

# The National Water Safety Forum Terms of Reference

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# The National Water Safety Forum

**1. Name of the group:** The National Water Safety Forum (NWSF).

**2. Background:** The NWSF is a UK umbrella network made up of the leads of Water Safety England, Water Safety Scotland, Water Safety Wales and Water Safety Northern Ireland. Its key aim is to reduce water-related deaths and associated harm by sharing best practice and improving consistency across the UK.

The NWSF was established in 2004 following a government review into water safety. It sought to bring together several pre-existing national groups with the ambition of creating a 'one-stop shop' for the prevention of drowning and water-related harm in the UK, recognising the broad range of existing stakeholder groups, their respective contributions, and their own brands and values, often towards charitable objectives.

As contexts changed and the devolved nations developed their own national partnership organisations, a NWSF governance project was undertaken and completed in 2024/25, which subsequently led to the creation of Water Safety England. The NWSF was reconstituted as a new UK-wide umbrella forum in 2025.

**3. Aim:** The NWSF advocates for drowning prevention across the UK by bringing together the four nations. The NWSF 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.

## **4. Status**

**4.1** The NWSF is a voluntary network made up of the leads of the four UK nations including Water Safety England, Water Safety Scotland, Water Safety Wales and Water Safety Northern Ireland.

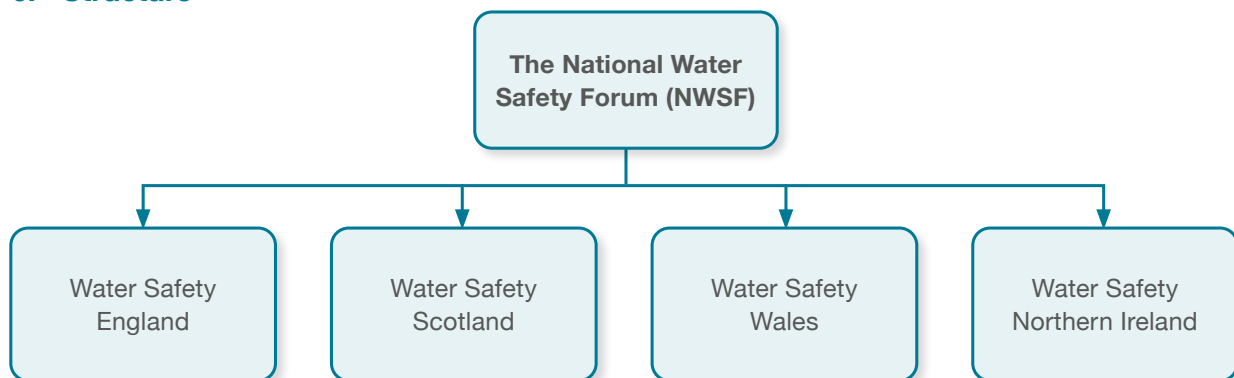
**4.2** The NWSF is an unincorporated entity. Contractual and financial risks are held and managed by the Secretariat, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), on behalf of the Forum.

**4.3** The NWSF is the Section Committee that advises RoSPA on matters of water safety, as per the objectives of the RoSPA Constitution.



- 5. Integration with devolved nations:** The NWSF umbrella organisation will serve as a collaborative platform to align and integrate shared priorities, whilst respecting the individual needs of nations. The NWSF will focus on establishing common goals, promoting good practice and coordinating actions across agreed thematic areas including: education, communications and evidence, data and insight. The NWSF will also coordinate UK-wide projects such as water incident data collection and database input.

## 6. Structure



## 7. Membership

- 7.1** All four UK nations are members of the NWSF through their respective national groups, i.e. Water Safety England, Water Safety Scotland, Water Safety Wales and Water Safety Northern Ireland. These entities are separate to the NWSF but make up the membership of the group. Each respective organisation may run its groups as required through its own membership, funding requirements and government commitments. Each organisation will work to align to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy guiding principles.
- 7.2** The Secretariat for the NWSF is RoSPA. The Secretariat shall support the NWSF 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.
- 7.3** A Chair for the NWSF will be drawn from the four nations' Water Safety Group Leads every two years by mutual agreement. The National Water Safety Forum Chair role cannot be held consecutively for more than four years.

