Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week 13-19 April 2015

Toolkit for participating fire and rescue services
1. Introduction

Thank you for supporting CFOA's first Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week 2015 taking place from 13-19 April 2015.

This year’s campaign is focusing primarily on the issue of Cold Water Shock, something that causes a number of fatalities every year as young people – even those who are strong swimmers – are unaware of the effect that it can have on their ability to swim in open water. The key objective of the week will be to raise awareness of the issue, thus hopefully reducing preventable water fatalities in young adults aged 16-30, as this is the age that saw the highest number of water-related deaths in 2013. The slogan to be used for the campaign is ‘Tell a friend. Save a friend.’ encouraging young people to share information about cold water shock and to be aware of the risks around water.

We are looking to start the water safety year early, to drive home the message that, no matter how warm the air is in April and May, inland bodies of water are unlikely to have warmed up. The shock of cold water creates a physical response that can make it more difficult to swim, and can even cause death.

The water safety messages that the fire and rescue service will be delivering, through its recognised brand and access to often difficult-to-reach groups will, it is hoped, also raise awareness of and support for the great campaigns that the RLSS, RNLI and ASA will be running later in 2015 – the RLSS’ Drowning Prevention Week from 20-28 June and the RNLI’s Respect the Water campaign in July and the joint RNLI/ASA Swim Safe swimming lessons and beach safety advice ‘roadshow’ in July and August.

CFOA’s Water Safety Workgroup has already been making ground in this area as, with the RLSS, it has already supported the establishment of an All Party Parliamentary Working Group on Drowning Prevention, which has over 20 MPs taking part. CFOA is also taking part in developing a National Drowning Prevention Strategy, underpinned by data from the National Water Safety Forum’s Water Incident Database (WAID), which is supported by RoSPA. CFOA's lead officer for Water Safety also now sits on the National Water Safety Forum.

Taking part in leisure activities in, and around, the water is great fun, and Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week is not about stopping people enjoying this, but simply about raising awareness of potential risks and encouraging them to stay safe.

I wish you all the very best for a successful Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week 2015.

Peter Dartford
President, Chief Fire Officers Association
2. Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week

There were 669 water-related fatalities in 2013 – that’s two-and-a-half times the number of people that died in dwelling fires in 2012/13.

CFOA’s Water Safety workgroup, led by Dawn Whittaker, is working with partners, including the Royal Lifesaving Society (RLSS), the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and the ASA (national governing body for swimming) to develop co-ordinated campaigns to ensure more people are aware of the risks and statistics associated with fatalities in water in the UK. With fire and rescue services increasingly called to assist at such incidents, we are looking to expand preventative activity in this area, and are asking fire and rescue services to raise awareness of water safety to help prevent drowning incidents in their communities.

The Water Safety workgroup has identified a ‘fatal five’ issues as a focus for its water safety messages:

1. **Cold water shock** – low water temperature can numb limbs and claim lives
2. **Do you know what is in or under the water surface?** There may be entrapment hazards, pollution, etc.
3. **Currents or water conditions** – includes floods, unknown depths, ice, riptides, eddies etc.
4. **Alcohol consumption** – don’t swim if you have been drinking
5. **Swimming Competency** – don’t assume because you can swim in a pool that you can deal with the challenges of open water swimming. Swim in safe areas, or where there is supervision or a lifeguard

For 2015 the campaign will be focusing on the issue of **Cold Water Shock** with the slogan, ‘Tell a friend. Save a friend.’ devised by student Suzi Niculescu. Its key objective will be to raise awareness of this issue, to reduce preventable water fatalities in the young adult age group, aged 16-30 years. The highest number of water-related deaths in 2013 (35) occurred in the 20-24 years age group.

**Timing**

The week has been scheduled in April to start the water safety awareness year early, as drownings take place throughout the year. Fatality figures start to rise in April, in 2013 peaking in July and August, so by starting early we hope to get young people thinking about their behaviour around water in time for any good weather that may arrive during the Easter break or May bank holidays. Cold water shock is a particular concern at this time of year, as the temperature of the air may be significantly higher than that of the water.

