

Adults encouraged to learn to swim to boost water safety this summer

Each summer, families across Scotland flock to pools, lochs, and beaches – yet a familiar pattern emerges. Children splash and dive while many parents, grandparents or other older family members watch from the side-lines, smiling but staying dry.

For a surprising number, that isn't a lifestyle choice – it's the result of not ever learning to swim. Now adults across Scotland are being encouraged to take the plunge, thanks to a campaign confronting deep-seated fears and outdated assumptions.

The #NeverTooLate campaign, run by the team behind The Learn to Swim National Framework – [Scottish Swimming](#) and [Scottish Water](#) – is encouraging more adults to lead by example and learn to swim, not simply watch from afar.

Backed by the National Learn to Swim Framework, the campaign

highlights how building water confidence among adults is not only a step towards personal growth but can also dramatically enhance water safety for the entire family.

Delivered through a network of 38 leisure trusts and aquatic providers, the framework supports lessons in 165 pools nationwide. While the programme has already helped more than 100,000 learners gain confidence in the water, the adult-focused campaign marks a bold expansion.

The Learn to Swim programme is committed to creating supportive and quality environments in which individuals can learn to swim regardless of their age, ability or skill level.

John Lunn, Chief Executive of Scottish Swimming, said: “We hear it constantly – parents telling us they wish they could join their kids in the pool, but they feel held back.

“Many never had the chance to learn when they were young. Now they’re held back by fear, embarrassment or the belief that it’s too late to start.

“We’re challenging that idea head-on. It’s never too late to learn to swim – and there’s never been a better reason to do so. From building lasting memories with your family members or friends to feeling safer on holiday, swimming is a skill that enriches lives.”

Peter Farrer, Chief Operating Officer at Scottish Water, said: “Learning to swim is such an important safety skill no matter what your age or ability – everyone should be able to enjoy Scotland’s miles of rivers, lochs, reservoirs and shorelines,

and do so safely.

“Encouraging anyone in later life to learn to swim is just as important as encouraging younger generations – ensuring people of all ages and abilities have access to learn such an essential life skill and how to be confident and competent in or around water is hugely important from a safety perspective, plus they will also get to experience the wider social, health and fitness benefits that swimming can offer.”

That message is resonating. Each week, more than 1,600 adults across Scotland are taking part in Learn to Swim sessions, a figure the campaign is hoping to grow.

Many are parents or grandparents motivated by their children’s safety and a desire to participate more fully in shared experiences, whether on holiday, during school swim lessons or simply enjoying a day at the beach.

The #NeverTooLate campaign also touches on deeper issues of health, inclusion and access. Water-based activity is widely regarded as one of the most inclusive forms of exercise, ideal for building strength and confidence at any age.

For many learners, these sessions represent much more than mastering a stroke, they’re about reclaiming confidence, overcoming past fears, and modelling resilience for younger generations.

While Learn to Swim is primarily recognised for helping children reach key aquatic milestones, the adult arm of the programme is quickly gaining traction, thanks in part to wider

conversations around health equity and active lifestyles.

Figures show that 63% of Scots prefer holidays near water, yet a significant proportion remain unable to swim – something the campaign is determined to change.

With hundreds already benefiting and momentum building, Scottish Swimming and Scottish Water are hoping their message makes a splash: it's not just about learning to swim – it's about reconnecting with the water, with confidence, and with family.

