

Volunteering for the RNLI is a **big** commitment.

Do you have what it takes?

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. The Weston-super-Mare lifeboat station team receive about 50 calls for help in an average year, at any time of the day / night and in all weather conditions. In addition, the 35 volunteers train twice a week, and assist in community events and fundraising activities. The station operates two types of inshore lifeboat, an Atlantic 75 and a D class which are launched by a range of launch and recovery vehicles.

Do you want to be a part of this amazing team and support your local community by volunteering your skills, time and efforts?

Then imagine for a moment that you have gone out for the evening for a meal with your best friends at your favourite restaurant. The waiter has just put your meal down in front of you and you have just taken the first bite of what promises to be a fantastic meal. Your pager goes off. You have to put down your knife and fork, forego your meal and time out with your mates and immediately head down to the lifeboat station to launch the lifeboat. A sailing vessel is in difficulties 3 miles out at sea in rough weather and needs immediate help.



And you still want to volunteer for this?

To become a team member, you need to:

- be over 17 (with the permission of your parents) or over 18 years old
- be under 55 years old (lifeboat crew) or 65 (shore crew / tractor driver)
- be physically fit
- complete a health assessment including eyesight to ensure they meet the health standards set for the role (lifeboat crew only)
- live and/or work close to the lifeboat station
- pass a probationary period that usually lasts for one year
- be a team player and be accepted by the rest of the crew
- enjoy hard physical work
- get on well with other people
- communicate easily
- follow orders when required to
- be able to commit to attend the majority of training sessions on a Wednesday evening, and Sunday morning.



Do you fit the criteria above and still have a desire to give aid to those in distress? Then read on....

Being part of a lifeboat crew is a major commitment, which could ultimately include risking your life. Your commitment isn't only measured in the time spent involved in rescues. Increasingly, new equipment and faster boats mean that regular training programmes also account for much of your spare time. You may also be asked to show visitors around the station and help with local fundraising events. Due to this huge commitment, it is important to have support from your family.

What's in it for you?

The RNLI provides first class training and equipment, guidance and support. For you it's an opportunity to achieve and to save lives and a chance to be part of our world class rescue service. We can offer you one of the most exciting and fulfilling voluntary jobs available.

The station operation at Weston-super-Mare

There are several key areas of operation in the Weston-super-Mare Lifeboat station. As outlined below, not only do we need crew for the lifeboat, we also need a range of support personnel to be able to launch and recover the lifeboats and perform various maintenance duties.

Initial station introduction

If selected, we will first ask you to come down on training nights and start to get to know our team. You will be able to observe the crew at work with the lifeboats and launch vehicles. You will see how the crew launch and recover the lifeboats, handle various pieces of equipment, on the boat and in the boathouse and familiarise yourself with the lifeboat operating procedures.



If you decide you still want to proceed with enrolment then you will complete some paperwork to register you as a probationary member of our Shore Crew. You will have the opportunity to join in with the maintenance and basic training; seamanship skills, knots, chart work, radio, first aid etc.

Crew training takes place every Wednesday evening and every Sunday morning in all weathers. There are shore-based and afloat activities for boat crew while Shore-Crew and drivers practice key skills.

Shore Crew

Shore Crew training sessions include a range of activities, including learning how to use a VHF radio, nautical charts, administer first aid, lifeboat launching and recovery, refuelling and making a lifeboat ready for service. There will be familiarisation with operational procedures and maintenance etc.

When the station team feel confident that you are reliable and have reached a satisfactory skill / knowledge level, you will receive a pager and key to the boathouse so you can fully assist with emergency shouts. Estimated time to achieve this is 6 months.

Tractor Driver

Tractor driver training is specialised. If you wish to receive tractor training whilst you are a member of our Shore Crew you can do so only once you have completed all your Shore Crew training units. This role is subject to holding the correct licence and passing a driving assessment. The station operates both tracked and untracked vehicles with trailers.



Boat Crew

When you have achieved experience as Shore Crew you may be considered to trial for Boat Crew training. This isn't suited to everyone! Many volunteers stay shore-based for their entire volunteering career and enjoy the teamwork that the Shore Crew offers.

On station, training will include sea survival, all operational procedures, further navigation, radio and first aid training, boat and casualty handling, use and maintenance of lifeboat and equipment along with other key skills required to be lifeboat crew.



Retirement

Boat crew can serve (subject to medical fitness) until they are 55 yrs old and Shore Crew / Drivers until 65 yrs old. There are some shore based roles that are not age capped, including volunteering for the Weston Fundraising branch of the RNLI.

Still interested?

If the thrill of a shout and teamwork appeal to you, and you think that you have what it takes to be that special kind of person, then please complete an Application Form.