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1 National Water Safety Forum Water Incident Database (WAID) data, 2013
2 Fire Statistics Great Britain, 2012-13
The focus of the campaign week will be on inland water – lakes, reservoirs, rivers and canals, as well as water-filled quarries. There were 224 accidental or natural cause deaths in these locations in 2013\(^1\), a third of the total water-related fatalities. An important part of the week will be to encourage young people what to look out for, and to look after their friends, by not putting them into danger or encouraging them to risk their life – and that learning basic lifesaving skills could help in an emergency.
3. Facts and Figures

**Total water-related fatalities in 2013 (all causes) = 669**

The National Water Safety Forum Water Incident Database (WAID) data offers a breakdown of activities and locations in which fatalities occurred. Below is an adapted table showing fatalities related to a selection of activities at selected water-body types.

| Table 1: Water-related fatalities: selected activities and locations by accidental and natural cause outcome |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Activity/Activity / Location                               | Canal/Aqueduct  | Drain/Well/Pit  | Harbour/Dock/Marina/Port | Lake/Loch/Lough | Marsh | Pond | Quarry | Reservoir | River | Stream/Ditch/Blam | Total |
| Walking/running                                            | 15              | 5               | 8              | 2              | 5    | 2    | 46     | 6          |       |                 | 89    |
| Person/object in water, person of uncertain status         | 14              | 4               | 4              | 3              | 1    | 25   | 6      | 57         |       |                 |       |
| Swimming                                                   | 1               | 2               | 8              | 7              | 5    | 12   | 35     |           |       |                 | 17    |
| Jumping/diving in                                          | 1               | 3               | 1              | 1              | 1    | 11   | 17     |           |       |                 |       |
| Waterside activity/in water play                           | 1               | 1               | 1              | 1              | 8    | 11   | 11     |           |       |                 |       |
| Angling                                                    | 2               |                 |                |                |      | 4    | 6      |           |       |                 |       |
| Sub aqua diver                                              | 1               | 1               |                |                |      |      | 2      |           |       |                 |       |
| Commercial                                                  | 1               |                 |                |                |      |      | 1      |           |       |                 |       |
| Sailing                                                    | 2               | 2               |                |                |      |      | 2      |           |       |                 |       |
| Motorboating                                                | 1               | 3               |                |                |      |      | 5      |           |       |                 |       |
| Manually powered boats                                     | 1               | 2               |                |                |      |      | 4      |           |       |                 |       |
| Motor vehicle                                              | 1               |                 |                |                |      | 1    | 5      |           |       |                 |       |
| Cycling                                                    | 1               |                 |                |                |      |      | 1      |           |       |                 |       |
| Animal rescue                                              |                 | 1               |                |                |      |      | 1      |           |       |                 |       |
| Person on ice                                               | 1               |                 |                |                |      |      | 1      |           |       |                 |       |
| **Total**                                                   | **32**          | **3**           | **22**         | **29**         | **2**| **10**| **11** | **6**     | **124**|                 | **251**|

The WAID data also breaks down incidents by age and gender – below are the fatality figures for the 15-29 age group.

| Table 2: Accidental and Natural Cause Fatalities - Age and Gender³ |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Age                | Female | Male | Total  |
| 15-19              | 5      | 22   | **27** |
| 20-24              | 4      | 31   | **35** |
| 25-29              | 4      | 19   | **23** |
| **Total**          | **13** | **72**| **85** |

³46 cases overall excluded due to poor age/gender information
CFOA’s Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week has been scheduled for April as water-related fatalities start to rise around this time. While weather – and particularly sunshine and high temperatures – are never 100% predictable, the Met Office’ records show that Spring 2011 was the warmest in 100 years and April 2011 was the warmest on record.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Month/Gender of incident</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below breaks down all accidental water-related fatalities (both inland and coastal) by region (excludes suicides and murder figures).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Location of incident by selected region</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and the Humber</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Man</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Sea*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*At Sea refers to incident locations which are offshore to the extent WAID is not able to determine a valid landside region.
Three cases have been excluded due to poor geographic information.
4. Key messages

Reservoirs, lakes, rivers and other inland water may look safe and inviting, particularly on a warm day. But there are hidden dangers below the surface that could make you ill, hurt you, and – at worst – could kill you.

