

Leaping into action: How insights from CDR led to new water safety campaign

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The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)



About us

Strong heritage in water safety

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) has been sharing expertise in water safety, lifesaving, and lifeguarding, educating others to enjoy water safely for over 130 years.

Industry-leading lifesaving qualifications and awards

We have used our extensive, world-leading knowledge of water safety and training to develop a comprehensive range of vocational qualifications, awards and education programmes which all have the aim of preventing drowning.

We have 250+ lifesaving clubs that teach our Rookie Lifeguard programme, delivering 48,000 lifesaving awards in 2024.

Raising awareness of the importance of water safety education

We work tirelessly to raise awareness of water safety education, supported by our annual Drowning Prevention Week campaign.

In 2024, an estimated 1.48m children were educated using our free resources across a mix of educational settings and in leisure centres.

We also offer free, open access resources to parents and caregivers via our website.

Striving for class-based water safety education for all children

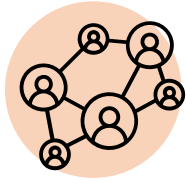
We remain committed to achieving equal access to water safety education for all children and are currently lobbying for class-based water safety education to be delivered in all schools in England - a campaign which has now seen water safety included as part of draft RHSE guidance (currently under review).

In 2024, over 8,000 children participated in water-based classroom education through our Water Smart Schools programme.

Royal Lifesaving Society UK & NCMD Partnership Journey



Meet & Greet
January 2023.



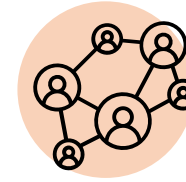
Networking Event

RLSS UK attended NCMD's charity networking event February 2023.



Collaborative Insight

RLSS UK was one of several partners sharing expertise to enhance trauma report analysis and insights.



Westminster Event

NCMD attended the launch of RLSS UK's National Drowning Report in June 2023.



Trauma Conference

NCMD invited RLSS UK to speak at the NHS Trauma Care Conference in March 2024.



CDOP Workshop

NCMD invited RLSS UK to speak at a CDOP review meeting for Rotherham.



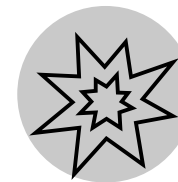
Trauma Report

NCMD Thematic Report into Child Trauma Deaths launched July 2023.



Drowning Updates

RLSS UK and NCMD worked closely together on a drowning updates for 22-23 and 23-24.



Impact Sharing

RLSS UK was invited to present at the Paediatric Trauma Network Meeting in March 2025.



Today's Webinar

Sharing the evolution of our Splash Safety campaign in response to NCMD data.

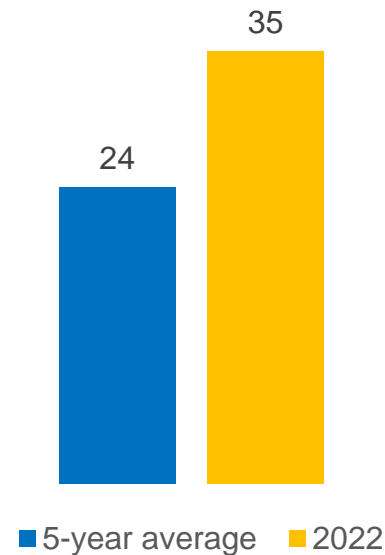
RLSS UK first highlighted an increase in child drowning in the National Drowning Report (June 2023)



Number of child UK water-related accidental fatalities

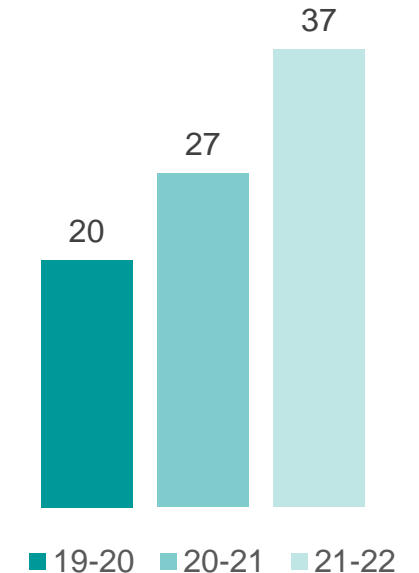


RLSS UK's National Drowning Report UK (June 2023) showed a 46% increase in the number of children accidentally drowning in the UK in 2022, compared to the 5-year average.



NCMD National Child Mortality Database

The National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) thematic paper, *Deaths of children and young people due to traumatic incidents, July 2023*, reported evidence of an increase in child drownings in England, increasing from 20 in 2019-20 to 37 in 2021-22.



Source: RLSS UK National Drowning Report, June 2023.

Source: Deaths of children and young people due to traumatic incidents, July 2023.

