

WAID 2025 Summary for Water Safety Wales

This report details the 2025 release of water-related fatality data. An interactive version of this report can be found online [here](#). Please be aware that this trend report uses enhanced five-year WAID data (2019 to 2023). This means that overall numbers, outcomes and some fatality details (e.g. location, ages, sex) may differ to previously published data tables and reports (more information on the enhanced data can be accessed [here](#)).

Overall water-related fatalities

In 2025, there were 52 water-related fatalities in Wales from all recorded causes. This was a slight decrease compared to the previous year (see Figure 1, which also breaks down water-related fatalities by outcome).

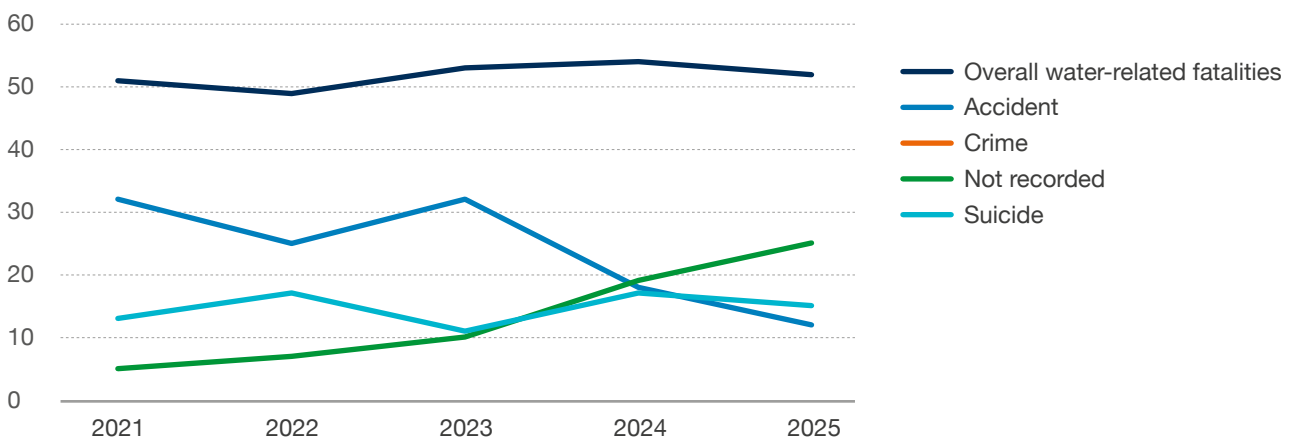


Figure 1: Overall water-related fatalities by year (2021–2025)

The 2025 figures show that overall water-related fatalities are above the Wales' Drowning Prevention Strategy (WDPS) baseline but below the Mid-Strategy Review average (see Figure 2).

Year	Overall water-related fatalities
WDPS Baseline (2016-2018 average)	45
Mid-Strategy Review average (2021-2023)	51
2021	51
2022	49
2023	53
2024	54
2025	52

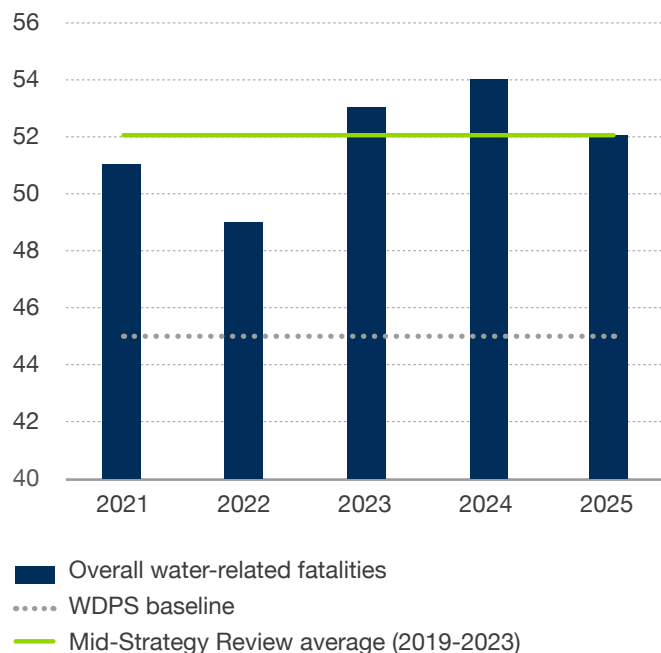


Figure 2: Overall fatalities by year vs WDPS baseline (2016-2018) and Mid-Strategy Review average (2021-2023)

