

# Life as a crew member - a reality check

Life on the crew is anything but predictable. You can expect to be called away from your family, your bed and your work at any time – **it's a big commitment**. You'll also spend many hours of your own time training.

If your application is successful and you've completed your initial training, you'll be given a pager and personal protective equipment, or PPE.

Serving with a lifeboat crew is an incredibly rewarding way to volunteer, but we know it can be stressful too, and have a significant impact on family and work life.

There are situations you may be involved in while carrying out your RNLI role that could have an impact on your physical and mental health. They include:

- exposure to harsh conditions
- rescues requiring first aid intervention
- potentially aggressive situations
- potentially traumatic incidents, such as those involving body recovery

Our crew members need to:

- be over 17 years old (with the permission of your parents) or over 18
- be under 55 years old (inshore lifeboat crew)
- complete a health assessment, including an eyesight test
- be physically fit
- live and/or work close to the lifeboat station and be able to respond in approximately 10 minutes during the day and 15 minutes at night whilst keeping within the speed limits of the road traffic act
- be able to cover 2 days per week (Monday to Friday) and 1 weekend per month
- pass a probationary period that usually lasts for 1 year
- be a team player
- enjoy hard physical work
- get on well with other people
- communicate easily
- follow direction when required to

Medical:

Due to the extreme conditions of going to sea, you are unlikely to be issued with an RNLI medical certificate if:

- you do not meet the RNLI's requirements for colour vision/visual acuity (see below)
- you have had laser eye surgery in the last 3 months
- you are liable to epileptic seizures or sudden disturbances of the state of consciousness
- you have had a coronary thrombosis (heart attack) or have undergone heart surgery
- your blood pressure is significantly raised and not well controlled with drugs
- you need insulin treatment for diabetes
- you have had a stroke, or unexplained loss of consciousness
- you have had a severe head injury with continuing impairment
- you suffer from Parkinson's Disease or Multiple Sclerosis
- you are being treated for mental or nervous problems

- you have had alcohol or drug dependency problems within the last 3 years
- you have profound deafness and cannot communicate clearly on the radio/telephone
- you suffer from double or tunnel vision
- you have any other condition which would/could cause problems regarding your fitness to navigate/crew a vessel
- you suffer from any condition of bone or joint that may affect your mobility
- you suffer from any condition that may affect bone strength or are on oral steroids.

Eyesight test:

You are unlikely to meet the RNLI's requirements for colour vision/visual acuity if:

- there is any evidence of a colour vision defect as assessed using Ishihara plates\*;
- you are unable to read 6/6 in the better eye and 6/12 in the worst eye on the Snellen Chart from a distance of 6 metres even with glasses or contact lenses;
- you are unable to read 6/60 with at least one eye without any visual aid;
- you have defects in your field of vision in either eye;
- you have evidence of any progressive disease in either eye, or suffer from any other eye condition which could limit vision either now or within the next 5 years.

\* During the Ishihara plate test, aids for colour vision may not be worn. Up to two plates may be failed and still constitute a pass.