New data released in June 2024 enabled RLSS UK to raise awareness ahead of Drowning Prevention Week*



Number of child drownings in England 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023

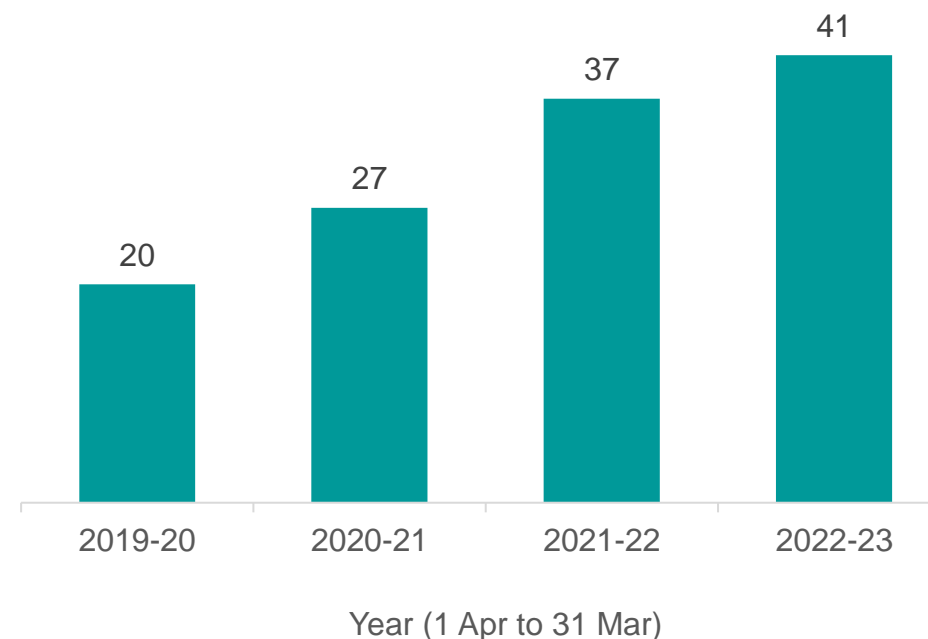
Charity urges focus on water safety as child drownings in England double over last four years

The RLSS UK shares data that accidental drowning deaths amongst children have doubled since 2019-20 as its annual water safety education campaign begins.

07/06/2024

The data^[1] shows the number of child drowning deaths in England has significantly increased from 20 in 2019-20, to 41 in 2022-23. Tragically, a total of 125 children have accidentally lost their lives to drowning in the last four years.

With England reporting an alarming increase in child drowning fatalities, RLSS UK is urging everyone to learn the **Water Safety Code** through its video **animation** as part of its annual Drowning Prevention Week campaign, taking place from 15-22 June 2024.



Three outcomes for RLSS UK from the June 2024 data release



Child Drowning Update



Parent Survey



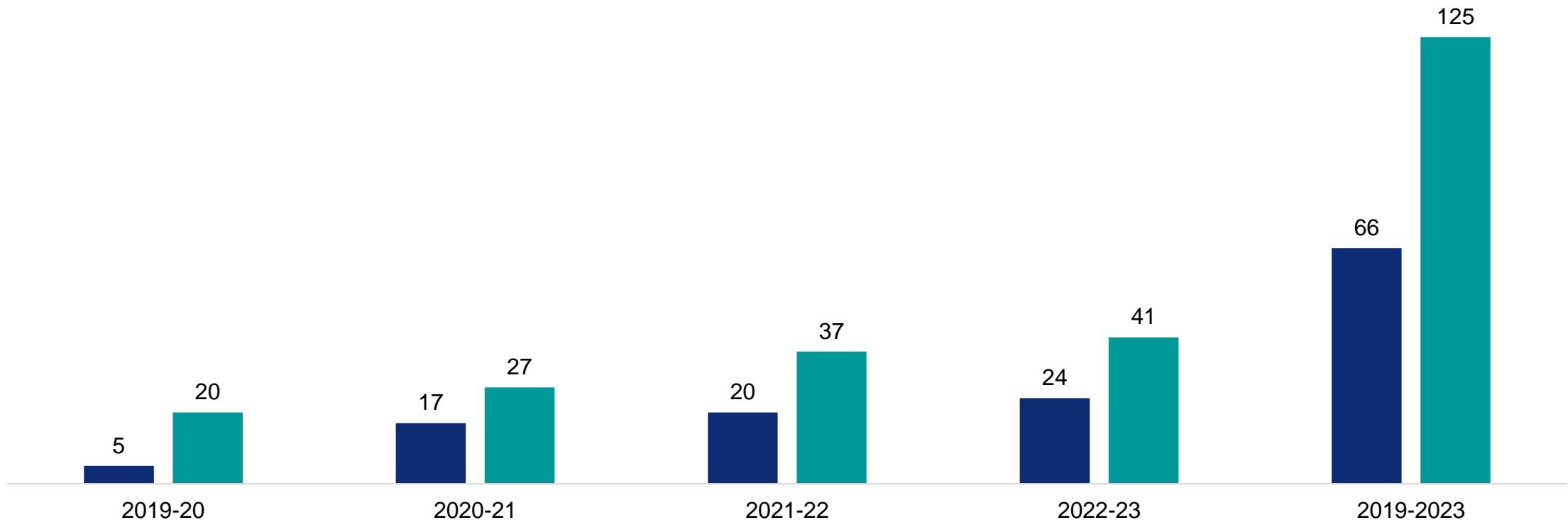
New Campaign

NCMD data showed that 125 children accidentally drowned in England (1 Apr 2019 to 31 Mar 2023)



