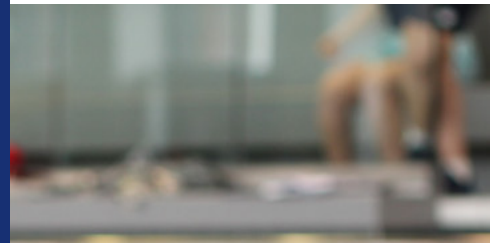




# Royal Life Saving Society UK **IMPACT REPORT 2022**



# A message from the RLSS UK President

**A**s I look back on my first five months as your new President, I realise the amazing legacy left by the previous President Mark Smith. His outstanding leadership during the pandemic and after is responsible, with the staff team, volunteers, members, trainers and lifeguards, for the outstanding impact report you see before you today.

As a charity we exist to enhance communities so everyone can enjoy being in, on or near water safely – because every life is worth saving. It is essential that this message is at the heart of everything we do and this report indicates how successful we have been in the last year.

Over 1.5 million people were educated via our free downloadable resources. In this digital world it is imperative that we enhance our digital offering and offer everyone the ability to find our message.

Over 48,000 Rookie awards were completed. Young people are the future, and it is essential that they hear and understand our lifesaving messages in fun and engaging ways. Many are involved via our fantastic network of lifesaving clubs, and it is essential that these clubs continue to pass on our lifesaving messages.

Over 50,000 First Aid awards were completed, allowing candidates to gain essential lifesaving skills.

Our lifeguard programmes continue to train lifeguards to the very highest standards, they are true Ambassadors for the charity.



**Deborah Hunt** , President

The figures are impressive but even more impressive are the years, months, days and hours that are given by our trainers, both volunteer and commercial, ensuring that our water safety message is delivered. Their constant dedication to spreading the charity's message deserves a special mention.

2022 has seen the world change. War, an energy crisis and a cost-of-living hike has seen the environment we work in change considerably. Some swimming pools have closed, some of our clubs have faced difficulties with membership and costs. The Board of Trustees has continued to support and campaign on these issues wherever we can.

We will continue to spread our water safety message and look for new initiatives.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support and be involved in all that the charity does to spread our water safety messages. Without you none of this would be possible.



**IN 2022** we proudly continued our mission to educate as many people as possible to enjoy water safely, supported by both our commercial and charitable activities.

**T**he Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) has been sharing expertise in water safety, lifesaving, and lifeguarding, educating others to enjoy water safely for over 130 years.

We have built years of experience and are honoured to boast a strong force of loyal members, supporters and volunteers who work with us to promote water safety and educate in lifesaving skills. Our roots were established back in 1891 as the Life Saving Society, and, in the early 1900s, with support from the Royal Family, we were granted permission to adopt the 'Royal' to our title – a badge that we are still immensely proud of today.

We have used our extensive, world-leading knowledge of water safety and training to develop a comprehensive range of vocational qualifications and a series of awards and education programmes which all have the aim of preventing drowning and stopping unnecessary loss of life.

In the last five years, an estimated 312 people in the UK and Ireland lost their lives to accidental drowning. (Source: WAID 2017-2021). Water safety education remains critical to ensuring we can achieve our vision of nations without drowning.



Our charity work is funded through both our commercial and charitable activities, coupled with fundraising and donations from our members, volunteers and supporters. All profits from RLSS UK Enterprises, including our shop, training, consultancy, awards and qualifications are distributed to the charity. In combination, these funding sources allow RLSS UK to continue its charitable work for UK and Irish communities.





A young girl with brown hair tied back, wearing a red hoodie with a yellow 'ROOKIE LIFEGUARD' patch, is smiling. She is standing outdoors near a body of water with a red buoy visible in the background. A yellow object is partially visible on the left side of the frame.

Section 1:

# Education, training, and personal development

## KEY METRICS

- 1.5m+ children educated in water safety via our FREE downloadable resources
- 48,000+ Rookie Lifeguard Awards presented
- 37,475 Lifeguard Qualifications awarded
- 50,000+ First Aid courses passed

# Water Safety (Curriculum) Bill gains momentum, receiving a first reading in Parliament in June 2022.



RLSS UK is focused on educating everyone to enjoy water safely. For many years, we have been working tirelessly to raise awareness of barriers and lobbying to try and push forwards with getting class-based water safety education mandated in schools.