- 7.4** The Chair role will be ratified by the RoSPA Board of Trustees.
- 7.5** During the Chair's tenure, if the Chair no longer wishes to remain as Chair, they should alert the Secretariat of their intention to resign as soon as possible. The NWSF will then hold a discussion and elect a new Chair from the remaining leads.
- 7.6** A member of the NWSF may resign at any point by notification to the Secretariat and Chair in writing. Resignation is as organisation, not individual.
- 7.7** If a member acts in a way that may bring the NWSF 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. A complaint may then be issued to the respective country level organisation and a new representative to attend be requested.
- 7.8** The decision to remove an individual shall be taken by a blind voting. Arbitration shall be at the discretion of the RoSPA Board of Trustees.

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**Water Safety England**



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**Water Safety Scotland**



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**Water Safety Wales**



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**Water Safety  
Northern Ireland**



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**Secretariat**



## **8. Conduct and procedures**

- 8.1** Voting: each country will have one vote each (regardless of the number of representatives attending the meeting). RoSPA will also have one vote. In the case of equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
- 8.2** Two thirds of the membership (three of five) shall comprise a quorum.
- 8.3** The NWSF will aim to meet three times per year. The minutes of each meeting will be circulated within four weeks of each meeting. The notice of a meeting with an agenda shall 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.
- 8.4** Any member of the NWSF 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 8.1.
- 8.5** If a representative 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 NWSF, as per Clause 7.7
- 8.6** The NWSF may appoint working groups for specific projects and approve their terms of reference. The Chair and Secretariat will be members of those groups.
- 8.7** Members should approach discussions in an open and transparent manner, raising concerns via the Chair or Secretariat if they cannot be resolved in the meeting.
- 8.8** The NWSF 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 will be noted in the minutes, alongside how it was addressed.

## 9. Communications and use of branding

Groups and organisations that work within the NWSF network may wish to utilise the brand or seek comment, clarification or support from the NWSF. As far as practicable, the NWSF will seek to accommodate these requests. 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 the NWSF will not:

- 9.1** Alter or amend the brand for use in any respect or situation without written agreement.
- 9.2** Sub-let or permit third parties to use the brand, or enter into any agreement that enables this, without written agreement from the Secretariat.
- 9.3** Use or associate the brand for endorsement or promotion of commercial services or products.
- 9.4** Speak on behalf of, or act as a representative of, the NWSF without the prior knowledge and agreement of the full group.
- 9.5** Take part in activity that may be considered lobbying under the NWSF brand.
- 9.6** Continue to use the brand and any associated materials following a request in writing by the Secretariat.

## 10. Reporting and risk management

- 10.1** The Chair and Secretariat will prepare and maintain a work plan, with the support and contribution of the NWSF members.
- 10.2** Members may input and make recommendations on NWSF project budgets including staffing support in order to meet the Forum's aims.
- 10.3** Data protection and privacy: the NWSF and projects commissioned by the Secretariat will be subject to RoSPA's privacy policy and aligned risk management process.

## **11. Funding and intellectual property**

- 11.1** The work of the NWSF 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.
- 11.2** All funds associated with NWSF shall be held by RoSPA in a separate restricted fund, and are subject to the Society's arrangements for grant and restricted funds. These arrangements follow the Charity Commission guidance for fund accounting.
- 11.3** Intellectual property (IP) associated with NWSF, such as but not limited to copyrights held, data and software code, original NWSF content, and network information, shall be held by RoSPA. The IP will be subject to RoSPA's governance policies and framework.
- 11.4** Basis of property held: subject to Clauses 11.2 and 11.3, in the absence of a specific agreement, the RoSPA shall hold 100 percent of the rights associated with the funds and properties.
- 11.5** If by way of a majority vote, notice may be given to change the arrangements.
- 11.6** In the event of the NWSF being dissolved, assets not subject to a specific agreement shall be returned to contributors proportionately in the first instance.

## **12. Review and dissolution**

- 12.1** Dissolution of the NWSF is at the discretion of RoSPA's Board of Trustees. Without prejudice to the powers of the Board of Trustees, the NWSF may recommend to RoSPA that the committee be dissolved by a resolution approved by no less than two thirds of the voting members present at a Special Meeting called for the purpose of the dissolution.
- 12.2** Review of membership and constitution: these terms of reference shall be reviewed annually with recommendations made to RoSPA for approval.



