

Life as a crew member – a reality check

Life on the crew is anything but predictable. You can expect to be called away from your family, your bed and your work at any time – it's a big commitment. You'll also spend many hours of your own time training.

When you've completed your initial training you'll be given a pager and personal protective equipment, or PPE. Although the role is voluntary, you will be entitled to reimbursement for any expenses you incur in your capacity as crew.

Serving with a lifeboat crew is an incredibly rewarding way to volunteer, but we know it can be stressful too, and have a significant impact on family and work life.

There are situations you may be involved in while carrying out your RNLI role that could have an impact on your physical and mental health. They include:

- exposure to harsh conditions
- rescues requiring first aid intervention
- potentially aggressive situations
- potentially traumatic incidents, such as those involving body recovery.

Photos: Stephen Duncombe, Pat Moore, RNLI/(Harwich and Red Bay, Nigel Millard, Nathan Williams)

Eligibility

You must live and/or work close to a lifeboat station.

You'll also need to complete a health assessment, including an eye test, to ensure you meet the health standards set for the role. Further regular health assessments (including physical fitness) may also be required while you are a crew member.

You need to be over 18, or 17 with parental permission, and under 55 (inshore lifeboat) or 65 (all-weather lifeboat).

Individual lifeboat stations may have additional requirements.

For shore-based roles, different criteria may apply (please discuss with your local lifeboat station).

For more information visit RNLI.org/JoinOurCrew.



Looking after our crews

The health and wellbeing of our lifeboat crews is paramount and we take our duty of care seriously. There's lots of help available, including:

Physical wellbeing

Support from the volunteers at your lifeboat station, RNLI staff and our Occupational Health Team.

Mental wellbeing

Support 24/7 is a free, impartial and confidential advice service. RNLI Mental Health First Aiders are also available.

Peer support

Our trauma risk management (TRiM) programme can help you if you experience a potentially traumatic event or incident while on duty.

Personal injury benefit

Short-term financial assistance towards loss of earnings is available if you incur an injury while on operational duty or exercise.

Hardship assistance

The Lifeboatmen's Benevolent Fund offers financial assistance to crew, former crew and their families in times of hardship.

Other help

Support is also available for the families of crew through our RNLI Families Programme.

Are you ready to join us?

If you like the idea of being part of a lifesaving team and making a difference in your community – and you're eligible – we'd love to hear from you.

There are lots of other ways of getting involved too. You'll find more information at RNLI.org/volunteer, although individual station needs may vary.

To apply to be a lifeboat crew volunteer – or discuss other possible roles – contact your nearest lifeboat station.

CONTACT NAME AND ROLE:

LIFEBOAT STATION:

CONTACT DETAILS:



The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea
Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (20003326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), the Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney

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RNLI.org/JoinOurCrew

COULD THIS BE YOU?

All you need to know about being a lifeboat crew volunteer



Do something extraordinary

Want to learn and develop new skills? Keen to give something back and use your spare time constructively? You can, by training to be a lifeboat volunteer with the RNLI, the charity that saves lives at sea.

We receive no funding from the government for our search and rescue service. We provide the lifesaving equipment and training, and we rely on volunteers like you to crew the lifeboats.

Lifesaving never stops. As one of the crew you'll be ready to launch 24/7, at any time of day or night. You'll also contribute to the overall upkeep of the lifeboat station, lifeboats and lifesaving equipment.

You'll train with other crew, afloat and ashore, to enable you to meet the dangers and challenges you face on search and rescue missions at sea.

Being a lifeboat crew member is one of the most exciting and fulfilling volunteer roles you could do. You'll have an opportunity to save lives, make a difference in your local community and be part of the larger RNLI family.



'Volunteering has taught me a lot. Having a shared, focused goal brings out the best in me and those around me'

Sinéad Sharpe,
Red Bay Lifeboat Station



'Being on the crew is incredibly rewarding. It brings home how important a job the RNLI does'

