

Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Open Water safety Update
September 2022



Open Water Safety Governance



Durham City Safety Group

Altogether Safer Policing

DURHAM STUDENTS' UNION
Enabling STUDENTS

County Durham Open Water Safety Group

The national picture

- Figures indicate that a total of 616 people lost their lives in 2021 (down from 631 in 2020), of which 195 were suspected suicide.
- Inland drowning (e.g. lakes, reservoirs, rivers etc) remains the common cause in terms of location. There has been an increase in coastal related fatalities.
- Drowning is a male dominated issue with 83% of last years fatalities male.
- The most prevalent age groups for drowning victims was 60-64 and 30-64 year olds.
- Drownings of individuals with alcohol or drugs in their system were 68 for 2021.
- The most startling fact is that the largest 'grouping' of people losing their lives in 2020 was once again, those people who had no intention of going into the water and were walking or running close to water

County Durham

Year	Durham City Centre			County Durham (Exc. Durham City centre)		
	Near miss	Injury	Fatality	Near miss	Injury	Fatality
2013/14	13	1	1	3	1	2
2014/15	5	1	4	5	2	3
2015/16	3	1	0	8	5	2
2016/17	2	1	0	1	2	1
2017/18	2	3	0	3	5	0
2018/19	3	6	1	1	1	2
2019/20	2	4	0	6	3	1
2020/21	2	0	0	8	3	2
2021/22	9	4	0	7	1	1

County Durham vs National Statistics

- Lower fatality rate of 0.19 per 100,000 compared to 0.41 per 100,000 at a UK level in 2021
- Average 3-year accidental drowning fatality rate of 1 per year compared to 6 in the North east as a region and 244 overall in the UK.
- Zero fatalities related to with alcohol or drugs in their system compared to 0.10 per 100,000 at a UK level in 2021
- Zero fatalities in Summer period 2022 despite a spike of fatalities in July across the UK due to heatwave (at least 13 fatalities in July)
- Zero coastal fatalities despite nationally accounting for 38% of all accidental drowning deaths
- No known open water swimming related fatalities- given the widespread media and leisure industry reports regarding the psychological and physical benefits of open water swimming as a recreational activity, this is an area that requires monitoring in County Durham going forward.

Durham City

- Continued emphasis on partnership working and collective responsibility
- RoSPA (completed Dec 2021) independent reviews of previous river corridor risk assessments and new city developments pre and post completion
- RoSPA related action plan adopted by City Safety Group and actively resolving recommendations
- Continued investigations of incidents and near misses to ensure controls remain effective
- Regular monitoring and inspection of city centre river routes and control measures

RoSPA
The Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents

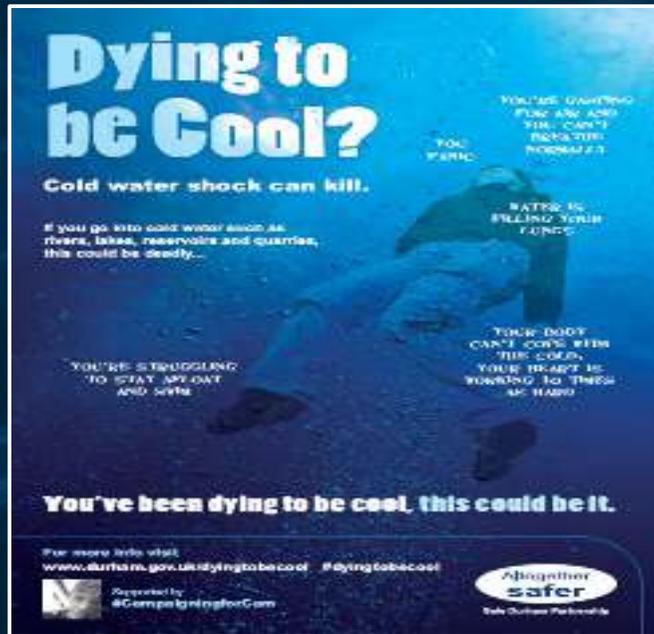


County Wide

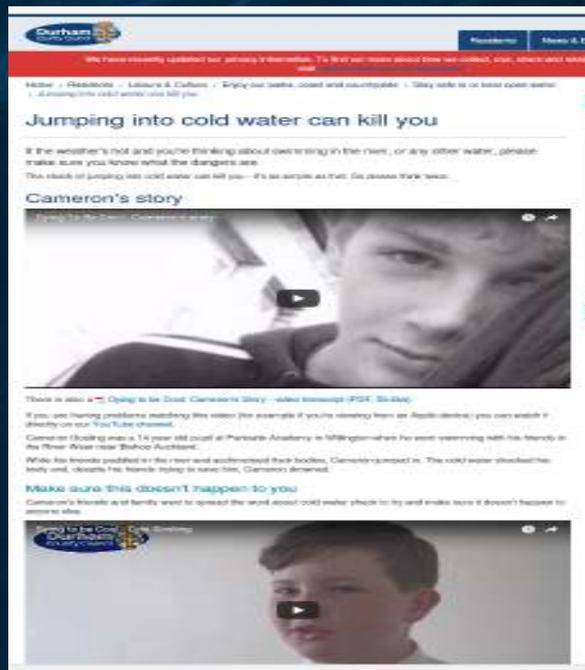
- ✓ Cold Water Shock 'Dying to be cool' Campaign delivery in limited areas in 2022
- ✓ Promotion of national campaigns
- ✓ Extensive social media activity at risk periods
- ✓ Plan for education and awareness again in 2022/2023
- ✓ Re-assessment of priority locations across county
- ✓ Investigations and assessment of public rescue equipment
- ✓ Monitoring of high footfall locations in peak periods
- ✓ Throw line training pilot by CDDFRS
- ✓ Upgrading of public rescue equipment



2022 'Dying to be Cool' campaign



- June-July 2021 in Chester-le-Street
- Pre-summer period focus
- Work with local AAP coordinators
- Coincided with national drowning prevention week and world drowning prevention day
- Partner comms and promotion
- Fiona Gosling fronted the campaign along with police and fire and rescue officers



Looking Forward

- Continued partnership approach important
- Revision of action plans at city centre and county wide level
- Education, awareness and utilising national campaigns and initiatives
- Re-assessment of previous risk assessments
- Investigation of all incidents and near misses
- Identification of new and emerging trends and causation factors
- Working closely with public health around suicide prevention and mental health
- Working with developers and designers to ensure water safety related risks are managed
- Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of existing controls
- Review of public rescue equipment and provision of training for first responders, businesses and communities