

# RNLI LOUD AND CLEAR 2026



This information is for volunteers and staff to use when talking about the RNLI's work. If you receive an enquiry from a journalist or media outlet, please direct them to the RNLI Press Office on 01202 336789 (from the UK) or +44 1202 336789 (from Ireland).

## WHO WE ARE

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is the charity that saves lives at sea

### Vision

To save every one.

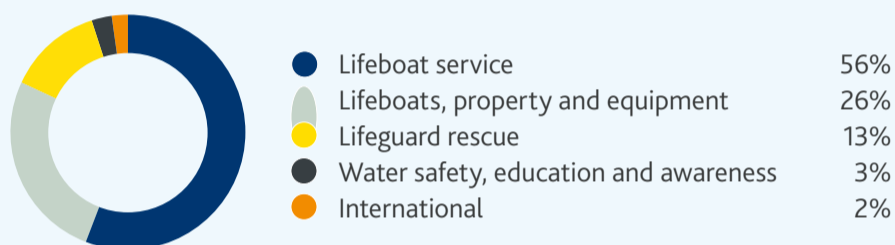
### Values

Our volunteers and staff are trustworthy, courageous, selfless and dependable.

## MONEY IN 2025

### Charitable spend: £196.9M/€230.7M

At £196.9M/€230.7M, charitable spend was £6.6M/€7.7M (3.5%) higher than in 2024. Most of this spend was on our lifeboat and lifeguard rescue services. Following a reduced charitable spend in recent years to mitigate the impact of inflation, in 2025 the RNLI began increasing spend where required to improve services.



### Financial health

In recent years, the RNLI has focused on careful cost control to ensure continuity of core services and a stable financial position for the future despite challenging economic conditions. In 2025 the focus shifted to improvement in our equipment and facilities to ensure we can deliver lifesaving effect both now and in the future. Free reserves (unrestricted funds which we can spend as we see fit) stand at £149.8M/€175.5M – meaning, if we stopped fundraising right now, we would have enough funds to keep the RNLI running for 8.7 months. The RNLI remains reliant on the ongoing generosity of our supporters to continue saving lives at sea.

### Net income available for charitable spend: £234.0M/€274.2M

In 2025, our total income available for charitable spend was £277.1M/€324.7M. After deducting the £43.1M/€50.5M cost of raising income, our net income available for charitable spend was £234.0M/€274.2M. Legacies accounted for 65% of the total income, while donations accounted for 27%.



## LIFEGUARDS

RNLI lifeguards have been keeping our beaches safer since 2001. Over the past 25 years, our lifeguards have carried out over 48 million preventative actions, aided more than 440,000 people and saved over 2,000 lives. To find out more about the 25th anniversary of RNLI lifeguards, visit [RNLI.org/Lifeguard25](https://RNLI.org/Lifeguard25)

In 2025, we provided lifeguard cover on 249 UK and Channel Islands beaches, with 1,608 lifeguards on patrol.

### Lifeguard kit costs†

Local authorities and beach owners contribute to the RNLI's costs, which helps to cover lifeguard wages.

- Wetsuit £300 | €344
- Binoculars £80 | €92
- Sunglasses £45 | €52
- Rash vest £25 | €29
- Swimsuit £55 | €63
- Trunks £32 | €37

## 2025 STATISTICS

Lifesaving region	Incidents	People aided	Lives saved**
Northern Ireland	329	402	7
North and East England	2,339	2,639	14
Scotland	197	269	4
South East England	2,567	2,843	16
South West England and Jersey	7,602	10,437	46
Wales and West England	4,139	19,623	30



## LIFEBOATS

The RNLI provides a 24-hour search and rescue service around the UK and Ireland.