Number of Accidental Child Drowning Deaths (0-17 years) - England

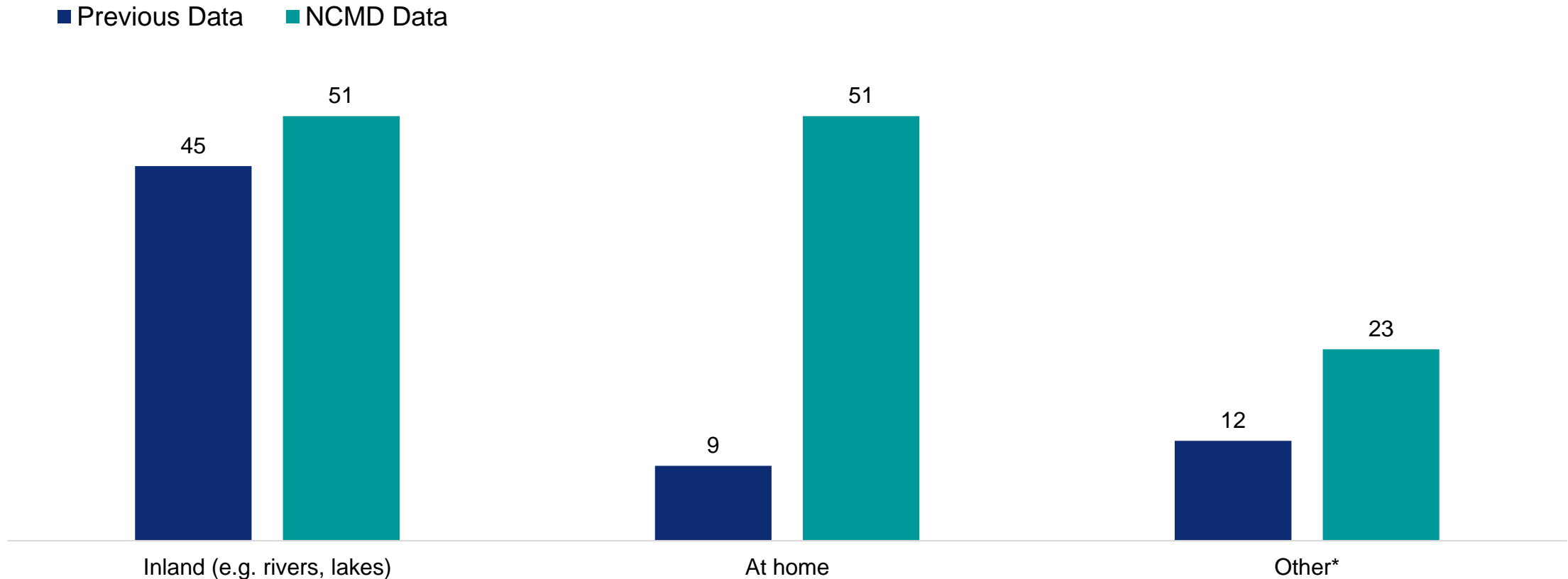
■ Previous Data ■ NCMD Data



NCMD data highlighted a significant number of child drownings occurring at home



Number of Accidental Child Drowning Deaths (0-17 years) – England, by Location



Source: Previous Data, WAID, National Child Mortality Database (NCMD)
*Other includes at the coast and in swimming pools, abroad and the in UK

Note: Research approaches not directly comparable.
Data shown side by side to illustrate overall differences in numbers of cases.

2 in 3 children that drowned at home, did so in the bath. This totalled 35 deaths in four years



Findings – RLSS UK Child Drowning Update (September 2024)

2 in 3

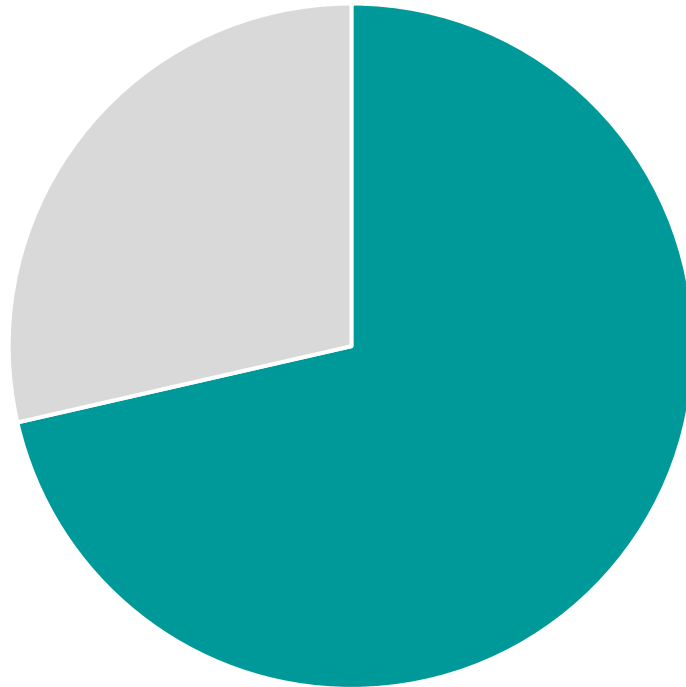
accidental child drownings at home
were **in the bath**



35 children that drowned in the bath across the four years. 25 of these were aged under 5 years



Findings – RLSS UK Child Drowning Update (September 2024)



25 of 35

accidental child drownings in the bath
were children **aged under 5 years old**,
including 10 infants aged under 1 year.

