

## WHY DOES THE RNLI REQUEST REFERENCES WHEN RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS?

- We are one crew and our values reflect the way we operate. References help to shed light on a person's character and their suitability for the role.
- The reference check is a key part of the RNLI's risk management within the volunteer recruitment process, and is a very important step during the selection of volunteers.

## REFERENCE CHECKING WITHIN THE RNLI VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- The RNLI uses reference checking, when appropriate to the role and circumstances, as a tool when recruiting volunteers.
- If in doubt about whether a role requires a reference, seek further guidance from the Volunteering Team.
- If the role involves contact with young people or vulnerable adults our *Safeguarding Policy* should also be referred and adhered to according to the level of risk associated with the role.

## WHO CAN ACT AS A REFEREE?

- One of the references should be from someone who knows the applicant from an employment, volunteering or educational situation. We do recognise that some people may never have worked or may not have worked for several years. To ensure we do not build barriers in the recruitment process, we have therefore included social worker or probation officer references as options.
- The second reference should be from a personal, long-standing acquaintance, such as a lifelong friend. The referee must have known the applicant for at least 3 years.
- We do not accept references from family members or relatives.

## ISSUES ARISING WHEN REQUESTING REFERENCES

The process of taking up references can sometimes be time consuming so it's important to keep the potential volunteer informed about any delays. To speed the process up, the below can be considered:

- The volunteer can be asked for an alternative referee.
- The volunteer can start in the role whilst the reference is being chased (unless they are in contact with young people, vulnerable adults, or valuables/money)
- Whilst a written reference is preferable, the referee can be contacted by phone as it can be a faster, more successful route to obtaining a reference than email or post. We ask applicants to include their referee's telephone numbers as mandatory.

Some volunteers may struggle to provide any reference details. In these situations, further discussions should take place with the volunteer to understand their situation and a more considered approach should be taken. If in doubt, please seek guidance from the Volunteering Team.

If a negative reference is received, this should be reviewed on a case by case basis and discussed with your volunteering adviser to ensure a fair approach is taken.

## REQUESTING A REFERENCE

- Please see the *Volunteer Reference Request Form* which can be emailed, sent by post, or used as a guide for a telephone call to a referee.