

## WAID 2024 Summary for Northern Ireland

This report details the 2024 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 – 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 2024, there were 13 water-related fatalities in Northern Ireland from all recorded causes. There were fewer fatalities, overall, compared to the previous years (see Figure 1 which also breaks down water-related fatalities by outcome).

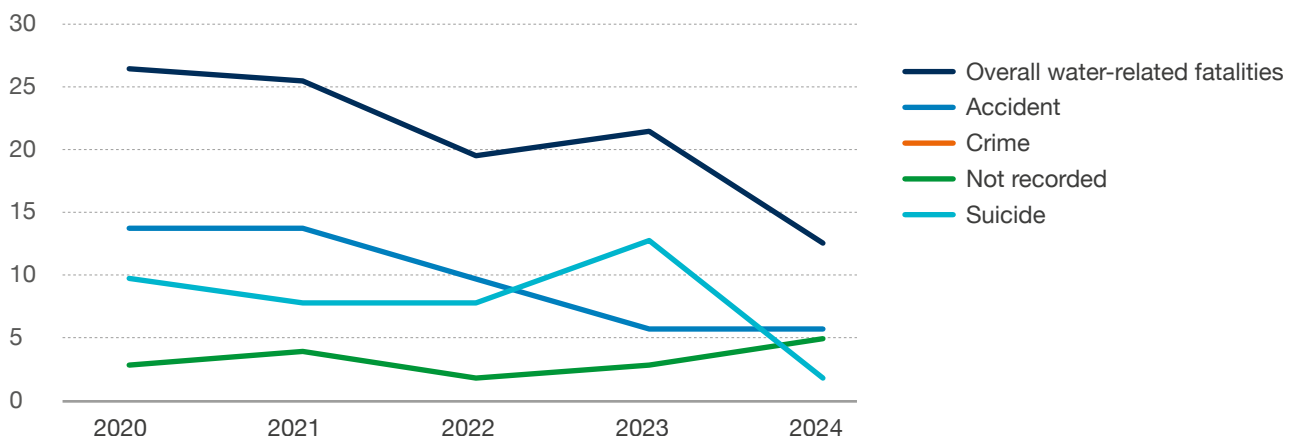


Figure 1: Overall fatalities by year (2020 – 2024)

The 2024 figures show that overall water-related fatalities decreased. When compared to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy (DPS) baseline and the DPS review average, the 2024 figures are below both (see Figure 2).

Year	Overall water-related fatalities
DPS baseline	20
DPS review average (2021 – 2023)	24
2020	27
2021	26
2022	20
2023	22
2024	13

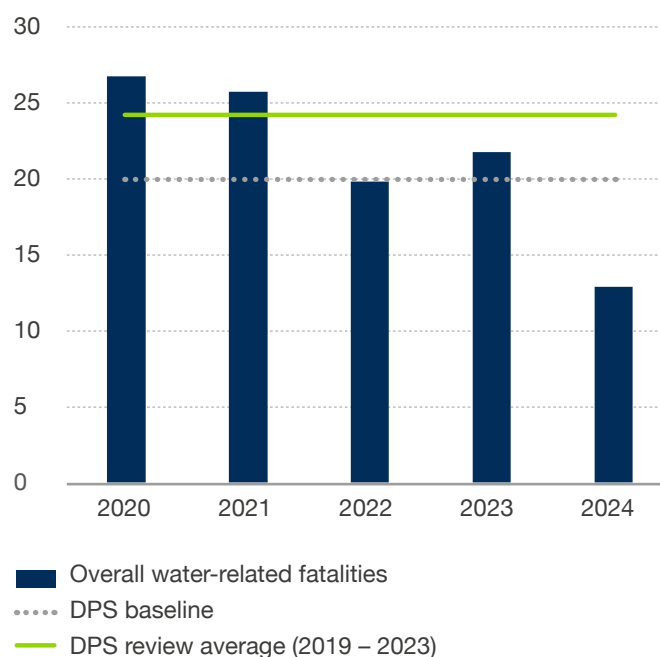


Figure 2: Overall water-related fatalities by year (2020 – 2024) vs DPS baseline and DPS review average, Northern Ireland

## Accidental fatalities

In 2024, there were 6 accidental fatalities<sup>1</sup> in Northern Ireland. **This is a 40 per cent decrease in comparison to the DPS baseline and a 45 per cent decrease in comparison to the DPS review average** (see Figure 3). However, caution should be taken in the interpretation of this trend due to the not recorded/inconclusives in the 2024 data. The 2020 – 2023 data uses an enhanced dataset with a reduced number of not recorded/inconclusives.

