water safety England

Water Safety England Terms of Reference

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Water Safety England

1. **Name of the group:** Water Safety England (WSE)

2. **Background:** Following a governance project in 2024/25, the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) was reconstituted as a new UK wide forum made up of the four Water Safety Groups of the UK including Water Safety Scotland, Water Safety Wales and Water Safety Northern Ireland. WSE was subsequently created to lead drowning prevention and water safety for England.

3. **Aim:** The principal aims of WSE are to advocate for drowning prevention in England and to provide an authoritative voice to government on water safety issues. WSE also works towards achieving the key steps of the World Health Organization's Drowning Prevention Implementation guide and the United Nations resolution on global drowning prevention. Additionally, WSE contributes to the principles by which the UK-wide NWSF operates.

4. **Status**

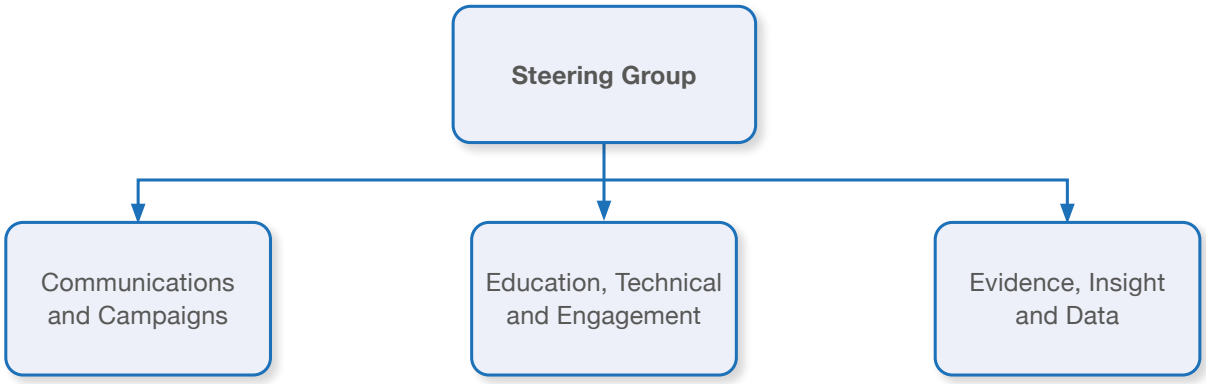
   4.1 WSE is a voluntary network whose members agree to work together to reduce death by drowning and water-related harm.

   4.2 WSE is an unincorporated entity. Contractual and financial risks are held and managed by the Secretariat, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), on behalf of WSE.

5. **Links:** The NWSF, Water Safety Scotland, Water Safety Northern Ireland, Water Safety Wales.

6. Structure

The Steering Group leads the WSE agenda and is supported by the Secretariat. Working Groups take forward the specific functions for drowning prevention in England.



7. Membership of the Steering Group

7.1 Membership of the Steering Group shall not exceed twelve (12) full members and shall be reviewed annually.

7.2 Membership will consist of the following:

Independent Chair
Secretariat (RoSPA)
Communications and Campaigns Working Group Chair
Education, Technical and Engagement Working Group Chair
Evidence, Insight and Data Working Group Chair
Canal and River Trust
The Royal National Lifeboat Institution
Royal Life Saving Society UK
National Fire Chiefs Council
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Surf Life Saving Great Britain
Swim England

7.3 An Independent Chair for WSE will be nominated as set out in Clause 8.

7.4 The Secretariat for WSE is RoSPA. The Secretariat will support WSE with managing and leading the group. It will also provide administrative and project support (where agreed), allowing actions, risks and any relevant information to be collaboratively stored, disseminated, and updated in an inclusive and timely manner.

7.5 Working Group Chairs, and those noted in Clause 7.2, should send a nominated person to attend the Steering Group. It is the responsibility of the nominated lead to manage and accurately reflect the contribution of their organisation or group.

7.6 Any member of WSE may arrange for an appropriate substitute to attend, provided the Secretariat is notified in advance of the meeting. Such substitutes are entitled to vote, subject to the condition in Clause 9.1

7.7 Members of the Steering Group may resign at any point by notification to the Secretariat and Chair in writing. Resignation is by organisation, not individual.

7.8 If a member acts in a way that may bring the WSE network into disrepute, is against the best interests of the collective, or fails to attend meetings, the remaining members shall take a collective view on the future membership status of the individual.

7.9 The decision to remove an individual shall be taken via a blind voting process.

7.10 The Steering Group may appoint further Working Groups, if approved by both the Chair and Secretariat. The Working Groups' Terms of Reference also need to be approved by the Chair and Secretariat.

7.11 The Chair may invite observers or guests as they deem appropriate for a meeting or agenda item. Invitation does not confer an official role, nor does it extend to voting rights.

8. Independent Chair

8.1 An independent Chair for WSE will be elected every four years through an open and transparent recruitment process. This process will be run by the Secretariat.

8.2 Each year, at the first quarter meeting (March), the current Chair should confirm their intention to continue the Chair role or revoke clause 8.3.