Danger 1: Cold Water Shock
Even on a warm day, the temperature of the water in a reservoir, quarry or lake can remain very cold. When you jump into a body of water you experience a cold-shock response. This is what happens:

1) You gasp for air – meaning that you could breathe in water;
2) You hyperventilate – this over-breathing can make you light-headed and, as your brain is deprived of oxygen, you may become disoriented;
3) Your body's Cold Shock Response, which speeds up the heart rate, may conflict with the Diving Response, which does the opposite, causing your heart to go into abnormal rhythms which can cause sudden death;
4) Your muscles will become weaker – your muscle ability can drop by as much as 25% – so you may not be able to keep yourself afloat or pull yourself out;
5) Your body will shiver, which will affect your coordination and your swimming ability.

Even Olympic swimmers can be affected in the cold water, as shown in this YouTube video from Professor Michael Tipton https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_96YEPAdA2Y


Danger 2: Currents
Moving water, such as rivers, may look calm but may have strong currents below the surface. Even reservoirs can have currents, caused by working machinery. Whether you’re a strong swimmer or not, currents can carry you into danger – trapping you against underwater obstructions or in weeds; pulling you away from where you can get out of the water; or dragging you further than you’re able to swim back.

Danger 3: Sickness
Open water can be polluted. Things that might make you ill include:

1) Rat urine – can cause an illness called Weil’s Disease. Weil’s disease can initially cause flu-like symptoms between 7 and 26 days after you swim and, if untreated, the secondary stage can cause death;
2) Cryptosporidium – a parasite that gives you bad stomach cramps and diarrhoea (the runs!);
3) Trachoma – an eye infection that can lead to blindness;
4) Whipworm – worm eggs that hatch inside the body after being swallowed;
5) Toxic algae – which can cause skin rashes and stomach upsets.

Danger 4: What lies beneath…
From out of the water, or above the water, you may not be able to see what’s under the water. That could be anything from large rocks to machinery; from shopping trolleys to dead branches, and even fish hooks or broken fishing line, all of which could injure you.

4 http://www.port.ac.uk/uopnews/2012/05/30/scientists-warn-swimmers-of-heart-attack-risk/
5. What are you going to do?

There are a range of activities that your service could undertake in support of the week

However you decide to mark it, choose which stakeholder group (or groups) you are targeting your activity at, and identify how you are going to try to influence them. Here are some suggested ideas... but this is your week, so use activities that fit your local needs.

- If you have a fire cadet crew, arrange for them to undertake an RLSS lifesaving award
- Establish a local Water Safety Forum, identifying key partners, etc. Advice is available from the Water Safety Group to assist
- Revise your educational materials to include water safety information
- Run a survey using your Facebook site to identify young people in your area and their water safety behaviour
- Print and distribute the flyers to youth clubs, colleges, etc.
- Work with relevant local clubs e.g. swimming, sailing, for awareness-raising events
- With appropriate safety support, build a simulator that demonstrates the power of fast-flowing water/currents
- Collect your local data on water rescues and map where fatalities have occurred in last three years to target locations
- Produce beer mats to be distributed to pubs based near water
- Set up a group of Drowning Prevention & Water Safety community advocates, inviting people to work with you to deliver the message
- Visit local scout, brownie or sea cadet groups to help with water safety badges
- Work with a local quarry to raise awareness of the dangers ‘below the surface’
- Create a draft Drowning Prevention and Water Safety strategy for your service*
- Work with teachers at local colleges to develop programmes to help teens deal with peer pressure
- Arrange a visit to a local river/lake to show the hazards, with a ‘hoopla the buoy’ life-saver competition
- Arrange a demonstration of a rescue on a local river or lake. Invite local press to attend
- With appropriate safety support, build a simulator that demonstrates the power of fast-flowing water/currents
- Collect your local data on water rescues and map where fatalities have occurred in last three years to target locations

*You may wish to look at GMFRS’ strategy, available in the CFOA Water Safety Community document repository
6. Planning your activities

The range and number of tasks you will need to complete will depend entirely on the type of activity you decide to organise.