Year	Accidental fatalities
DPS Baseline	10
DPS review average (2019 – 2023)	11
2020	14
2021	10
2022	10
2023	6
2024	6

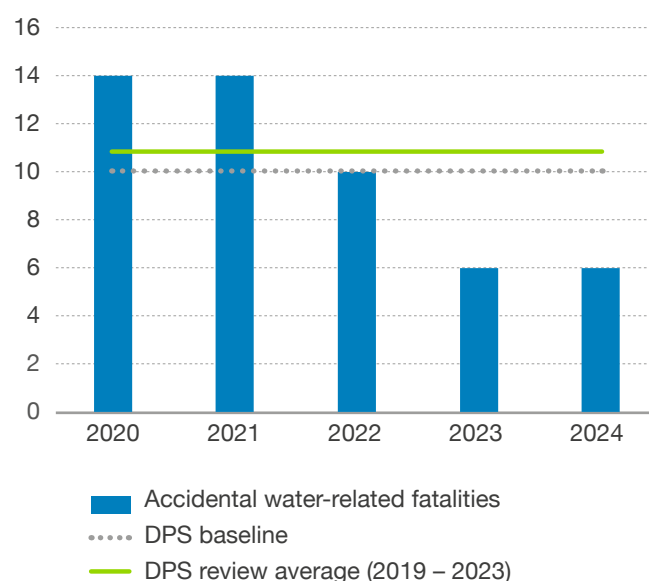


Figure 3: Accidental fatalities by year (2020 – 2024) vs DPS baseline and DPS review average, Northern Ireland

<sup>1</sup> Accidental fatality refers to accidental and natural causes suspected.

## Key points

In 2024:

- There were 6 accidental fatalities
- 60 per cent of accidental fatalities were male
- Males aged 20 to 29 were the highest group for accidental fatalities (see *Figure 4*)
- 50 per cent of accidental fatalities happened at **inland waters** (see *Figure 5*)
- Recreational activities accounted for 50 per cent of accidental fatalities (see *Figure 6*)
- None of the fatality reports noted the presence or potential presence of drugs and/or alcohol
- The rate of accidental water-related fatalities has decreased in comparison to the Northern Ireland DPS review. In 2024, the accidental water-related fatality rate was 0.31 (see *Figure 7*)
- When considering the population rate, males aged 20 to 29 were the highest group (see *Figure 8*)
- June was the month with the most accidental fatalities (see *Figure 9*).

