

Megan's story

When Megan Willdig registered her baby daughter's birth it broke her heart to have to leave the name of Ava's fisherman father blank.

Steven Robertson, 25, died at sea two weeks before his partner, Megan, discovered she was pregnant with their much wanted first child.

None of Steven's colleagues on the fishing boat saw him fall overboard on the dark January night he died.

And as he was not wearing any sort of life jacket when he fell, his body was never found.

For Steven's family the absence of his body made their grief at losing him so much worse.

They could not register his death.

They could not hold a funeral.

They could not close his bank account.

And of particular heartache to Megan was that with no death certificate she could not even add Steven's name to the birth certificate of their baby daughter who was born eight months after her father's death.

Steven died in January 2012 while working on the scallop dredger, the St Amant, off the coast of Anglesey, Wales.

Now almost two years on from the tragedy Steven's family are supporting a campaign led by both fishing industry body Seafish and the Fisherman's Mission to encourage more fishermen to wear personal floatation devices.

And while they say the main aim of these modern life jackets is to save lives, they also want fishermen to think about how the loss of their body would affect their loved ones should the worst happen.

Megan, 20, of Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire, said: "We will never know if wearing a life jacket would have saved Steven's life, but we do know that if he was wearing a life jacket they would have been much more likely to have found his body.

"At first, no body being found gives you hope - and you keep holding on to the dream that he is going to be found safe and well somewhere.

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Securing a sustainable and profitable future for the UK seafood industry.

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"But as time goes on, no body just makes the grief even worse.

"There is no closure. You can't say goodbye at a proper funeral. You don't have a death certificate so you can't do the administrative things you need to do like close banks accounts.

"And in my case I couldn't even put Steven's name on Ava's birth certificate.

"I think a lot of fishermen believe a life jacket won't actually save their life if they fall overboard, but they don't think about how wearing a life jacket might make things much easier for their families if the worst does happen."

The 'Sea You Home Safe' campaign is also backed by fisherman Steven Robertson's grandfather.

Angus Robertson, 81, of Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire, said: "After an inquest was held into Steven's death we were finally granted a temporary death certificate - but that was more than a year after his death which was a long time to wait to do the things we needed to do.

"Steven would have been a wonderful daddy and it breaks all our hearts that he is not here for Ava, Megan or for everyone else who loved him so dearly.

"I would like to see all fishermen wearing life jackets - both for their own sake, and the sake of their families."