To help you draw up a simple project plan, here are some of the very general actions you may need to include. We have also suggested some timescales by which you should aim to complete them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERALL PROJECT MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>At project start-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Inform CFOA of your participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Appoint project lead and task group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Involve fire authority member with relevant interest or portfolios</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Determine main objectives of the week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Establish what budget is available</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>At start-up</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Refer to service policy on running public events and complete:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ health and safety checklist and/or risk assessment</td>
<td>Once event defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ equality impact assessment, if required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ internal business case, if required</td>
<td>At start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Ensure public and employee liability insurance is in place</td>
<td>Once event defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Agree how progress will be reported to service management</td>
<td>At start-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTNERSHIPS</th>
<th>As soon as decision is made on whether to use the week as a partnership opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Think about who you might team up with:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ organisations such as RLSS, RNLI, ASA, Canal &amp; River Trust etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ regional water companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ local leisure providers, rowing and sailing clubs, running clubs, ramblers' groups, angling clubs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ schools, colleges, universities, youth groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Appeal to partners to join in through visits/stakeholder briefing</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGETING THE INTERVENTION</th>
<th>To help determine aim of intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Review corporate intelligence on incidents of drowning and water rescue in the local area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Define target audience:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ where are they located?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ what are the key risks affecting them?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ what are the best ways to reach them?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**EVENT LOGISTICS**

- Book venue/s
- Mark the dates in senior officers’ and members’ diaries
- Arrange transport or travel if required
- Guest list and invitations
- Catering and refreshments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As early as possible before your events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADVANCE PUBLICITY**

- Produce posters, leaflets or other materials to promote events
- Proactive news release to the local media
- Paid-for advertising in local press or commercial radio
- Piece on website, promoted through social media
- Internal briefing for colleagues and members
- Stakeholder briefing for key partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As early as possible before your events</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PUBLICITY DURING THE WEEK**

- Seek support from the Service’s communications team
- Think about a creative photo or filming opportunity
- Talk to communications about consent issues
- Nominate a spokesperson and work with communications to ensure he or she is briefed on key messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the final two weeks before your events</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**LEGACY**

- Develop evaluation forms or surveys to measure success
- Think about how the success of your events might live on afterwards
- Inform CFOA about the results of your events

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure feedback is gathered within a week of the events</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Dylan Ramsay

Beckie Ramsay, from Chorley, lost her 13-year-old son Dylan in July 2011. He got into difficulties while swimming with friends in open water at a quarry in Lancashire. Despite being a strong swimmer, the cold water on a hot summer's day proved fatal.

You can visit Beckie’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/DoingItForDylan to find out more about her water safety campaign ‘Doing it for Dylan’ which is aiming to raise awareness of the dangers of unsupervised swimming in open water.

Watch Dylan’s story here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnsv-z3Yxe4&feature=youtu.be

Beckie Ramsay has supplied two of the posters that she uses, which will be available as downloads from the CFOA web pages, and can be used as part of your promotion of the week.

Students on the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's BA Advertising and Brand Design course have produced poster flyers giving some of the key messages of Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week, aimed at a young adult audience. A thumbnail of the winning design, by Tilly Baker, is pictured left. Seven of these hard-hitting and moving images are available for Fire and Rescue Services to use – one for each day of the campaign, and PDF versions will be uploaded to the CFOA Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week website as soon as they are available.

We would ask that services either tweet/retweet the daily image, or perhaps use them as a header on their Twitter account, Facebook page or Water Safety web page.

Chris Turnbull

Chris Turnbull, aged 15, drowned on 14th August 2006 at Pont Cyfyng Falls, Capel Curig, North Wales. He was playing with friends at the falls during the summer holidays, after heavy rain, and became trapped in the fast flowing water.
Chris’s mum, Debbie, set up River and Sea Sense (RASS - www.riverandseasense.com/) to help educate children in schools in North Wales about water safety. RASS organises school visits, lifesaving courses, and organises fund- and awareness-raising events.

In 2011, Debbie also set up the Water Safety Map (www.watersafetymap.co.uk), an interactive online resource that can be used in schools to educate children about the dangers of water use. The Water Safety Map lists incidents and gives a range of details, including the date, cause, casualty information and a description of what happened.

Watch a clip of ITV’s Wales Tonight programme’s piece about the Water Safety Map: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2H4npYSWleU
8. Resources/Useful Links

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has produced a Water Safety Awareness pack for schools, which can be accessed by logging in to www.nfrseduction.org, clicking on the Water Safety section, and using the password fire999. (If you can’t see anything, click on the settings icon in the top right hand corner of Internet Explorer, then click onto Compatibility View settings, ‘add’ the website.)