Seven out of ten drownings of infants occurred when the child was using a bath seat



Findings – RLSS UK Child Drowning Update (September 2024)

7 of 10

infants that drowned in the bath, were using a bath seat at the time



Baby bath seats are widely used and there is a common misconception they are a safety device



Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old

88%

of parents of children under five told us they **have used a baby bath seat**, even if they no longer do so.

39%

of parents of under fives **currently use a baby bath seat** when they bathe their child.

72%

of parents of under fives believe the **purpose of a baby bath seat is to keep the baby safe**.

Q. Have you ever used a baby bath seat when bathing your child? Which (if any) of the following would you say describes the purpose of a baby bath seat?

Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=1,003 parents of children aged under 5 years old)

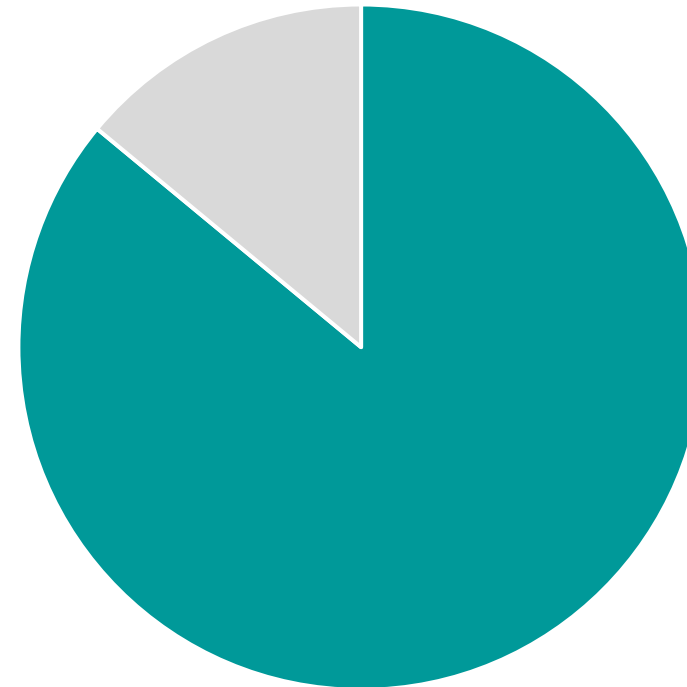
A lack of adequate adult supervision was identified as a significant contributory factor to child drowning



Findings – RLSS UK Child Drowning Update (September 2024)

86%

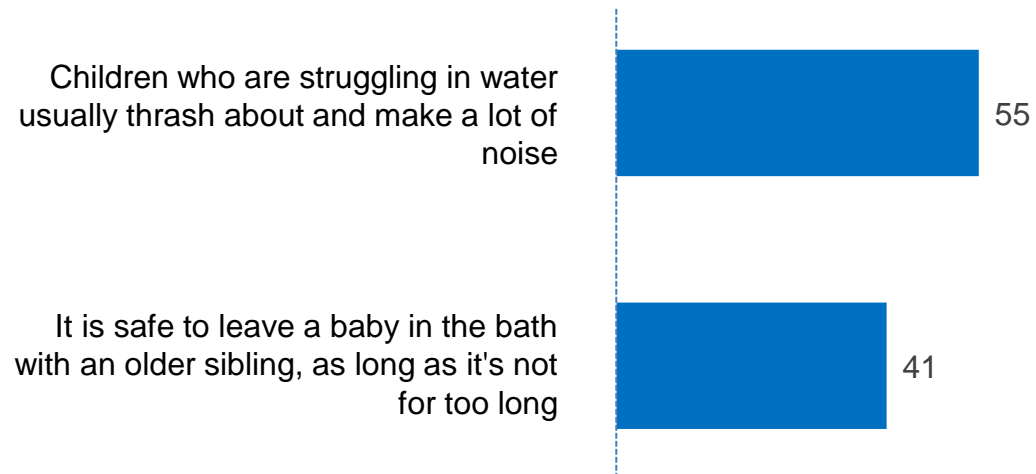
of all accidental drownings of children occurred when the child was unsupervised by an adult



Source: RLSS UK, Child Drowning Update (September 2024)
Base: Accidental child drownings (aged 0-17) where presence of supervision was known (n=81)

The parent research identified common misconceptions about drowning and bath safety

Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old



Question: To what extent would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Total agree shown.

