

WATER SAFETY

EDUCATION PACKAGE

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

What we will talk about

Objectives:

- Know what ‘open water’ is
- Recognise the dangers of ‘open water’
- Understand possible consequences of entering ‘open water’
- Know what to do if you or someone else needs help

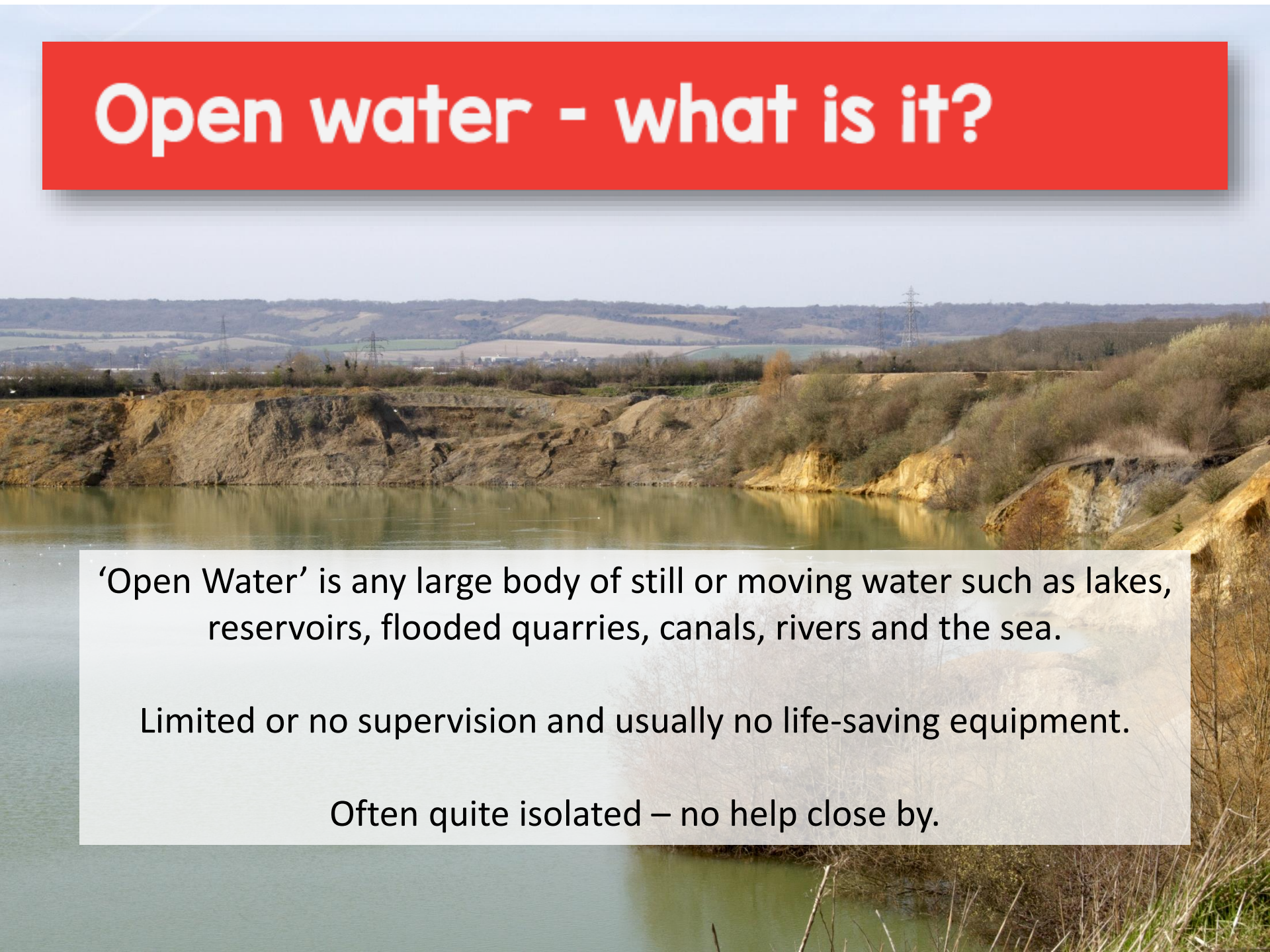
The facts and figures



- Drowning is one of the UK's leading causes of accidental death.
- Generally, over 300 people die from drowning in the UK every year.
- Males account for over 80% of the deaths
- Many of these deaths are males aged between 10 and 18 and are entirely preventable.
- It is the third most common cause of death in under 16-year-olds.