We believe that only with class-based education and removing the insurmountable barriers for some schools to travel to pool spaces, will we be able to give every child the opportunity to learn crucial knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and be safe around water.

1.5m+ children were educated in water safety via RLSS UK's FREE downloadable resources - delivered by a mix of schools, educators and leisure providers in a broad range of educational settings.

Support for teachers and educators comes in the form of a Primary School assembly to introduce the topic, along with CPD materials for those who require further information. The assembly can be delivered at the whole school, cohort, or classroom level.

In April, we launched a set of new, fully resourced, and flexible primary school materials targeted at children between the ages of 4 and 11 years.

The thematic lesson plans and associated resources were created in collaboration with our water safety partners to establish a standard for the delivery of water safety education in schools across the UK and Ireland.

The resources and the messages were very good and could be lifesaving. I will definitely be covering the topic again next year.

– Primary school, educating years 1-6

Central to the concept is a series of short lessons which directly teach the four recognised points of the Water Safety Code. These align closely with the health and wellbeing objectives of the various national curricula and are class or hall-based, recognising that there can be barriers to universal school swimming and water safety education, where access to swimming pools might be restricted.

Cross-curricular lesson plans (PE, Creative Arts, Geography, etc.) are also provided to support and augment the water safety-specific sessions and to give a more holistic approach to water safety education.

The resources were excellent, and I've already shared the link with other teachers.

Secondary school, educating years 8-10

All lessons are fully resourced and can be adapted to suit the needs of the learners, the school, and the teacher, as required.

92%

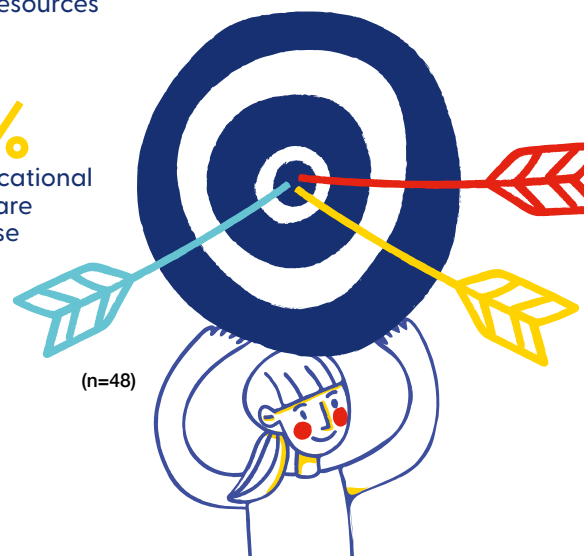
agreed the children taught showed strong engagement with the content of our educational resources

96%

agreed that the resources were appropriate for the target age group

94%

agreed our educational resources are easy to use



## Over 48,000 Rookie lifeguards started their journey on the Royal Life Saving Society UK's pathway in 2022, with the new National Lifesaving Academy offering a raft of opportunities in lifesaving and lifeguarding.

We were delighted to present over 48,000 Rookie Lifeguard Awards in 2022, an increase of more than 175% on 2021, increasing the number of younger children learning vital lifesaving skills.

Primarily designed for 8–12-year-olds, our Rookie Lifeguard programme is the start of the RLSS UK lifesaving pathway and gives children the skills they need to be confident in, on or around water. With colourful materials and fun, varied activities, the Rookie Lifeguard scheme teaches children how to enjoy water safely, whether in shallow or deeper water.

Launched in 2011, **Survive & Save** marked the first significant change to the senior lifesaving awards programme in over a quarter of a century, building on the success of the Rookie Lifeguard award. In 2022, **Survive & Save** Awards increased 30% vs 2021 to 1,960. As of 2023, **Survive & Save** will be replaced by the National Lifesaving Academy (NLA).

