

Practice Exemplar

WATER SAFETY CODE

Name and Timescales

Scotland's Water Safety Code began in 2019 along with Visit Scotland in preparation for the launch of the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020/2021. The code however was also created for use beyond this year and is therefore an ongoing initiative.

Summary

The theme of campaign is water safety advice in Scotland.

The lead organisation on the campaign was Water Safety Scotland, who had a subgroup comprising of different water organisations such as Visit Scotland, Scottish Water, RoSPA, RNLI, SFRS . This sub-group was successfully chaired by Jane Campbell-Morrison.

The nature of the campaign is an awareness raising campaign, which is aimed at people living in Scotland to be aware of danger and hazards of waters in Scotland. It was also aimed at visitors to Scotland who were going to be using the waters of Scotland in any way.

Need for Initiative

Each water safety organisation had their own code or message: this made getting the message across difficult when all the organisations are saying the same message but in different ways. The Year of Coasts and Waters was an opportunity to produce a document with specific water safety advice, in one consistent water safety code.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the campaign was to allow water organisations to provide the same consistent water safety code message to users of waters in and around Scotland instead of having over (40+) messages being given to the public. A further aim was to help reduce the number of accidental drowning fatalities in Scotland by the use of this one consistent message by raising awareness of this new consistent water safety code.

Delivery

The sub-group met several times to discuss what the main message would be to give to people who didn't know about water safety, what hazards they needed to be aware of in Scotland if they are first time visitors here. How to bring it all together was the main problem that the sub-group faced.

Water safety Scotland held in person meetings with the first being discussions on what Visit Scotland wanted, what were the issues that could come up, what work needs to happen, what the key messages were and if it should concentrate on specific age groups or be a generic code. It was decided to be a generic code and then there were further meetings on how the core document should be produced and what to include.

Once the draft water safety code was created it was taken to each organisation for checking and editing before being approved. After this it was taken to the full Water Safety group for approval. A social media campaign was then created to get the message out. The code was sent out to as many relevant organisations as possible. It is now the key water safety message that is sent out across Scotland by the different organisations.

Successes and Challenges

Main success was that Water Safety Scotland was able to create one Water Safety Code by bringing together the 40+ member organisations separate codes and messages, as some concentrated on summer water safety and others on winter water safety, into one Scotland wide Water Safety Code. It was a challenge to fit the amount of information required into a small document, but by working with member organisations and the main Water safety Group this was overcome.

Impact/Change

The impact of the campaign hasn't been measured in how far it has gone as it is available online through the different organisations, but Water Safety Scotland know that Visit Scotland put out with every marketing toolkit, it went out with every single event that was due to take place and it went to all Visit Scotland accommodation advisers.

All the Water Safety partners pushed the message out across social media and any events that they were running pre-Covid.

This type of campaign is very difficult to measure how successful it has been as it is an ongoing campaign, but people now know the 3 core messages, even if they don't know the hazards:

- Stop and think – spot the dangers
- Stay together – stay close
- What to do in an emergency (call 999 and float)

As more people staycation in Scotland and don't know how cold Scottish waters are, there is always a need to push the Water Safety Code. "You can't just stop with an awareness campaign; you just can't stop"

Reflections

It has made a great change in that the Water Safety Code is now consistent throughout Scottish organisations. Previously there were 40+ different organisations saying certain things. The meetings were an opportunity for each organisation to get what they needed in the new Water Safety Code. Also, there should have been a bigger social media push over the campaign, but the social media campaign was launched just as Scotland was hit by Covid. A bigger plan can be made of the Water Safety Code in social media once Covid restrictions have eased over.

Additional Information

Water Safety Code: <https://watersafetyscotland.org.uk/media/1740/core-4891-water-safety-poster.pdf>

Water safety code minutes which may be helpful: <https://watersafetyscotland.org.uk/members/ycw202021-subgroup/>

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