238 lifeboat stations

470 lifeboats\*, excluding hovercraft

315 inshore lifeboats (ILBs)\*

155 all-weather lifeboats (ALBs)\*

6 hovercraft\*

### Crew kit costs†

- ILB drysuit £900 | €1,030
- ILB thermal suit £165 | €189
- ALB layered clothing & boots\*\*\* £1,710 | €1,959
- Lifejacket\*\*\*\* £620 | €750
- Helmet £350 | €401
- Gloves £25 | €29

### Lifeboat costs

- Shannon £2,781,000 | €3,185,000
- B class £322,000 | €369,000
- D class £101,000 | €116,000

This is what it costs on average to build the lifeboat, deliver it, and make it ready for service.

### Training costs

- Average annual training cost for a crew member £1,360 | €1,558

## 2025 STATISTICS

Lifesaving region	Launches	People aided	Lives saved**
Ireland	967	912	17
North and East England	1,274	754	32
Scotland	1,172	838	37
South East England	2,579	3,670	77
South West England and CI****	1,493	975	36
Wales, West and Isle of Man	1,573	1,141	73



Euro prices have been calculated using an average HMRC 2025 exchange rate of £1 : €1.1454.

†RRP. Where possible, we negotiate a lower cost.

\*Including relief fleet.

\*\*Had it not been for the intervention of the RNLI, emergency services and/or a third party, a life would've been lost.

\*\*\*Includes outer jacket, salopettes, mid jacket, merino top and bottom, gilet and wellies.

\*\*\*\*This is the price of similar items, as the supplier does not sell to retail.

\*\*\*\*\*Channel Islands

# GLOBAL DROWNING PREVENTION

## Water safety

**Around 138\* people die by accident in UK and Irish coastal waters each year.** Men and boys aged 15 and over are most at risk, with activities including boating, walking, paddleboarding, waterside play and swimming accounting for most coastal incidents and deaths.

The coast is being used in different ways and new risks are emerging, including 1 in 4 children leaving UK primary schools unable to swim\*\*, and 1 in 4 adults in Ireland being unable to swim\*\*\*. We are working with partners across the UK and Ireland as an influencer and catalyst for drowning prevention, including educating adults and young people.

### In 2025, our research showed:

- 14k young people took part in Swim Safe
- 570k people were reached with safety messages
- 1 in 3 people said they would **Float to Live**

#### If you find yourself in difficulty in the water, **FLOAT TO LIVE:**

- Tilt your head back, submerging your ears.
- Relax and try to control your breathing.
- Move your hands and legs to help you stay afloat.
- Your legs may sink – that's OK. Everyone floats differently.
- Practise floating at a supervised location like a swimming pool.

If you see someone in trouble at the coast:

- **PHONE** 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.
- Tell them to stay calm and **FLOAT** on their back.
- **THROW** rescue equipment to help them float until emergency services arrive.

For activity-specific safety advice, visit [RNLI.org/safety](https://www.rnli.org/safety)

## International

**300,000** people drown worldwide each year – around one person every 2 minutes\*

**356** children under the age of 15 drown every day\*

We work with partners globally, and in countries where drowning is a significant problem, to raise awareness and find ways of saving more lives.

Last year, **2%** of our total charitable spend was on our international work. We received funding for this work from the overseas aid budgets of the Ireland and Isle of Man governments, from the Laerdal Foundation and the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation.

\*Global Health Estimates 2024, World Health Organization.

### In 2025, we:

- Began working with partners in West Bengal, India, to support lifesaving skills training in communities where children are at high risk of drowning.
- Welcomed 100 members of the global search and rescue community to Poole as we co-hosted the International Maritime Rescue Federation's annual conference in partnership with the UK Coastguard.
- Worked with partners to support awareness around drowning prevention on World Drowning Prevention Day (25 July), which was marked in more than 80 countries.

\*UK average (115 people) from the Water Incident Database (WAID) 2020–22. Republic of Ireland pro-rated average (23) from Water Safety Ireland (WSI) 2020–22.