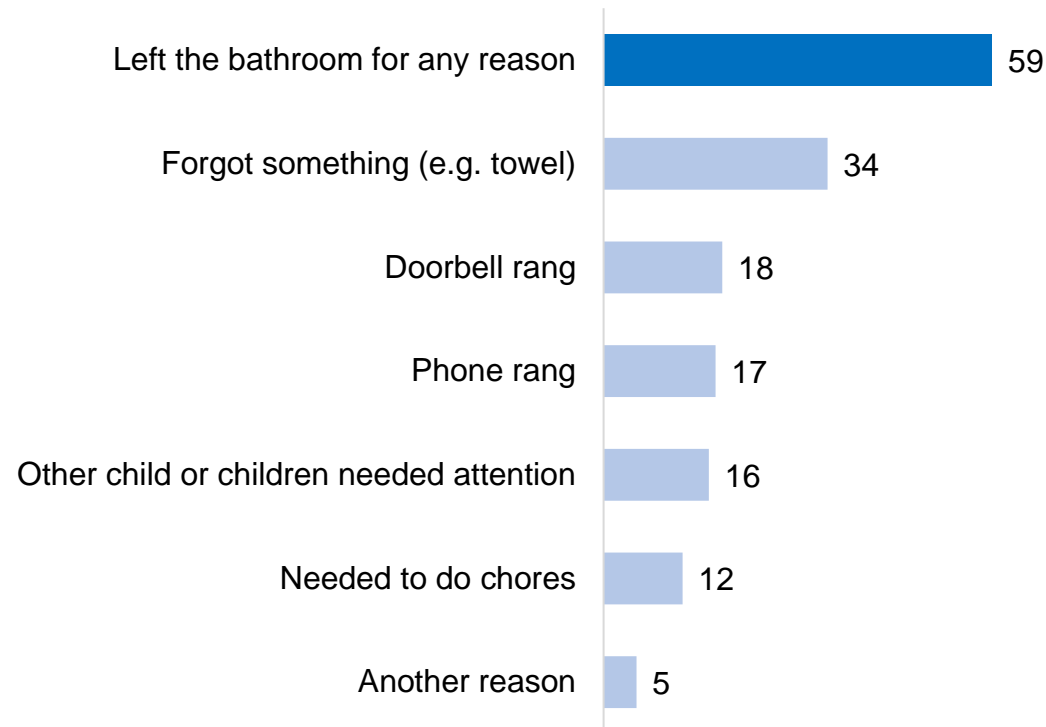
Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=1,003 parents of children aged under 5 years old)

In our parent survey, leaving a child unattended in the bath was found to be commonplace a few minutes



Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old



59%

of parents told us they'd left their child alone in the bath in the past month, even just for a few minutes

Question: In the last month, which (if any) of the following have meant that you've needed to leave the bathroom whilst your child is in the bath, even just for a few minutes...?

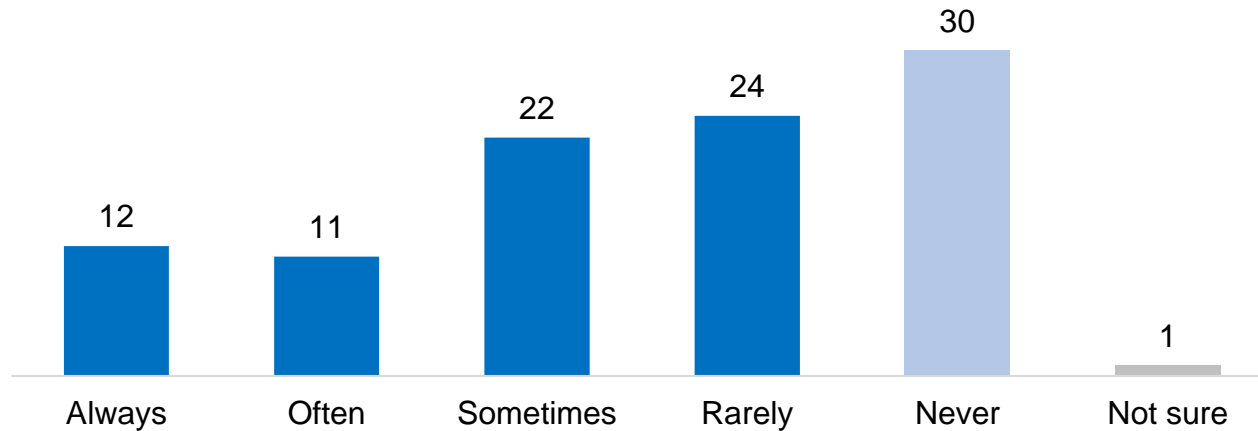
Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=1,003 parents of children aged under 5 years old)

1 in 5 parents claimed to 'always' or 'often' check or use their mobile phone whilst bathing their child



Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old



69%

of parents told us they check or use their mobile phone whilst their child is in the bath

Question: When bathing your child, how often do you check or use your mobile phone?

