventions, and the National Water Safety Forum is currently working across sectors to improve data collection methods, including introducing the capability to collect and analyse non-fatal incident data.

Two priority issues are clear, firstly, that men remain a target for interventions (78% of 2020 fatalities), and secondly, there is still much work to be done, to better understand drowning in inland waterways. Education efforts, and public perception often assume coastal drowning is the major focus but 2020 showed us again, that inland fatalities remain a grave concern.

Supporting the positive growth of outdoor swimming, with education that allows participants to make the correct decisions to enjoy their activity safely, is also a key consideration. Finally, providing people with access to education and training that helps them understand what to do should they fall into the water, must also continue to be a factor in our work (almost 43% [107] of people had no intention to enter the water).

You can access the figures via our new **interactive report**, which allows users to visualise water-related incidents by local authority area, as well as explore how demographic factors, such as age and gender, impact on accidental drowning and unintentional entry into open water.

The interactive report contains information relating to UK water incidents that were reported between 2014-2020



OUR WORK CONTINUED TO SAVE LIVES THROUGH 2020

Sue strolls to the rescue!

For those of you who missed Sue Hutchings' appearance on BBC Breakfast on Saturday 14 November, you may not have heard about her everyday hero, lifesaving actions:

Unaware he had a heart problem, Exeter Strollers Walking Football Club member Andy Hannan had been playing at Wonford Sports Centre, when he suddenly collapsed as his heart and breathing stopped. Teammate and everyday hero Sue Hutchings, was quick to respond, accurately assessing the need for immediate CPR, giving Andy the best chance of recovery. Thanks to her skills and her confidence under pressure, Andy's heart was restarted and he was already coming round, when the emergency services arrived.

Sue is no stranger to RLSS UK, as she is an RLSS UK Lifesaving Instructor, holds an NPLQ, is an active volunteer with Bovey Tracey Lifesaving Club and is married to former RLSS UK President, Ian Hutchings.

It's clear Mr. Hannan was in good hands:

"I was waiting for the next game to start and realised someone was lying on the floor by the gate.

"When I got there I recognised Andy and quickly realised he was in real trouble. I started CPR straight away, until the Centre Manager arrived and applied the defibrillator.

"If it wasn't for Andy, we wouldn't have a defibrillator at the centre, it was him who'd obtained a grant to have it installed. It's one of life's ironies that its first ever use was to save his life!

"It just goes to show that the ongoing training we receive and deliver in our clubs as volunteers and trainers, can ultimately save a life."



“ The Royal Life Saving Society UK is incredibly proud of Sue, without her skills and presence of mind in an emergency situation, the outcome for Mr. Hannan could've been very different.” said Robert Gofton, RLSS UK's Chief Executive Officer. ”

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Our responsibility throughout the recovery from COVID-19 involved working to support customers, members and partners, in a safe return to activity. Our number one aim was to ensure pools could become operational, as soon as safely practical. Pools being operational created the environment for water safety activities and community interactions with the water, to continue.

Interpreting Government(s) guidance, as well as securing qualification extensions, played a critical role in helping training and supervision to continue.



5,203 attendees at RLSS UK webinars
2,043 attendees at industry-specific webinars

“ During 2020/21 RLSS UK set the standard for communicating with operators on the management of Covid.

Like many national bodies they made clear their intent to support operators in this period to manage sensibly.

Not only did they confirm they would support, they actually did so and also listened to the feedback, ensuring the industry felt very much part of the decision-making process.

I'm not alone when I say a big thank you to Jo Talbot and Debbie Weston for their support and accessibility during the most difficult of times. ”

Andy Read
Head of Safety
Places Leisure



“ It has been incredibly reassuring to have had RLSS UK supporting us through the pandemic of 2020/21, they have been instrumental in bringing together a united collaboration of UK swimming pool operators to discuss, debate and agree best practise in our operations; this has been a fundamental step to ensuring we achieved both compliance and practicality in our diverse workplaces.

Jo Talbot and her team have been an incredible support to many businesses and organisations that required sensible, practical and logical solutions to lifeguarding operations through the pandemic. It must be noted that the support from this organisation has been invaluable throughout, ensuring our operations and lifeguard population maintained a safe, compliant and practical status. ”

Heather Perry
Group Leisure Operations Manager
Centre Parcs



WE DELIVERED 244,345 ONLINE LEARNING MODULES

Introducing a variety of learning approaches and increasing flexibility to deliver training, remains a focus for the organisation. As part of our 2020 – 2025 strategic framework, we specifically state our desire to continue with our visionary course development, excelling in the development of internationally recognised, creative education and training opportunities, to enhance the ability of everyone to save lives.

Our agility and evolution in this area ignited a quick response when the UK and Ireland entered lockdown, and saw us produce a suite of online learning opportunities for Trainers and candidates to access information, and keep their skills up to date.

Our online learning in 2020 included:

- NPLQ Online Ongoing Training – 216,016 modules
- Lifesaver – Lifechanger Water Safety Toolkit – 16,060 modules
- NVBLQ Online Ongoing Training – 5,309 modules
- COVID-19 TA Update – 3,340 modules
- Drowning Prevention Week Lesson (5-10-years-old) – 3,087 modules

Introducing policies for remote online learning and flexibility around assessments also aided the delivery of training, and allowed activity to continue and recover quickly.