Dan Sime,
Harwich Lifeboat Station

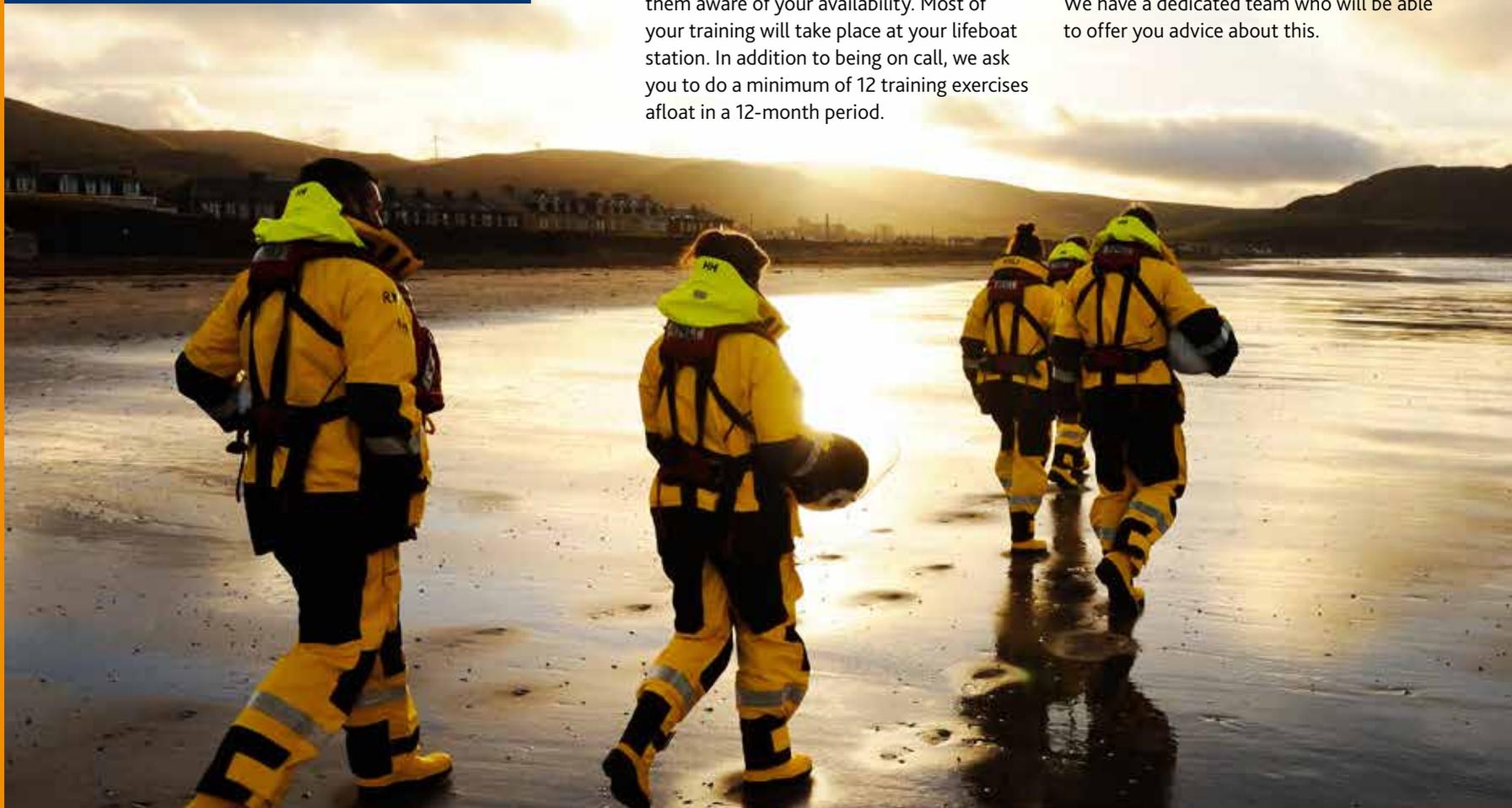
95%
of our people
are volunteers

Our promise to you

We'll give you:

- world-class training in the different aspects of being a crew member
- assessment as you go, so you can track your training progress
- the satisfaction of helping the community in which you live or work
- the opportunity to be part of a close-knit team.

In return, we ask that you uphold our values and act as a role model on behalf of the RNLI. In your induction we will outline the spirit in which we'll work together to achieve the charity's objectives.



Your questions answered

What skills and experience do I need?

You don't need any particular skills or experience to join the crew – lifeboat volunteers come from all walks of life. All we ask is that you are enthusiastic about saving lives at sea, willing to learn new skills and ready to put your life on hold when the call comes. You'll need to get on with people too, enjoy hard physical work and follow direction.

How much time will I have to commit?

Only you know how much time you can give to the RNLI so you will need to discuss this with the lifeboat station, and make them aware of your availability. Most of your training will take place at your lifeboat station. In addition to being on call, we ask you to do a minimum of 12 training exercises afloat in a 12-month period.

How do I fit volunteering around work?

Our rescues are only possible with the generous support of local employers. It's important to notify your employer from the outset so that you can come to an agreement on time required for training and on responding to a pager while at work.

And home life?

Joining the lifeboat crew is a major commitment so it's important you discuss it with the people in your life who may be affected first. Your family will have to live with your pager and they will make a significant contribution to the RNLI too. We have a dedicated team who will be able to offer you advice about this.