The **National Lifesaving Academy (NLA)** launched in October 2022 and marked a shift in the way we recognise the valuable contribution that lifesavers make to society.

We've worked closely with lifesaving instructors, clubs, and commercial leisure partners to design a flexible programme that can be delivered to more lifesavers and enables more people to enjoy water safely.

For the first time, awards from the RLSS UK lifesaving programme can be utilised towards one of our lifeguarding qualifications. This means that should one of our lifesavers decide they wish to train as an RLSS UK lifeguard, they'll already have some of the training required to pass their assessment.

It is hoped that by making the journey from junior lifesaver to lifeguard more streamlined, more lifesavers will consider a role as a lifeguard in the future.



**ROOKIE LIFEGUARD**  
Awards increased by  
more than 175% in 2022



The RLSS UK remains the leading provider of training in lifesaving and lifeguarding in the UK and Ireland, awarding 202,000+ qualifications and awards in 2022.

In 2022, RLSS UK qualified 35,000+ individuals with our industry-leading National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), teaching core lifesaving skills, such as pool rescue techniques, lifeguarding theory, vital first aid skills and CPR.

2,200+ Open Water Lifeguard (OWL) and/or National Vocational Beach Lifeguard Qualification (NVBLQ) were awarded in 2022. These tailored qualifications ensure candidates have the appropriate knowledge and skills to keep people safe on beaches and in increasingly popular open water spaces, including aqua parks.



*Did you know?*

On average, RLSS UK Pool Lifeguards prevent 1 probable in-water accident every 6 minutes<sup>1</sup>

### RLSS UK awarded more than 50,000 first-aid qualifications and bolt-on awards in 2022.

Uniquely, our first aid awards can be completed as stand-alone awards or combined with some of our other awards and qualifications.

RLSS UK is proud to be an active member of the First Aid Quality Partnership group along with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) and Met Police amongst others. This allows us the opportunity to influence the delivery of effective lifesaving skills at the highest level.



### Driving inclusivity in lifesaving and lifeguarding

At RLSS UK, we are always keen to help as many people as possible take part in our awards and qualifications.

In 2022 we made 140 reasonable adjustments to help break down barriers during course delivery or assessment situations on behalf of a candidate who has a disability or difficulty which may place them at a disadvantage. It's not always possible to cater for every candidate, but we will do everything we can to ensure our awards and qualifications are as inclusive for as many candidates as possible.

"Having autism, the staff were very good at helping me understand what was going on and what I had to do for the theory and practicals. Thank you." NPLQ candidate

"As someone with fibromyalgia and told I had to stop everything years ago. This course has proved to me that I can still do things I used to enjoy and allows me to be an active member of my community again." NPLQ candidate

"Trainer was helpful, attentive to my needs as I have dyslexia and continually checked on me throughout." First Aid at Work candidate

**The best course ever. Had so much fun and learned some great skills!**  
NPLQ candidate.

1. RLSS UK Lifeguard Intervention Data 2022 (n=346)

## RLSS UK demonstrates a positive impact on candidates' personal development.

When you complete an RLSS UK qualification you learn, not only the lifesaving skills relevant to that award, but also a range of soft skills enabling candidates to enhance their development further.

**94%** agreed their RLSS UK qualification will help them stand out to future employers (n=781).



I really enjoyed the course. It really tests you physically and mentally. You feel you have achieved something special when you complete the course.

– NPLQ candidate.



**93%** of new NPLQ candidates in 2022 agreed that completing the RLSS UK qualification helped improve their confidence (n=781).

## DID YOU KNOW?

RLSS UK's NPLQ can lead to paid employment.

In our recent survey, 89% of those that completed our NPLQ went on to secure paid work as a lifeguard.

n=(1,990)



## In 2022,

more than 49,000 RLSS UK online CPD sessions were undertaken across our 35 online e-learning programmes, keeping our Instructors, Trainer Assessors and Lifeguards up to date with the latest technical skills and developments.

Ongoing CPD e-learning – great for getting your hours towards renewing your lifeguard qualification.

