












Lifeboats

Launching into our third century

Interim Strategic Intent

JANUARY 2025








Lifeboats

Our purpose

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

Our vision

To save every one

Our values

Courageous, dependable, selfless, trustworthy

Whoever we are Wherever we are from

We are one crew

Ready to save lives

We're powered by passion **talent** and **kindness**

Like generations of selfless lifesavers before us

This is our watch

We lead the way

Valuing each other **Trusting each other** **Depending on one another**

Volunteering to face the storm together

Knowing that **with courage nothing is impossible**

That is what has always driven us

to save every one we can

It's what makes every one of us

a lifesaver

‘As we launch into our third century, we need to adapt to the challenges ahead’

The RNLI’s rescue work is as vital as ever – but the way people are using the coast and the water is changing. If the RNLI is going to save even more lives, our lifeboat and lifeguard services must continue to adapt to these changing needs, so that we can provide the right response.

After joining the RNLI’s One Crew in June 2024, I undertook a 100-Day Review to identify the challenges and opportunities that face us, and to determine how we can continue to improve our vital lifesaving service as we launch into our third century.

The lifesaving evidence from the past 7 years is compelling. 98% of the RNLI’s lifeboat response is within 10 nautical miles of the shore; 1.8% is between 10 and 25 nautical miles; just 0.2% of casualties saved and assisted are at a range greater than 25 nautical miles from the shore. Our lifeboat capability must reflect the changing demand for our service.

Drowning is a complex, evolving problem. The reason people are getting into trouble in the water is changing – and too few know how to stay safe. This trend is set to continue as the number of visitors to Irish and UK coastlines increases, and their proficiency on the water, and ability to swim, declines. Sadly, we are also seeing a dramatic increase in incidents involving people in crisis, in inland waters and close to our shorelines. This all means that we need to reach more people and communities with targeted water safety advice if we are to prevent more tragedies. We need to share knowledge, working alongside and influencing decision-making organisations, domestically and internationally.

The first steps towards our future have already been taken. We have a Lifeboat Fleet Strategy that will ensure our service adapts as we look towards 2040. This includes introducing a brand-new coastal lifeboat, improving our offshore lifeboat capability, enhancing the capability of our inshore lifeboats, and introducing a new hovercraft fleet – with trials planned in 2025.

Social and economic factors are also affecting our charity’s ability to save more lives. The vast majority of our volunteer lifeboat crews are not professional mariners – so the equipment, support mechanisms and training we provide must reflect this. To secure the RNLI’s future, we need to inspire a new generation of lifesavers, fundraisers, and kind and generous donors and supporters. We need to use our funds and resources wisely, in the most cost-effective way possible to deliver upon our purpose – to save lives at sea – while looking after our own people and keeping them safe.

As we move forwards, our volunteers and staff will shape the journey ahead. It is very important to me that everyone can engage with our plans – sharing ideas, expertise and experiences that will help us to save every one we can. There will be more opportunities for volunteers, staff, partners and donors to be involved in these conversations, with regular updates and local events (in person and online) throughout 2025 and beyond.



For over 200 years, we have continuously evolved – from oar-powered wooden lifeboats and cork lifejackets to the modern kit and technology we use today. As we launch into our third century, we need to continue to adapt and rise to the challenges ahead of us, with courage and integrity – like generations of lifesavers before us.

With courage, nothing is impossible.

