

LETTERS

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Defending the RNLI

The RNLI performs an essential public service, saving 500 lives each year and rescuing or helping more than 30,000 people.

People want and expect us to be an organisation they can feel proud of and where people from all backgrounds can feel welcome.

So when we receive reports of bullying or aggressive behaviour at our stations; when we hear of a lifeboat being taken for a joyride in a near gale and so be unavailable for lifesaving; and when we hear about mugs portraying explicit pornographic images (bearing no relation to mockups shown in the media) being used in a station crew room, we have no option but to investigate and take appropriate action.

This is not a witch-hunt. It is not political correctness gone wild. It is an organisation that recognises that even courageous volunteers need to behave and maintain the trust of the people on whose support we depend. That standard of behaviour is not negotiable.

We take no shortcuts in looking after our courageous volunteer lifeboat crew and lifeguards who venture out into some of the most dangerous seas in the world.

That requires a variety of technical skills of the very highest order, across a number of disciplines. The head office staff are not 'pen-pushers'; they are dedicated and skilled people who enable the RNLI to operate its services safely.

Vice Admiral Paul Boissier, RNLI Chief Executive, Poole, Dorset.