– Lifeguard Member

I love how easy it is to complete CPD and online training.

– Licence to Operate Member





Section 2:

# Consultancy, expertise, and partnership

## KEY METRICS

- 500+ lifeguards participated in RLSS UK industry-leading research
- 1,300+ UK accidental drownings analysed
- 1.4m aqua park visitors benefited from enhanced water safety protocols



## 500+ lifeguards participated in RLSS UK industry-leading research to revolutionise lifeguarding.

The RLSS UK partnered with experts at Chichester University, in collaboration with Kings College London, to enhance our understanding of the intricate mechanisms that enable lifeguards to sustain their attention effectively over extended periods across a range of task difficulty levels. The ground-breaking program of research consists of seven studies, leveraging cutting-edge eye-tracking technology, neurocognitive assessment tools, and innovative lifeguard-specific detection tasks to establish an empirically validated approach to monitor and enhance lifeguard performance.

Currently undergoing peer review, the findings of the studies are set to be shared globally within the next year, promising to revolutionise the field of lifeguarding and enhance the safety of bathers worldwide.

## A focus on continuously improving our qualifications and awards.

Our extensive programme of over 100 qualifications and awards includes both vocational and non-vocational lifesaving qualifications in and out of the water. In 2022, building on our expert knowledge and continued innovation, we have updated several of our qualifications to stay at the forefront of the latest thinking, including our first-aid suite, our National Vocational Beach Lifeguard Qualification (NVBLQ) and our supervisor qualifications.

## DRONE AWARD

In April 2022, the RLSS UK launched the UK and Ireland's first drone award, showcasing how technology can be utilised to enhance water rescues.



Through a partnership with Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) and drone specialists Eagle Eye Innovations (EEI), the innovative Emergency Response Drone Pilot Award offers candidates the opportunity to acquire the skills and technical knowledge of operating a drone to assist with water-based rescues.

This is the first award of its kind in the UK and offers RLSS UK candidates the chance to complete a unique water rescue award. The Award was featured on BBC's Click programme and can be viewed on BBC i-player.<sup>2</sup>

2. \* TV Licence required.

3. [Surfing: Get on board to get fit | The Independent](#) | [The Independent](#)

## NEW

## SURF COACH AWARD

**New Surf Coach Award ensures Surf Coaches adopt the highest standards of beach safety, helping ensure the safety of the UK's estimated 250,000<sup>3</sup> surfers.**

Working in partnership with Surf Lifesaving Association Wales (SLSA Wales), the RLSS UK developed the National Surf Coach Lifesaving Award (NSCLA), an award designed to give candidates the specific lifesaving skills to become a Surf Coach in the UK. The NSCLA has also received support from Surfing England and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).





## 1,300+ UK accidental drowning cases analysed by RLSS UK raise awareness of important risk factors.



The analysis, which is based on data from key sources such as the Water Incident Database (WAID) and the Water Incident Research Hub (WIRH), has challenged some of the pre-existing assumptions about what it takes to stay safe in the water and has re-highlighted the need for specific water safety education.

The topics, which include cases relating to swimming ability, water body, as well as the role of supervision, have worked hard to generate discussion around new, thought-provoking topics, for example, “Swimming is vital, but is it enough?” on Twitter, gained high levels of engagement and was described as “A great thread re: water safety.” by Sharron Davies OBE.

As well as generating impactful narratives to raise awareness of factors that influence drowning, in 2022, RLSS UK produced our first Insight Report. It collated findings from multiple sources, again aimed at raising the profile of accidental drownings and the associated risk factors to encourage people to be more vigilant in, on and around water.

