

ROYAL LIFE SAVING  
SOCIETY UK

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2020 – 2025



REPUBLIC  
OF IRELAND



ROYAL  
LIFE SAVING  
SOCIETY UK



# CONTENTS

- 3** MESSAGES FROM RLSS UK'S PRESIDENT AND PATRON
- 4** RLSS UK'S PURPOSE, VISION AND MISSION
- 5** OUR STRATEGY ON ONE PAGE
- 6** OUR 'SEVEN HABITS' OF BUILDING A HIGH EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION
- 7** BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY
- 8** EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
- 9** CONSULTANCY, EXPERTISE AND PARTNERSHIP
- 10** BUILDING ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS
- 11** FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE
- 12** ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE
- 13** SUMMARY: THE THREE STRATEGIC PILLARS AND THE FOUNDATIONS
- 14** OUR AMBITIOUS GOALS
- 15** A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
- 16** STRATEGIC ENABLERS

## A MESSAGE FROM RLSS UK'S PRESIDENT

CONTRIBUTING TOGETHER BECAUSE EVERY LIFE IS WORTH SAVING

When I was first elected to be your President, I explained that I wanted to lead a Society fit for the future. As an individual, I had grown with the Society, first with lifesaving clubs and then in lifeguarding - leading me to enjoy unforgettable experiences around water and beyond. This is something I want to empower others to do by enabling wide-ranging opportunities.

At the time I was frustrated at seeing lifesaving clubs closing and a missed opportunity to engage qualified lifeguards with wider aspects of the charity's work, including open water lifeguarding and community engagement. I had seen the teaching of the RLSS in the UK & Ireland progress from 'always stay out of the water', to teaching people to respect and understand the water, yet still saw resistance to creating opportunities for people to enjoy water safely.

Our new strategic framework addresses these topics and more, recognising that different communities have diverse needs around water and that local engagement by building our own community is fundamental to the delivery of education that enables everyone to enjoy being in, on or near water safely - because every life is worth saving.

We can only achieve the ambitions set out in this document by all of us working together towards the same vision, of nations without drowning where everyone can safely enjoy being in, on or near water.



I implore you to consider how you can contribute to our three core pillars, whether as an individual or with an organised group such as a club, leisure centre, sports team or any other part of our community.

**MARK SMITH,  
RLSS UK PRESIDENT**

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON, LORD STOREY CBE

RLSS UK has a proud history of helping to save the number of lives lost to drowning. The significance of what they have achieved cannot be underestimated and I am so proud to be a Patron.

However, there are still too many people in the UK and Ireland that are still losing their lives to drowning and this strategy is a key development of addressing such an important issue.

Our new strategic framework through its three pillars of - Education, partnerships and building a resilient community can help to deliver this. This is admiral work that needs everyone's support.

We must also not forget that RLSS UK is a charity governed by Trustees, and their charitable aims are to advance health and save human lives by preventing drowning.

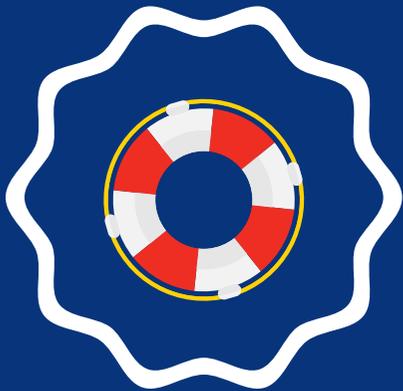
On this basis, I hope you will join me as a volunteer, supporter or member so that collectively we can make a difference.



**THANK YOU.  
LORD MIKE STOREY**

**ENJOY WATER  
SAFELY**





## WHY WE ARE HERE – OUR PURPOSE

To enhance communities, so everyone can enjoy being in, on or near water safely – because every life is worth saving.



## VISION

Nations without drowning where everyone can safely enjoy being in, on or near water.



## MISSION

To be the leader in lifesaving and lifeguarding in the UK and Ireland; sharing our expertise and knowledge with as many people as possible, giving everyone the potential to save lives and safely enjoy water.



## STRAPLINE

Enjoy Water Safely.

# OUR STRATEGY ON ONE PAGE

## OUR PURPOSE

To enhance communities, so everyone can enjoy being in, on or near water safely – because every life is worth saving.