Accidental fatalities

In 2025, there were 12 accidental fatalities¹ in the Wales. **This is a 50 per cent decrease in comparison to WDPS baseline and a 52 per cent decrease in comparison to the Mid-Strategy Review average** (see Figure 3). However, caution should be taken in the interpretation of this trend due to the high number of not recorded/inconclusives in the 2025 data. The 2019 to 2023 data uses an enhanced dataset with a reduced number of not recorded/inconclusives.

Year	Accidental fatalities
WDPS Baseline (2016-2018 average)	24
Mid-Strategy Review average (2021-2023)	25
2021	32
2022	25
2023	32
2024	18
2025	12

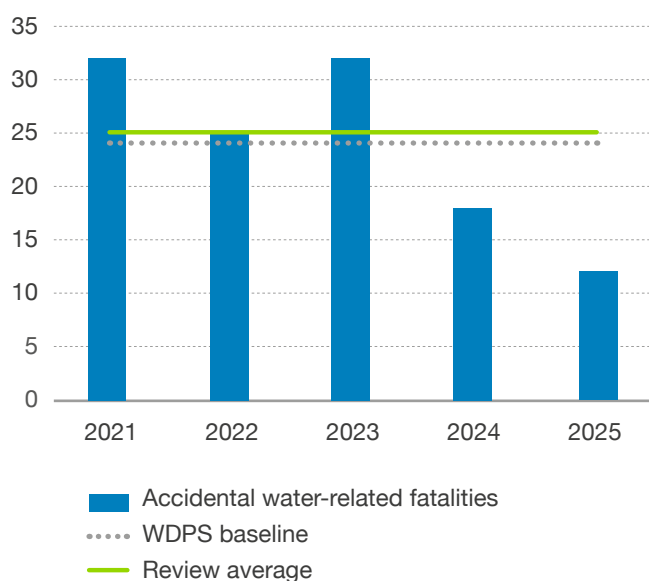


Figure 3: Accidental fatalities by year vs WDPS baseline (2016-2018) and mid-strategy review average (2021-2023)

¹ Accidental fatality refers to accidental and natural causes suspected.

Key points

In 2025:

- There were 12 accidental fatalities
- 75 per cent of accidental fatalities were male
- Males aged 60 to 69 were the highest groups for accidental fatalities (see Figure 4)
- 55 per cent of accidental fatalities happened at inland waters (see Figure 5)
- Recreational activities accounted for 82 per cent of accidental fatalities (see Figure 6)
- 1 accidental fatality report noted the presence or potential presence of drugs and/or alcohol
- The rate of accidental water-related fatalities has decreased in comparison to the WDPS and the Mid-Strategy review. In 2025, the accidental water-related fatality rate was 0.38 (see Figure 7)
- When considering the population rate, males aged 60 to 69 were the highest group (see Figure 8)
- May and June were the months with the most accidental fatalities (see Figure 9).