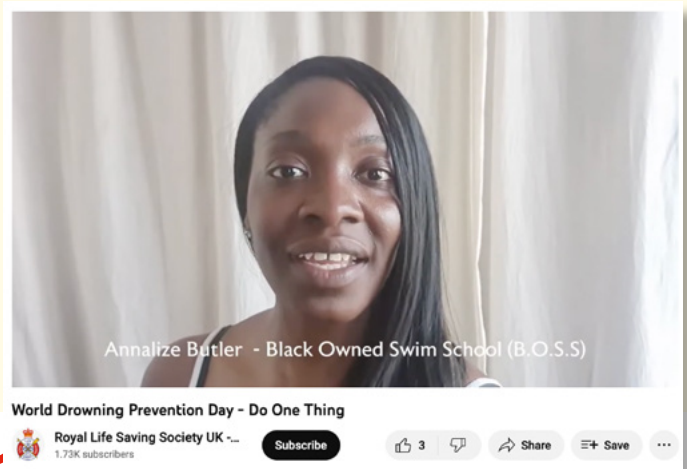
### RLSS UK's World Drowning Prevention Day

## ‘DO ONE THING’

video gained over 10,000 views on social media.

In response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) request to ‘do one thing’ for World Drowning Prevention Day, RLSS UK called on those in our lifesaving community to share what one thing they are doing to help prevent drowning. The video was shared across our social media channels.

In addition, as a member of the UK National Water Safety Forum (NWSF), RLSS UK supported the launch of the new #RespectTheWater campaign on World Drowning Prevention Day to reinforce the importance of dialling 999, rather than entering the water to assist in a drowning emergency.



# CRUISE LINERS



RLSS UK educated 1,375 crew aboard cruise liners for the world's largest cruise company. RLSS UK provided the crew with vital lifesaving knowledge in water safety and CPR, improving the safety of the fleet passengers.

Pre-pandemic, almost 2m people cruised from the UK and Ireland each year<sup>4</sup>, with crew training vital to keeping these passengers safe onboard.

RLSS UK develops bespoke training services for many sectors and are experts at delivering clear and practical consultancy support to any business or individual with liabilities to visitors and staff around water, including events, construction and outdoor recreation.

It is part of my duties to have the skills to be able to save someone from an accident on board or ashore, I consider it an honour to have been trained to save a life at sea.

Marcus Dsouza, Assistant Dining & Beverage Manager on MV Britannia

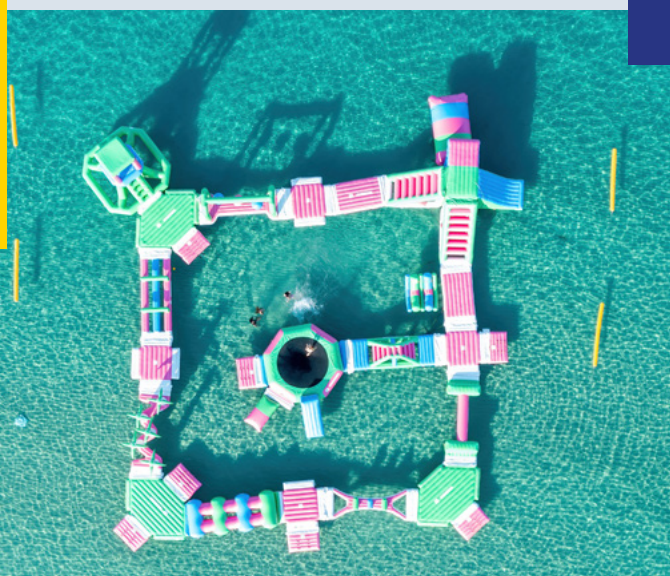
4. CLIA Europe Passenger Report (2021)

## AQUA PARKS

An estimated **1.4m aqua park visitors benefited from enhanced water safety** as a result of the RLSS UK safety accreditation.

RLSS UK is the appointed auditor for the Aqua Parks Association UK and Ireland, inspecting parks that have signed up for the scheme against the standards set. In 2022, RLSS UK accredited 34 UK and Irish aqua parks, a 20% increase on 2021, with visitor numbers totalling an estimated 1.4m.

This further increase in the number of aqua parks joining the scheme is a huge step forward for the safety of UK and Irish aqua parks as we work to standardise water safety protocols across the industry.



**Accelerated growth in RLSS UK Consultancy expands the footprint of people impacted by our water safety advice and guidance.**

In 2022, we quadrupled our number of consultancy projects from five in 2021 to 21 in 2022. The varied projects included those working with local authorities, property developers, real estate management, industrial building work, hotels, outdoor education, aqua sports venues and ports.

