

WAID UK 2022 Summary for the NWSF

This report details the 2022 release of water-related fatality data. An interactive version of this report can be found online [here](#).

Overall water-related fatalities

In 2022, there were 597 water-related fatalities in the United Kingdom from all recorded causes. There were fewer fatalities, overall, compared to the years 2019-2021.

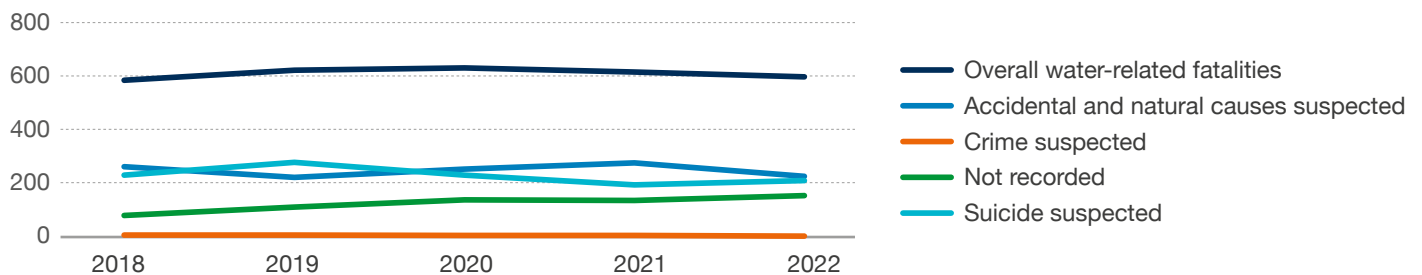


Figure 1: Overall fatalities by year, 2018-2022

The 2022 figures show that overall water-related fatalities are decreasing. The 2021 figures were below the three-year average (see Figure 2).

Year	Overall water-related fatalities
Three-year average (2013-2015)	650
2018	585
2019	623
2020	631
2021	616
2022	597

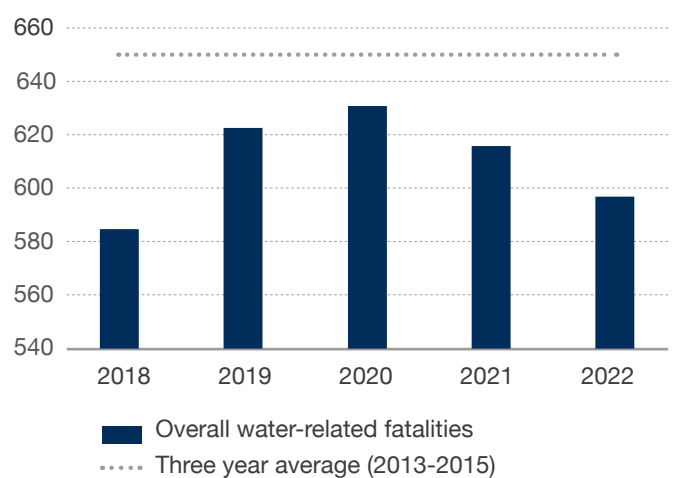


Figure 2: Overall water-related fatalities by year 2018-2022 vs Baseline, UK

Accidental fatalities

In 2021, there were 226 accidental fatalities¹ in the UK. This is a 44 per cent decrease in accidental drowning fatalities in comparison to the UK DPS baseline and a 34 per cent decrease in comparison to the three-year average (see Figure 3).

Year	Accidental fatalities
Three-year average (2013-2015)	344
UK DPS Baseline	400
2018	263
2019	223
2020	254
2021	277
2022	226

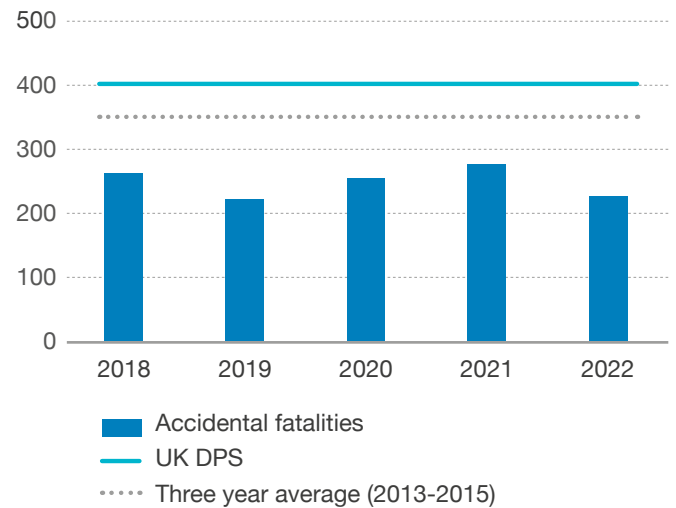


Figure 3: Accidental fatalities by year 2018-2022 vs Baselines, UK

¹ Accidental fatality refers to accidental and natural causes suspected.

