

## Appendix One



### **Bath and North East Somerset Water Safety briefing note**

#### **Safer and Stronger Communities Panel meeting 20 January 2011**

When there is a death related to open water the loss to the immediate family is obvious, but there is also a loss the society and the BaNES community as a whole.

Leisure tourism and allied businesses are key for Bath & North East Somerset, yet these industries rely on a perception of security and safety. Deaths in the city related to leisure activity, be that night time economy, or summer recreation all have the potential to erode public confidence and impact negatively on those key businesses.

Water related deaths are not an everyday occurrence in Bath and North East Somerset, but there is a low level of incidents that is continuing to cause concern.

On average Avon Fire & Rescue attend just under one incident per month involving injury in water, and a very small proportion of those will tragically result in deaths. The rescues put the lives of responders from all emergency services at risk, as well as any well intentioned bystander who decides to become involved.

Some rescues are straight forward but water searches can be especially prolonged and protracted that demands a lot of resources for an extended duration from Police and Fire. Casper Flag was missing for almost a month, during which time intensive searches were conducted and due to the uncertainty of his whereabouts, this had a negative impact on the perception of the city and surrounding areas.

Water deployment is inherently hazardous and Fire Service crews have had to undergo specialist training to National standards.

Our partners in police and ambulance also attend incidents and perform rescues, some of which we attend – some of which they complete themselves. Ultimately, it will be the unenviable task for a Police Family Liaison officer who has to make that knock on the door and break the distressing news of any death to the family.

We believe the impact on the individual, the community, business and commerce as well as the emergency services brought in to deal with the aftermath is such that it warrants efforts to try to reduce the incidence of water related incidents.

Recognising this as a community safety issue the Bath and North East Somerset Fire and Rescue team has been proactive in raising awareness of this issue.

## Appendix One

Supported by Sue Tilley and her Community Safety Team and other partners such as the Police, we have conducted a poster and media campaign during the summer months of 2010.

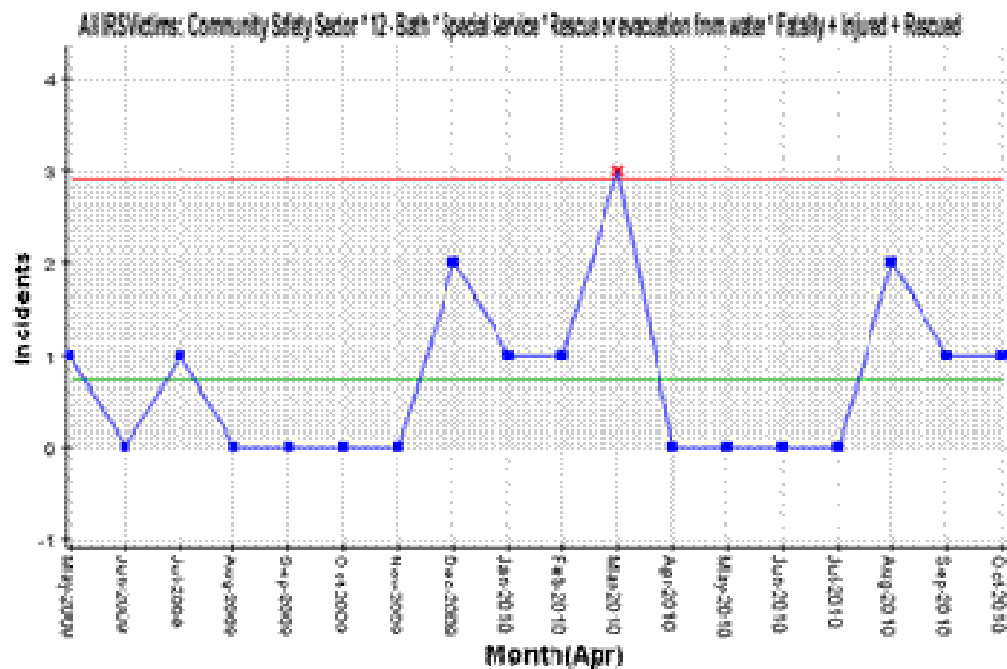
Avon Fire & Rescue has paid to place adverts in the Bath and North East Somerset Council resilience manual that is sent to homes and businesses.

During 2011, we will start to deliver a program into schools based on water safety and basic life support first aid. The program devised by the RNLI will be delivered by the operational crews from Bath. We will aim to repeat the awareness campaign during the summer months where recreational swimming is more attractive due to improved weather.

We will continue to look for opportunity and methods to raise awareness and to reduce risk, whilst keeping a balance on the positive aspects and benefits the river brings to Bath and North East Somerset.

We ask the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to note the content of the presentation and to look where further support can be generated by the council in this multi agency community risk management initiative.

The end.



0.8 p/m