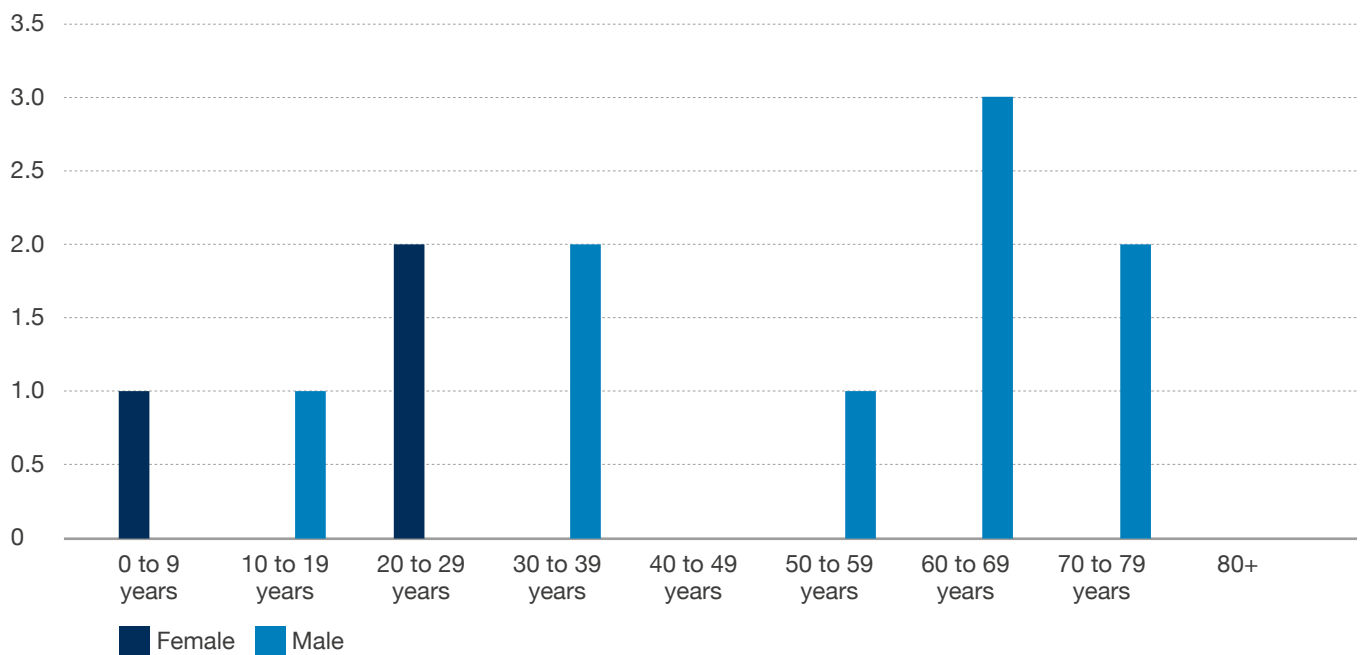


Figure 4: Accidental fatalities by age. n=12

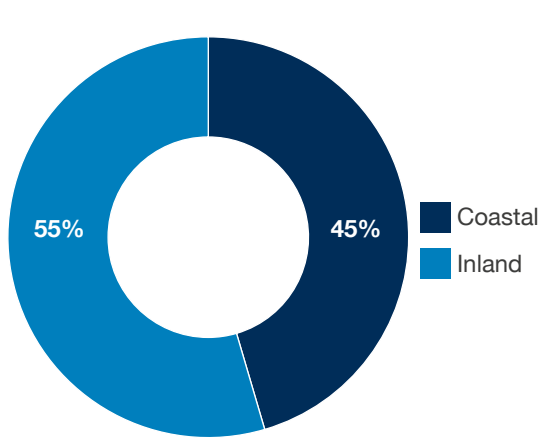


Figure 5: Accidental fatalities by location. n=11, 1 excluded

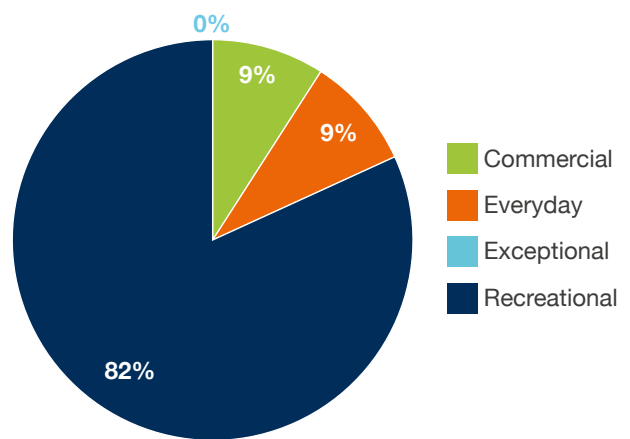


