

News story: Rescue heroes given £1 million for life-saving equipment

Dozens of charities across the UK will benefit from new equipment to help volunteer search teams save lives more quickly and easily thanks to £1 million of government funding.

Today (23 December 2018) the Department for Transport revealed the 57 successful bids for the latest round of the rescue boat grant fund. The scheme was launched in 2014 to provide £5 million over 5 years to independent search and rescue teams working on inland waterways.

Over the past 4 years, 201 bids have been successful – helping a total of 98 search and rescue charities. The money has already paid for 65 new boats in addition to launch vehicles, rafts, safety gear, and other costs to support rescue teams. This year's pot will fund 15 new boats and a hovercraft.

Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Our rescue boat teams are the unsung heroes of the UK's waterways. Their commitment and skill keeps people safe on and around our rivers, lakes and inshore areas.

Lives have been saved as a result of this scheme and our additional funding will ensure that these tireless volunteers and charities can buy the craft, equipment, and other resources they need to provide vital round-the-clock services.

Among the successful applicants of this year's fund was Hornsea Inshore Rescue, which made headlines over the summer when volunteers from the organisation saved a father and son who had been swept away by a riptide off Mappleton Beach, East Riding of Yorkshire.

Another of the recipients is Salisbury-based Serve On, which is being given more than £19,500 to buy a boat and other life-saving equipment. Last Christmas, volunteers from the charity were patrolling the River Avon to highlight to students the dangers of drowning, when they spotted and rescued a 22-year-old man who had fallen into the river and was at risk of succumbing to the cold.

Actress Joanna Lumley, an ambassador to the Salisbury-based Serve On charity, said:

The inshore and inland rescue boat grant fund is a good example of how government money can enable the incredibly valuable work that voluntary groups like Serve On do in their communities.

Also receiving funding is Wiltshire Search and Rescue team which was praised by emergency services in July last year for its role in finding an 82-year-old dementia patient who had been lost in the New Forest for 3 days.

List of Rescue Boat Fund winners 2018 to 2019

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The bids for the latest round of funding were considered by an expert panel, chaired by officials and including representatives from DEFRA and the devolved administrations as well as expert advisers from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RNLI and the Royal Yachting Association.