In just one of our local authority projects, the remit covered lakes in a 600-acre site, which attracts around 350,000 visitors every year.

RLSS UK Consultancy supports landowners in relation to their accountabilities for managing water safety, including specialised health and safety services, risk assessments, and relevant water safety training.

**80+ Mystery site visits** conducted on behalf of leading holiday and water park operators, safeguarding the welfare of thousands of holidaymakers and visitors.

The visits involved RLSS UK representatives attending sites as guests and assessing important aspects of water safety, ensuring safety standards are being adhered to and maintained at all times.

The RLSS UK Consultant has been really good with excellent communication, including listening to our needs and sticking to deadlines. It has been key to the early success of the project.

— Thomas Crawford,  
County Council Operations Manager





Section 3:

# Building our community

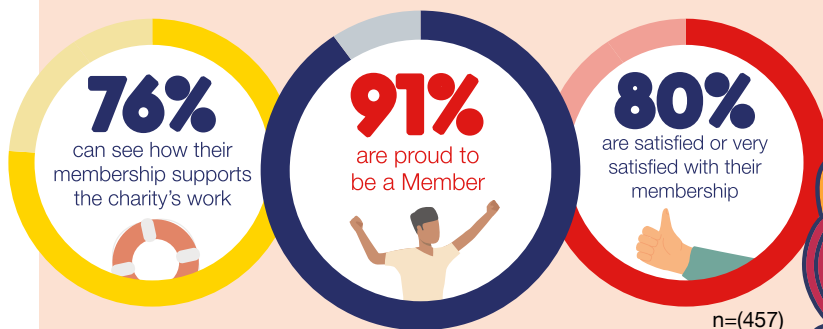
## KEY METRICS

- 9,381 RLSS UK members
- 1,817 Jubilee Medallions awarded
- 764 lifesaving competitors
- 2 national education campaigns

**500+ RLSS UK members joined the Society in 2022,** resulting in our total number of members reaching 9,381.



Our members help support our work, raising awareness of water safety and sharing lifesaving knowledge and skills in the community, all helping to keep more people safe in, on and around water.



The RLSS UK is a fantastic charity doing great work to promote lifesaving and accredited qualifications that are all life skills that should be known by everyone. They are leaders in lifesaving and have the strength and opportunity to promote their values to the wider community. – RLSS UK Member

**1,817 RLSS UK Lifesavers awarded the Limited-Edition Platinum Jubilee Medallion** marking Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.

The award was based upon the award Queen Elizabeth II completed in 1941. It was open to all ages and saw lifesavers from 6 to 88 years old successfully complete the accolade.



**764 RLSS UK members** showcased skilful provision of RLSS UK lifesaving techniques at our two championship events.

The **National Speed Championships** returned in March, with the **National Lifesaving Championships** in November. The events offer an opportunity to showcase lifesaving skills to new audiences and attract others to the sport.

## 2 Royal Life Saving Society UK National campaigns amplified the importance of water safety at critical times during the year.

**Drowning Prevention Week** (18-25 June 2022) saw 909,000 children educated in water safety in leisure centres and a further 341,000 educated in schools using our free resources.

The Drowning Prevention Week campaign generated 250+ press articles - with over 50 MPs engaging with our RLSS UK event at Westminster, helping to further spread vital water safety messages.



Later in the year, our **Don't Drink and Drown** Campaign doubled its reach on Twitter (vs 2021), extending the spread of messaging around the dangers of being in or around water after drinking alcohol.





## Building new partnerships to focus on reaching new, underrepresented communities.

It is one of RLSS UK's core missions to enhance our visibility in underrepresented communities. This is why, in 2022, we proudly partnered with the Black Owned Swim School (B.O.S.S), offering several joint events to attendees from across the community.

By working with organisations such as RLSS UK, we can actively change the way people think about swimming and water safety. B.O.S.S is about reconnecting people with the water in an effortless and exciting way, bringing new opportunities to engage an underrepresented audience and level up in the aquatics industry.