8.3 The Chair role can be held consequently for four years. If the Independent Steering Group Chair no longer wishes to remain as Chair, or four years has passed, they should alert the Secretariat of their intention to resign as soon as possible so that the election process can be prepared and implemented.

8.4 The Chair may appoint a Vice Chair to further the agenda of WSE or to delegate specific tasks or projects. The holder shall be drawn from within the Steering Group membership. The role of Vice Chair shall not confer additional voting rights.

9. Conduct and procedures of Steering Group meetings

9.1 All members of the Steering Group will have full voting rights. In the case of equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

9.2 RoSPA, like other members, will have only one vote.

9.3 One third membership of the Steering Group (see clause 7.2) shall comprise a quorum. If the total voting membership is not divisible by three, then the quorum shall be one third rounded up to the nearest whole number.

9.4 A maximum of four meetings shall be convened annually. The minutes of each meeting will be circulated within four weeks of each meeting. They will also be stored on the NWSF website (in a password protected area). The notice of a meeting with an agenda will be circulated 14 days in advance. Members wishing to raise an agenda item should notify the Secretariat at least four weeks in advance of a meeting; it is the responsibility of the member raising the item to prepare a briefing note for circulation. Supplementary items will be taken at the sole discretion of the Chair at the meeting. Any other items of business can be notified to the Chair before the meeting and will be taken at their discretion.

9.5 If a member of the Steering Group misses two consecutive meetings without sending a substitute, and fails to provide apologies prior to the meeting along with a written update within 10 working days of the meeting, the Secretariat shall write to the party concerned to establish its commitment to the WSE, as per Clause 7.8.

9.6 Members will approach discussions in an open and transparent manner, raising concerns via the Chair or Secretariat if they cannot be resolved in the meeting.

WSE will adhere to the principles set out in RoSPA's conflict of interests policy and Government guidance. Members must declare any conflicts of interest. Any declared conflict shall be noted in the minutes, alongside how it was addressed.

10. Working Groups

10.1 All Working Groups must be approved by the Chair and Secretariat and should work towards the aims and objectives of WSE.

10.2 Each Working Group should elect a Chair annually from its current membership.

10.3 All Working Groups must have Terms of Reference approved by the Chair and Secretariat.

10.4 RoSPA, as secretariat of WSE, will provide minutes and actions for up to three Working Groups, where resourcing allows.

10.5 The Chair of the Working Group will report to WSE's Steering Group at Steering Group meetings.

10.6 The Chair will also report to the Secretariat of WSE in advance of these meetings, via the WSE workplan, and alert the Secretariat of any decision making or emerging issues that should be tabled at the Steering Group meetings.

10.7 A stakeholder analysis of members should be completed annually by the Working Group Chair and Secretariat.

10.8 Membership of a Working Group is by invitation from the Working Group Chair following a discussion with the potential member. Members should be able to demonstrate:

- Evidence of their role in drowning prevention
- Expertise available to the Working Group
- Any known conflicts of interest.

11. Communications and use of branding

Groups and organisations that work within WSE may wish to utilise the brand or seek comment, clarification or support from WSE. As far as practicable, we will seek to accommodate these requests. As a collective network, there will be circumstances where a single organisation may be best placed to speak, particularly in the absence of an agreed position, or where that position may conflict with others obligations, such as those with a statutory duty or holding a government office. It is not the intention to restrict the organisation from pursuing a corporate objective; rather to manage those risks associated with working in a collective fashion.

Organisations within WSE will not:

11.1 Alter or amend the brand for use in any respect or situation without written agreement.

11.2 Sub-let or permit third parties to use the brand, or enter into any agreement that enables this, without written agreement from the Secretariat.

11.3 Use or associate the brand for endorsement or promotion of commercial services or products.

11.4 Speak on behalf of, or act as a representative of, the WSE without the prior knowledge and agreement of the full group.

11.5 Take part in activity that may be considered lobbying under the WSE brand.

11.6 Continue to use the brand and any associated materials following a request in writing by the Secretariat.

12. Reporting and risk management

12.1 The Chair and Secretariat will prepare and maintain a work plan, with the support and contribution of the WSE Steering Group members.

12.2 Data protection and privacy: WSE and projects commissioned by the Secretariat will be subject to the RoSPA privacy policy and aligned risk management process.

13. Funding and intellectual property

13.1 The work of WSE is funded in two principal ways (a) resourced through funding secured from Government or organisations, and (b) staffing contribution towards a given project or programme.

13.2 All funds associated with WSE shall be held by RoSPA in a separate restricted fund, and will be subject to the Society's arrangements for grant and restricted funds. These arrangements follow the Charity Commission guidance for fund accounting.

13.3 Intellectual property ('IP') associated with WSE, such as but not limited to copyrights held, data and software code, original WSE content, and network information, shall be held by RoSPA. The IP will be subject to the Society's governance policies and framework.

13.4 Basis of property held: Subject to Clauses 13.2 and 13.3, in the absence of a specific agreement, RoSPA shall hold 100 percent of the rights associated with the funds and properties.

13.5 Although WSE has no financial powers, it shall make recommendations where to best use the available monies, IP and staffing support in order to meet the WSE's aims.

national
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forum