## VISION

Nations without drowning where everyone can safely enjoy being in, on or near water.

## MISSION

To be the leader in lifesaving and lifeguarding in the UK and Ireland; sharing our expertise and knowledge with as many people as possible, giving everyone the potential to save lives and safely enjoy water.



**EDUCATION,  
TRAINING AND  
PERSONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**



**CONSULTANCY,  
EXPERTISE  
AND PARTNERSHIP**



**BUILDING  
OUR  
COMMUNITY**

**FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE**

**ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE**

# OUR 'SEVEN HABITS' OF BUILDING A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION



## WHY A HABIT AND NOT A VALUE?

A habit is defined as *“something that you do often and regularly, sometimes without knowing that you are doing it”*. Habits aren't just the processes used to achieve goals. They are a way of living our values. When we separate our values from our habits, we develop a disconnect between what we say is important and how we actually behave.

**WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY  
DO. EXCELLENCE, THEN,  
IS NOT AN ACT, BUT A HABIT.”**

~ ARISTOTLE

## OUR HABITS REFLECT OUR CULTURE, THE WAY WORK AND THINK, AND THAT WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE:

- 1. Partnership and Collaboration** – we recognise that we cannot change the world alone and aspire to work with others to help achieve our vision of 'nations without drowning where everyone can safely enjoy being in, on or near water'.
- 2. Building our family and community** – we are all part of one team that is altruistic, caring and works collectively for the benefit of everyone, over and above our own needs. We will also share and celebrate the successes of others and create a fun environment.
- 3. Integrity** – we will always be honest, consistent, trustworthy and dependable.
- 4. Empowering** – everyone who works with us will have the freedom to take responsibility, experiment, test, fail and learn.
- 5. Innovative** – we always strive to do things differently, be creative and never accepting the status quo.
- 6. Credible** – we will be trusted and recognised for our work, and we will celebrate our experience as experts.
- 7. Responsible** – we take individual and collective ownership for ourselves, our organisation, our environment, and we do not expect others to take this on for us.

## PILLAR 1: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



### OUTCOMES

To excel in the development of internationally recognised, creative education and training opportunities which enhance the ability of everyone to save lives.

Developing opportunities to embrace diversity, inclusivity and wellbeing, and provide affordable access for everyone, which can unlock their potential.



### KEY DRIVERS

- RLSS UK will continue to be recognised as the UK, Ireland and world's leading provider of training and the education of water safety, through our visionary course development and delivery.
- We will introduce stimulating and new flexible ways of learning, teaching and assessing. Recognising and promoting excellence in teaching, and supporting everyone to be independent and reflective learners.
- We will build a training pathway to encourage life-long learning.
- Our aim is to improve employability and we will do this by developing a qualifications progression path.
- We aspire to remove economic, social and cultural barriers that have prevented people from becoming lifeguards and lifesavers. This will help to improve diversity and social inclusion, which will also help to protect our communities.
- We shall ensure that, irrespective of background, disability, faith, gender, race and sexual orientation, everyone has access to equal opportunities to thrive and progress with RLSS UK and in Ireland.
- We plan to introduce bursaries for lifeguarding and lifesaving courses, and key employment qualifications such as first aid and pool management.
- We shall provide people with opportunities to support their health and wellbeing – both physical and mental, through the developing of lifesaving and lifeguarding skills.

## PILLAR 2: CONSULTANCY, EXPERTISE AND PARTNERSHIP



### OUTCOMES

Where our purpose is similar to others, we will create strategic partnerships and collaborations. We can then share expertise to ensure we maximise our impact and reach.



### KEY DRIVERS

- We will continue to be the leading support for UK and Ireland organisations in providing advice on using water safely.
- We continue to develop accreditation programmes and event expertise to raise the standards of water safety, giving partners and their customers a mark of safety assurance.
- It is essential that we are working with employers, professional bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that our training is responsive to need and we are developing bespoke training opportunities in new markets.
- At every opportunity we will be identifying and collaborating with organisations who have similar vision, aims and objectives so collectively, we can reduce the number of drownings and save more lives.
- Our aim is to continually be collecting and contributing to research data, to identify trends which help to form training and information needs analysis.
- We will provide financial support and access to water safety equipment, helping to install, train, develop and improve on equipment that is key to helping save more lives.
- Our ambition is to identify opportunities and partner with technology companies.
- We will be working in partnership with experts to tackle drowning by suicide and support families affected by drowning.

