



RNLI Trustees

Appointment Brief
October 2025

Introduction



Janet Legrand OBE KC (Hon), RNLI Chair

What makes a true lifesaver? You.

Our charity is looking for a person like you to join our Trustee Board.

It's a unique opportunity for you to contribute to a major lifesaving organisation in the UK and Ireland, and internationally, but also to help shape our future as we adapt to a changing world.

You probably know that we're a registered charity, independent from government. Governance is important to us, and as we launch into our third century of lifesaving, we are looking for Trustees who can bring breadth of perspective, diversity of thought, and the vision and ambition to help shape our future. We welcome individuals with experience of providing commercial, finance and people leadership in large and complex organisations, but also those with strategic expertise in areas crucial for future success, such as engineering, digital transformation, organisational change and building resilience in complex environments.

Join us and you'll be helping our skilled and brave lifeboat volunteers sustain a world-class search and rescue service around the coast of the UK and Ireland. You'll also be supporting our seasonal lifeguards and preventing drowning by helping our Water Safety and International teams.

If you are willing to contribute to our charity, the rewards are huge. By making the most of your own skills and working with others who share your commitment, you will make a real difference to a charity that has saved over 146,000 lives at sea over the past two centuries.

As we adapt to the challenges ahead, it is an exciting time to join the RNLI. I very much welcome your interest and look forward to discussing the opportunity of joining the RNLI with you.

Janet Legrand OBE KC (Hon)

Chair, RNLI

About us

WE ARE THE RNLI: THE CHARITY THAT SAVES LIVES AT SEA

Every day of the year, people of all backgrounds get into danger in the water. It's a problem we're here to tackle.

We are more than a rescue service. The RNLI also works with communities to prevent drowning by influencing, supervising and educating people. We share our expertise internationally too. We give support to countries where drowning rates are significant, and work with like-minded organisations to save lives. We build our own state-of-the-art rescue craft.

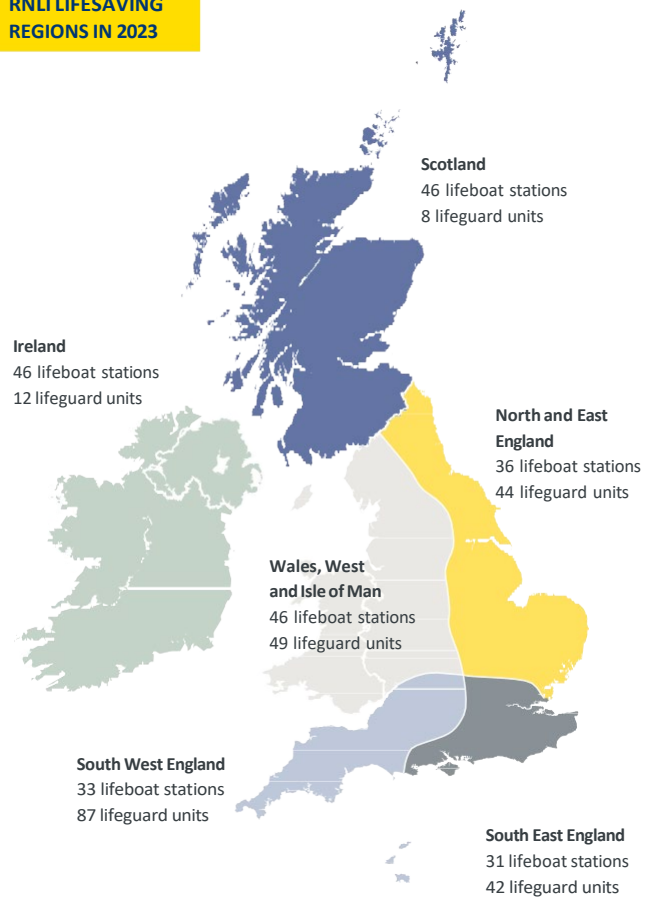
We're here to explain the risks, share safety knowledge and rescue those people whose lives are in danger.

We're here to work with others to make the water a safer place for everyone.

We're here to prevent tragedies inshore and offshore.

And with your help, we always will be.