Figure 6: Accidental fatalities by activity. n=11, 1 excluded

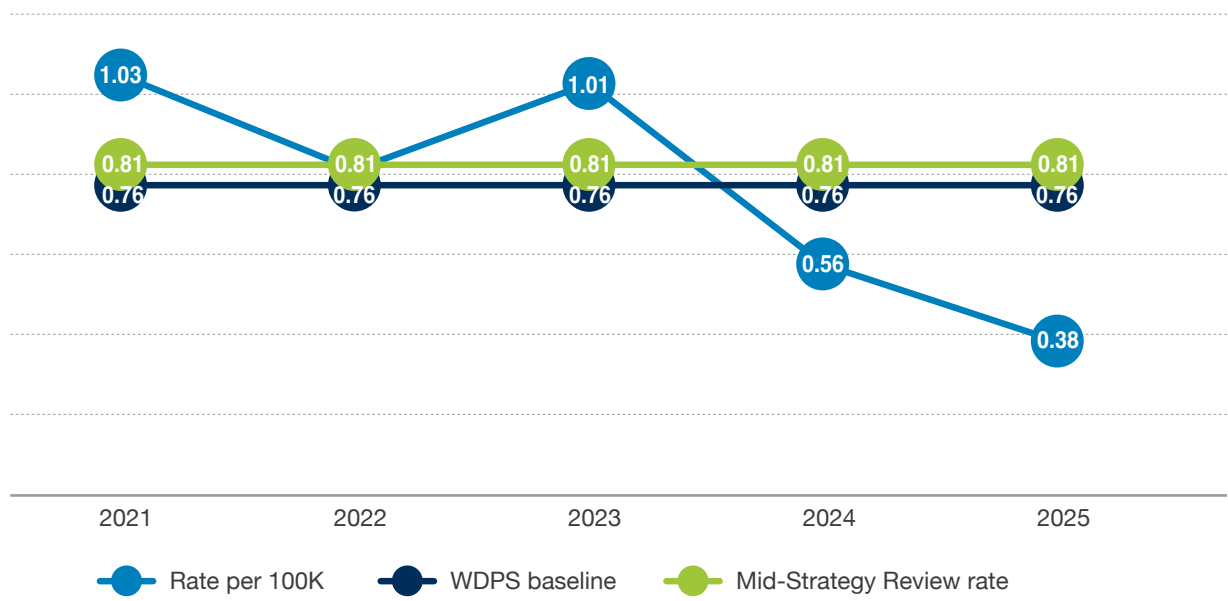


Figure 7: Accidental fatalities by year and rate (2020-2024) and WPDS baseline rate and mid-strategy review rate. Rates based on ONS figures per 100,000