Open water - what is it?



‘Open Water’ is any large body of still or moving water such as lakes, reservoirs, flooded quarries, canals, rivers and the sea.

Limited or no supervision and usually no life-saving equipment.

Often quite isolated – no help close by.

Organised Open Water Swimming

- **Organised – other people about**
- **Safe location and risk assessed – safe swim zones**
- **Non-polluted water**
- **Help on hand – likely to be supervision or a lifeguarding service.**



Open water dangers



- Depth of the water
- Cold water
- Risk of getting trapped
- Difficulty getting out
- Hidden currents and strong tides
- Rubbish under the waterline
- Polluted water
- Remote locations







Effects of cold water shock

Cold water carries heat away from the body 25 times faster than air of the same temperature.

Jumping into cold water causes immediate physiological responses, the first of which is a “gasp” reflex.

Water with a temperature of less than 15°C can trigger this REFLEX reaction.

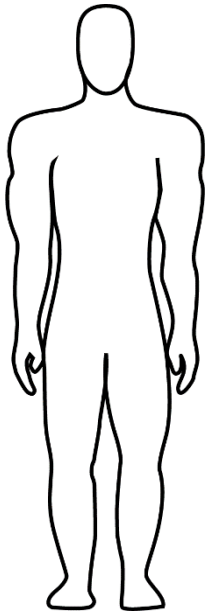


Reservoir temperatures rarely get above 12°C!

United Utilities

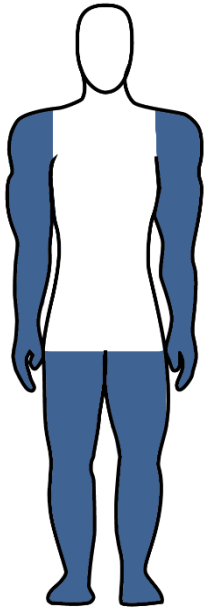
Effects of cold water shock

Short Term



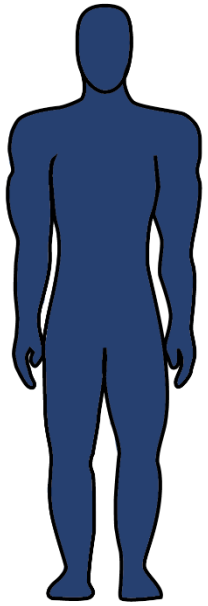
- Panic
- Struggle to breath
- Heart rate rises rapidly

Medium Term



- Arms and legs will cool quickly
- Leads to a loss of strength

Longer Term



- Body becomes so cold you can't control it
- Become disorientated and fall unconscious

Tombstoning

Tombstoning is a term given to a high-risk activity involving people jumping from heights into water.

Serious injuries and deaths as a result of tombstoning remain a real concern.