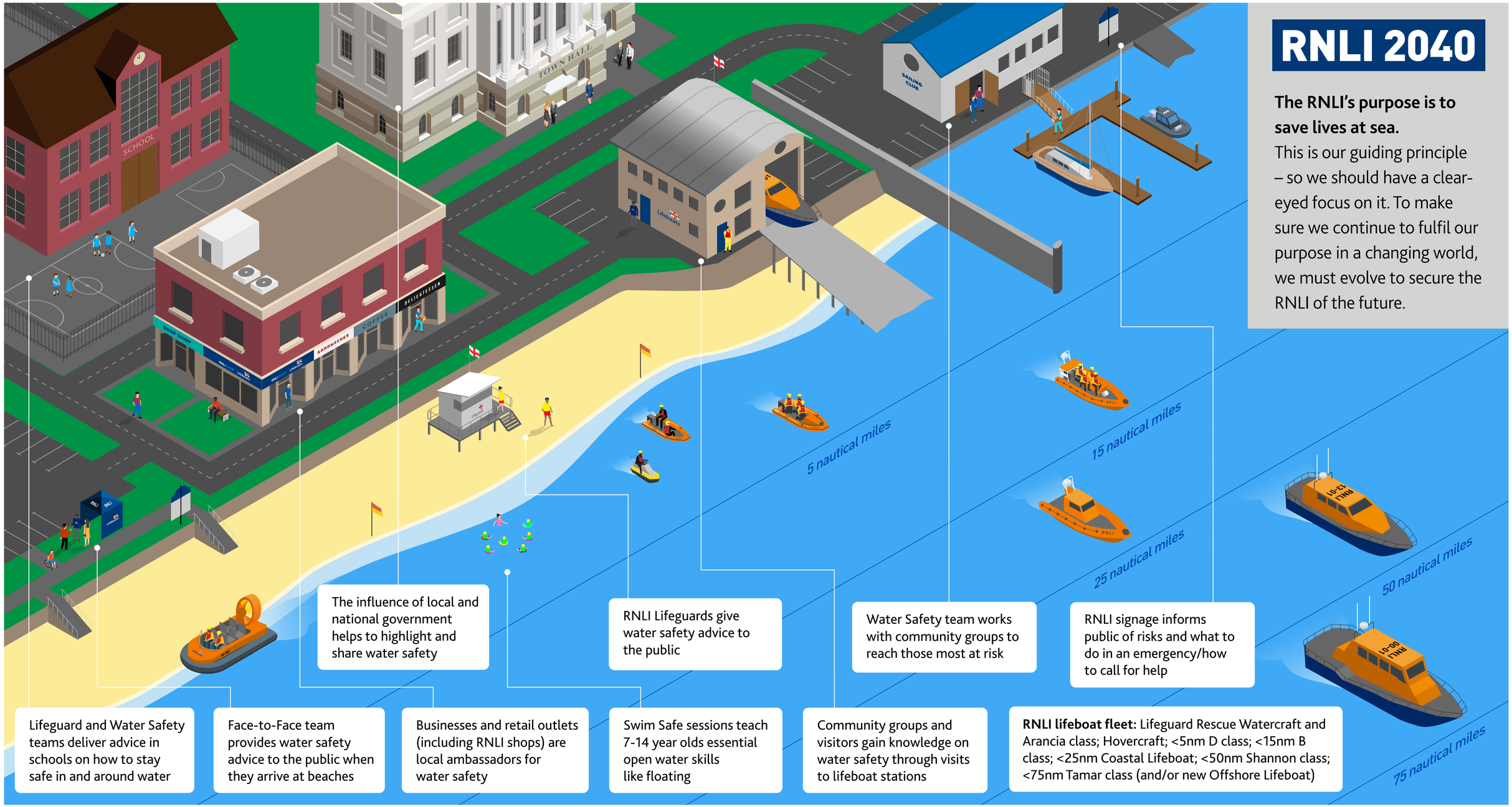


Peter Sparkes
RNLI Chief Executive

Photo: RNLI/Nathan Williams

RNLI 2040

The RNLI's purpose is to save lives at sea.
This is our guiding principle – so we should have a clear-eyed focus on it. To make sure we continue to fulfil our purpose in a changing world, we must evolve to secure the RNLI of the future.



Lifeguard and Water Safety teams deliver advice in schools on how to stay safe in and around water

Face-to-Face team provides water safety advice to the public when they arrive at beaches

Businesses and retail outlets (including RNLI shops) are local ambassadors for water safety

Swim Safe sessions teach 7-14 year olds essential open water skills like floating

Community groups and visitors gain knowledge on water safety through visits to lifeboat stations

RNLI lifeboat fleet: Lifeguard Rescue Watercraft and Arancia class; Hovercraft; <5nm D class; <15nm B class; <25nm Coastal Lifeboat; <50nm Shannon class; <75nm Tamar class (and/or new Offshore Lifeboat)

The influence of local and national government helps to highlight and share water safety

RNLI Lifeguards give water safety advice to the public

Water Safety team works with community groups to reach those most at risk

RNLI signage informs public of risks and what to do in an emergency/how to call for help

The journey to 2040

Working together towards shared goals, in common purpose, is what makes any crew great. It's up to us to ensure that we secure the RNLI for the next generation. To help everyone play their part on our journey, we will create a roadmap to 2040 articulated in three supporting 5-Year Plans.