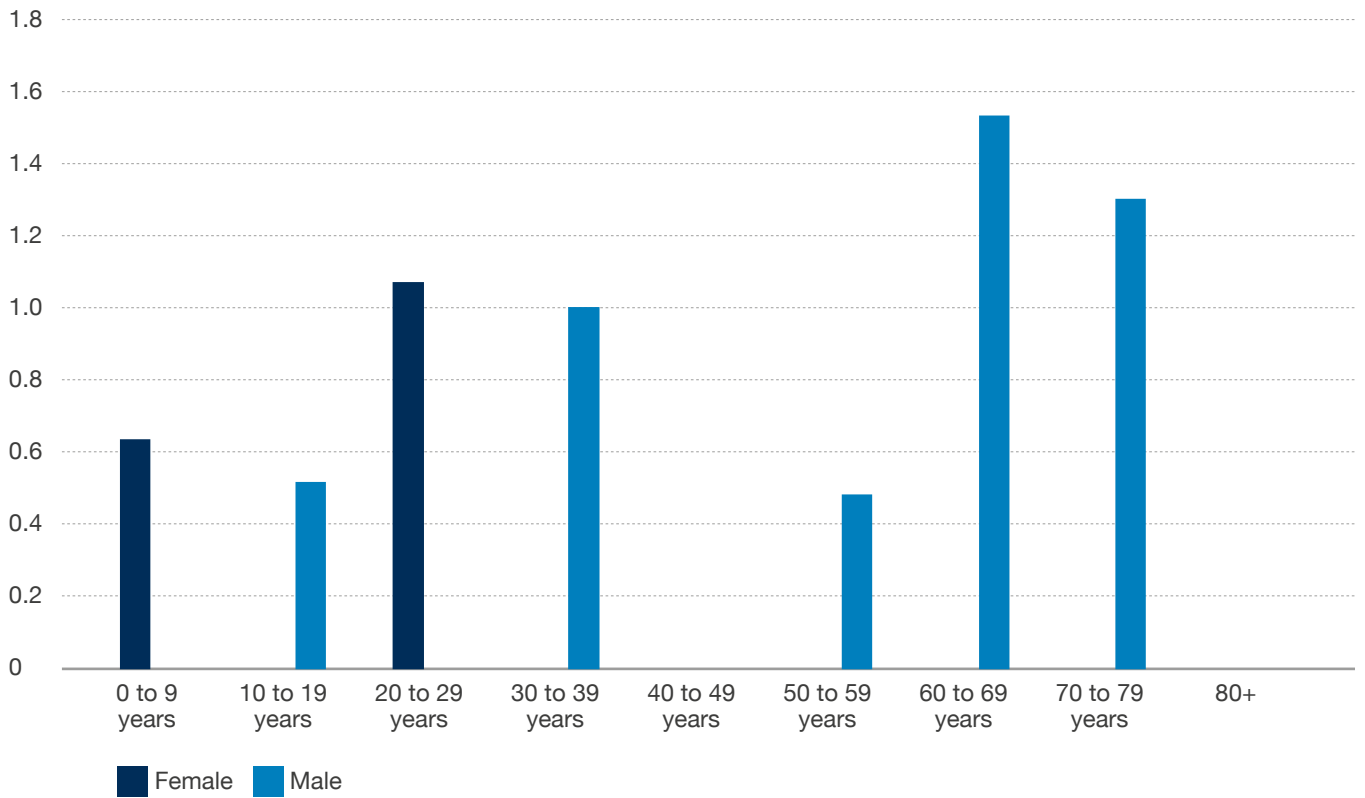


Figure 8: Accidental fatalities by age, sex and rate (based on ONS figures per 100,000. n=12)

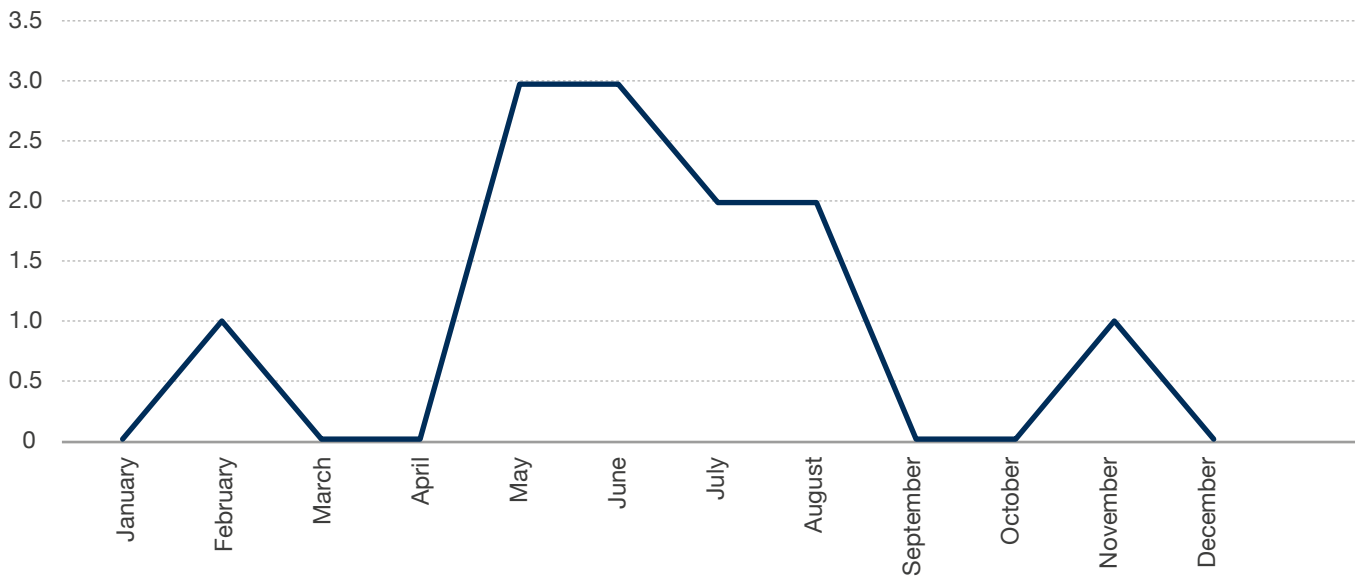


Figure 9: Accidental fatalities by month, n=12

Suicide fatalities

In 2025, there were 15 suicide fatalities at or near water in Wales. This is less than the previous year but again caution should be taken in interpretation due to the high number of not recorded/inconclusives within the 2025 dataset.