– Annalize Butler, B.O.S.S

## 522 new RLSS UK volunteers trained in delivering our lifesaving awards to enable the reintroduction of club sessions post-Covid.

To support our club network of 250+ clubs in recruiting new lifesaving volunteers post-Covid, RLSS UK provided training for 240 new Rookie Instructors, 258 new Lifesaving Instructors and 24 Lifesaving Instructor Tutors to enable new volunteers to access the required training to facilitate club sessions.

## Young lifesaver with special needs achieves Rookie bronze awards using unique language of symbols and signs.

**ROOKIE LIFEGUARD**

In December, RLSS UK permitted the use of Makaton in its Rookie Lifeguard programme for the first time. The initiative, which was put forward by the Signpost Inclusion Specialist Swimming Club, enables children with communication difficulties to take part in the lifesaving award scheme using Makaton, a unique language of signs, symbols, and speech.

One Rookie Lifeguard has taken advantage so far, achieving the bronze stage one and two awards. In the UK, there are 100,000 children and adults using Makaton symbols and signs, and RLSS UK hopes that the permitted use of Makaton in its Rookie programme will help open up the pathway to more future Rookie lifesavers.

## 15 events and festivals covered by the RLSS UK Water Safety Team

keeping thousands safe whilst having fun in, on and around water.

Events included the **Great North Swim**, the UK's biggest open water swim, and **Secret Garden Party**, which regularly attracts more than 35,000 visitors.



## More than £58,000 was fundraised

by our committed supporters, through activities and events throughout the year, despite economic challenges. The amount raised includes:

### £20,000

secured by RLSS UK Trustee James Cossons from the Lloyd's of London Foundation in recognition of his previous work as our Youth Advisor.

### £11,000

generated by Professor Greg Whyte completing a 125-mile swim in the river Thames.

### £1,635

was raised by 17 fundraisers taking part in Make a Splash.

### OVER £500

was raised through our Christmas appeals, including our virtual Christmas Tree and Christmas Appeal.

## Youth Advisory Board focuses on new ways to connect with our 3,400+ RLSS UK members under 30 years of age.

Our Youth Advisory Board, led by the Youth Advisors, were active throughout 2022, boosting RLSS UK's media presence on TikTok, holding Youth Events and representing RLSS UK at events in London and Warwickshire.

## National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) funded for a Ukrainian teen.

RLSS UK was pleased to fund the completion of the NPLQ for Mykolai Skydan, 17, a Ukrainian national who was living with a UK host family due to the ongoing conflict in his home country.

Following completion of the course, Mykolai secured employment as a part-time lifeguard. He's also studying for a Digital Production qualification at college.

When I qualified I was really happy, because it wasn't easy for me, and I didn't want to waste my chance that my hosts and RLSS UK gave me.

- Mykolai Skydan



## 71 #EverydayHeroes were recognised by the Society

Our #EverydayHeroes are amazing people who put their lifesaving skills into action in the community. This year, half of our heroes held a current RLSS UK qualification. Our youngest lifesaver was 11 years old and our diverse range of rescuers also included a lifesaving canine named Banditt.



Enjoy Water **Safely**



## *With your support,*

we have achieved an incredible amount over the years, but with an average of 312 people\* losing their lives to drowning each year, we still have much to achieve, giving more people access to high-quality water safety education so that everyone can enjoy water safely.

In 2023 we will continue to build awareness of the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK), growing the reach of our lifesaving education to help more people enjoy water safely.

We aim to focus on targeting those from under-represented communities and continue to support all of those who use our expertise and guidance to ensure themselves and their families stay safe in, on and around water.

## *Thank you* ★

to all our dedicated members, volunteers, and supporters in 2022.

To support our work in 2023, you can...



**SHOP** at RLSS UK Shop



**JOIN** our member community



**FUNDRAISE** and raise money whilst taking on a challenge



**DONATE** online, in person or on the phone



\* Source: WAID (2017-2021)



ROYAL  
**LIFE SAVING**  
SOCIETY UK

Enjoy Water **Safely**

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