Despite the challenges of delivering face-to-face qualifications and awards 57,759 number of qualifications were still delivered in 2020. In addition, as part of the Re-Train initiative RLSS UK secured £470,000 funding to support operators to ensure that their staff were ready to open their facilities and welcome back people to enjoy the water.



CANDICE ARNOLD

RLSS UK LIFEGUARD FOR OVER 8 YEARS

“ The RLSS UK Lifeguard Membership free online learning has been worth its weight in gold. It has really helped to keep my skills and knowledge up to date so that I can return to lifeguarding fully prepared and raring to go. ”

LAUNCHING OUR NEW MEMBERSHIP PROPOSITION

RLSS UK members are the beating heart of our activity. They deliver the training, take part in our activities, share the messages and advocate our work, so that we can ensure that everyone has access to the information and the environment, to enjoy water safety.

Adding value as part of membership means a lot to us and so, in 2020, we began the journey to segment membership categories and offer a more bespoke experience. RLSS UK is a family, and we welcome anybody. We believe our work is relevant to every UK and Irish household. It is our ambition to provide a lifelong connection with water safety; engaging children in water safety, and lifesaving knowledge and training as early as possible, is crucial to achieving this. Providing further opportunities to progress through our pathways of awards, qualifications and opportunities, offers a diverse and everlasting experience that should help build a new following for RLSS UK. We still have more to do in this area and are excited about the ongoing improvements.

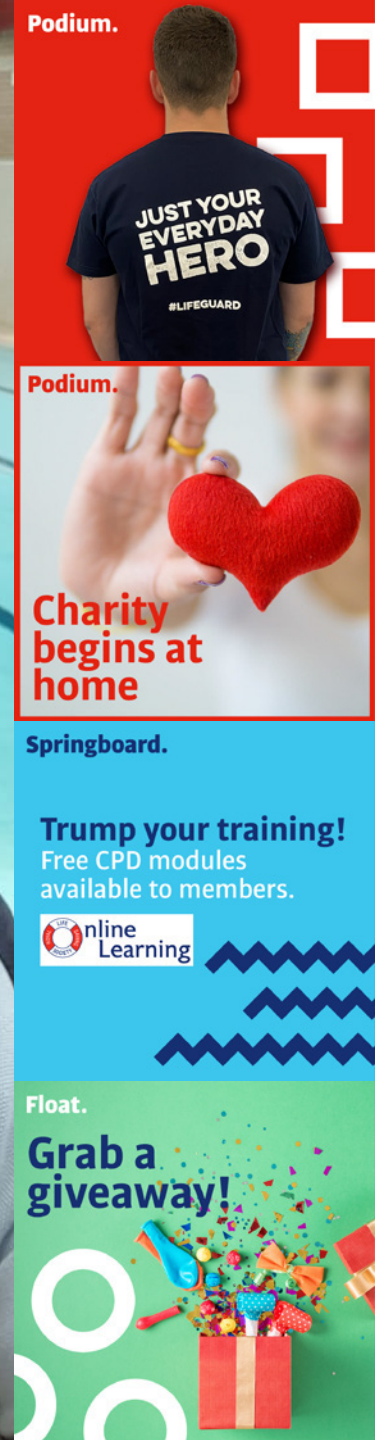
In 2020, to help us understand member aspirations better, we embarked on one of our biggest ever consultation exercises. We wanted to understand more about our members, who they are and what we could do to expedite them delivering their own, as well as the charity's, goals.

Nine per cent of members responded to the survey and in addition, 29.5 per cent of RLSS UK's listed Branch Officers, responded to a supplementary survey.



STEVE CARTER LIFEGUARD AND TRAINER FOR OVER 20 YEARS

“ At just £15* a year, the RLSS UK Lifeguard Membership package offers NPLQ holders exceptional value for money, and I would recommend that all lifeguards sign up. ”



THE WORLD WENT DIGITAL

COVID-19 accelerated digital usage, with a widely reported more than 70 per cent of us, increasing our social media consumption during the pandemic.

Using social media and especially video communication platforms, helped us to stay connected and in addition, helped us to reflect on how we increase flexibility in our future working methodologies.

The way RLSS UK used technology was no different. To protect the Charity there was a need to utilise Government support, some of which meant, at times, putting a large proportion of staff on the Job Retention Scheme (furlough). We did however, utilise staff that could maintain a consistent digital presence.

We delivered a strategy that would increase our digital output, to help support members and customers whilst in lockdown. Central to our output was providing opportunity for members to maintain their physical and mental health, so they were 'Ready for Action'.

Our total outgoing messages increased by 73.6%

Our impressions increased by 35.5%

Our engagements increased by 55.6%

Our audience increased by 17%

These numbers are pleasing, and whilst we are committed to continue to find ways to communicate with members and customers in a way that it is preferable to them, we know our approach in 2020 helped continue to educate the public and support members.