RNLI LIFESAVING REGIONS IN 2023



Above regions are based on 2023 figures.



**WE ARE THE RNLI
SAVING LIVES AT SEA**

With more than 200 lifeboat stations across the UK and Ireland, our strength lies in operating through local teams, centrally supported and resourced. But the RNLI's work is broad and varied – we're more than a rescue service. We influence, supervise and educate people too. Our vision is to save every one.

OUR ORGANISATION

The RNLI is a dynamic, complex, and international charity – and one of the world's leading lifesaving organisations. Independent from government and powered by kindness for over two centuries, we are supported almost entirely through the generosity of our donors.

Our scale and impact are significant. In 2024, the RNLI reported an estimated £247 million in income, with a workforce of around 2,400 employees. We manage a substantial marine estate and oversee 1,200 properties, supporting a highly complex operational environment. Our active fleet comprises more than 400 lifeboats across over 200 lifeboat stations, while our seasonal lifeguards provide a world-class search and rescue service by patrolling over 230 beaches.

At the heart of the RNLI are our people. More than 10,000 operational crew members and lifeguards volunteer their skills on the frontline, supported by over 14,000 additional volunteers who fundraise, build awareness, and share vital water safety advice in their communities. It is their dedication – alongside the support of our donors – that enables us to save lives at sea every single day.



RNLI lifesavers pictured next to the Tenby lifeboat and slipway

'It is a privilege to be an RNLI Trustee and to be able to play my part in supporting our dedicated volunteers in saving lives at sea'

Philip Goodwin, Trustee

RNLI lifeboat crews protect hundreds of communities around the UK and Ireland through our 24-hour search and rescue service. We have an active fleet of more than 400 lifeboats, and our crews are called out an average of 24 times per day. There's most likely a lifeboat crew out right now, saving lives. In order to maintain this service, we build and repair our lifeboats to the highest standards.

Our lifeguards patrol well over 230 beaches around the UK and Channel Islands in the summer season. They aim to reach anyone up to 300m from shore, within the red and yellow flags on RNLI-patrolled beaches, within 3½ minutes.



Cork's famous Annie Moore statue gets a 2021 makeover as part of a joint RNLI and Helly Hansen safety campaign to encourage people to wear a lifejacket when out on the water

EDUCATION

Educating young people about water safety is fundamental to saving lives at sea and a core part of our prevention work. The more young people we can reach with our water safety messages, the more lives we can save now and in the future.

We also support young people as they think about their career paths. Engineering is at the very heart of what we do at the RNLI. That's why it's crucial we inspire the next generation, particularly young women, to consider roles within engineering. We hold a yearly event for local schoolgirls to celebrate International Women in Engineering Day.



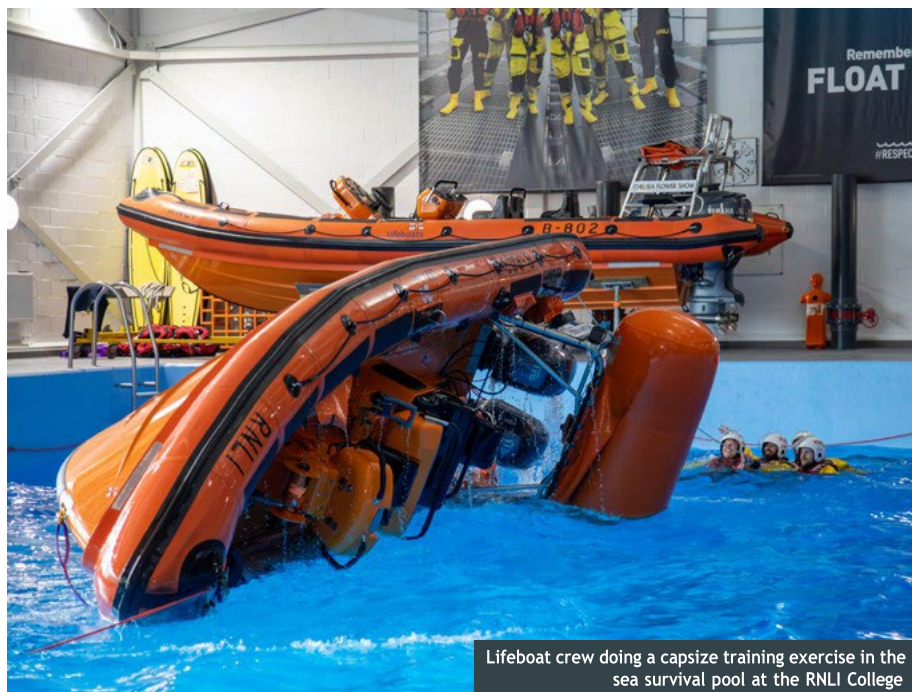
RNLI Education volunteer teaching primary school children important water safety skills