Royal Lifesaving Society UK (RLSS)

The RLSS is a drowning prevention charity and the UK’s leading provider of water safety and drowning prevention education. It has a wealth of resources available on its website at http://www.rlss.org.uk/

These include:
- The RLSS UK Water Safety Workshop PowerPoint – for KS3 school assemblies or class presentations. This covers
  - The facts about drowning
  - Case studies
  - Why people end up in the water
  - The situations that might contribute to young people getting into trouble in the water
  - Why people get into trouble
  - Cold Water Immersion
  - A link to the RLSS’ ‘Filling up’ video on YouTube
  - Advice on reducing hazards
  - Advice on what to do in an emergency
  - Details of the RLSS’ Survive and Save Lifesaving programme
- The ‘Filling up’ video, can also be downloaded from Vimeo
- A Water Safety Workshop information leaflet and Summary Poster, giving a brief outline of the contents of the PowerPoint presentation above
- A Water Safety Workshop Instructor Guide, for delivering the Water Safety Workshop, plus lesson plans for the elements of the workshop, including Drowning Information, Inland Water, Rescue, Cold Water Immersion and a Recap
- The RLSS has ‘on the ground’ drowning coordinators who work in local communities. They are:
  - Kenny MacDermid – North kennethmacdermid@rlss.org.uk
  - Andrea Roberts – West andrearoberts@rlss.org.uk
  - Hayley Reynolds – South hayleyreynolds@rlss.org.uk
  - Aaron Dhanda – East aarondhanda@rlss.org.uk

The RLSS has a number of campaigns taking place in 2015 which you may wish to support if appropriate to local risks:
- End of March/Beginning of April – Spring Clean Campaign (water safety at home aimed at parents of 0-4 year olds)
- Beginning of June – Don’t Drink and Drown (aimed at young people and festival-goers)
- 20 to 28 June – Drowning Prevention Week
- End of September – Don’t Drink and Drown (aimed at university students)
- December – Don’t Drink and Drown (aimed at Christmas revellers)
Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. It provides an on-call, 24-hour, lifeboat search and rescue service around the UK and Ireland and a seasonal lifeguard service.

The RNLI provides a number of educational resources via its website at www.rnli.org which can be used by teachers and youth leaders.

These include ‘On Your Wavelength’, aimed at 11- to 14-year-old children, a multi-media resource comprising lesson plans, film clips, student activity sheets and an interactive map. You can find the On Your Wavelength resource at http://rnli.org/safetyandeducation/teachersandyouthleaders/resources/Pages/On-your-wavelength.aspx and it is also available in Irish Gaelic and Welsh language versions.

In 2014, the RNLI ran its ‘Respect the Water’ campaign, encouraging people not to underestimate the power of the sea, and offering specific advice to groups including anglers, kayakers, surfers and sailors. It also provided advice on some common coastal risk factors including rip currents, tidal cut off, alcohol and cold water shock. Details at http://rnli.org/safety/respect-the-water/Pages/respect-the-water.aspx

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

RoSPA has a Water Safety section at www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/watersafety/ and campaigns on key water safety issues, such as ensuring every child has the ability to swim to a good standard, and that water safety skills remain a central part of the school curriculum. Its Laser Alliance group (www.lasersafety.org.uk/) promotes learning about safety through experiencing risk, to allow young people to learn how to safely manage risk.

RoSPA’s Water Safety Advice and information section provides a range of advice and information on subjects including:

- Child Holiday Swimming Pool Safety
- Coasteering
- Flooding
- Group Safety at Water Margins
- Inland Waters Risk Assessment
- Scottish Local Authority Approaches to Managing Water Safety
- National Water Safety Signs
- Parents & Water Safety
- Pond & Garden Water Safety
- Staying Safe on Holiday
- Swimming & Water Safety
- Taking Children Swimming
- Tombstoning
- UK Drowning Statistics
- Vehicles in Water
- Watersports Safety
- Water Safety at Home
- Watersports Safety Abroad
- Water Safety for Children and Young People
- Flags
- Rescue Methods
- Water Wise Quiz
- Water Safety Signs
- Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis)

RoSPA is the coordinator of the National Water Safety Forum (http://www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk/index.asp) an association of organisations that have a wide variety of interests and responsibilities for water safety.
The ASA (national governing body for swimming)

The ASA and the RNLI provide free safety lessons for all children aged 7-14 to learn the importance of being safe in and around water. Organised annually, the Swim Safe campaign is returning this summer to beach and lake side locations across England in an effort to help children become safe in and around open water.

