



**Phone Float Throw**  
Campaign toolkit

  
**#RESPECTTHEWATER**



# Introduction

---

Every year, people across the UK witness water-related emergencies, and in those first few seconds, bystanders often play a crucial role. But without clear, memorable guidance, the instinct to help can unintentionally put both the responder and the person in difficulty at even greater risk. That's why having simple, effective public instructions is essential to our shared mission to reduce accidental drownings.

Over the past year, the National Water Safety Forum has partnered with Claremont to carry out a review of Call, Tell, Throw, engaging members, analysing data and campaigns, drawing on behavioural science expertise and conducting public focus groups. This process highlighted a consistent challenge: while the principles behind the original guidance were sound, the delivery was not always intuitive.

Many misunderstood key terms, and overall memorability wasn't strong enough for a message intended to be recalled under extreme stress.

Strengthening this guidance is therefore not just a communications priority, it's a potentially life-saving one.

**Phone Float Throw** emerged from the review as a clearer, more instinctive and more widely understood set of instructions. This toolkit explains in brief why the update matters, how it was developed, and how members can use the campaign assets we've designed in support of it to deliver consistent, effective messaging to the public.

# What's in this toolkit?

Context	2
Our process	3
<b>Audience and key research insights</b>	<b>5</b>
Who are the Audience?	6
Key Insights	7
<b>Campaign materials</b>	<b>8</b>
Social Media	10
Digital 6 Sheet	11
A3 Poster	12
Supporting icons	14
Animated version	15
<b>Further materials for members</b>	<b>16</b>
Graphic device	17
In the real world	18
Content ideas	19
<b>Campaign Principles</b>	<b>21</b>

# Context

---

The latest Water Incident Database (WAID) data reinforces the urgent need for clear, consistent public guidance during water-related emergencies. In **2024, the UK recorded 193 accidental water-related deaths**, including **136 in England, 33 in Scotland, 18 in Wales and 6 in Northern Ireland**. It marked a decrease in comparison to the prior five years, but accidental drownings are still causing devastation to families and communities across the UK.

These drownings continue to occur most frequently in **inland waterways**, which accounted for **61% of all accidental deaths**, with data showing that **84% of those who died were male**, and that warm weather spikes remain a consistent risk factor.

Our work aims to **empower bystanders** who witness a water-related incident to help the person in trouble **without endangering themselves**. In recent years National Water Safety Forum members have been sharing the message of Call Tell Throw to enable

bystanders to act safely, but anecdotal feedback from across the membership revealed some questions around both the salience of the campaign and the comprehension of the terminology, prompting a review ahead of relaunching the campaign in 2026.

The NWSF has undertaken this review working with behaviour change communications partner Claremont, as well as liaising across its membership. It has led to an evidence-based redevelopment of the approach, and this toolkit helps NWSF members to

understand the changes and take advantage of new resources for their own communications and public engagement efforts.

# Our process

---

The review of Call Tell Throw and the development of the new campaign followed this research and consultation process:

## Phase 1

### Insight and strategy

- Review of previous approaches and available data and evidence. Interviews with National Water Safety Forum Chair and other members.
- National Water Safety Forum member workshop to develop understanding of the audience for the campaign and member requirements.
- Development of behavioural strategies, agreed with NWSF

## Phase 2

### Audience insight and campaign development

- Development of campaign creative concepts, and alternative instruction options to compare to Call Tell Throw in testing.
- Research design and hosting two co-design research groups with the public
- Analysing insights and building recommendations
- Review with the NWSF steering group and decision making

## Phase 3

### Audience testing and production

- Further creative iteration based on member feedback
- Audience testing of finalised concept and terminology
- Production and guidance

---

Our guiding principles throughout the development of this programme have been

- **Collective shaping**
- **Listen to our audience**
- **User-friendly outputs for NWSF members**
- **Efficacy-building approach**  
Fear doesn't create effective action
- **Not be politely ignored!**  
We need our message to be seen

---

# AUDIENCE AND KEY RESEARCH INSIGHTS

# Who are the Audience?

---

We have limited data available on the bystander audience. What we do know is informed by WAID 2024 data, anecdotes & stories, and our qualitative research with likely bystanders

Our **primary audience are bystanders who may unexpectedly witness a water emergency**, with a skew towards the below, without being exclusionary to any other audience:

- Men (over-represented in drowning statistics)
- People spending time near inland waterways and coastlines
- People without formal water safety or rescue training

WAID data concerning annual fatalities records that males aged 20-29 were the highest group for accidental fatalities, followed by 60-69-year-old males. We have made an informed assumption that these cohorts are also strongly present within the bystander audience.