Our engagement rate (per impression) was 4 per cent, a significant increase on 2019. Through Facebook our rate increased to 5.1 per cent.



SOCIAL MEDIA MASH UP

@RLSSUK
An updated version of our Guidance for Delivering and Assessing during COVID-19 is now available. Our guidance is updated regularly to reflect an ever-changing environment & based on government advice. Please ensure you review and use the latest version.



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@RLSSUK
Walking is just one option; any physical activity can slash the risk of depression and positively contribute to good mental health. We've prepared some advice to give you the motivation you may need to stay physically active, click the link in our bio to view them. If swimming is your chosen activity, remember to keep safe.

#feelgoodfriday #relationships #mentalhealth #mentalhealthawareness #activity #exercise #selfcare #toptips



@RLSSUK
Listen to our latest podcast NOW. This week we talk to Ed Accura, Black Swimming Association Co-founder. RLSS UK are proud to be a strategic partner with the @blackswimmingassociation and believe that together we can increase participation for people from all communities, in aquatics. Ed's journey and account is fascinating. All of our podcasts are now available on Google, Apple and Spotify – Listen now by clicking the link in our bio.



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@RLSSUK
We're proud to be UK and Ireland's leading water safety training provider. Take up of our new online training has been phenomenal, with over 200,000 free, modules completed since launch in March. PLUS, our online First Aid Annual Refresher Course is still available at just £7.50.





FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

In 2020, more than ever, RLSS UK needed help to swell the ranks of people dedicated to keeping our waterways fun, friendly and secure places for everyone. Through some incredible fundraising and with your help, we were able to protect the organisation's future.

Thank you to everybody who donated to and supported our fundraising efforts, including those that took part in our 2.6 Challenge, which raised an incredible £14,300 for RLSS UK and the NHS.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU GOES TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROSITY DURING OUR #PROTECTOURFUTURE APPEAL:

Clive Holland	:	W J Stoot	:	Alan Sutherland	:	Jill Bailey	:	Sue Flush
Nial Elliot	:	Heather Leighton	:	Debbie Weston	:	Rick Tazzini	:	David Slade
Clive Elliot	:	Janet Wilson	:	Debbie Hunt	:	Ella Hunt	:	Billingham Forum
Peter Moyes	:	Ed Duffy	:	Cavell Burchell	:	David Browne	:	Lifesaving Club

It is vital that RLSS UK continues to diversify its income, both to engage communities that don't currently benefit from water-based activities and to help future generations enjoy water safely. We welcome the continued dedication of members and supporters in our mission to diversify and strengthen our income, to invest in further charitable objectives.

For more information on ways to donate, click [here](#).



DROWNING PREVENTION WEEK 2020

In 2020 we were resilient, and despite resource challenges, it remained high on our agenda to utilise digital communication and educate the public. Early in the first lockdown, partners across the water safety sector rallied, as the race to put lifeguards on the beach and at open water venues, conflicted with an expectedly busy summer of staycations and a desire to distance from others.

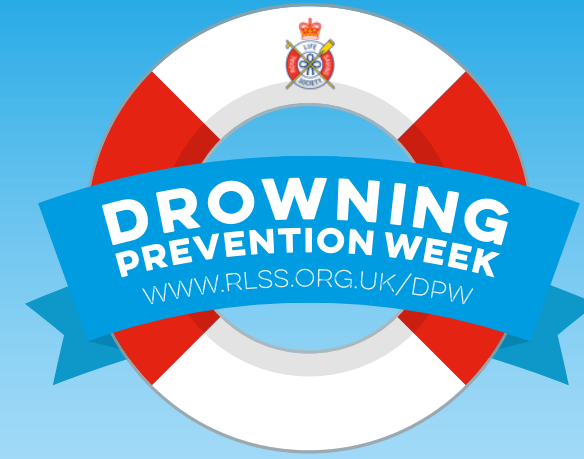
Drowning Prevention Week, as with most years, could not have come at a better time to educate the public in preparation for the summer. Prioritising free, easily accessible online resources meant moving the campaign digital.

We're incredibly grateful to the many partners that joined forces to support Drowning Prevention Week, and who collaborated to increase summer safety messaging.

Our usual methods of delivering education in schools, and practical water safety education through leisure operators and clubs wasn't possible, so we created a hub of shared resources that could be owned by the passionate people and organisations, who are committed to sharing our messages.

Drowning Prevention Week had a reach of over 79 million through a combination of coverage from the national and regional press, online, print, broadcast and social media. In the campaign week alone, we reached 14 million people on Twitter and over nine million on Facebook.

In addition, our messages and campaigns, including Don't Drink and Drown (6 million reach); summer and winter water safety as well as our collaborative efforts with partners, continued through the year in effort to help everyone enjoy water safely.



**GET INVOLVED
AND HELP SAVE LIVES**



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**TO OUR DEDICATED
MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS**

**THANK YOU FOR ALL
THAT YOU DO TO HELP
THE UK AND IRISH PUBLIC
ENJOY WATER SAFELY.**

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Enjoy Water **Safely**

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