



**NORTH YORKSHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

# Public Accountability Meeting

## Water Safety



[www.northyorksfire.gov.uk](http://www.northyorksfire.gov.uk)

# Overview



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North Yorkshire has several water hazards across the county

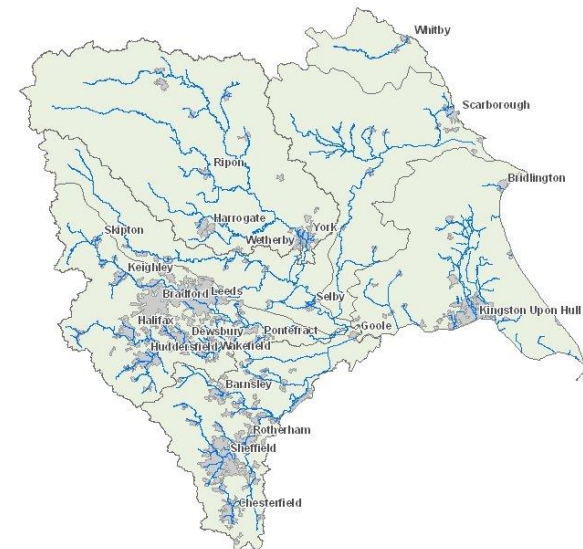
These range from approx. 60km of coastline

Rivers such as the Ouse, Swale, Wharfe, Derwent and Aire

Canals including Leeds to Liverpool and The Aire & Calder Canal

And inland lakes and quarries

Flash floods



# Risks



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Each of these water sources presents a range of hazards to the public

Slips & Falls into water

Rapid rise in levels due to adverse weather

Swift water

Cold water shock

Entanglement in weeds/debris

Injuries from Tombstoning



# Service Provision



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Currently the service provides 3 levels of water safety provision

These align with the DEFRA standards of operation

Mod 2 All firefighters are trained to this level

Allows crews to work from bankside and wade in shallow water

Mod 3 Crews at Whitby, Malton & Richmond are trained to this level. Allows crews can enter the water to carryout rescues

Mod 4 Crews at Selby are trained to this level

Crews have a power boat trained and can enter the water to carry rescues

York Are trained to MOD2 and have a powerboat (Crews can enter the River Foss)





# Location of Water Rescue Capability



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Currently York has the highest water risk in the County with over 20 fatalities in the past 5 years

York is situated on the junction of two water ways the River Ouse, which is a wide river carrying a high number of pleasure craft and the Foss which is a smaller river with slower moving water and little traffic, but vertical sides meaning egress is very difficult once a person has entered the water.

York have a powerboat however the crew are not trained to physically enter the water

Due to the level of incidents and the variety of water types an upgrading of the York Capability to MOD 4 would seem justified



# Opportunities



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## Geography

Current Technical Water Rescue resources locations may not reflect the greatest risk. This is compounded by the size of the county. The Risk and Resource Model project will include this response capability.

## Data

Organisations (Fire, Police, RNLI, Mountain Rescue, York Rescue Boat) use different recording systems and different recording methods. Accessing accurate, empirical data will improve prevention and response arrangements

## Funding

Courses, training and equipment require significant capital investment. The response to water related incidents does not form a part of the statutory duties for a fire and rescue service.

## Training

Courses and maintenance are time consuming (MOD 3 & 4 courses are in Wales)

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# Improvements to Training & Equipment



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## **PPE Upgrades**

5 stations are receiving upgrades to the dry suits and PFD's (Personal Floatation Devices)

## **Improvements to the Boat**

The boat at York has had a Prop guard and improved lighting fitted

## **Improvements to Skills (Tethered swim)**

Crews across York will receive an uplift in training to allow them to carryout a tethered swim. This will improve the rescue capability for incidents in the Foss

## **Underwater Search team (UWST)**

Crews have visited the UWST at Humberside and working with NYP have improved procedures for the recovery of bodies from the water.

## **Body Recovery Nets**

York & Selby both have the ability to use this system to recover bodies from rivers

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# Incident Locations



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Incident Hot Spots



Mod 3 Stations



Mod 4 Stations



Water Rescue Unit



# Incident Profile



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The incident profile in the York District has changed over the past 5 years

The initial profile was young people aged 18-25 who entered the water between 10pm and 3am mainly on weekends

In recent years this has changed to  
An older age group, and the issues are more complex often associated with mental health

In other areas the profile is people using the water during warm weather or for sport and leisure, not appreciating or understanding the risks



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# Statistics



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The below table shows fatalities in the Ouse & Foss (York)

*Accurate data is difficult to collate due to the number of agencies involved and different recording systems they use.*

Year	Fatalities	Male	Female	Avg Age
2014	3	2	1	26
2016	3	3	0	19
2017	1	1	0	42
2019	7	5	2	50
2020	4	3	1	68
2021	3	3	0	68

York Fire Station data for the Ouse and Foss & may not include all incidents

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# Statistics



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The below table shows Rescues in the Ouse & Foss (York)

Year	Rescues	Male	Female	Avg Age
2014	No Data Available			
2016	No Data Available			
2017	No Data Available			
2019	2	2	0	38
2020	9	5	4	Unavailable
2021	2	1	1	Unavailable

York Fire Station data for the Ouse and Foss & may not include all incidents

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# Practical Interventions



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The York Water Safety Forum has implemented a number of initiatives to make the river safer

Escape ladders have been painted orange so they can be clearly seen from the water

Signage has been installed giving helpline numbers for the Samaritans at Hotspots

RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) have been commissioned to conduct a new safety survey

Links with the Universities has improved safety messaging to students through Students Union, Freshers Weeks and Information days.