Emergencies are rare but emotionally intense. We know that many overestimate their ability to rescue safely and are likely to act differently based on situational factors and their own feelings in the moment.

# Key Insights

---

## Research into campaign comprehension and creative concept development

- Participants in our research found the words Call and Tell to be confusing and unclear
- Participants felt that the phrase Call, Tell, Throw was not particularly memorable overall
- Participants (and experts) had mixed responses regarding the order of the words and felt that this was situational
- Among tested alternatives, **Phone Float Throw was met with support from across our research groups**
- Participants rejected creative approaches that layered too much messaging on top of the core Phone Float Throw instructions. Less is more!
- The groups gravitated towards simple, salient campaign ideas that centred the instructions.
- The lifering concept was by-far the most favoured, with research groups appreciating the simple icon of the ring as being naturally stand out and easy to decode
- While recognising that other life-saving equipment is used around the UK, but conversely it isn't always available at the waterside, the lifering nonetheless was the clearest visual cue for our audience that immediately allowed them to connect with the campaign and messaging
- We've taken this concept and developed and tested it to create a suite of high-impact materials for NWSF's advertising campaign and for members to use and adapt for their own communications

---

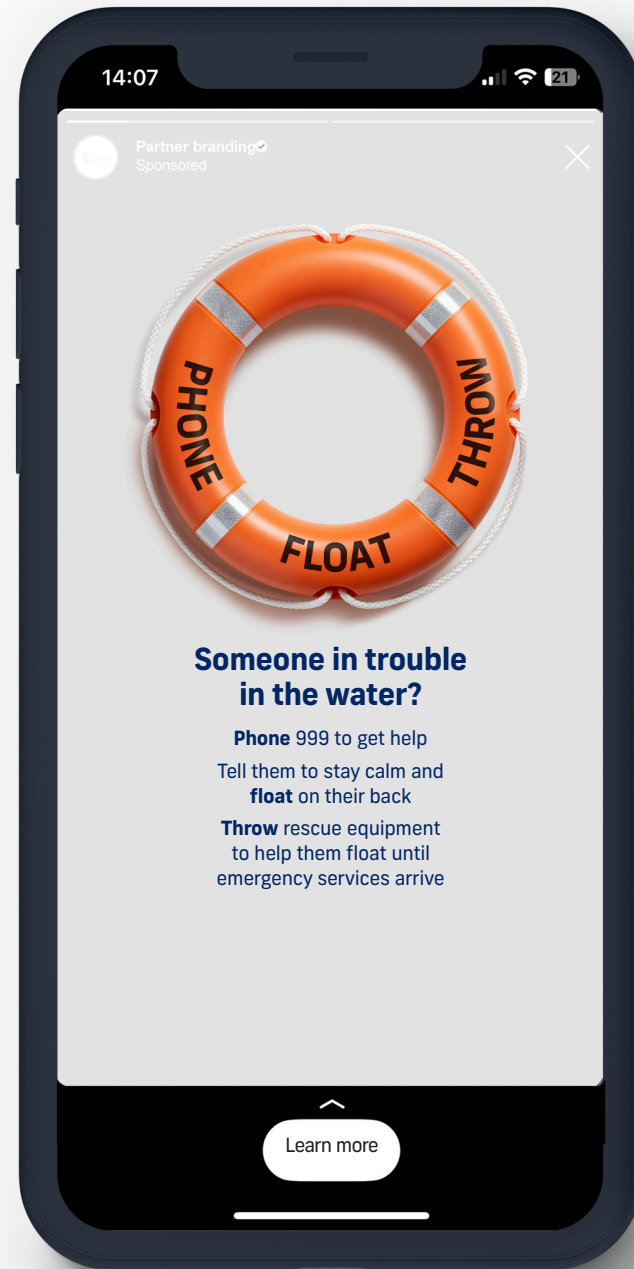
# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Find these in the  
Phone Float Throw  
materials folder

# Phone Float Throw

This is the hero execution of the campaign, it will be the focus of paid advertising undertaken by the National Water Safety Forum and is available for members to use, including provision for members to include their own logo.