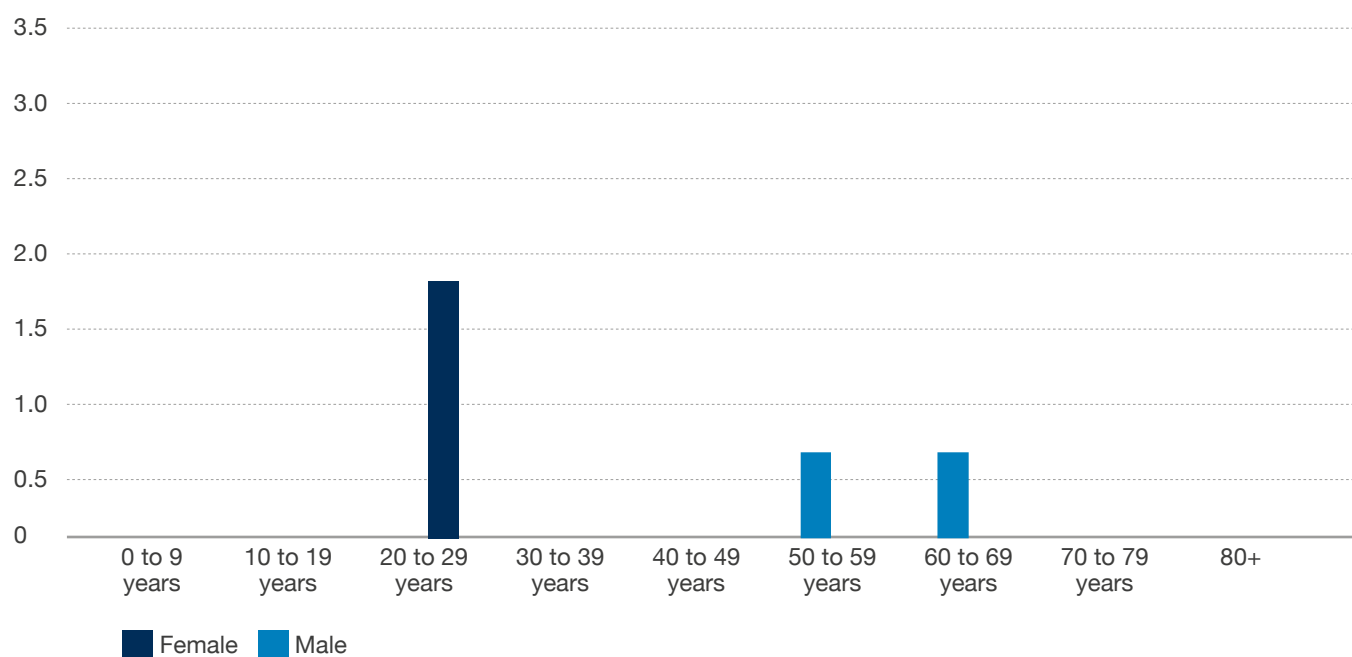


Figure 4: Accidental fatalities by age. N = 5, 1 not recorded

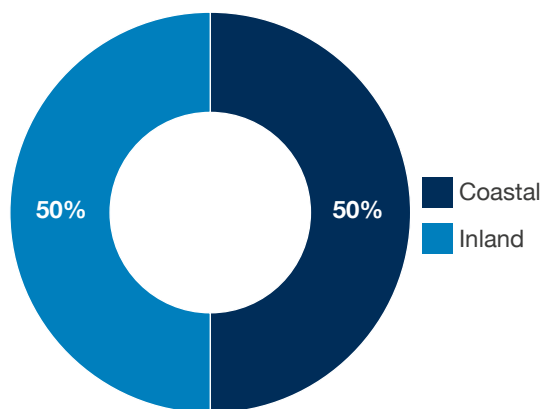


Figure 5: Accidental fatalities by location. N = 4, 2 excluded

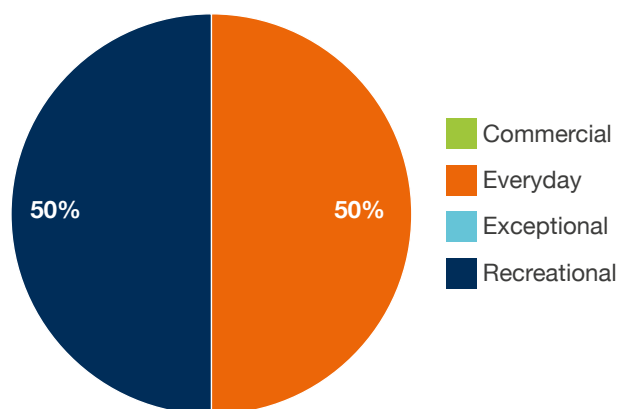


