

NOTICE OF MOTION	Date of Council Meeting: 15/07/26
	Mover: Councillor Jodie Ryalls
	Seconded: Cllr Adam Tinsley BEM
	Title of Motion: Supporting further measures for Water Safety Save Lives for Sam

Summary/Background:

The recent, devastating surge in water-related fatalities across the UK—hitting heartbreakingly close to home right here on our doorsteps in South Yorkshire—demands immediate action. The recent losses in our local community, including the tragic incidents at Rother Valley Country Park and the River Don in Mexborough, are a stark, agonizing reminder that this is a persistent and entirely preventable public safety crisis. The overwhelming majority of these drownings continue to occur in everyday inland waters during routine activities.

In direct response to this ongoing emergency, we highlight the launch of the Daily Mirror's 'Save Lives for Sam' campaign. This vital movement campaigns for a long-overdue, cohesive national strategy regarding water safety. Alongside this, we recognize the tireless efforts of 'Sam's Army', whose dedicated campaigning is driving a critical nationwide push for change.

Together, these campaigns demand urgent accountability from landowners, the rollout of widespread public safety education, and the formal legislative passing of 'Sam's Law' to mandate life-saving rescue equipment around high-risk open waters. Through collective action, we can strive to prevent further tragic losses, protect our local communities, and ensure no more families have to endure such devastating heartbreak.

That this Council Notes:

1. That every year, an average of 33 children lose their lives to drowning in England.
2. The launch of the Mirror's "Save Lives for Sam" campaign, which highlights the urgent need for a cohesive national strategy on water safety.
3. The tireless efforts of Sam's Army in campaigning and raising awareness to prevent further tragic losses.

4. The proposal of Sam's Law, which calls for a legal requirement for adequate, maintained safety equipment at all high-risk bodies of water.
5. The lack of a dedicated Minister for Water Safety, leading to a fragmented approach to water safety education and infrastructure.
6. This Council recognises that the prevention of drowning is a public health imperative requiring a coordinated national response, and that local authorities require stronger national support, guidance and legislation to protect residents effectively.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Formally endorse the "Save Lives for Sam" campaign and support the ongoing work of Sam's Army.
2. Write formally to: The Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy, Samantha Dixon MBE MP; The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP; and The Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP; urging them to take the following urgent action:
 - a. Urgently appoint a dedicated Minister for Water Safety and Drowning Prevention, to provide clear national leadership, accountability and coordination for both prevention work and operational response, working alongside a designated lead department.
 - b. Commit to greater long-term support for prevention and public education, including national support so that every child and young person receives consistent, high quality water safety education regardless of where they live.
 - c. Work closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council and the National Water Safety Forum to strengthen national coordination, raise standards and ensure consistent public messaging on water safety.
 - d. Implement Sam's Law to mandate and protect essential water safety equipment at all high-risk bodies of water.
3. Request that the Leader of the Council also writes directly to our local Members of Parliament, urging them to support these measures and to advocate for a national, long term public awareness campaign on water safety and support a Minister for Water Safety and Drowning.
4. Conduct an internal review of all council-managed open water sites within the borough—encompassing both physical safety infrastructure and staffing arrangements—to ensure the highest safety standards, and report the findings of this review to the relevant Scrutiny Committee within four months.

We call on all Members to support this motion and to work together, across parties, to help prevent future avoidable drownings in our communities and across the nation.

To be completed by Governance

Date received by Governance/Head of DS:	06/07/26
Date sent to Monitoring Officer:	06/07/26
Date approval from Monitoring Officer received:	06/07/26