

Swim superstar makes a splash in West Lothian

Athlete dives in to celebrate provider's commitment to learning to swim

Youngsters in West Lothian have participated in a once-in-a-lifetime swim class with Olympic, World & Commonwealth Champion Duncan Scott.

Duncan, the UK's most decorated athlete from the Tokyo Olympic Games, made a splash at Xcite's Broxburn Sports Centre to celebrate West Lothian Leisure being recognised as Learn to Swim Provider of the Year.

More than 130 children participated in the swimming lessons from preschool upwards learning vital life skills such as floating, sculling, treading water and the basics of moving through the water such as streamlining and different swimming strokes.

Xcite is one of 37 aquatic providers delivering The Learn to Swim framework – a partnership between [Scottish Swimming](#) and [Scottish Water](#) – at eight sites including Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn, Linlithgow, Livingston, Whitburn, Deans High school and Winchburgh Wellness Hub which recently received significant investment.

Learn to Swim programme ambassador and Scotland's all-time top medal-winning Commonwealth athlete, Duncan Scott shared knowledge and skills with youngsters during the lessons delivering some teaching on poolside and in the pool – with a designated Q&A session to hear top tips and swimming advice.

Duncan said: "It's fantastic to see the work Xcite West Lothian are doing around learn to swim to become Scottish Water Learn to Swim Provider of the Year and the programme is set to grow by more than 25% over the next three years.

"Swimming pools are vital community hubs that teach children all over the country the life skill of learning to swim. Without pools we would be literally putting lives at risk so it's great to see so many happy, smiling faces today!"

Both Duncan Scott, and fellow Learn to Swim ambassador and Paralympian Toni Shaw, are passionate about creating a generation of confident, safer and competent swimmers.

Lorraine Pollock, Xcite West Lothian, said: "There has been a real buzz in the lead up to Duncan's visit. Broxburn is our largest site, welcoming over 1,500 youngsters weekly so it is great to have a visit from such an important role model.

"Learn to Swim has been a major success and we see children improve their swimming skills on a weekly basis. We know Duncan's visit will leave a lasting impact on our community's next generation of swimmers.

"The past two years have been challenging but thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Xcite team we have been able to bounce back, and are delighted to have been recognised as Learn to Swim Provider of the Year.

"A large part of this recovery has focused on teacher development and recruitment. We are always on the lookout for people interested in a fun, rewarding career."

Xcite is a vital community hub and secured the Learn to Swim Provider of the Year award for increasing the capacity of youngsters learning to swim from 3855 in May 2021 to more than 5031 in August 2022.

This resulted in an additional 1300 children attending lessons

every week with a further 200 children to join the programme in February 2023 as the programme expands further.

Euan Lowe, CEO of Scottish Swimming, said: “The earlier that a child becomes familiar with the aquatic environment and being in and around water the better. It maybe someone from the programme follows in Duncan’s footsteps, but most importantly, we hope they continue to inspire children to learn to swim.

“Today’s event in Broxburn marks the first Learn to Swim event of the year and I cannot think of a better way to celebrate swimming pools and the vital role they play in Scotland – teaching children an essential life skill and also as the nation’s Natural Health Service – safeguarding mental and physical wellbeing for all ages, abilities and backgrounds.”

The National Learn to Swim Framework has already provided lessons to more than 100,000 youngsters, and wants to reach a further 100,000 by 2025.

Brian Lironi, Director of Corporate Affairs with Scottish Water, said: “Duncan and Toni have played a vital role in continuing to inspire, develop and motivate youngsters across the country while helping to create Scotland’s “Generation Swim”.

“The programme equips children with skills that will help them to be safer in and out of the water – whether at their local pool, at the beach on holiday or around Scotland’s miles of coastline, rivers and lochs.”

The Learn to Swim Framework helps to create quality Learn to Swim environments for children from birth upwards where they can become competent swimmers with opportunities to progress through the aquatic pathway and to swim for fun.

The next chapter of Learn to Swim will build a real legacy for Scotland – creating “Generation Swim” by improving water safety, and giving all children a real platform for success

and to achieve their full potential in the pool and out.

<https://learntoswim.scot/>

<https://www.westlothianleisure.com/>



Olympic World Commonwealth champion Duncan Scott with youngsters on the Learn to Swim Programme