RNLI COLLEGE

The RNLI College in Poole is where our extraordinary volunteer crew – and lifeguards – from around the UK and Ireland are trained. The site also offers an award-winning hotel and conference venue, so everyone can come and experience the home of RNLI training.

WATER SAFETY

Making people safer is core to the RNLI's operations. We use research, targeted campaigns and lifesaving plans to encourage changes in people's behaviour, in and around the water. We work alongside partners to maximise our reach and influence.



Lifeboat crew doing a capsize training exercise in the sea survival pool at the RNLI College

INTERNATIONAL

Every other minute, someone in the world drowns. Drowning claims an estimated 235,000 lives every year, many of them children. The RNLI is working with global leaders, public health organisations and at-risk communities to change this by raising awareness, conducting research and testing interventions. We want to make drowning prevention a priority worldwide and reduce this staggering loss of life.



The RNLI supports SeaSafe, a project in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, where children are at high risk of drowning. As part of the project, children receive swimming lessons that could save their lives

Our impact

Every year, our volunteer lifeboat crews and lifeguards help and rescue thousands of people, and have saved over 146,000 lives since 1824. Countless more lives are saved through our youth education, water safety and international work.

The RNLI celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2024. We are proud of our history, the affection in which people hold our traditions, and the RNLI's achievement of saving lives over more than two centuries.

As we look ahead, volunteering will remain at the heart of everything we do, while we embrace and adapt to the changing ways people choose to give their time.

We are proud to work with partners such as the Black Swimming Association (BSA), reflecting our shared belief that everyone should have the knowledge and skills to stay safe in and around water. Together, we are committed to making water safety education and drowning prevention accessible, inclusive and equitable for ethnically diverse communities across the UK and Ireland.

Through this partnership, we share a clear and powerful ambition: to reduce accidental drowning fatalities in these communities and move closer to our goal of saving every one.



RNLI Senior Seasonal Lifeguard Maisie Rafferty monitoring the beach at Southsea, Portsmouth



Whitstable Atlantic 85 inshore lifeboat Lewisco B-877 during a training exercise

IN 2024

352
LIVES SAVED BY
RNLI CREWS
AND LIFEGUARDS

25,327
PEOPLE AIDED BY
RNLI CREWS
AND LIFEGUARDS

22
PEOPLE AIDED EACH
DAY ON AVERAGE
BY LIFEBOAT
VOLUNTEERS

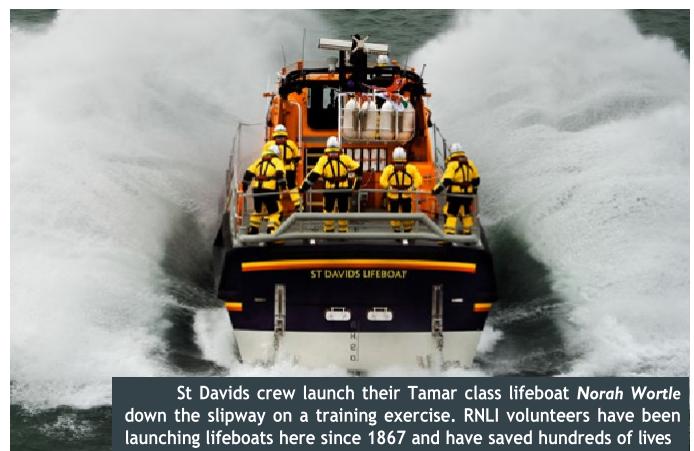
Our values

We are a charity founded upon and driven by our values:

- **Selflessness**
- **Courage**
- **Dependability**
- **Trustworthiness**

Volunteers are at the heart of our charity, supported by expert staff to enable communities to save lives. More than 10,000 of our operational crew members, and around 100 of our lifeguards, are volunteers. More than 14,000 dedicated volunteers also raise funds and awareness, give water safety advice and help in our shops, museums and offices.

