

News story: Lifeboat charities receive £1 million to boost search and rescue efforts

Water rescue charities have been awarded £1 million in funding for vital rescue equipment to help keep the UK's rivers and seas safe.

The money has been made available by the inshore and inland rescue boat grant fund and is the [fourth round of funding under this 5-year, £5 million scheme](#).

Charities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will use this year's fund to purchase 14 new lifeboats and maritime equipment including lifejackets, helmets, boots, ropes, knives and torches.

Today (7 November 2017), Maritime Minister John Hayes is visiting the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), an organisation in the west of England which has received a grant of more than £110,000.

Based in Gloucestershire, the charity operates lifeboat and water rescue services, helping those around inland and inshore waterways, and carrying out flood rescues. The SARA will use the funds towards a new lifeboat to add to its existing fleet and continue their efforts to keep river users safe.

Maritime Minister John Hayes said:

Every day water rescue volunteers risk their safety to protect the lives of people across the UK. Their dedication and highly specialised skills are absolutely crucial to providing inshore and inland rescue services.

This extra money means that the volunteers and charities can purchase the lifeboats and equipment they need. It means that assistance is never far away for those in need or in distress on or around our waterways.

Since its launch in 2014, the grant has provided water rescue services up and down the UK with funding for new boats, vehicles and equipment.

A total of 62 organisations will receive a share of the £1 million funding for 2017 to 2018 after their bids were considered by an expert panel.

Chaired by the Department for Transport and made up of representatives from DfT, DEFRA, devolved administrations, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RNLi and the Royal Yachting Association, the panel assessed bids taking into account:

- how the equipment listed supports or enhances the organisation's rescue

capability

- evidence that the items funded represent good value for money
- applicants were also required to match fund 10% of the costs of funded items, and to provide a letter of support from the authority that tasks them to rescues

Sir Alan Massey, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, said:

These smaller, independent charities are the lifeblood of our communities, playing a vital role in supporting the daily lives of thousands of people across the UK.

We often need to remind ourselves that these brave women and men may be called at any time of the day or night to assist persons in difficulty. Those persons may be lost or injured, in trouble at sea, or needing to be rescued from fast-flowing water or floods.

It's essential that funding like this is available to independent lifeboats so that they have the proper emergency equipment to aid in rescues. This funding will help meet their goals and ease their financial burden.