

Olympic hero Duncan encourages Scots to dive in

Olympic hero Duncan Scott is inspiring the biggest drive ever to encourage Scots of all ages and abilities to learn to swim.

As part of his role as Learn to Swim Ambassador, Duncan is supporting the September-long celebration to help both children and adults of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to become safe and confident swimmers – especially with pools reopening after lockdown restrictions were lifted.

The existing Learn to Swim framework for children – a partnership between [Scottish Swimming](#) and [Scottish Water](#) – has already seen more than 100,000 young people participate in regular swimming lessons since it launched four years ago.

The 36 Leisure Trusts and Aquatic Providers, who are delivering lessons in 170 pools, are now welcoming children back after the summer holidays – and the drive is to grow numbers to full capacity.

This Learn to Swim month will focus on encouraging older children to return to lessons if they haven't completed their course to ensure they have the skills to be safe swimmers, as well as appealing for adults of all abilities to seek out lessons and additionally inspiring more people to become swimming teachers.

Duncan has been an ambassador for the Learn to Swim framework for four years and alongside Paralympic medallist and fellow Learn to Swim ambassador Toni Shaw, has played a vital role in

continuing to inspire, develop and motivate the next generation of swimmers.

Duncan, Britain's most decorated Olympian in a single games, said: "I hope everyone gets behind Learn to Swim Month. I know people that because of Covid haven't been able to get in a pool for a very long time so this might encourage them to take their kids at a weekend.

"Learning to swim is a life skill and it's so important for everyone to learn how to be safe and confident in the water. I've always enjoyed swimming and while not everyone will have ambitions to be an Olympic athlete, it's an essential skill to have and fun to learn too."

Euan Lowe, Scottish Swimming chief executive officer, said: "Due to various restrictions over the last 18 months, swimming lessons were put on pause or disrupted. So now that pools are opening up again we want to see lessons full once more with kids excited to be back in the water.

"We are particularly keen to get older children to return to the pool to finish training that would have been halted or affected during lockdown. And we have always ensured that disability is no barrier, so no child should ever miss out.

"Learn to Swim month is the biggest drive we've had to focus on all that's good about swimming. It also should be highlighted that, regardless of age, it is a lifelong skill. Core skills such as floating, treading water and sculling could even save your life."

Brian Lironi, Director of Corporate Affairs with Scottish Water, said: "Scotland is known for its coasts, waterways, lochs and reservoirs and being able to enjoy these places safely and with confidence is at the heart of the programme.

"There should be no barriers to any child learning to swim so we're delighted to have a month dedicated to the initiative.

“Beyond the safety benefits of learning to swim, it’s also a great way to show how water is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, from keeping hydrated with the clear, fresh drinking water at your taps, to taking the plunge in your local pool as the ideal form of exercise.”

A Learn to Swim month digital toolkit has been sent to all providers and a series of promotional videos are being created by Scottish Swimming to help encourage more children into the programme.

Scottish Swimming Learn to Swim programme providers are also recruiting swimming teachers and can offer training opportunities through the Scottish Swimming Teacher Qualification.

The Learn to Swim partnership – which was extended for a fourth year in 2020 – provides consistently high-quality teaching for youngsters from birth upwards, which progresses through a series of lessons and levels over a number of years.

Duncan Scott – a double relay Silver medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics – initially entered his name into the record books in Tokyo as he, alongside Tom Dean, became the first British pair to win Gold and Silver in the same swimming event since 1908.

His Silver in that 200m freestyle was quickly followed by Gold in the 4x200m freestyle relay. He made it three in the pool with Silver in the 200m individual medley before winning his record-breaking fourth, a Silver, in the 4x100m medley relay.

More information on the Learn to Swim Framework can be found on the dedicated website: www.learntoswim.scot



Duncan Scott