Please do not change the wording of the messages, which have been extensively tested, or change the colours or layouts. Consistent expression of the messages will help them gain traction over time.



# Phone Float Throw

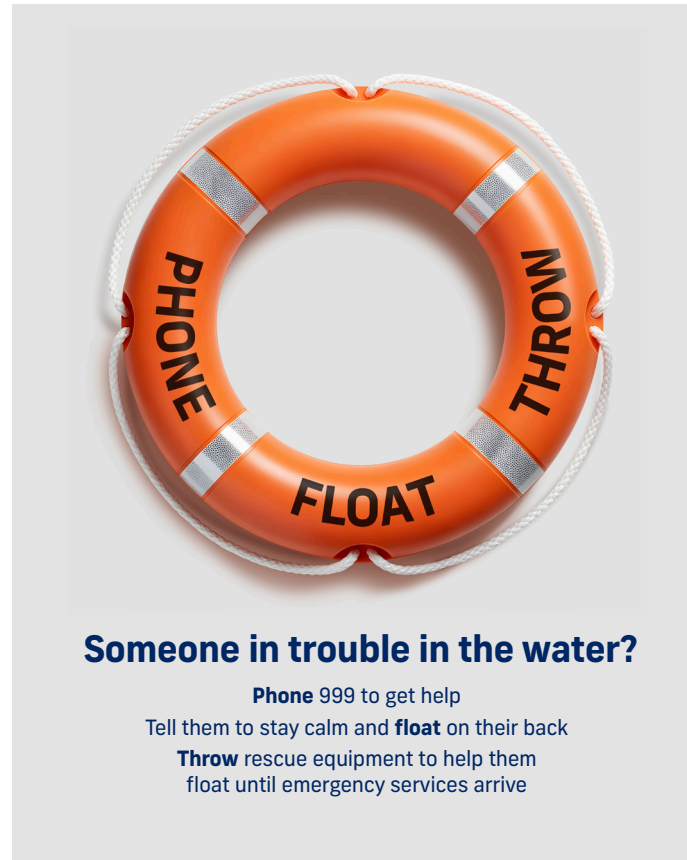
## Social media

Social media assets are provided for Meta (Facebook and Instagram) in both 4:5 and 9:16 ratios.

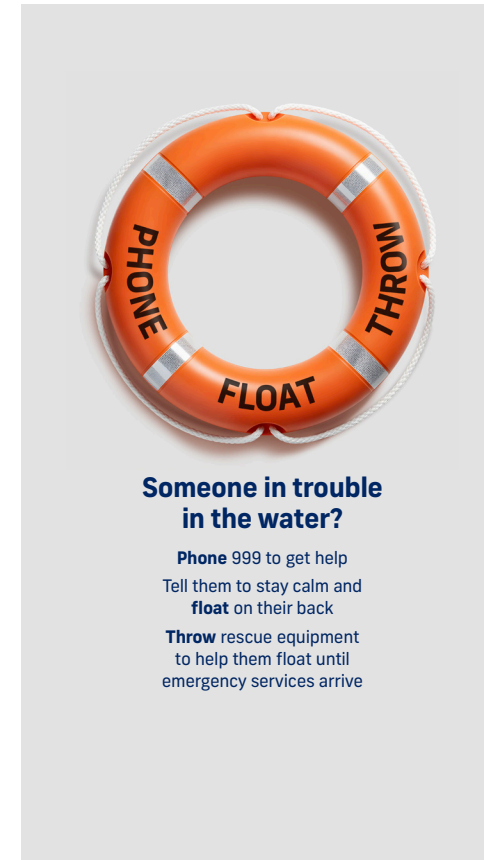
The layout of the 9:16 format (for Instagram Reels) is designed to allow for the safe area.

Social media assets do not contain logos as they are intended to be displayed on member or partner accounts, which will already contain their branding.

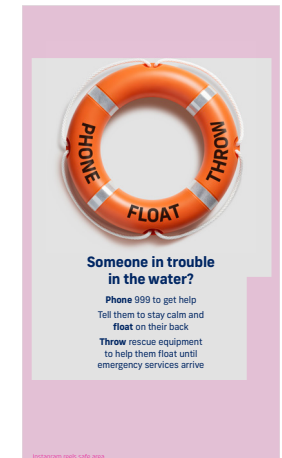
Source files are provided in case the layout needs to be adjusted for a different format.