## PILLAR 3: BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

### OUTCOMES

As a member-led organisation we will build a sustainable, active and thriving community by celebrating their successes, and adding value to our relationships.

### KEY DRIVERS

- Our aim is to grow the size of our community and those who are committed to helping us save lives, so more people can benefit from the pleasure of swimming and water-related activities. We will do this through clubs and sports participants, members and supporters.
- We will build brand recognition, brand awareness and then develop brand loyalty so that more people want to join our community.
- We should celebrate our lifesavers and lifeguards and recognise them as heroes #BeaHero.
- It is key that we continue to work with our Commonwealth partners to enable us to grow collectively and build a global community.
- We are developing a membership pathway and cradle to a lifetime of support, creating key membership categories and adding value to their membership proposition with targeted incentives.
- We will ensure all our communications encourage the engagement with new and existing members.
- We are aiming to embed as many communities with future lifesavers and community champions. By doing this we will help save lives within those communities.



## FOUNDATION 1: FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE



### OUTCOMES

To constantly investigate opportunities to diversify, develop income streams and manage our costs so that we can maximise our reinvestment into our charitable aims.



### KEY DRIVERS

- As we grow, we will focus on a diversification of revenue streams that will add to the strong foundation we have built over the first 125 years of our history.
- Responsible financial growth will be a key part of our success so that it supports our long-term ambitions.
- We will constantly be identifying efficiencies through critical analysis of operational practices and the use of space and physical resources.
- Linked to our environmental aims, we will also implement energy saving and waste reduction initiatives.
- Our budgetary prudence and financial resilience will be supported by agreeing appropriate reserves and then reinvesting additional surpluses, to achieve our strategic aims.
- We will recognise, understand and budget what income is sustainable, then identify income that is one-off funding so that we do not over-stretch our resources on unsustainable income generation.
- We have ambitious aims to grow fundraising and strengthening our ability to develop effective cause-related campaigns.

## FOUNDATION 2: ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE



### OUTCOMES

We aspire to have a positive impact on the environment and are committed to playing our part in making a difference in the areas where we operate, influence and control.



### KEY DRIVERS

- A commitment that environmental responsibility is a key foundation that supports our operations and endeavours.
- A pledge that we are committed to playing a role on environmental sustainability issues and practices in the UK and Ireland.
- Supporting water-based environmental awareness campaigns such as those that seek a reduction in plastic in the water system.
- Helping society become aware of their responsibilities and commitment to be the guardians of our water systems, embedding a culture of using water safely and responsibly.
- New product developments in line with the three pillars of sustainability: economic, environment and social impact.
- A move to recycled plastic or sustainable alternatives whenever available.
- As part of this framework we will become carbon neutral and we will meet the standards of ISO 14001.

# SUMMARY – THE THREE STRATEGIC PILLARS AND THE FOUNDATIONS



## BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

As a member-led organisation we will build a sustainable, active and thriving community by celebrating their successes and adding value to our relationships.



## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

To excel in the development of internationally recognised, creative education and training opportunities which enhance the ability of everyone to save lives. Developing opportunities to embrace diversity, inclusivity and wellbeing, and provide affordable access for everyone, which can unlock their potential.



## CONSULTANCY, EXPERTISE AND PARTNERSHIP

Where our purpose is similar to others, we will create strategic partnerships and collaborations. We can then share expertise to ensure we maximise our impact and reach.



## FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

To constantly investigate opportunities to diversify, develop income streams and manage our costs so that we can maximise our reinvestment into our charitable aims.



## ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

We aspire to have a positive impact on the environment and be committed to playing our part in making a difference in the areas where we operate, influence and control.

## THESE ARE OUR AMBITIOUS GOALS

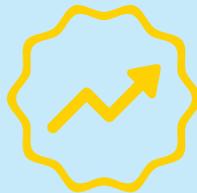
**EACH ONE WILL BE CHALLENGING AND WE WILL  
NEED YOUR SUPPORT BUT THIS FRAMEWORK  
WILL BE THE START OF UNLOCKING OUR  
POTENTIAL TO DELIVER THESE GOALS:**



Our training and lifesaving work will mean a total eradication of accidental drownings by the end of this decade.