# Prevention Activities



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Crews from across the county are proactively involved in water safety education and engagement

This includes:

- Youth Education
- Multi agency work
- Social Media plan and messaging
- Talks and demonstrations
- Patrols at local risk sites during periods of high traffic
- Installation of equipment
- RNLI Throwline training to riverside establishments





# Co-ordinated approach



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For the first year we have run a dedicated 4 month water safety campaign between May and August

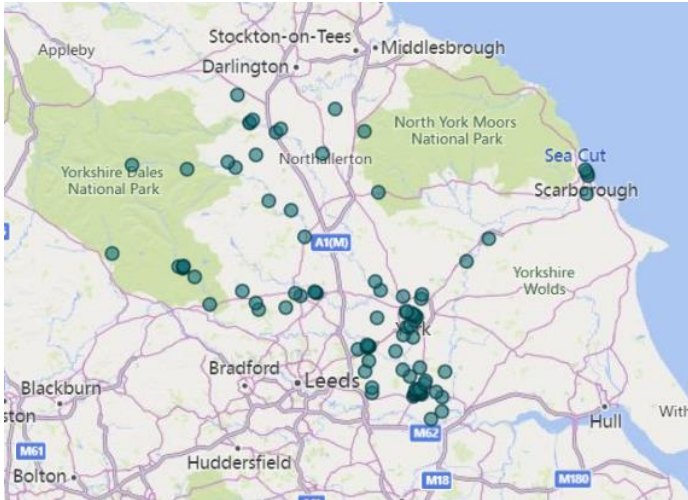
We have completed In house training and resourcing for water safety activities and messaging

Multi-agency video resource produced and released to the public for Drowning Prevention Week

National water safety campaigns supported including

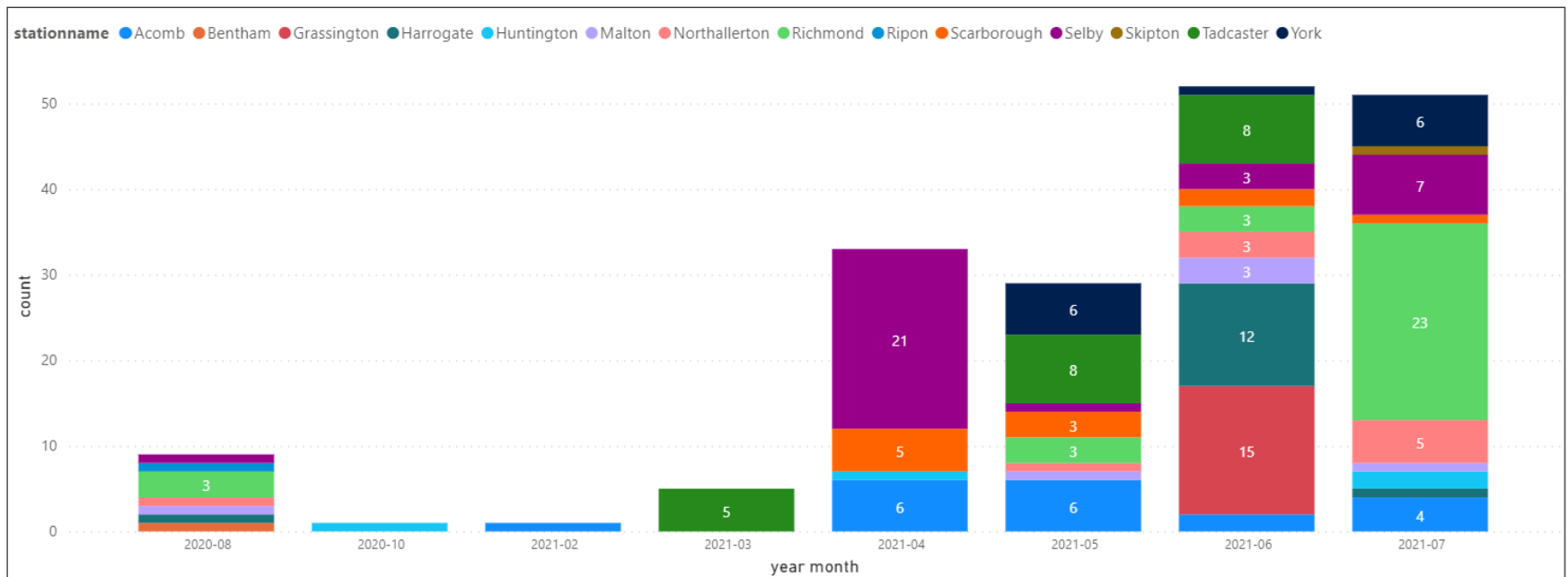
- RLSS Drowning Prevention Week
- NFCC Be Water Aware Campaign





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# Water safety education and engagement



# Co-ordinated approach



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## High risk site work – River Wharfe

Multi agency work with parish councils, highways, Police, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

Signage installed near recent and historic incidents in Grassington with assistance from National Parks and Craven District Council

Recent water rescue exercise and public engagement day at Bolton Abbey. This involved both on call appliances from Skipton, Grassington on call, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service crew from Bingley, Police and Ambulance

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# Any questions?

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