\*\*Royal Life Saving Society UK, 2022

\*\*\*Ireland National Swimming Strategy, 2024

# SAFER ALL ROUND

Like lifesaving, **safety takes courage.** Keeping people safe is everyone's responsibility. We encourage all volunteers and staff to speak up whenever they spot a safety concern, hazard, near-miss or incident. Reporting helps the RNLI learn from experience and improve how we protect one another – because we can only save more lives if we are safer all round.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP US

## Make a donation

As a charity, we rely on voluntary donations to power our lifesaving work. There are many ways you can give to the RNLI. To find out more and to donate, visit [RNLI.org/donate](https://www.rnli.org/donate)

## Raise money

Take part in an organised fundraising event, or plan one of your own. Visit [RNLI.org/fundraising](https://www.rnli.org/fundraising)

## Leave a gift in your Will

Gifts in Wills are our crews' protection at sea. Six in 10 lifeboat launches are possible thanks to the generosity of supporters leaving us a gift in their Will. Visit [RNLI.org/legacy](https://www.rnli.org/legacy)

## Donate in memory

Support the RNLI by donating in memory of a loved one. More than 83,000 loved ones' names have been added to the letters and numbers that identify Shannon class lifeboats through our Launch a Memory campaigns. Visit [RNLI.org/LaunchAMemory](https://www.rnli.org/LaunchAMemory)

## Become a member

RNLI membership is one way of giving on a regular basis. To view the membership options and their benefits visit [RNLI.org/membership](https://www.rnli.org/membership)

## Shop

All profits from the purchase of RNLI products whether from our shops, retail branches or the website at [shop.RNLI.org](https://shop.rnli.org) are spent to further our purpose.

## Connect on social

Join more than 1.2M supporters following [@RNLI](https://www.rnli.org) across social media.

## Partner with us

If you have a connection with a commercial company or organisation that could support the RNLI, please email our Corporate Partnerships Team at [corporate@rnli.org.uk](mailto:corporate@rnli.org.uk)

## Give time

Volunteers are the heart of the RNLI and make up the vast majority of our people. 97% of our frontline lifesavers are volunteers.

**7,800** operational volunteers

**140** volunteer lifeguards

**14,700** volunteers who raise funds and awareness, give water safety advice, run our shops and museums, and host tours and visits. Find out more at [RNLI.org/volunteer](https://www.rnli.org/volunteer)

# IN THE CHANNEL

The RNLI is one part of the search and rescue response to small boat crossings of the English Channel.

### In 2025, our crews:

- **launched 109 times** to Channel crossing incidents. This is **1.2%** of the year's total number of RNLI lifeboat launches.
- **rescued a total of 2,353 people.** This represents 5.7% of the total number of people recorded to have crossed the Channel last year in small boats. The vast majority of people are aided by other agencies such as Border Force.

RNLI lifeboat crews are tasked in the UK by HM Coastguard to assist anyone who is in trouble on the water and will go to the aid of those in danger crossing one of the world's busiest shipping lanes in small, overcrowded and unseaworthy boats.

This is an extremely demanding search and rescue environment in which our volunteer crews are often confronted with highly challenging rescue scenarios, involving large numbers of distressed casualties in the water.

We are proud of our volunteers and staff who deliver our lifesaving service in such a demanding environment.

For more information on our work in the Channel please visit [RNLI.org/channel](https://www.rnli.org/channel)

As always, if you receive an enquiry from a journalist or media outlet, please direct them to the Press Office which is open 24/7:

Email [PressOffice@rnli.org.uk](mailto:PressOffice@rnli.org.uk) or call **01202 336789** (from the UK) or **+44 1202 336789** (from Ireland).

# RNLI HISTORY

The RNLI was founded by Sir William Hillary in 1824. Collectively, our crew and lifeguards have saved over 147,000 lives since the charity was founded.

## Notable anniversaries in 2026

- 25th anniversary of RNLI lifeguards (established in 2001).
- 200th anniversary of first RNLI lifeboat station established in Ireland, at Arklow, Co Wicklow (1826).
- 60th anniversary of the *Nafsiporos* service by the Holyhead and Moelfre crews for which 17 RNLI medals, including two Gold Medals, were awarded (1966).
- 25th anniversary of the first inland lifeboat station, at Enniskillen (2001).