According to research by the ASA, 10% of parents in England say their child only swims while on holiday, so it will come as no surprise to learn that two thirds of incidents the RNLI respond to on some of the UK’s busiest beaches involve children. Swim Safe runs during the summer holidays, 6 days a week during the period. Each session includes a 10-minute talk with RNLI lifeguards and 30 minutes in-water tuition from ASA qualified swimming teachers, completely free of charge. Children must be aged between 7-14 years old and be able to swim a minimum of 25 metres unaided to take part.

Dates and locations for Swim Safe 2015 will be announced shortly, visit the website at www.swimming.org/swimsafe for more details.

The ASA also operates a unique partnership with primary schools across England, the School Swimming Charter, to help them develop the necessary knowledge required to deliver high quality school swimming programmes. Developed after the ASA’s 2014 School Swimming Census revealed that 45% of 7-11 year olds cannot swim the statutory distance of 25 metres unaided, the length of an average sized pool, the main aim of the Charter is to increase the number of primary school children who can swim 25 metres unaided and provide them with the skills and knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in and around water. The ASA provides primary schools with an extensive package of support, resources and guidance to help their school meet the national curriculum standards. Find out more at www.swimming.org/schoolcharter.

The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has a range of information on its website, which can be reached via https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency, including providing environmental data about rivers and bathing water across England and Wales.

Environmental data maps for Scotland can be found on the Scottish Environment Protection Agency website at http://www.sepa.org.uk/planning/map_based_information.aspx while information on rivers and flooding for Northern Ireland is provided via the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website at http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/rivers.htm

The National Water Safety Forum Blog

Updates and information from the UK National Water Safety Forum, including news about the activities and campaigns of its member are available on its blog site at https://nationalwatersafety.wordpress.com/about/

US National Center for Cold Water Safety

Water companies

Water UK

Water UK members are UK water and wastewater service suppliers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. You can find a list of, and links to, the organisation’s members at
http://www.water.org.uk/about/our-members

Many of the water companies have information on their websites about safety around water, particularly reservoirs. Three sites are listed below as an example.

United Utilities

United Utilities has produced a video: ‘Not a game’ about swimming in reservoirs, which uses video game imagery to show the effect of the cold water on a young man who goes into a reservoir to impress a girl friend. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i27iGYgYBqc

United Utilities also has information on its website about reservoir safety, including a video from a GP about the effect of Cold Water Shock. http://www.unitedutilities.com/reservoir-safety.aspx It has a downloadable Teacher’s Guide to accompany these materials, which could be used by teachers or youth leaders – http://www.unitedutilities.com/documents/reservoir-safety-teacher-guide.pdf

Welsh Water/Dŵr Cymru

Welsh Water’s Education section at http://www.dwrcymru.com/en/Community/Education.aspx has a section on reservoir safety, including a short video, factsheets, posters and cartoons.

Yorkshire Water


Sports Organisations

British Rowing

British Rowing’s Rowsafe pages at http://www.britishrowing.org/taking-part/staying-safe/rowsafe offer guidance to rowers on a range of topics including cold water immersion and hypothermia and swimming and capsize/swamping training.

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

The RYA has a range of Safety Information on its website, including a page on Cold Water Shock - http://www.rya.org.uk/infoadvice/safetyinfo/Pages/cold-water-shock.aspx

Other organisations

Canal & River Trust
The Canal & River Trust is a charitable trust set up to look after the waterways of England and Wales. You can contact the head office or your local office of the Canal & River Trust via its website at https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/contact-us

Scottish Canals
Scottish Canals are custodians of Scotland’s Canals and run a number of educational initiatives. Contact information at http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/corporate-home/about-us/contact-us

Waterways Ireland
Waterways Ireland is an all-Ireland implementation body responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of inland navigable waterways for recreational purposes. Contact details can be found at http://www.waterwaysireland.org/Pages/Contact%20Us/Contact-Us.aspx

Doing it for Dylan
Beckie Ramsay's water safety campaign ‘Doing it for Dylan’ aims to raise awareness of the dangers of unsupervised swimming in open water (see Case Studies). Details at www.facebook.com/DoingItForDylan

River and Sea Sense
Set up by Debbie Turnbull (see Case Studies) River and Sea Sense (RASS - www.riverandseasense.com/) helps educate children in schools in North Wales about water safety. RASS organises school visits, lifesaving courses, and organises fund- and awareness-raising events.

