



# Water Safety and Drowning Prevention



# OVERVIEW

In July 2023, the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) published its thematic report Deaths of children and young people due to traumatic incidents, which highlighted evidence of an increase in the number of child drowning deaths in England, from 20 in 2019-20 to 37 in 2021-22

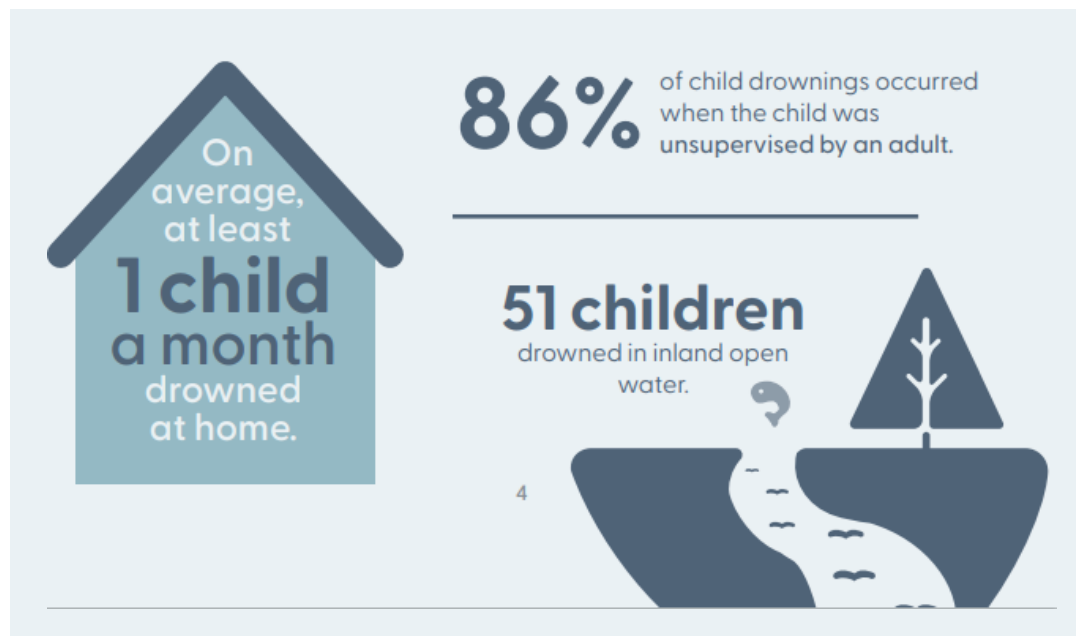
[Child Drowning Update September 2024: England | Royal Life Saving Society UK \( RLSS UK \)](#)

NHS Frimley are championing resources to reach all, with a focus on parents and carers of children under 5, and individuals aged between 13-17 years old.





# HEADLINE FACTS



In total, there were 125 child drowning deaths in England between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2023.

**71%** of these were male children.

Of those that drowned...



Source: Child Drowning Update September 2024: England | Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)







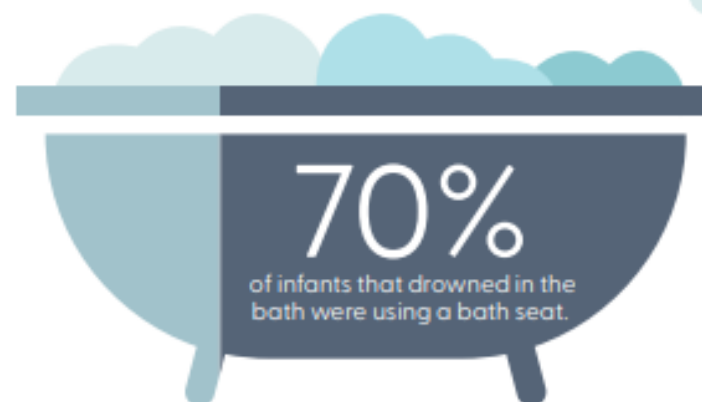
# SUPERVISION

A lack of supervision remains a contributory factor across all accidental child drownings, and where recorded, 86% occurred when the child was unsupervised by an adult.

**2 in 3 children that drowned at home, did so in the bath.**  
This totalled 35 deaths in four years.

25 out of the 35 children that drowned in the bath were under 5 years old, including 10 infants less than one year old. Of these, seven were using a bath seat at the time.