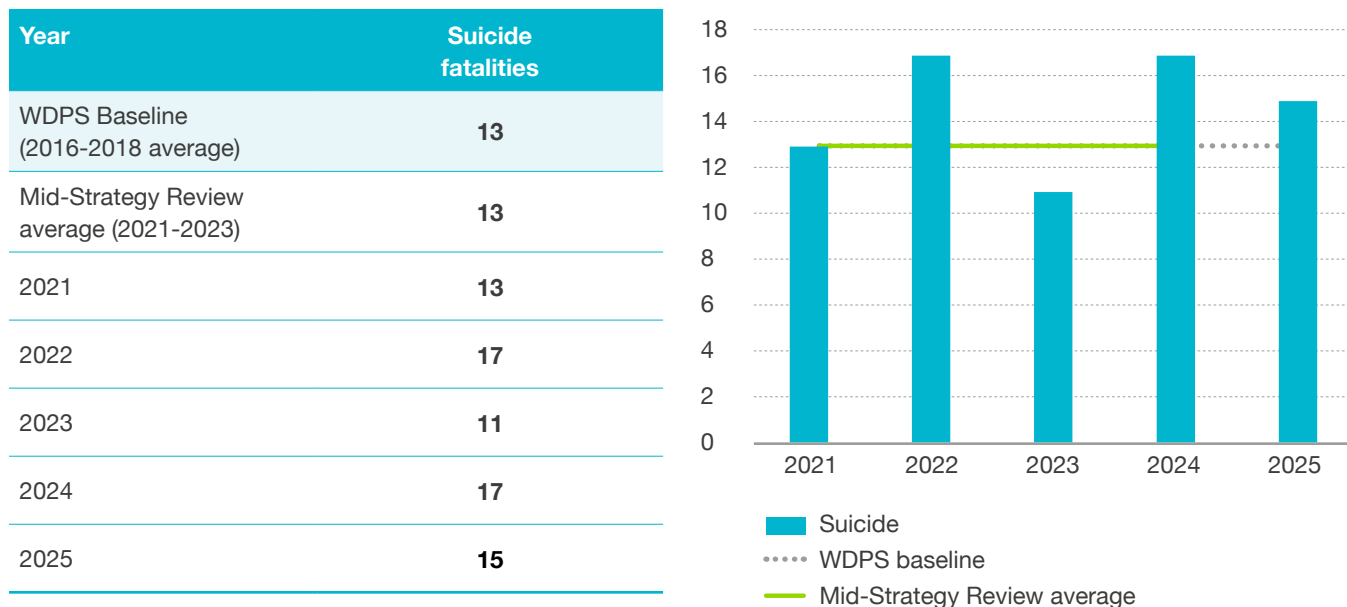


Figure 10: Suicide fatalities by year vs WDPS baseline (2016-2018) and Mid-Strategy Review average

Notes

All data used are from WAID 2019 to 2023 (v2) and 2024 to 2025 (v1).

“Accidental fatalities” refers to suspected/confirmed accidental causes and natural water-related causes.

“Suicide fatalities” refers to suspected/confirmed suicide causes.

Population rate figures use ONS mid-year data.

Figures 5 and 6 exclude “ungrouped activities”.

Baseline figures

The Wales baseline is based upon 2016 to 2018 WAID data – as detailed in Wales’ Drowning Prevention Strategy (WDPS) – and shows 45 water-related fatalities per year. 24 of which are accidental, 13 are suicide and the remainder are ‘not recorded’ or crime.

The **Mid-Strategy Review** provided updated averages (years 2021 to 2023) in order to ascertain changes to the baseline. It established that since the implementation of WDPS, there were an average of 51 overall water-related fatalities per year including 25 accidental fatalities and 13 suspected suicides.

WAID taxonomies

WAID taxonomies for activity include:

- ‘Everyday activities’ – running, walking, cycling, mobility vehicle, motor other, commuting
- ‘Recreational activities’ – adventure sports, angling, boating (other), motorboating, sailing, waterside activities
- ‘Commercial activities’ – only includes those categorised as ‘commercial’
- ‘Exceptional activities’ – person/animal rescue, person on ice, flooding
- ‘Ungrouped activities’ – bathing, residential, unknown activity, undetermined.