

RNLI response to today's article in the Daily Mail

Lifeboats News Release

Saturday 12 May 2018

The RNLI is disappointed with today's article in the Daily Mail. The RNLI provided a full and detailed response to the newspaper which was not reflected in the article. The RNLI also provided interviews with staff and volunteers with decades of operational experience, both in management and at sea.



This is the full statement provided to the Daily Mail:

Recently you may have read about some well-publicised disputes at a handful of our 238 lifeboat stations over the past couple of years. Today, we want to take the opportunity to put our side of the story across.

The RNLI is a unique organisation. As an emergency service, we must adhere to the very highest standards of safety and behave in a way that meets the expectations of a modern emergency responder. And as a charity, we take our ethical and legal responsibilities very seriously. The examples you have read about recently have involved serious incidents that we were duty bound to challenge.

We do not stand volunteers down lightly. We recognise the years of dedication and the skill involved in becoming a crew member, helm or Coxswain. We fully understand and respect the close bond and camaraderie of our crew and other volunteers. We know that friendly banter is a key part of this.

But to be clear – we simply will not tolerate lifeboats being taken for joyrides in rough weather without full crew. We don't accept that hard core, graphic pornography has any place at a lifeboat station. We will not tolerate threats of violence towards our volunteers or staff. We will not stand for bullying or aggressive behaviour.

To provide some context, the recent issues involve less than 1% of our 6,000 operational volunteers. We are proud of our brave, decent men and women dedicated to saving lives and committed to acting with integrity.

We cannot operate in the same way we did 30 or 40 years ago, when the world was a very different place and so we've understood the need to change. Some of this change has been implemented to protect our volunteer crews – 90 per cent of who don't come from a maritime background – and to make sure they have the very best training, equipment and day-to-day support essential to providing a 24/7 lifesaving service. Other change has been necessary because we want to live up to our own high standards and the scrutiny being placed on charities.

We have not got everything right during these changes, but we are working hard with all our volunteers to ensure they have the support and the training they require to operate a modern lifesaving service.

But what hasn't changed is our desire to uphold the values of the RNLI. We have to ask ourselves – what kind of charity do we want to be? What kind of charity do you want to volunteer for? What kind of charity do you want to support?

We are a charity that our volunteers, supporters and those we rescue can trust to do the right thing – whether that's rescuing those in peril, keeping our volunteers safe or making sure anyone who is part of the RNLI feels welcome and valued.

During the 194 years since the RNLI was founded in 1824, we've aspired to be a decent, honourable charity that is respectful of others. We're proud of our volunteers' professionalism and our organisation's commitment to being a modern emergency service and principled charity and we don't think we should settle for anything other than that.

RNLI Media Contacts:

RNLI Press Office 01202 336789 (available 24/7)

RNLI online: For more information on the RNLI please visit <http://www.rnli.org/> News releases and other media resources, including RSS feeds, downloadable photos and video are available at the RNLI News Centre.

Key facts about the RNLI

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution is the charity that saves lives at sea. Our volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service in the United Kingdom and Ireland from 238 lifeboat stations, including four along the River Thames and inland lifeboat stations at Loch Ness, Lough Derg, Enniskillen and Lough Ree. Additionally the RNLI has more than 1,000 lifeguards on over 240 beaches around the UK and operates a specialist flood rescue team, which can respond anywhere across the UK and Ireland when inland flooding puts lives at risk.

The RNLI relies on public donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service. As a charity it is separate from, but works alongside, government-controlled and funded coastguard services. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824 our lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved at least 140,000 lives. Volunteers make up 95% of the charity, including 4,600 volunteer lifeboat crew members and 3,000 volunteer shore crew. Additionally, tens of thousands of other dedicated volunteers raise funds and awareness, give safety advice, and help in our museums, shops and offices.

Learn more about the RNLI

For more information please visit the [RNLI website](#) or [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#). News releases, videos and photos are available on the [News Centre](#).

Contacting the RNLI - public enquiries

Members of the public may contact the RNLI on 0300 300 9990 or by [email](#).

The RNLI is a charity registered in England and Wales (209603) and Scotland (SC037736). Charity number 20003326 in the Republic of Ireland