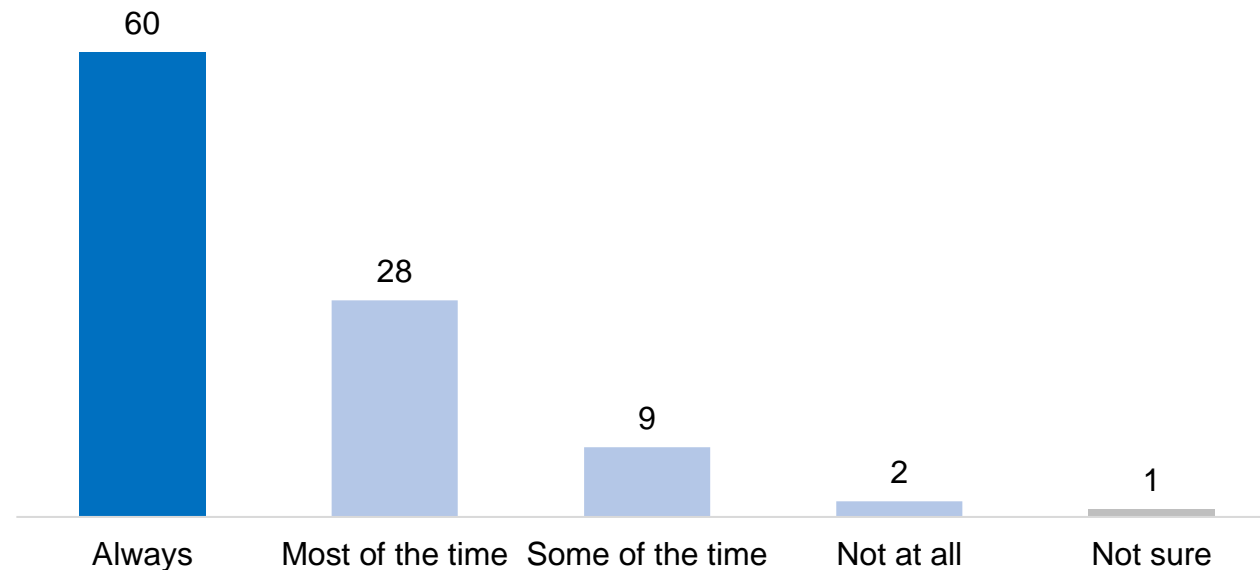
Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=1,003 parents of children aged under 5 years old)

Around 2 in 5 parents don't always keep their child within arm's reach during bath time



Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old



39%

of parents told us they don't always keep their child within arm's reach during bath time

Question: When your child is in the bath, do you keep them within arm's reach....?
Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)
Base: (n=1,003 parents of children aged under 5 years old)

In October 2024, RLSS UK launched a **brand-new** campaign, in direct response to NCMD & RLSS UK data



The launch campaign focused on water safety around bathtime, addressing unsafe behaviours

RLSS UK Splash Safety Campaign – Phase One



We encouraged parents to think again at bathtime, to stay together, be prepared and avoid distractions



RLSS UK Splash Safety Campaign – Phase One



Press releases saw coverage in major Nationals, including The Mirror, The Sun and The Daily Mail



RLSS UK Splash Safety Campaign – Phase One

Water safety charity issues warning after latest report shows one child drowns each month at home

30/09/2024

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) has published a Child Drowning Update for 2024 which highlights that in the last four years, on average, at least one child a month drowned at home in England.

This shocking statistic follows earlier findings from the charity, which used data from the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD), underlining that child drowning deaths in England have doubled since 2019-20.

Matt Croxall, Charity Director at RLSS UK, said: “We find it heartbreaking to learn that one child a month is drowning at home. In a bid to reduce the number of young lives lost, our latest report seeks to help shed light on the factors contributing to child drownings, so that we can help more families be aware of the risks and stay safe.”

The report highlights that 2 out of 3 drownings that occurred at home did so in the bath, and that most of the children affected were aged under five.

Matt added: “In 86% of child drownings, the child was unsupervised by an adult at the time of the incident. In

Water safety charity issues warning as new survey shows most parents mistake bath seats as safety devices

14/10/2024

According to a new eye-opening survey from the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)*, there is a worrying misconception among parents that a baby seat is a safety device.

The survey showed that almost three quarters of parents (72%) believe a baby bath seat is designed to keep a baby safe. This is not the case. Research published in RLSS UK’s Child Drowning Update (2019-2023) revealed that out of ten children under one that drowned in the bath, seven were using a baby bath seat.

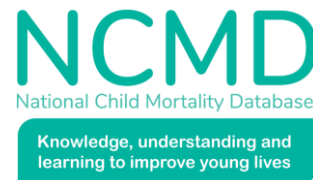
Figures also revealed that 88% of parents have used a baby bath seat, and almost two-thirds (64%) of those with children under one currently do so. RLSS UK is therefore working to increase parents’ understanding of the purpose of baby bath seats to help promote safer bathtimes for all families.

Matt Croxall, Charity Director at RLSS UK, said: “We find it heartbreaking to learn that child drownings in the bath are continuing to take place – and it is concerning to learn that in many of these instances, there was a bath seat involved. Seeking to shed light on the major misconception that bath seats can be used as a safety device, we want to educate more families to be aware of the risks, so they are able to stay safe.