Figure 6: Accidental fatalities by activity. N = 6, 2 excluded

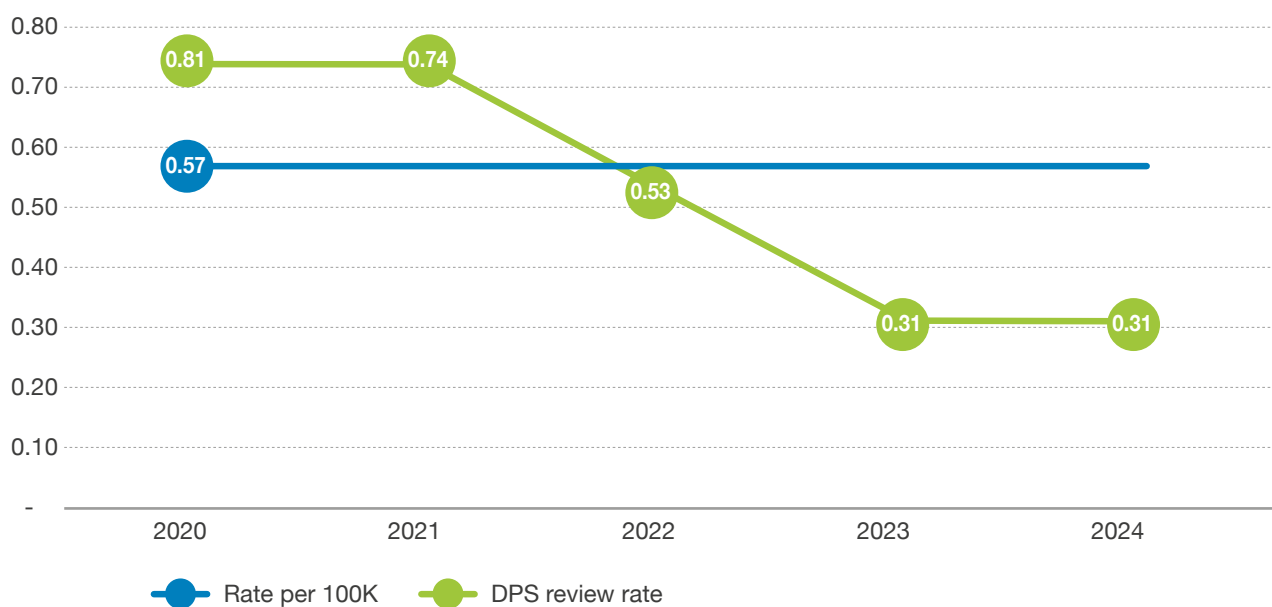


Figure 7: Accidental fatality rates by year (2020 – 2024) vs DPS review rate, Northern Ireland Rates are per 100,000 (Population Source: ONS)

