



KENSINGTON PALACE

People's attention may be focused on the worldwide effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but sadly that does not mean that other deaths are not occurring which are avoidable.

Over the last year, the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), the Commonwealth's oldest and largest lifesaving and drowning prevention organisation, has been undertaking a vital piece of work to report the number of deaths by drowning throughout the Commonwealth. This research has been led by Dr Aminur Rahman, the Society's Drowning Prevention Director, who is from the RLSS member organisation in Bangladesh, the Centre for Injury Prevention Research Bangladesh.

I am delighted that we are finally able to officially launch the Commonwealth Fatal Drowning Data Factsheet.

There is a real concern that the loss of life might be much higher in many Commonwealth nations, given that not all deaths by drowning are recorded accurately, or at all. The figures we do have tell us that the number of lives lost is extremely high, and that some simple interventions could prevent people from drowning.

Today, I am calling on all Commonwealth Governments and supported agencies to use the data in the Commonwealth Fatal Drowning Factsheet, in collaboration with key agencies and lifesaving organisations, to start the process that could ultimately see accidental drowning a thing of the past.

I therefore ask you to make introductions to appropriate departments within your High Commissions or government ministries, and instigate dialogue to find out how we can work together to reduce this terrible death toll.

I implore you to share this important issue with your governments and put an end to the unnecessary loss of life through simple, yet effective, drowning prevention measures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mick'.

HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO
Commonwealth President