RLSS UK worked closely with key partners in a bid to amplify the campaign's messaging



RLSS UK Splash Safety Campaign – Phase One



Charity issues safety warning, as new data shows one child a month drowns at home in England.

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) is a leading charity in water safety, and following recent findings, is urging healthcare professionals and others working with families to help raise awareness of the risks associated with water in the home, with an initial focus on bathtime.

The charity's warning comes as its latest [Child Drowning Update](#) reports that a total of **125 children have drowned** in the last four years, including 51 at home.

The report also highlights that 2 out of 3 drownings that occurred at home did so in the bath, and that most of the children affected were aged under five years.

Analysis of the drowning cases identified several factors as contributing to these deaths. The most common was a **lack of adult supervision**, where in 86% of cases, the child was unsupervised at the time of the incident. The charity has also undertaken some research amongst parents of children aged under five, to understand more about the behaviours typically seen around water at home.

What are the messages we need your help to deliver?

- 1. Always keep young children within arm's reach in the bath. Always keep children under constant adult supervision in the bath. If you need to leave the bathroom, take the child with you.**

In our survey, 59% of parents of children under five admitted to leaving the child unattended in the bath at least once in the past month – and for most, this was down to them forgetting something, such as a towel.

- 2. Never leave your child under the supervision of child siblings in the bath. If you need to leave the bathroom, take the child with you.**

We found that 2 in 5 parents (41%) think it's safe to leave a baby in the bath with an older sibling, as long as it's not for too long.

- 3. Drowning can happen quickly and silently – in a matter of minutes. You won't hear that something is wrong.**

Parents often don't realise that drowning happens quickly and silently. In our survey, 55% of parents believe they would hear thrashing and a lot of noise if their child was struggling in the bath.

The second phase of the campaign is now **LIVE!**

SPLASH

SAFETY

in the
garden



1 in 3 children drowned at home in places other than the bath – amounting to 16 children in four years



Findings – RLSS UK Child Drowning Update (September 2024)

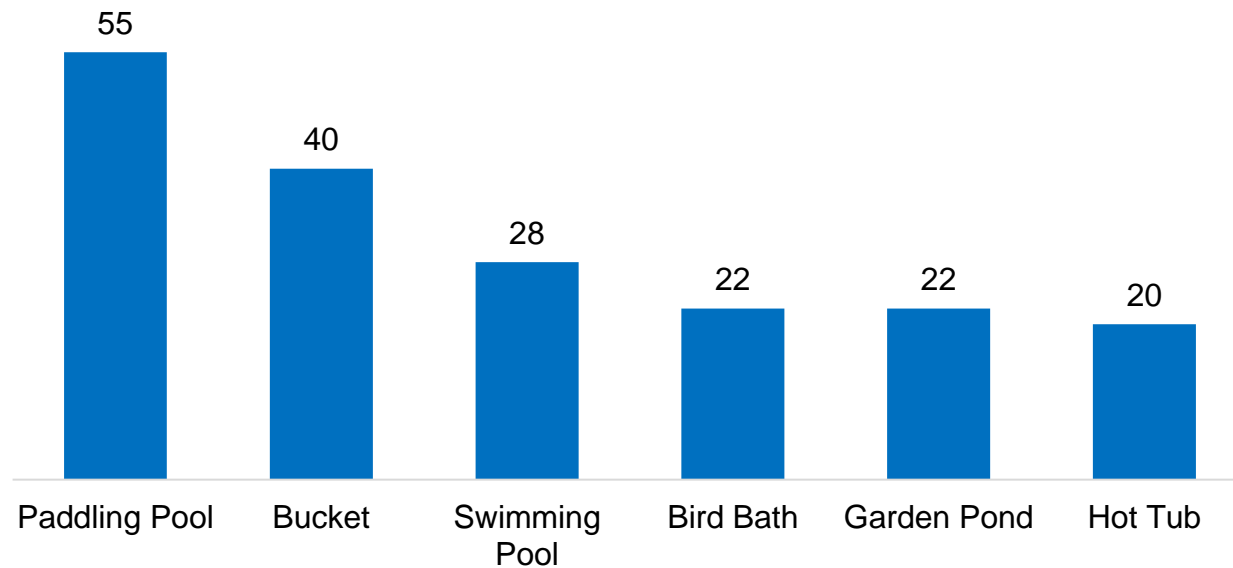
1 in 3

drownings at home occurred in places such as hot tubs, paddling pools, ponds and water containers



Most young children have water hazards in their outdoor space at home

Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old



89%

of young children have water hazards in their outdoor space at home

Question: Which (if any) of the following do you have in your garden (or outdoor space) at home?