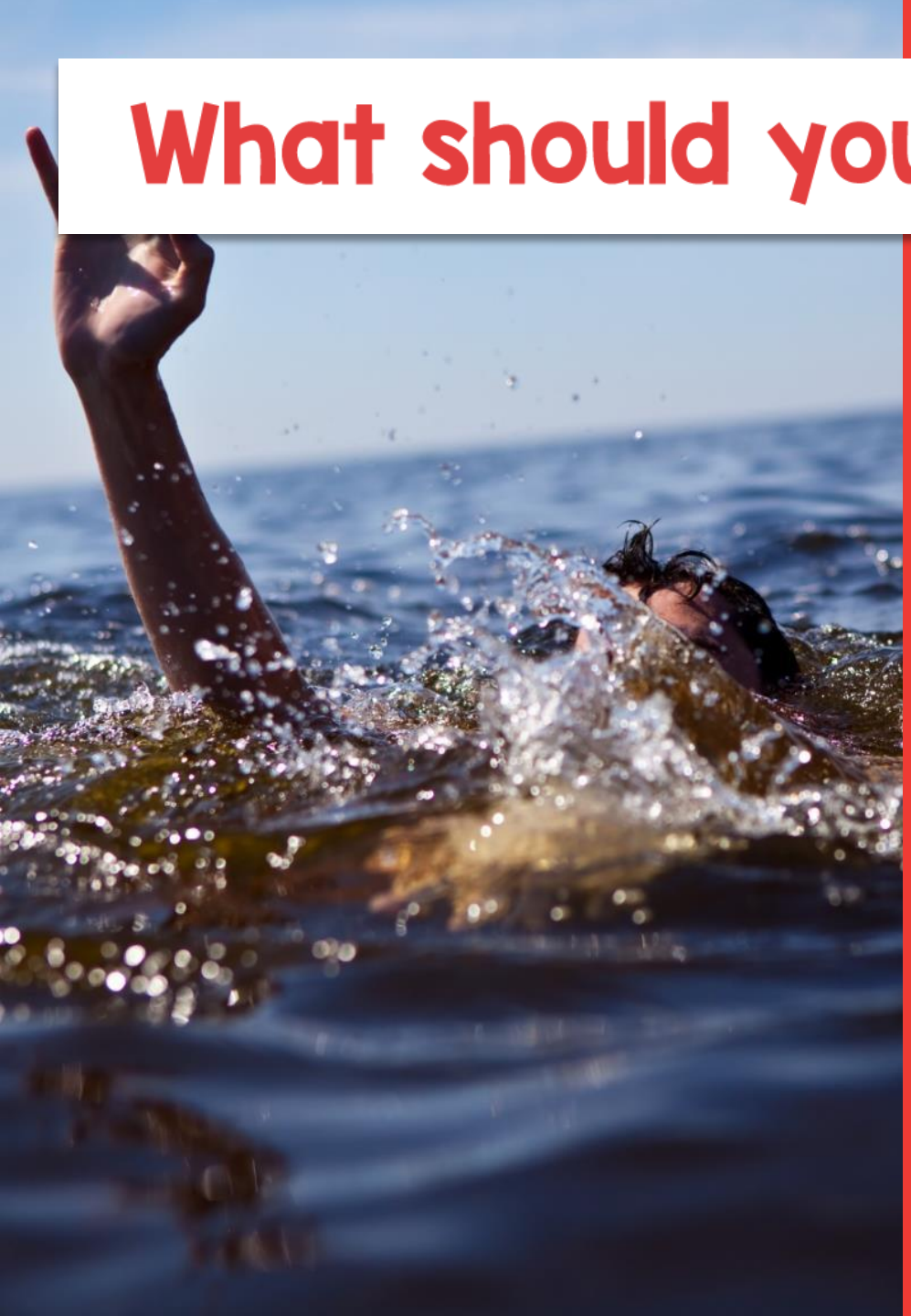


DON'T JUMP INTO THE UNKNOWN - CONSIDER THE DANGERS.

Skating on thin ice?



What should you do?



If someone else is struggling in the water:

Never enter the water to rescue a drowning person

Instead –
Shout Reach Throw

Whoever is struggling in the water should try to turn on their back and #FloatToLive

What3Words App

What3Words can share your exact location with the emergency services:

1. Download the **What3Words** app from Google Store/AppStore
2. Give the app permission to use your location
3. In an emergency, find your unique three-word location, **e.g., ///tells.puddles.punch**
4. Call 999 and give the operator your location, including your three words
5. They will share your exact location with the emergency services – fire and rescue service and HM Coastguard



Be water aware

Remember:

- **The consequences of entering 'open water' can be serious and could even lead to you losing your life**

- **'Open water' can have many dangers**
  - it is likely to be incredibly cold which can lead to 'cold water shock'
  - there may be hidden dangers under the surface
  - the water is often untreated which could lead to some nasty illnesses
  - sites are often remote so getting help quickly may be difficult

- **If someone is in trouble - raise the alarm - Shout, Reach and Throw**
  Try to float on your back - #Float To Live

- **You are more likely to drown in 'open water' if you are a strong swimmer because you are more likely to take risks and go into the water**

- **Download What3Words or a similar app to share your exact location with the emergency services**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

More information can be found on:

https://www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/safety/home-safety/water-safety

#LancashireFRS
#LFRSWaterSafety
#FloatToLive
#WaterSafety
#BeWaterAware