4:5 ratio – sized for Facebook



9:16 ratio – sized for Instagram Stories



Instagram Reels safe area

# Phone Float Throw

## Digital 6 Sheet

A digital 6-sheet format is supplied at 1080x1920px.



# Phone Float Throw

A3 poster (member branded)

Source files for an A3 poster design (created in Adobe Indesign) are also provided for partner use.

These can optionally be customised with your own logo in the bottom right hand corner. All other design elements are fixed and should not be changed.

Please see the following page for information on logo placement.



# Phone Float Throw

## A3 poster (member branded)

When adding your own logo to the poster, this should always be placed in the bottom right, as indicated here.

This area is indicated in the supplied artworks (but does not print). Due to the number of organisations supporting Phone Float Throw, it is not possible to give exact dimensions, so please use your judgement to ensure your logo(s) balance with the Respect The Water logo and does not encroach on the messaging.



Someone in trouble  
in the water? Remember  
**Phone Float Throw.**  
It could save their life.

**Phone** 999 to get help  
Tell them to stay calm  
and **float** on their back  
**Throw** rescue equipment  
to help them float until  
emergency services arrive

  
#RESPECT THE WATER

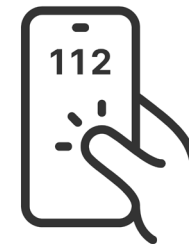
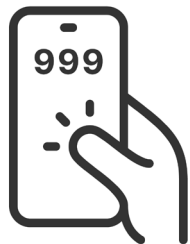
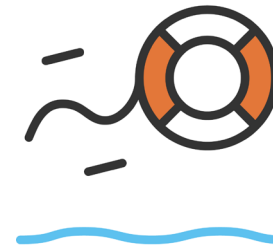
# Phone Float Throw

## Supporting icons

Icons—in both colour and black and white—have been created to support each of the three key messages.

The icons exist in both static and animated versions.

A 112 version of Phone icon has been created for use in Northern Ireland.