The first of these plans will be available in late September 2025. This will explain what we need to do, and how we will do it – together as One Crew. The key activity for each 5-Year Plan is outlined below.



Photo: RNLI/Harrison Bates, Whitstable Lifeboat Station / @imagedrum, Paul Martin / twonamesphotography

2030

- Lifeboat Fleet Strategy: first coastal lifeboats and new hovercraft fleet on service
- Estates rationalisation and modernisation programmes underway
- Extended regional delivery model implemented
- Improved digital information flows and smarter ways of working
- We are a truly volunteer-centric organisation, delivering a comprehensive support service to our operational, fundraising and engagement teams in Ireland and the UK
- Our supporters and donors are looked after amazingly well
- Increased evidence demonstrating the impact of our water safety interventions
- Development of new income streams

2035

- 'Connected lifeboats': using enhanced sensors and technology to save more lives
- Lifeboat Fleet Strategy: next generation inshore lifesaving and offshore lifeboat being rolled out
- Predictive regional maintenance of the lifeboat fleet and estate well-established
- Lifeguards will be the public's principal interaction point with the RNLI
- Tailored, effective engagement for all audiences, increasing support and reaching more people with water safety advice
- Drowning prevention embedded in revised UN Sustainable Development Goals

2040

- Lifeboat Fleet Strategy: Severn fleet withdrawn and new offshore, coastal and inshore capability fully embedded
- Drowning prevention is adequately resourced in high-priority locations
- All under 15-year-olds in the UK and Ireland know about water safety
- Future fundraising and engagement strategy in place
- Decarbonising the RNLI to reach 2050 zero carbon target

Our 2025 priorities

2025 is the year we define and embark on the first of the three 5-Year Plans to deliver the RNLI 2040 strategy. We must remind ourselves constantly that we are a volunteer organisation, and everything we do is in support of our volunteers and frontline staff. We are powered by kind supporters and donors and must spend every penny and cent they give to us wisely. In 2025, we will focus on:

Lifesaving demand: Maintaining the key strategic areas that support the delivery of our purpose

- Supporting our people to deliver our service while keeping them safe at 238 lifeboat stations and at around 250 lifeguarded beaches, 153 shops, 1,000 fundraising branches, and face-to-face fundraising locations
- Educating and influencing at-risk audiences and sharing our lifesaving expertise – domestically and internationally
- Working with partners to deliver enhanced lifesaving services, raise awareness and generate lifesaving funds
- Building, refitting and repairing our lifeboats more efficiently, better maintaining our fleet and estates, and shifting to regional support where we can
- Delivering key fundraising campaigns like Launch a Memory and Mayday
- Living our values, ensuring inclusion and engagement for all

Fit for the future: Continuing to implement effective lifesaving that responds to emerging risks

- Lifeboat Fleet Strategy: delivering the first trials of our new hovercraft fleet, establishing a team to take forward the plans for the new coastal lifeboat, and withdrawing the Mersey class lifeboat
- Continuing to create a sustainable volunteer model, adapting our service support so that we deliver at the point of need
- Introducing an Estates Management Tool to support improved estates management and rationalisation of our property portfolio
- Further enabling regional teams to make decisions on operational resource, upkeep and management, to drive better operational availability
- Developing our RNLI 2040 strategy and supporting plan

Continuous improvement: Continuing to drive good working practices with a focus on operational and safety risks, people and culture, information security and data governance