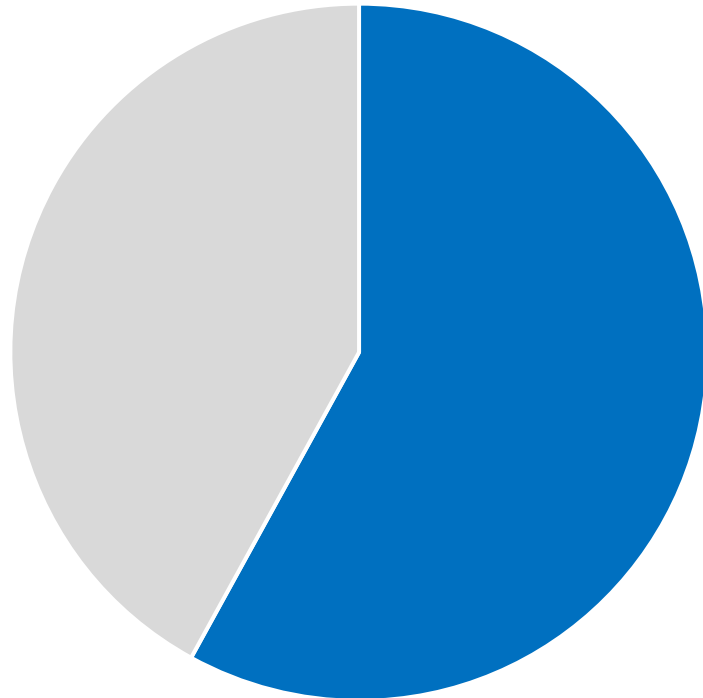
Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=1,003 parents of children aged under 5 years old)

Our survey showed that many parents don't empty a paddling pool immediately after each use



Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old with a paddling pool



58%

of parents with a paddling pool don't immediately empty it after each use

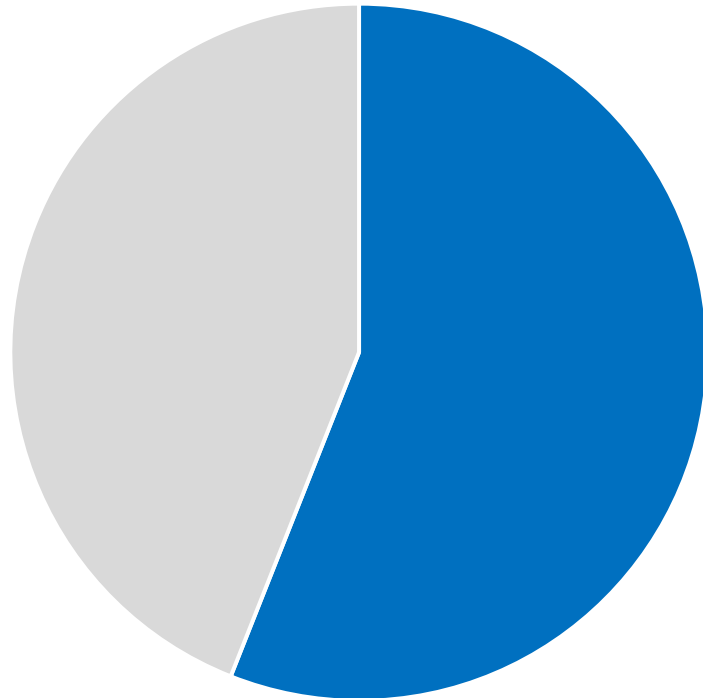
Question: When using a child's paddling pool, how often do you empty it immediately after each use?

Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=547 parents of children aged under 5 years old who have a paddling pool in their garden/outdoor space)

More than a half of parents with hot tubs don't immediately replace the cover after each use

Findings – RLSS UK Consumer Survey – Parents of children under 5 years old with a hot tub



56%

of parents with a hot tub don't immediately replace the cover after each use

Question: When using a hot tub, how often do you replace the cover immediately after each use?

Source: RLSS UK, Consumer Survey (September 2024)

Base: (n=202 parents of children aged under 5 years old who have a hot tub in their garden/outdoor space)

In phase two, we're focusing on urging parents to limit risk in the garden by adopting new behaviours...

RLSS UK Splash Safety Campaign – Phase Two



..whilst reminding them of the importance of constant adult supervision

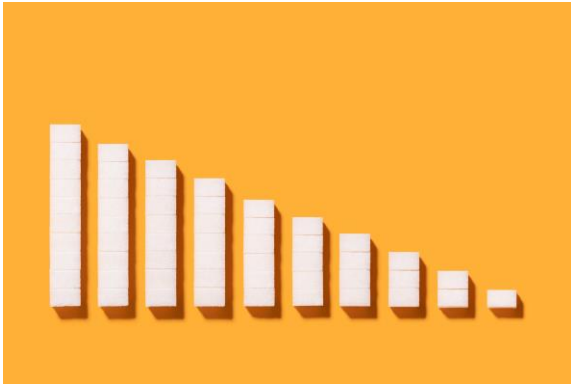
RLSS UK Splash Safety Campaign – Phase Two



24%

of parents believe it is okay to leave a child on their own in water, as long as they are wearing arm bands or a swim vest

What next?



Work is underway to launch 2023-24 NCMD drowning data in the next few weeks



RLSS UK's Splash Safety in the garden campaign continues throughout May.

Visit www.rlss.org.uk/splash-safety for more information



If you'd like to support this or any of our other campaigns or find out more about our professional materials, please get in touch via marketing@rlss.org.uk

Because no child should drown.



www.rlss.org.uk/splash-safety



marketing@rlss.org.uk