The Water Safety Map
The Water Safety Map (www.watersafetymap.co.uk) is an interactive online resource that can be used in schools to educate children about the dangers of water use. The Water Safety Map lists incidents and gives details of the date, cause, casualty and a description of what happened.
9. Spreading the message

How often has a friend, family member or even a colleague from a partner agency been surprised when you’ve told them about the range of work an FRS does?

We need to make sure that the people who can help spread the word are kept in the loop, so they can help share information in the best way possible to raise awareness. Identify the people most likely to be able to help you to publicise your participation in Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week 2015 and enlist their knowledge and experience to help you.

- If you intend to tweet in the lead up to, or during, Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week then please mention Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week, @CFOAfire, #DrowningPrevention or use the slogan ‘Tell a friend. Save a friend.’.

- Although CFOA is raising awareness of Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week among FRSs and stakeholders, it’s your event too and, as such, we encourage you to undertake your own local media activity without reference to us. If you manage to secure any regional TV coverage, it would be helpful if you could inform rebecca.wallis@cfoa.org.uk as CFOA may be able to arrange support from the Water Safety lead.

- CFOA will lead on securing coverage of the FRS’s involvement in the national media and trade press. If you would like a copy of the press contacts to whom we have sent press releases emailed to you, please contact Rebecca Wallis, as above.

- Reference in your communications to your involvement in a nationwide week by FRSs across the country will help reinforce the scale of our joint endeavours. Please consider adding the press statements circulated to your press releases and media responses.

- Core text/structure for a news release, briefing or newsletter article is provided on the following page for you to use if helpful. We will be partially evaluating the success of the event by monitoring the amount of media coverage – so any publicity secured will count.

- Bring the week’s events to life by posting photos and images on your service’s Facebook site.

Potential Press Release / Briefing / Article

[Name of FRS] is joining with fire and rescue services across the UK in supporting the Chief Fire Officers Association’s Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week 2015, taking place from 13-19 April.

The campaign is focusing on raising awareness of the issue of Cold Water Shock, which causes a number of fatalities every year as young people – even those who are strong swimmers – aren’t aware of the effect that it can have on their ability to swim in open water. Even on a warm day, the temperature of the water in a reservoir, quarry or lake can remain very cold and the shock of cold water creates a physical response that can make it more difficult to swim, and can even cause death.

[LOCAL WATER INCIDENT CASE STUDY – if available]
[Name of FRS] will be supporting Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week by [details of activities/objectives/audiences, etc.].

CFOA’s Water Safety Lead, Dawn Whittaker, warned: “While reservoirs, lakes, rivers and other inland water may look safe and inviting, particularly on a warm day, there are hidden dangers below the surface that could make you ill, hurt you, and – at worst – could kill you.

“Cold Water Shock is a physical response that can not only affect your breathing, but will reduce your muscle ability and can even lead to a heart attack. Moving water, such as rivers, may look calm but may have strong currents below the surface which can carry even strong swimmers into danger. And, of course, from out of the water, or above, you may not be able to see dangerous obstructions such as large rocks or dead branches that can cause you injury.

“You may also want to consider the fact that open water is untreated, and may be polluted with bacteria and algae that can give you stomach upsets, or even with organisms that can cause a number of nasty illnesses including Weil’s Disease, Trachoma and Whipworm

The water safety messages that the fire and rescue service will be delivering will, it is hoped, also raise awareness of and support for the great campaigns that the RLSS, RNLI and ASA will be running later in 2015 – the RLSS’ Drowning Prevention Week from 20-28 June and the RNLI’s Respect the Water campaign in July and the joint RNLI/ASA Swim Safe swimming lessons and beach safety advice ‘roadshow’ in July and August..