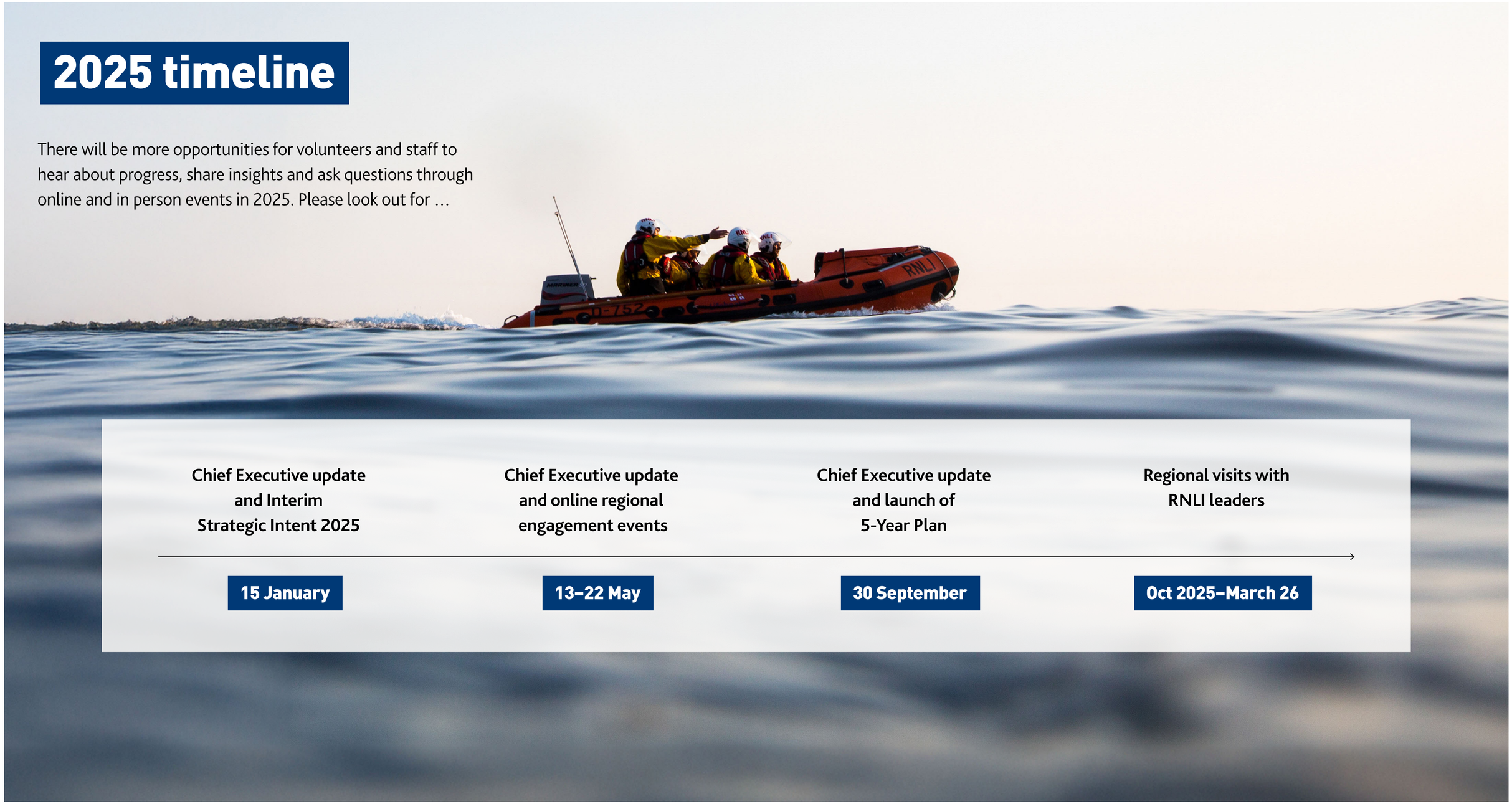
- Establishing a single view of organisational change: the RNLI Portfolio Office
- Supporting the growth, development and wellbeing of our people – acting on feedback from volunteer and staff surveys. Strengthening our ‘speak up’ culture
- Applying safety learnings and improvements, strengthening our safety learning culture and embedding our Safety Management System
- Delivering inclusive changing facilities across lifeboat stations and lifeguard units
- Introducing new helmets for our inshore lifeboat crews
- Developing the capabilities of managers and leaders

Financially secure: Reducing our permanent cost base while optimising net income growth

- Raising the funds we need to save lives through fundraising and legacies
- Consolidating the Poole campus to improve ways of working and reduce our operational costs
- Protecting against critical technology risks (‘Mainstay’ programme)
- Establishing a designated fund to invest in our future over the next 15 years
- Review our Standing Financial Instructions to enable delegation to the point of need

2025 timeline

There will be more opportunities for volunteers and staff to hear about progress, share insights and ask questions through online and in person events in 2025. Please look out for …



Chief Executive update and Interim Strategic Intent 2025	Chief Executive update and online regional engagement events	Chief Executive update and launch of 5-Year Plan	Regional visits with RNLI leaders
15 January	**13–22 May**	**30 September**	**Oct 2025–March 26**







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Thank you

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

Photo: RNLI/Nigel Millard, Nathan Willams, Andy Lyons