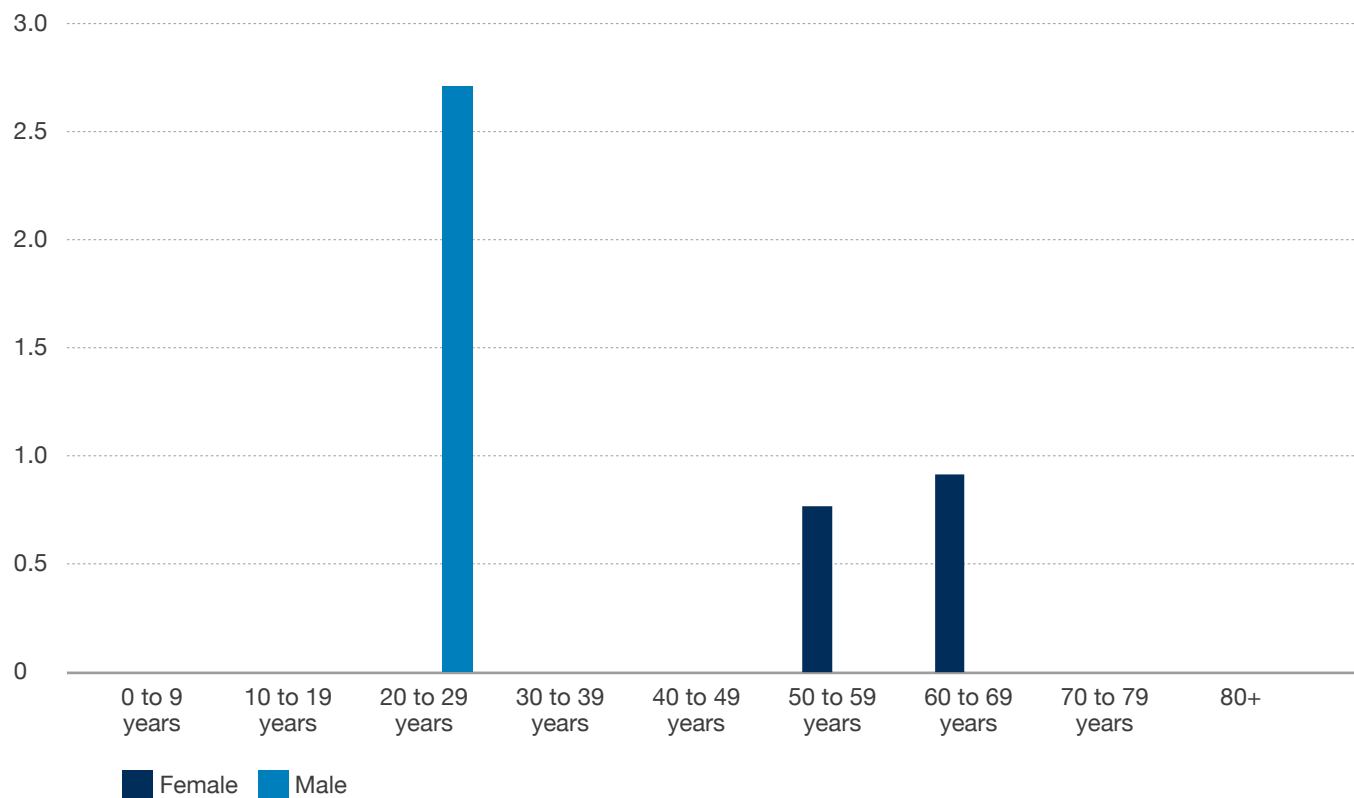


Figure 8: Accidental fatalities by age, sex and rate (based on ONS figures per 100,000). N = 5, 1 not recorded