An engaged and active community of 78,000 by 2023 and to be one of the top 30 largest membership organisations in the UK and Ireland.



We will grow the number of our clubs to 500.



Within the next three years, at least thirty million people will have heard of RLSS UK or one of our 'enjoy water safely' messages.



We will reinvest at least £5m per year into delivering our charitable objectives.



We will become carbon neutral by 2025 and eliminate single use plastics in our organisation, helping us to become guardians of our water system.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK. I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR THE ASPIRATIONAL NATURE OF ITS GOALS – AS SOMEONE ONCE SAID “SHOOT FOR THE MOON. EVEN IF YOU MISS IT YOU WILL LAND AMONG THE STARS”.

THE AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO DEVELOP A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR RLSS UK.

I believe our new strategy takes us back to our founder, William Henry's, principles of us all having a love of water and swimming but using this love and skills to help others and save lives. He developed a key set of skills that he identified as effective in saving lives and over the years, we have adapted, refined and improved on his original methods. The reason for our existence remains the same, but is now more relevant than ever, we create an environment where everyone can enjoy water safely and we transform people into becoming lifesavers. This is an honour that we should cherish and one that we should celebrate.

This framework also serves to provide structure to our longer-term planning by focusing on three key elements: vision, mission and objectives. It also sets out a five-year timeframe for implementation.

This is not a detailed operational plan or action list but should provide the clarity of our direction for us to develop plans, identify new opportunities and help us develop a structure for its delivery. As a framework, it is not designed to be a detailed planning document but will be linked to our operational plans so that we can identify and measure success.

During the creation of this document we undertook a number of strategic discussions. During these conversations it became clear that there is a desire to change our messaging, to reflect on a new and reinvigorated purpose that is more closely aligned to our clubs and members, We consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including Volunteers, Members, Clubs, Branches, Ambassadors, Partners, Operators, Staff and the Board so I hope this framework is a reflection of your thinking and also reflect this diverse range of opinions.

I want to thank everyone who was involved in designing this framework.

One thing is clear, for us to grow, become even more successful and help save more lives, we need to get more people involved with our work. We need to build our community, now and for the future.

We need to work with others to find solutions to a complex range of issues such as drownings by suicide or supporting bereaved families and ultimately, we need to work collaboratively to achieve our ambitious vision – Nations without drowning where everyone can safely enjoy being in or near water.

I hope you, your family, friends and colleagues will join us on this journey.

**ROBERT GOFTON,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



## STRATEGIC ENABLERS

**TO ACHIEVE AND HELP DELIVER THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, THERE ARE A FEW KEY ELEMENTS THE WE NEED TO HAVE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY. THESE DELIVERY MECHANISMS INCLUDE:**



- **Staff** – we will invest in expertise, knowledge, training and resources – ensuring that all our staff who are involved in the delivery of learning, teaching, advice and support continue to develop their professional capability, and remain the leader experts in lifesaving and lifeguarding.
- **People-led** – our members, supporters and advocates will have the opportunity to engage and help shape the membership and direction of RLSS UK.
- **Partnerships** – we will build strategic alliances and strong, collaborative links with leading businesses and charities. Supporting them by providing our skills in supporting participation in 'safe' water-based activities.
- **Government** – we will work with all our Governments to ensure they are committed to drowning reduction through advocacy, education, training and support.
- **Technology** – using it to enhance water safety and saving lives and as a tool to improve communications and to drive efficiencies.
- **Good governance** – we will comply with Charity Commission 'best practice' and meet the governance requirements of the voluntary and community sector.
- **RLSS Commonwealth** – we will ensure Royal status remains intact and we will work with the Commonwealth to support international membership opportunities and international advocacy.



ROYAL  
**LIFE SAVING**  
SOCIETY UK

RLSS UK, Red Hill House, 227 London Road, Worcester, WR5 2JG  
W. [rlss.org.uk](http://rlss.org.uk) | E. [info@rlss.org.uk](mailto:info@rlss.org.uk) | T. 0300 323 0096

 RLSSUK  @RLSSUK  @RLSSUK

Registered Charity (England and Wales 1046060, Scotland SC037912)  
Private Limited by Guarantee Company (3033781)  
Fundraising Standards Board Member



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**