Key points

In 2022:

- There were 226 accidental fatalities
- 83% of accidental fatalities were male
- Males 20-29 and 50-59 were the highest group for accidental fatalities (see Figure 4)
- 60% of accidental fatalities happened at **inland waters** (see Figure 5)
- Recreational activities accounted for 58% of accidental fatalities (see Figure 6)
- 58 accidental fatality reports noted the presence of drugs or alcohol
- The rate of accidental drowning has increased slightly since 2018 (0.40 per 100,000) to 0.34 in 2022 (see Figure 7)

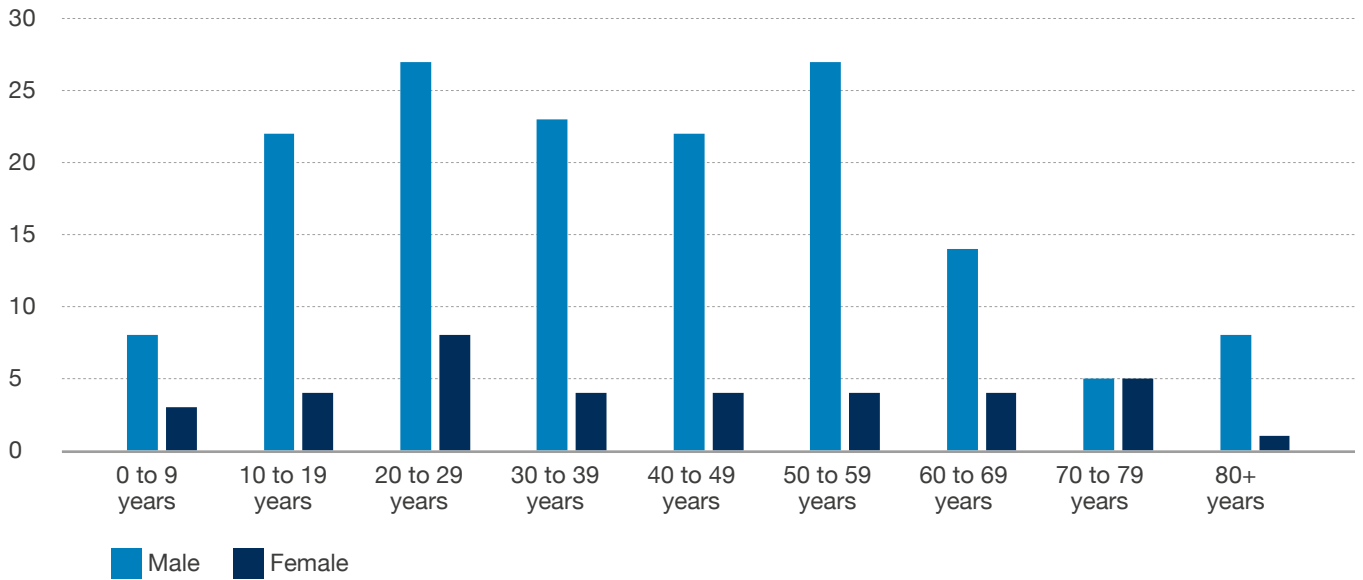


Figure 4: Accidental fatalities by age, N=193, 33 not recorded

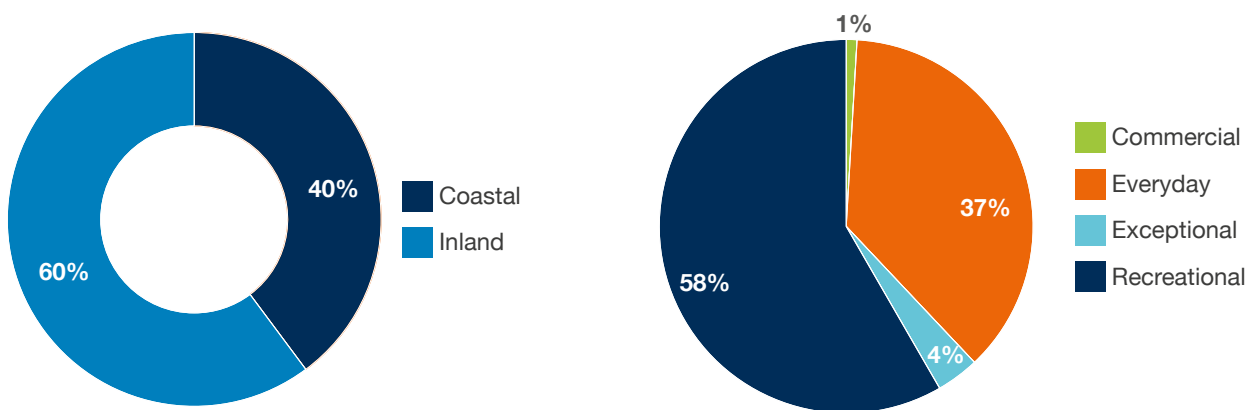


Figure 5: Accidental fatalities by location, N=216, 10 excluded

Figure 6: Accidental fatalities by activity, N=216, 10 excluded

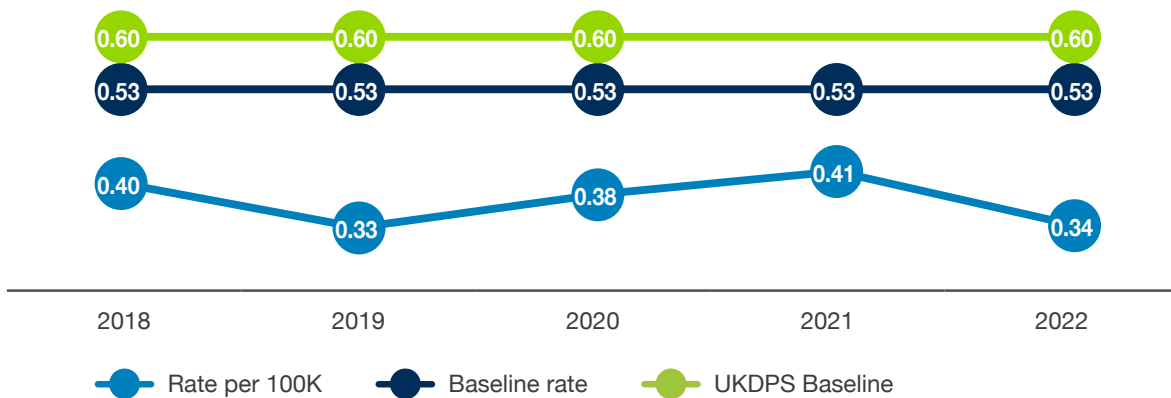


Figure 7: Accidental fatality rates by year and baselines per 100,000 (Population Source: ONS)

Suicide suspected fatalities

In 2022, there were 212 suicide suspected fatalities at or near water in the UK. This is an increase from last year and above the three-year average baseline.

Year	Suicide suspected fatalities
Three-year average (2013 – 2015)	200
2018	232
2019	279
2020	232
2021	195
2022	212

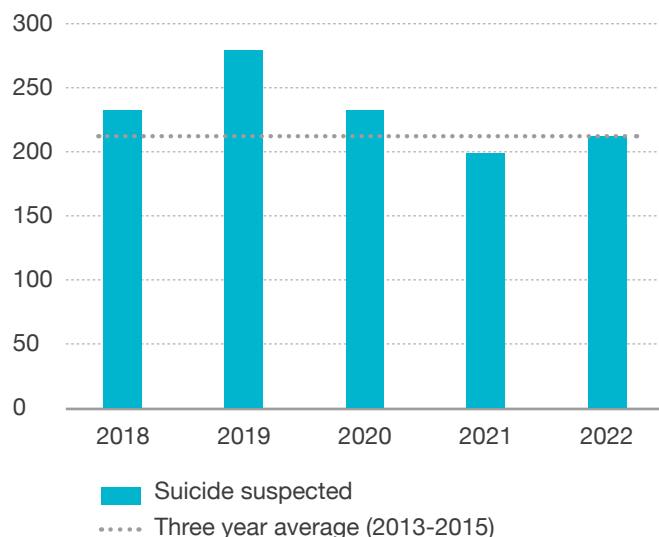


Figure 8: Suicide suspected fatalities by year 2018-2022 vs Baselines, UK

Notes

“Accidental fatalities” refers to accidental causes and natural water related causes.

This data analysis is based on the official releases of WAID data as found online nationalwatersafety.org.uk/waid/annual-reports-and-data. It should be noted that the core data providers continue to improve verification and completeness of records starting in 2012 which results in an improved record set.

All rates for population figures are based on ONS figures for the previous mid-year, published online: ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland. Baseline rates are based on mid-year 2015 data.

Baseline performance metrics

The UK Drowning Prevention Strategy (UK DPS) establishes that there are 400 accidental drowning fatalities each year – this is the principle metric with an associated reduction ambition. This baseline makes an allowance for the number of highly uncertain events that are captured within the ‘Not Recorded’ category, around 100-130 per year.

In the same period NWSF identified an average of 200 suicides a year, suspected or confirmed, included to enable a time comparison. **No explicit reduction target has been set in this strategy period by the NWSF.**

In addition to the UK DPS baseline, we also include a three-year average baseline which focuses on years 2013 – 2015. This does not include ‘not recorded’ outcomes except in figure 2 which covers overall water-related fatality. This helps to enable clearer comparison with home nation strategies.

Figures 5 and 6 exclude domestic fatalities.