Whilst bath seats can be a useful tool in assisting parents at bath-time, they are not a safety device. **Never leave a child unattended in a bath seat, even if they are with a sibling.**



<sup>1</sup>National Drowning Report (RLSS UK), June 2023





# SUPERVISION

**1 in 3 children that drowned at home did so in places such as paddling pools, hot tubs and ponds.**

Across the four years, this totalled 16 drownings.



## RLSS UK TOP TIPS for enjoying water safely in the garden

### SECURELY COVER OR EMPTY ALL WATER VESSELS AFTER USE

- Including paddling pools, hot tubs, water play tables and storage containers

### STOP WATER VESSELS FROM RE-FILLING BY:

- Turning them over
- Turning off the hosepipe off at the tap, so children cannot fill vessels themselves

### STOP CHILDREN GAINING ACCESS TO PONDS AND POOLS BY:

- Installing secure fencing at least 4 feet high
- Adding a strong mesh or grill to the top of your pond - one that is strong enough to take the weight of a child
- Keeping your door locked to restrict access to outdoor areas that can pose risks
- Consider filling-in your pond until your child is older





# DROWNINGS IN INLAND OPEN WATER

Data in the National Drowning Report showed children aged 5 and over are more likely to drown in inland water, with those aged 13-17 years old most likely to be actively entering the water to swim.<sup>3</sup>



**51 children**  
have drowned in inland  
open water, such as  
rivers, lakes and canals in  
the last four years.  
This includes 20 children  
in 2022-23 when the UK  
recorded some record high  
air temperatures.<sup>2</sup>

## RLSS UK TOP TIPS for staying safe in inland water

### LEARN THE WATER SAFETY CODE

- With statutory swimming outcomes in decline, RLSS UK encourages all parents to talk to their child about water safety
- Ensure that your family are familiar with the [Water Safety Code](#)

### LOOK FOR A LIFEGUARD

- Always use lifeguarded venues where possible

### TAKE CARE NEAR THE EDGE

- When walking or running next to open water, stay well clear of bank edges







# DROWNING PREVENTION WEEK

Drowning Prevention Week is deliberately timed ahead of the school summer holidays when children spend more time outdoors and when vital water safety skills can help keep children safe.



Royal Life Saving Society UK's Drowning Prevention Week

Drowning Prevention Week (DPW) is one of the largest summer water safety campaigns across the UK and Ireland.

Save the date for 2025:  
14 - 21 June.





# CAMPAIGNING COLLABORATIVELY

## OBJECTIVE:

Increase water safety within the identified vulnerable age groups:

- 0-5 years
- 13-17 years

## STRATEGY:

Sharing and creating visuals that align with the messaging from RNLI, sharing widely with partners for maximum reach and impact

## MESSAGING:

- Float to live
- Test the water
- Supervision







# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

Sharing a video made by local young people following a tragedy within their local area will help to resonate with younger people – reaching them on platforms they regularly engage with allows the opportunity to spread the message.

Message:

Test the water - cold water kills.  
All waters in the UK are cold  
enough to kill you – even during  
hot summers. Knowing how to  
float can save your life...

<https://youtu.be/jdcxThIHUmc>



[CLICK THROUGH TO VIDEO](#)





# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

## VIDEO FLOAT TO LIVE



### Message:

Knowing how to float can save your life! Over 60% of drownings happen when people accidentally fall into water. Read more here about how to stay safe around [Being Safe Around Water :: Frimley HealthierTogether](#)

Float to Live Toolkit: resources for download





# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

Message:

Knowing how to float can save your life! Over 60% of drownings happen when people accidentally fall into water.

