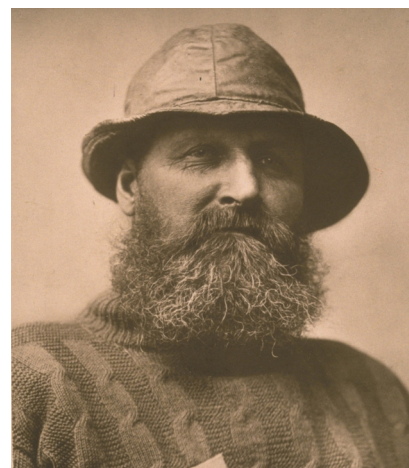


The RNLI, the charity that saves lives at sea, needs your support to help fund new, state-of-the-art lifejackets that will keep our volunteer crews safe at sea

A lifesaving history...

In 1854 an RNLI inspector called Captain Ward invented a cork lifejacket. Narrow strips of cork were sewn onto a canvas vest, so the lifejacket was flexible enough to move with the body. In 1861, when one of Whitby's lifeboats capsized on a service, just one crew member survived. Henry Freeman was the only one wearing a cork lifejacket, and went on to become Coxswain at Whitby.



Since the days of the cork lifejackets, the RNLI has always looked to advance and improve its safety equipment - from kapok lifejackets to beaufort lifejackets right up until the present day design. This is because the RNLI considers the safety of its volunteer crew members to be of paramount importance while at sea. The charity believes it owes its volunteer crews the best possible equipment available, as they often put themselves in difficult and dangerous situations to help others.

In 2012 the RNLI will begin to roll out new, innovative inshore and all-weather lifejackets designed with our crews' input. However, as a lifeboat service that receives no UK Government funding, we could not do this without the generous support of people like you.



Photos top: Henry Freeman and his cork lifejacket. Below: crew members trialling the new lifejackets.

The features of this new design

- These innovative all-weather and inshore lifejackets, incorporating the latest material technology, were designed specifically to meet the RNLI's current search and rescue operational requirements. Led by an RNLI technical expert and through close consultation with volunteer crews around the coast, the RNLI was able to bring a wealth of detailed user feedback into the two year development process, and ensure that its crews were completely happy with the design.
- The inshore lifejacket has a single 290 newtons manually inflated chamber with 90 newtons of inherent foam buoyancy. Fully inflated the lifejacket has a total of 380 newtons of buoyancy.
- The all-weather lifejacket is a twin chamber lifejacket. Each chamber has 290 newtons of buoyancy - one which automatically inflates and the other which can be manually inflated. If both chambers are inflated they will pressure equalise so that there is never more than 290 newtons of buoyancy.
- Both lifejackets are designed for search and rescue, fitted with a water activated emergency light and integral flare pockets for day and night distress flares.
- The RNLI has a 'one size fits all' policy. The lifejackets will provide increased safety for all size and shapes of crew member and a comfortable, secure fit leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness in lifesaving. They are fitted with crotch straps (which prevent the lifejacket riding up over the crew member's head when in the water) and an integrated harness (designed to pull the lifejacket away from the wearer's neck, allowing for greater freedom of movement whilst rescuing those in trouble).
- On top of all these features, the lifejacket holds zipped pockets for casualty care kit, torches, gloves or knives. A spray hood to protect against sea spray is also included in the design.



RNLI crew members trialling the new lifejackets.
Credit: RNLI/Nigel Millard

How you can help us get these lifejackets to our volunteer crew members

This is an essential development for RNLI crew kit and all of our crew members are looking forward to the benefits their new lifejackets will bring.

The manufacturer's recommended price for the new all-weather lifejacket is **£350** and for the new inshore lifejacket is **£330**. As a result of securing a discount because of our contribution to the development of the lifejackets, plus the quantities ordered, depending on operational requirements it will cost between £2,000 and £4,500 to equip our lifesavers with these new lifejackets at each station. If you could consider funding part of this lifejacket roll-out, you will be helping to keep our crews safe along the British and Irish coastline for many years to come.

Thank you - on behalf of our dedicated volunteer crews - for your consideration.