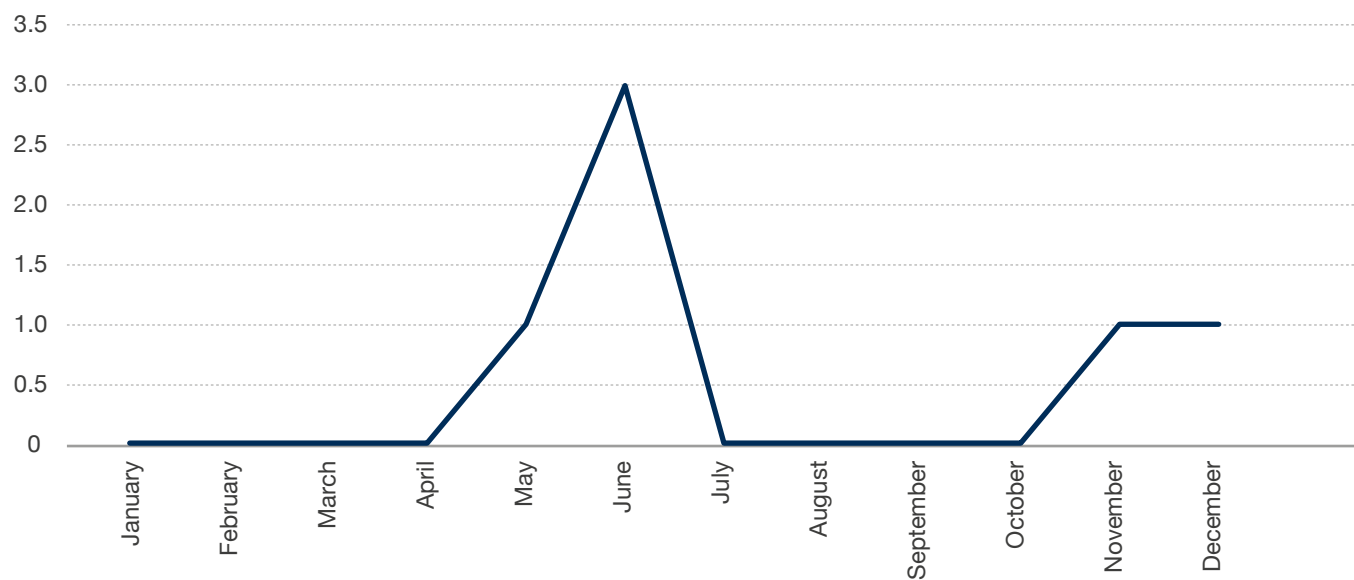


Figure 9: Accidental fatalities by month. N = 6

# Suicide fatalities

In 2024, there were two suicide fatalities at or near water in Northern Ireland. This is less than previous years but again caution should be taken in interpretation due to number of not recorded/inconclusives within the 2024 dataset.

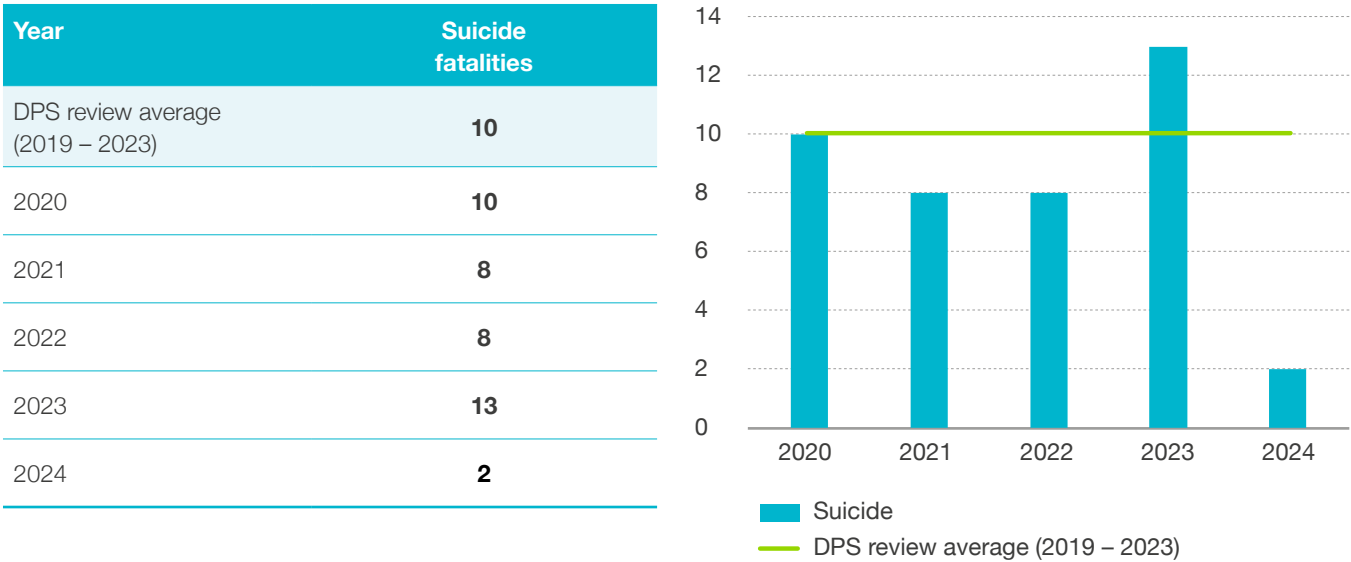


Figure 10: Suicide fatalities by year (2020 – 2024) vs DPS review average, Northern Ireland

## Notes

All data used are from WAID 2019 – 2023 (v2) and 2024 (v1).  
“Accidental fatalities” refers to suspected/confirmed to 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 Northern Ireland baseline is based upon the original dataset (WAID data 2010 – 2013).  
All baseline review figures for Northern Ireland are based upon the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy Review data (2019 – 2023) as detailed [here](#).

### 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