

# Ban the ban on open water swimming

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With the weather finally heating up, specialist open water swimming magazine H2open is calling on public bodies and local authorities to change prohibitive messaging around open water swimming and for swimming lessons geared towards open water safety to be made available to children, from a young age.

Open water swimming is becoming increasingly popular in the UK with tens of thousands participating in organised events in lakes, rivers and seas. What was once a niche hobby is now a marketable recreational activity with companies running training camps up and down the country and selling out popular events. As an island nation we are surrounded by water and also fortunate to have breathtakingly beautiful natural swimming pools at our disposal in the form of lakes and rivers but prohibitive 'Danger: No Swimming' signs are as effective a barrier to responsible swimmers as gates and electric fences.

H2Open believes that scaremongering does not tackle the underlying problem, which is that too few people know how to swim and stay safe in open water.

Simon Griffiths, founder of H2Open says: "In 2014, 138 people in the UK drowned after falling in while running or walking alongside water. It would be ludicrous to ban these activities close to water yet councils and water companies ban people from swimming in open water, which sees far fewer deaths. At the same time, the emergency services frequently – and erroneously – tell us that open water is extremely dangerous. Scaremongering doesn't tackle the underlying problem, which is that too few people know to swim and stay safe in open water. This starts with basic swimming ability in the pool, where we are already failing thousands of children in schools each year, but goes beyond this to teaching water awareness, an appreciation of the risks and basic survival skills."

He added: "we also strongly believe that exercising outside, especially swimming, is a wonderful thing that should be enjoyed by as many people as possible. It's therefore a shame that vast numbers of sensible people are put off open water swimming in an attempt to protect a few reckless ones."

## About H2Open Magazine

H2Open Magazine covers all aspects of open water swimming, from wild swimming to swimming holidays and long distance challenges, and it's relevant to anyone who's interested in open water whether they are just starting out or have multiple English Channel crossings to their name.

Find out more at: [www.h2openmagazine.com](http://www.h2openmagazine.com)

Contact: Simon Griffiths|[simon@h2openmagazine.com](mailto:simon@h2openmagazine.com)|07958 312607