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For immediate release

## **Busy weekend For Southend Lifeboat Crews As Adverse Weather Conditions Hit The Coast**

**Southend on sea's RNLI volunteer lifeboat crews launched three times over this weekend in the prevailing westerly winds and heavy seas.**

The first call came on Saturday at 13.48hrs, with lifeboat crew already at the pierhead boathouse carrying out monthly inspections.

They were able to launch immediately to Thames Coastguards request for assistance to a 27ft sailing yacht with three people aboard, that had given out a distress call due to having difficulty and taking on water in the adverse weather conditions.

The initial location given for the vessel was incorrect, but with the assistance of the Essex police launch and a Medway pilot's launch, Southend lifeboat crew were able to locate the casualty vessel near to The Red Sands Towers on the North Kent Coast.

Arriving on scene a lifeboat crew member boarded the sailing yacht to access the situation, finding the three sailors suffering from sea sickness and mild hypothermia. The sails were lowered and the vessel made way to the more sheltered waters of the river Medway, escorted by Southend Lifeboat.

Due to the worsening wind and sea conditions, Southend lifeboat requested the help of Sheerness all weather lifeboat to take the sailors off their yacht and have a more comfortable passage.

Lifeboat crew sailed the yacht into the River Medway to Queenborough under escort, where she was safely secured.

Southend lifeboat crew returned to Southend pierhead boathouse, with their thanks going to Essex police, Medway Pilots and Sheerness Lifeboat crew for their assistance in saving the stricken vessel and its occupants.

On Sunday morning with the volunteer crew continuing their monthly boathouse checks on the pier, they were alerted by colleagues working at the inshore lifeboat house at 10.15hrs to a motor cruiser that had run aground approx. a mile off shore at Westcliff in the blustery conditions and low water.

The lifeboat crew launched the Atlantic 75 lifeboat immediately, informing Thames Coastguard of the vessels plight and their intentions.

The lifeboat crew battled the Westerly winds gusting at times to 45mph and the near 6ft sea swell to get to the 42ft motor cruiser, which was en route from Teddington to Leigh with two people aboard. The lifeboat crew found on arrival that the steering gear was damaged and could not make her own way.

With the tide now on the flood a tow line was set up and Southend lifeboat slowly towed the vessel in to the calmer waters at Leigh where she was put on a mooring. The two sailors, both ok, were ferried safely to Two Tree Island Slipway, where they were picked up by relatives.

Southend lifeboat crew made their way back to the pier, cold and wet, to be greeted with hot cups of tea from colleagues after over two hours on service.

Later in the evening the third call of the weekend came as lifeboat crew pagers went off at 23.18hrs.

The volunteer crews launched the inshore lifeboat, backed up by the Atlantic 75 lifeboat from the end of the pier, to search for a person reported to have walked in to the water off of Jubilee Beach, Marine Parade, Southend.

After extensively searching the area with the help of the police helicopter, coastguards from Southend and South Woodham and police units onshore, nothing was found and the search was stood down after approx. an hour and a half, with it being pronounced a hoax call.

Southend lifeboat crew would again remind people using the water to check the weather conditions before setting out on their passage as the weather conditions had been forecast days earlier.

### **RNLI media contacts**

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**RNLI online:** For more information on the RNLI please visit [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk). News releases and other media resources, including [RSS feeds](#), downloadable photos and video, are available at the RNLI [Press Centre](#).

**Key facts about the RNLI:** The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. Its volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland coasts. The RNLI operates over 230 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and has more than 140 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK. The RNLI is independent of Coastguard and government and depends on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824 its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 137,000 lives.

Visit the RNLI's official [YouTube channel](#) for more films and follow our rescue stories on [Twitter](#).

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Charity number CHY 2678 in the Republic of Ireland.