Read more here about how to stay safe around water [Being Safe Around Water :: Frimley HealthierTogether](#)



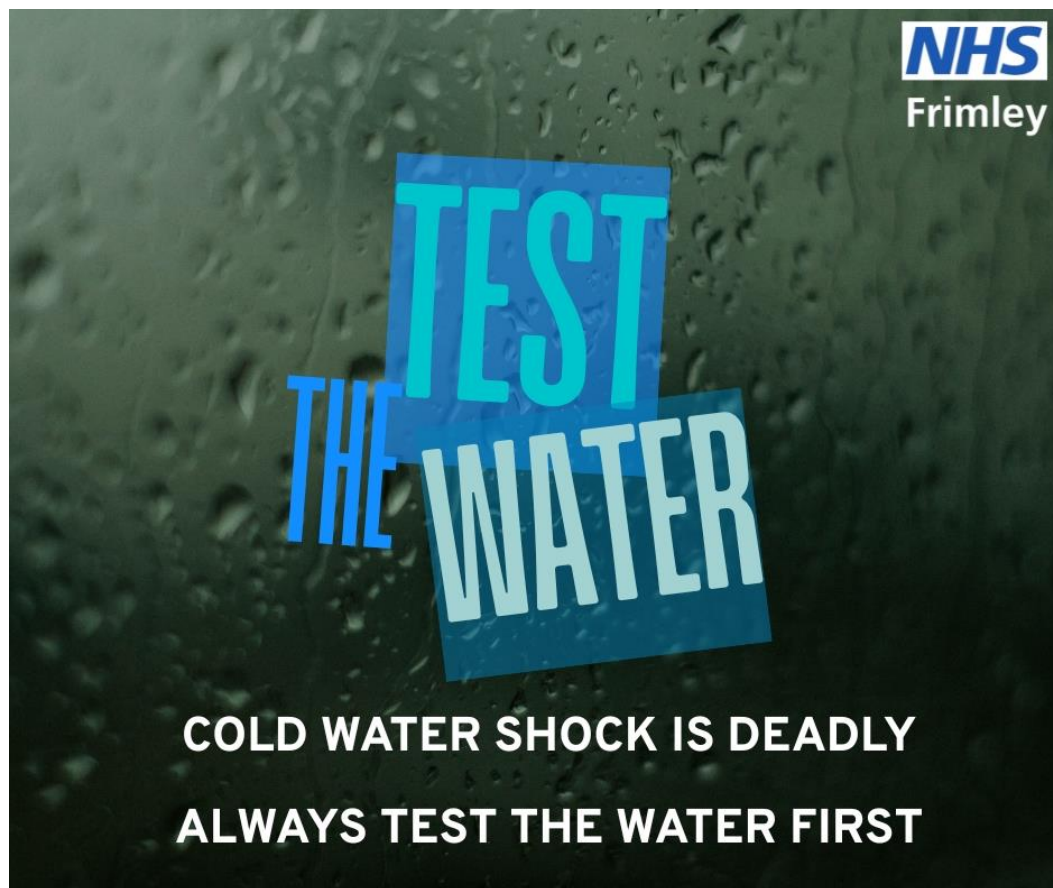
[Float to Live Toolkit: resources for download](#)







# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSET 4



Message:

Test the water - cold water kills.  
All waters in the UK are cold  
enough to kill you – even during  
hot summers

<https://frimley-healthiertogether.nhs.uk/parents/carers/keeping-your-child-safe/being-safe-around-water>



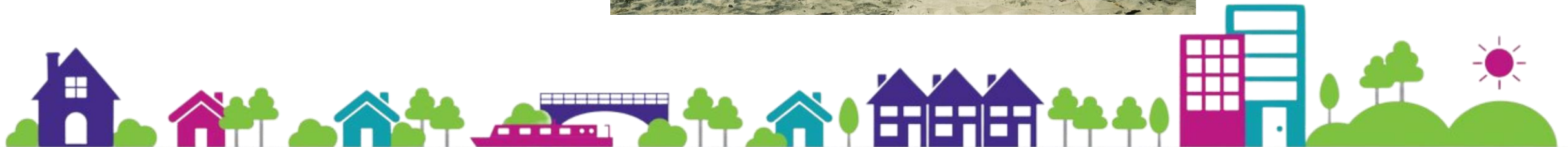


## SOCIAL MEDIA ASSET 5

### Message:

In 2023 RNLI lifeguards aided 19,979 people on the beach. They can see the dangers before they develop and respond instantly if anyone gets into difficulty.