Phone

Float

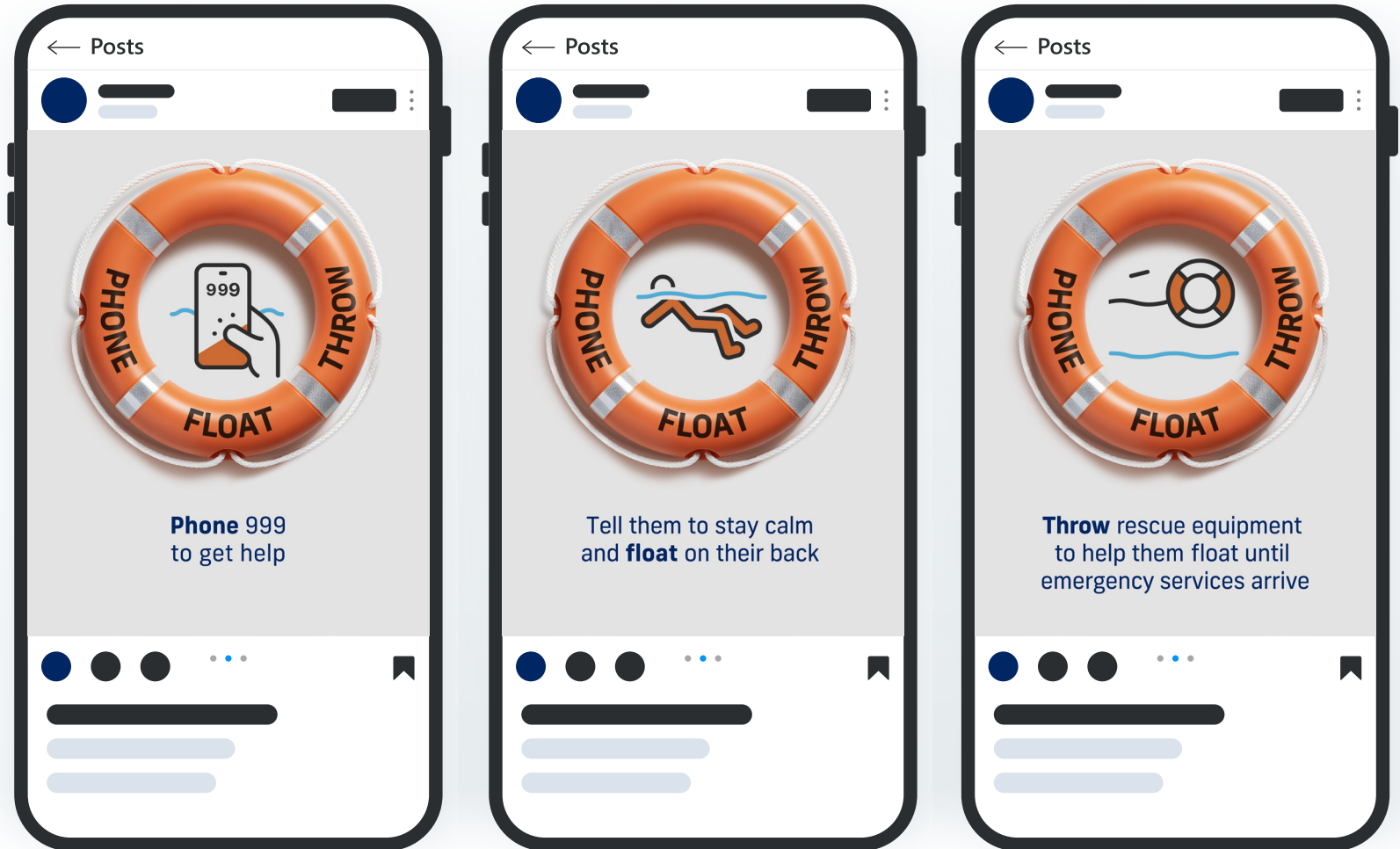
Throw

Phone  
Northern Ireland

# Phone Float Throw

## Animated version

Another focus of the paid advertising undertaken by the National Water Safety Forum is an animated version of Phone Float Throw, and NWSF members are encouraged to share this through their channels.



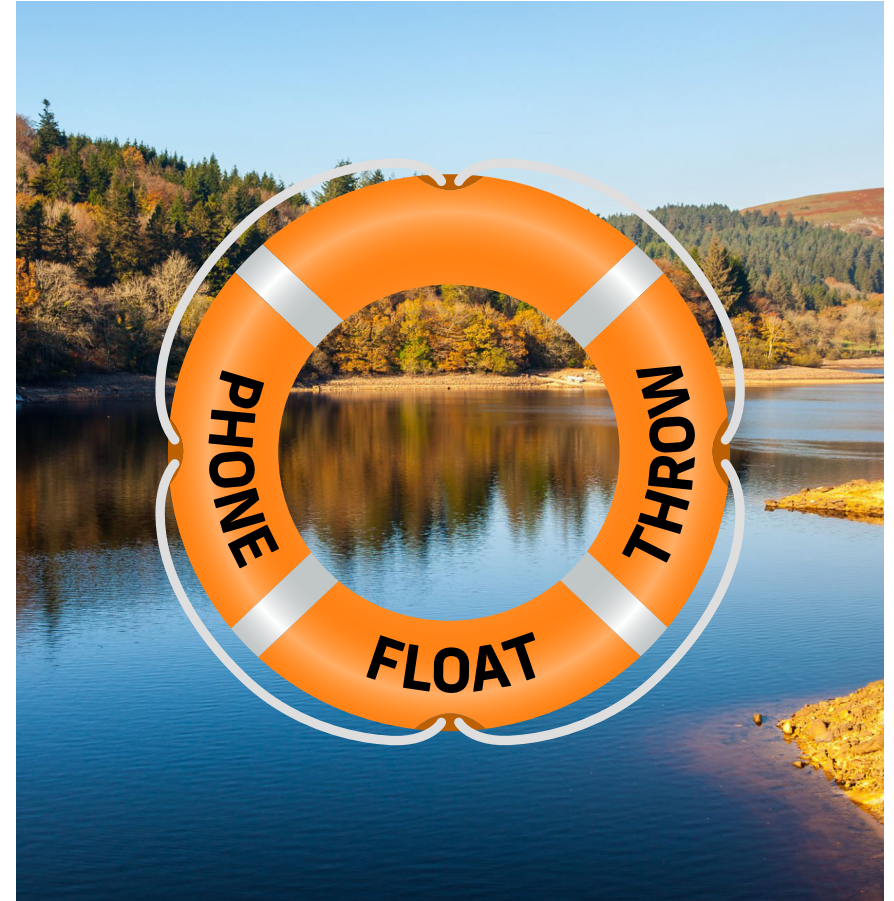
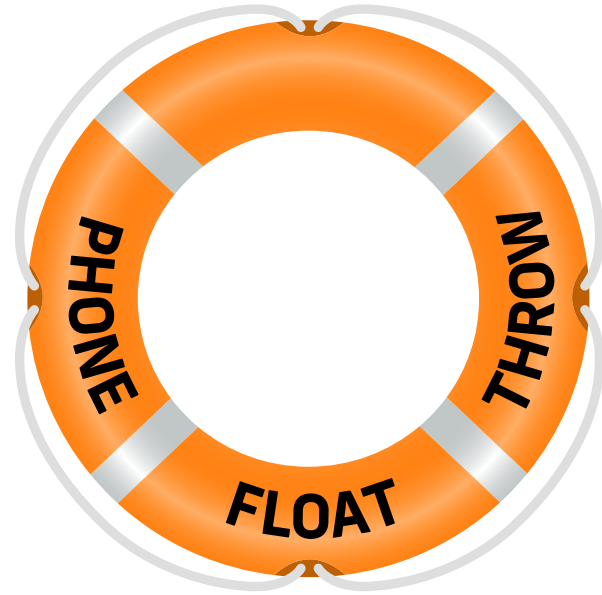
---