Values shared by generations of supporters have powered our lifesaving work through kindness and generosity for over two centuries.



'I feel privileged to be part of the RNLI, an institution that reflects the best values of our communities, with courageous and inspiring people achieving marvelous feats.'

Jim Islam
RNLI Treasurer and Trustee

Looking to the future

As we look ahead, it is vital that the RNLI is prepared for the challenges of the next two centuries, ensuring we remain resilient, relevant and equipped to save lives in a rapidly changing world. Our Board will play a crucial role in helping us look forward, adapt with confidence, and guide the organisation through transformation.

A major priority will be securing a strong and sustainable volunteer workforce for the future. This means engaging young people, adapting to new expectations of volunteering, and ensuring that we are inclusively connecting with diverse communities across the UK and Ireland.

At the same time, digital innovation will be central to our future. Harnessing new tools, technology and forms of communication will be key to engaging new audiences, improving the effectiveness of our operations, and ensuring that our lifesaving services remain fit for the future. Just as importantly, it will enable us to give our volunteers the best possible experience – making it easier for them to train, connect, and contribute their skills.

We must also continue to strengthen our ability to manage complex risks across every part of our work – financial, operational, safety, reputational, and global. Building resilience into the organisation, while sustaining the trust and confidence of our supporters, will underpin everything we do.

Our work has never been more important, whether we are keeping people safe in the UK and Ireland, or using our experience and expertise to help tackle the global drowning problem. Since 1824, we've pioneered developments in lifesaving at sea, and there is a hugely exciting period ahead as we continue to innovate, develop our services and inspire lifesavers of the future.



Torbay volunteer crew member James Hoare using a searchlight onboard the Severn class lifeboat *Alec and Christina Dykes* 17-28 ON 1255

The role of the Trustee Board

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring the RNLI stays true to its mission, ethos and values.

Being a Trustee of a dynamic, complex, international charity means making decisions that will impact on people's lives, on the communities we serve across the UK, Ireland and Crown Dependencies (and internationally) and on wider society.

The Trustee Board has ultimate responsibility for all the activities of the RNLI in pursuit of its objectives. Trustees, led by the Chair, have independent control over, and legal responsibility for, the RNLI's management. They act as the ultimate decision-makers, protecting the interests of volunteers, beneficiaries, colleagues, and the public. They agree the strategy and work closely with the Chief Executive and Executive Team to ensure they are in a position to deliver effectively.

RNLI Trustees come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a range of specialist skills to support and challenge the organisation. What they have in common is a passion for the organisation and a belief in its objectives to reduce deaths from drowning.

Trustees need to:

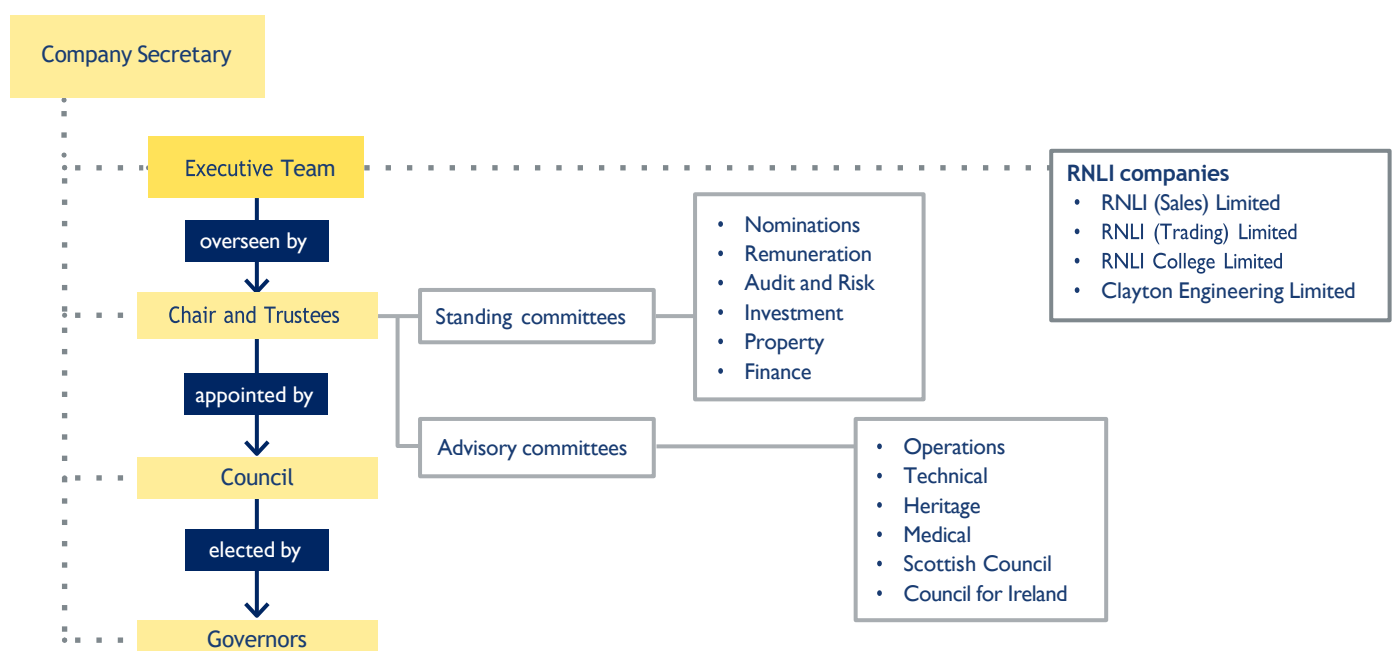
- demonstrate inclusive leadership traits, for example, being an active listener, aware of your own bias and comfortable in challenging your own thinking and that of others
- demonstrate an inclusive, respectful, non-judgmental approach to others
- show emotional intelligence and independence of thought
- actively promote diversity within both the Trustee Board and the RNLI as a whole.

The Trustee term of office is 3 years and Trustees may serve up to a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.

A Trustee must be an active governor member and remain so for the entirety of their tenure – more information about Governor Membership can be found here:

[RNLI.org/become-a-governor](https://www.rnli.org/become-a-governor)

This is how the Trustee Board and committees fit into our governance structure:



Volunteer role description:

Trustee

Like all large and complex charities, the RNLI continues to evolve, ensuring that we remain fit for purpose today, while equipping ourselves to be a modern, resilient organisation for the future. Change and transformation are part of our journey, and the Board plays a critical role in providing the breadth of perspective and diversity of thought to enable the effective strategic oversight required to support our Chief Executive and Executive team.

We are seeking Trustees who not only bring professional expertise, but also the vision and ambition to help shape the RNLI's future. The qualities we look for cannot be captured in a checklist alone: we want Trustees who are team players, who can contribute strategically and take a holistic view of the organisation, always keeping sight of the bigger picture and the many interdependent factors at play. Commercial and financial awareness is essential, but so too is an appreciation of the RNLI's unique brand, reputation and public trust, and the responsibility to steward these wisely.

As we strengthen the RNLI's resilience today and prepare confidently for the future, we recognise that the organisation benefits most from a Board with a wide

diversity of skills, experiences, backgrounds and outlooks. This diversity not only reflects the communities we serve but also ensures robust decision-making in the face of complex risks and opportunities.

As current Trustees complete their terms, we expect to appoint **up to four new Trustees in this round of recruitment**. We will also be pleased to identify candidates who may contribute in other governance roles or be considered for future appointments. We are undertaking a significant Governance Review, which will see our committee structure streamlined into fewer but broader committees, with clearer delineated responsibilities. New Trustees may be expected to contribute to at least one of these committees.