Advice to enjoy being in, on and around water safely | Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)





# EMAIL SIGNATURE 1

## FLOAT TO LIVE CAMPAIGN

Cold Water Shock – the Facts

Being Safe Around Water :: Frimley HealthierTogether

**FOLLOWING THESE FIVE STEPS COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE IF YOU GET INTO DIFFICULTY IN THE WATER:**

**TILT HEAD BACK**  
WITH EARS SUBMERGED

**RELAX**  
AND TRY TO BREATHE NORMALLY

**MOVE YOUR HANDS**  
TO HELP STAY AFLOAT

**IT'S OK IF YOUR LEGS SINK**  
WE ALL FLOAT DIFFERENTLY

**SPREAD YOUR ARMS AND LEGS**  
TO IMPROVE STABILITY

**FLOAT  
to  
LIVE**

**NHS  
Frimley**



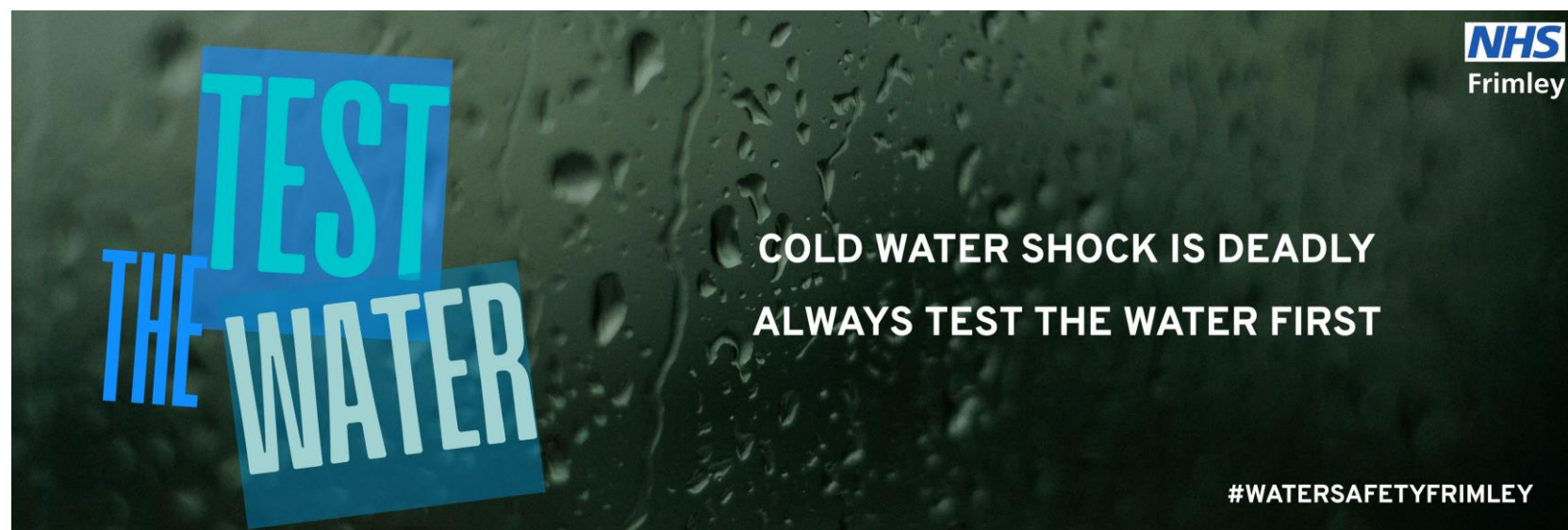




# EMAIL SIGNATURE 2

## TEST THE WATER

Cold Water Shock – the Facts



Being Safe Around Water :: Frimley HealthierTogether





# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSET 6

Accidents and injuries -  
Keeping your child safe in the  
home :: Frimley  
HealthierTogether



Message:

Young children can drown in less than two inches of water in only 20 seconds.

Always supervise babies or young children when they are in or around any water.

Splash Safety in the Bath

Source: Child Drowning Update September 2024: England | Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)





# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSET 7

Message:

Young children can drown in less than two inches of water in only 20 seconds.

Always supervise babies or young children when they are in or around any water.

([Splash Safety in the Bath](#))



[Accidents and injuries](#)  
[- Keeping your child safe in the home ::](#)  
[Frimley](#)  
[HealthierTogether](#)







# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSET 8

## Splash Safety at Your Pad - Water Safety at Home

Message:

Young children can drown in less than two inches of water in only 20 seconds. Stay safe at home this Summer with these top tips  
Splash Safety at Your Pad - Water Safety at Home



Accidents and injuries - Keeping your child safe in the home ::  
Frimley  
HealthierTogether

