

WATER SAFETY

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

Please use this template to provide information on any Water Safety initiatives you are doing within your area. Please provide as much relevant information as possible.

if you require any assistance or support in completing this template please contact Bernadine Blair, Evaluation, Funding and Initiatives Officer:
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LSO AREA

East SDA City of Edinburgh

Author and Contact Details (add a contact email or phone number),

WC David Morrison 07768556285

What is the Title of the Initiative?

Harlaw reservoir water safety event.



Summary

Improved engagement with the community to highlight Water safety. This was aimed at Young people to highlight cold water shock as well as the new trend in open water (wild swimming).

Need for Initiative

Following a rise of water rescue incidents both nationally and locally, LALO David Morrison, recognised that it was important to push out the water safety message across partnerships in Edinburgh. He made initial contact with Pentland hills regional park (PHRP) senior heritage officer to highlight the need for the event. This work was selected after several local accidents in the Pentland Hills.

A few months after the work started we tied this in to the SFRS Summer Thematic Action Plan (TAP) initiative and water safety advice.

To highlight the importance of this work, a week before our first event there was a drowning in Thriepmuir Reservoir, next to Harlaw

It was also reported through the PHRP CIP there was an increase in activity in the area due to the staycation due to COVID.

Aims and Objectives

In accordance with Scotland's National Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-2026 we aim to reduce the number of accidental drowning by 50% by 2026 and reduce danger amongst the highest risk groups and communities.

The main objectives of this initiative are:

Improved engagement, support and provision of advice to people who are unaware that death by drowning is the third highest accidental cause of death in the UK.

Develop further partnership working/collaboration including local community groups.

Reduce anti-social behaviours.

Delivery/Activities

Prior to the initiative, Police Scotland (PS) ran an operation (OP Boxy) for the whole of July. We supported this through our social media channels and then ran a series of social media posts which PS also supported to publicise our event.

The posts advised that SFRS supported by Police Scotland and Pentland Hills Regional Park Rangers would be demonstrating water safety and engaging with the public on 26th July.

This was the first joint event, we have held others and the latest in December will be to highlight the danger of ice, on open water, in winter. Marionville SWRT will again support these events.

Resources (What resources does the project require? Does the project rely on any other resources, such as staff from other organisations or premises owned/managed by other organisations? What social media platforms were used to promote it?)



SFRS Water Rescue teams
Police Scotland
CAT members
Pentland hills regional park rangers
Twitter used to promote events



Partner Agencies (include contact details)



Police Scotland
Pentland hills regional park rangers

Successes and Challenges

Successes-

We engaged with 50-70 individuals.

We worked in a partnership approach which helped demonstrate each agency's commitment and ability to respond to water safety and gave public reassurance after the recent fatality.

ITV news carried out an interview with DACO Perry and broadcast it later that evening highlighting the event. Both STV and BBC news attended the event, Police did not make SFRS aware of this or we would have involved our media team.

In response to enquiries made by WC Morrison, it was confirmed that *Scottish Rural Partnership against Crime unit* from Police Scotland have taken the lead on post incident action after the drowning at Thriepmuir. They have confirmed funding from Scottish Water to have water safety signage erected around both reservoirs in the area.

Challenges-

Would like to have had more interaction with younger individuals

Organising on days and times when the “audience” is correct. We need to challenge the model of doing this type of thing at a time that “suits us and partners” (morning/afternoon) due to capacity and realise we need to be there when young adults attend these locations, early evening and weekends.
Securing Strat Reserve so that the SWRT could attend.

Impact/Change/Outcomes (has anything changed because of the project? What impact has the project had on participants, the wider community and your area? Have you produced anything as a result of the project (i.e. reports, guidance etc.)? Were there any unexpected outcomes?

The event has highlighted the lack of, and the need for correct buoyancy aids (rescue/floatation devices) in this area when the public are entering the water.

It has developed a more proactive approach and increased knowledge of the location, for operational crews, to ensure we are operationally ready to respond to an incident in the area.

It was positive to engage with 50-70 individuals as well as the event being reported through STV news which gives it a national platform.

The SWRT, LALO and partners now have a proven template to continue this work. It can and will be replicated across other parts of the City.

Reflections

Due to the high number of Water Safety fatalities this year in Scotland, people having ‘staycations’ and the better weather, it is essential that planning community safety engagement in areas with bodies of water which may attract swimming etc. particularly by young people gathering in these areas is extremely important.

Local knowledge by the crews is crucial as is collaboration with local community groups and partners to target those areas which may attract visitors/young people, improving their understanding of the risk and increasing their safety. This will ensure we are using an intelligence led approach to these events.

Personnel report that overall, this has been a very worthwhile event from a community safety perspective. It provides reassurance to the Community that SFRS, with local partners, are working towards enhancing the safety of everyone within the local area.

It has allowed a partner approach to the post incident response to collectively agree the additional measures we can ensure are in place. For this area it will be the signage funded by Scottish water.

Next steps Will this project continue? What are the plans for the project in the future and what is needed for this to happen?

SFRS will continue to organise further events at the reservoirs which will complement the Thematic plan current at the time of year. We will ensure that these events occur and evolve through the year as the risk from water does i.e. drowning after falling through ice
We will continue to build partner relationships to ensure all agencies are involved in the future events.

Additional Information (include any other relevant information, such as links to other websites or reports)

This will be shared with the SFRS Water rescue group as a good practice example.

Date: 01/12/21

Signed: WC David Morrison