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. 2013 fatality statistics from the National Water Safety Forum’s Water Incident Database (WAID).
2. The key objective of the week will be to raise awareness of the issue, thus hopefully reducing preventable water fatalities in young adults aged 16-30, as this is the age group that saw the highest number of water-related deaths in 2013.
3. CFOA’s Water Safety Workgroup, with the RLSS, has supported the establishment of an All Party Parliamentary Working Group on Drowning Prevention, which has over 20 MPs.
4. CFOA is also taking part in developing a National Drowning Prevention Strategy, underpinned by data from the National Water Safety Forum’s Water Incident Database (WAID), which is supported by RoSPA.
5. CFOA’s Water Safety Lead also sits on the National Water Safety Forum.

For further information please contact:

[FRS press contacts]

About [Name of FRS]
[Details]

About CFOA
The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) is a professional membership association and a registered charity. CFOA members are drawn from all UK Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs) representing the senior executives and managers of the Service. Through the work of its members the Association supports the Fire and Rescue Services of the UK in its aspiration to protect the communities they serve and to continue to improve the overall performance of the fire sector. CFOA provides professional and technical advice to inform national fire policy.
10. How was it for you?

Shortly after 19th April we will be circulating a brief e-survey among participating services to find out how your Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week activity went.

As always, we will use your feedback to shape our future involvement, and will share information with our strategic partners about the impact we might have made.

The survey will ask the following questions, so it would be helpful if you could think early on about how you might collect this information:

- **What activities** did you run during Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week?
- What was your **main aim**?
- How many people did you **directly engage** with?
- How many people might you have **indirectly engaged** with (e.g. through local media coverage or through umbrella organisations)?
- **How many staff** were involved during the week?
- Did you **achieve your main aim**?
- How much **media coverage** did you achieve?
  - **How useful** was information you received from CFOA before the event?
  - What **additional information or support** would have been helpful?
- **Any other comments...?**
11. Social Media

The @CFOAfire Twitter account will be tweeting during Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week. Please consider re-tweeting us, or let us know if you are publicising your events so we can give you a re-tweet. Or perhaps you could link to the website – www.cfoa.org.uk/CFOADrowningPreventionWaterSafetyWeek from your Facebook account? If you intend to tweet in the lead up to, or during, the Week then please mention Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week, @CFOAfire, #DrowningPrevention

‘Launch’ Tweet

We would like as many services as possible to join us in a ‘launch tweet’ at 09:00am on Monday 13th April. This will comprise of an image, together with the text ‘We support CFOA’s Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week, 13-19 April 2015’. Please contact Rebecca Wallis for further details.

Potential Tweets

- 2013 saw 669 water-related deaths: we’re talking water safety to bring that figure down #DrowningPrevention http://tinyurl.com/cfoadpws15 (137 characters)
- Fire Services are taking part in @CFOAfire’s #DrowningPrevention & Water Safety Week. Find out more: http://tinyurl.com/cfoadpws15 (131 characters)
- Even if you’re a strong swimmer, cold water shock can kill. #DrowningPrevention http://tinyurl.com/cfoadpws15 (109 characters)
- 35 people aged 20-24 died in water-related incidents in 2013. Do you know the risks of swimming in inland water? #DrowningPrevention (132 characters)
- Look out for your mates: even a strong swimmer can drown in a lake/river/quarry. Know the facts: http://tinyurl.com/cfoadpws15 (126 characters)
- Don’t take risks in/near a river: currents can carry even strong swimmers into danger. http://tinyurl.com/cfoadpws15 (116 characters)
- Would you know what to do if someone was drowning? http://tinyurl.com/m45nxe8 #DrowningPrevention (97 characters)
- Cold Water Shock: look below the surface, know the risk = you gasp, maybe underwater, filling your lungs. http://tinyurl.com/cfoadpws15 (135 characters)
- Cold Water Shock: look below the surface, know the risk = you hyperventilate, depriving your brain of oxygen, get disoriented (125 characters)
- Cold Water Shock: look below the surface, know the risk = your cooled blood may lead to dangerous irregular heart rhythm/heart attack (133 characters)
- Look below the surface, know the risk. Cold Water Shock may result in a heart attack - even if you're young and fit (115 characters)
- Cold Water Shock: look below the surface, know the risk = your muscle ability drops by 25%, you struggle to keep yourself afloat (128 characters)
- Cold Water Shock: look below the surface, know the risk = your muscle ability drops by 25%, you struggle to get yourself out of the water (137 characters)
- Cold Water Shock: look below the surface, know the risk = your body shivers, affecting coordination & swimming ability. (119 characters)

Or create your own tweets using facts from the toolkit, or local information.