It is **essential** that candidates bring **previous non-executive or trustee experience**, ensuring they can contribute effectively to the governance and strategic leadership of the RNLI. We are particularly interested in candidates who can offer expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- **Audit and Risk** – With a view to stepping up as the future Chair of our Audit & Risk Committee. Candidates will ideally have a finance background and accounting qualification. While financial risk is an important consideration, the RNLI faces broader operational, safety and reputational risk, and therefore it would be a significant benefit to have someone in this position who has relevant experience in a similarly complex, operational organisation.
- **HR and Organisational Change** – We are seeking an experienced People function leader with proven expertise in leading cultural transformation, organisational design and employee relations, as well as experience of addressing practical HR challenges. Direct, hands-on leadership in this area, as well as strategic leadership experience, will be particularly valuable. An understanding of how to support a large and diverse volunteer base is desirable, as is experience of embedding good safeguarding practice across complex organisations.
- **Digital Transformation** – Digital change and transformation are essential to the RNLI's future success and to the experience of our thousands of volunteers and staff. We need a Trustee with significant experience of delivering digital transformation at scale, able to help the Board think strategically while supporting the Executive to deliver.
- **Engineering and Infrastructure** – We would welcome candidates with strategic experience in infrastructure and engineering, able to guide investment with confidence, and support volunteers and staff in this vital area of our work. With 1,200 properties and a substantial marine estate, we are investing significantly to ensure safety, value for money and long-term resilience.

WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING

- Make a time commitment of approximately 20+ days a year. You will meet with the Trustee Board 6 times a year. This requirement may increase if you are appointed to a committee.
- Ensure that the Chief Executive and their Executive Team develop appropriate long term strategic plans aligned with the mission and public benefit, and monitor their implementation.
- Agree and monitor key RNLI policies with clear ownership of each policy.
- Ensure effective and efficient management and administration is in place, so resources are used responsibly and with good judgement.
- Provide support and leadership to the Chief Executive, including providing constructive feedback.
- Ensure the reputation of the RNLI and its values are kept intact.
- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board, or any committees, reach sound decisions.
- Act as an RNLI ambassador at events such as lifeboat naming ceremonies, Council and Committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting.

What's in it for you?

- Use your talents and expertise to save lives at sea and be a part of the RNLI family.
- Work with other committed experts who are passionate about influencing and challenging key decisions for the charity and our supporters.
- Meet with others in your local community and nationally to support our volunteers.



‘I feel it is a privilege to serve such an important and cherished national institution and really enjoy working with so many dedicated and inspirational people.’

Sandra Morson
Vice President and Membership
Former Nomination Committee Member

WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR THIS ROLE?

The ability to work with a range of stakeholders, and to act with integrity and confidentially.

- An ability to ask open questions and to listen.
- An ability to remain strategic while assimilating a large amount of operational detail.
- A proven ability to work with people at all levels within an organisation or community.
- To be able to demonstrate an existing or future commitment to the RNLI.
- To be willing to devote the necessary time and effort to the work of the Board.

The RNLI is strongest when its Trustee Board, Council and committees reflect a broad balance of skills, perspectives and experiences, and when we are representative of the many communities we serve. We have made important progress on this journey, but we know there is more to do. That's why we actively encourage applications from individuals who can bring fresh perspectives and help us build an even more diverse and inclusive leadership for the future.

Safeguarding

The RNLI is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. We expect all volunteers to share this commitment and comply with the RNLI Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Safeguarding level 1: Awareness and understanding of safeguarding policy required upon commencement of role. If you don't have this, training will be provided.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the RNLI on this appointment. Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code XLNK.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, addressed to Janet Legrand, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is 9am on **Monday 3 November 2025**.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



Clifden crew members walking on the beach

Saxton Bampfylde



Photos: Stephen Duncombe, Andrew Parish, Dean Wright, RNLI/International, RNLI/(Harrison Bates, International, Nigel Millard, Nihab Rahman, Derek O'Rourke, Charis Walker, Nathan Williams)

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (CHY 2678 and 20003326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), the Isle of Man (1308 and 006329F), the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ



Lifeboats