# **FURTHER MATERIALS FOR MEMBERS**

# Graphic device

National Water Safety Forum members operate on both coastal and inland waters across the country. These environments are incredibly diverse, so we've created a graphic Phone Float Throw overlay members can drop over the top of representative environments for their audiences. This approach keeps the core message consistent while helping to link it to the many different water contexts in which members operate in the UK.

The graphic device is supplied as both an eps and transparent png files which can be dropped directly over photography within design software.



# Phone Float Throw

## In the real world

Over time we want audiences to think of the Phone Float Throw instructions whenever they see a life ring, which will help build efficacy across the public should anyone find themselves as a bystander to someone in trouble in the water.

We'd encourage the creation of branded Phone Float Throw life rings that National Water Safety Forum members can use to create their own communications for social media. Members can create content using the ring in environments that make most sense to their audiences.

On the next page we have some ideas to make the most of the ring in the real world.



## Producing your Phone Float Throw life ring:

To produce your own life ring, we'd recommend sending the hero image to your supplier to use as a guide.

The font used for the Phone Float Throw wording is New Frank Bold, although any other uppercase, bold sans serif font in black is also acceptable.

The various suppliers involved means we are unable to provide a universal artwork.

# Phone Float Throw

---

## Content ideas

We encourage members to be creative with life rings, but when creating content, please try to include the core messaging of Phone Float Throw said out loud or in your post text.

### Ideas for using the life ring:

- Use the life ring as a visual frame for story telling. Has someone helped a person in the water by following the instructions? They can tell their story while holding the ring.
- Rescue team or member organisation representatives can explain the importance of Phone Float Throw while holding the campaign life ring.
- Try passing the ring from one spokesperson to another to cover the instructions.
- Take the ring to higher risk locations to ground the instructions in the real world and in contexts where they are more likely to come into play.

## Core messaging

Someone in trouble in the water? Remember **Phone Float Throw** – it could save their life.

**Phone** 999 to get help

Tell them to stay calm and **float** on their back

**Throw** rescue equipment to help them float until emergency services arrive

---

# **PRINCIPLES AND CONTACT**

# Campaign Principles

---

Phone Float Throw has taken on board evidence from National Water Safety Forum members and from audience testing to help improve the memorability of these important, life saving instructions. To help them gain traction among the public, try to stick to these principles:

- **Keep it consistent – don't change the core wording – the more consistently it appears over time, the more it will establish itself**
- **Use the materials for members to make the campaign your own, add your logo**
- **Share stories where Phone Float Throw has supported a bystander in helping someone in the water**

## **Need support?**

Contact Phone Float Throw's communications lead Georgie Beardmore at the National Water Safety Forum for support with the campaign:

[gbeardmore@ROSPA.com](mailto:gbeardmore@ROSPA.com)

  
**#RESPECT THE WATER**

