

RNLI - Chief Digital & Information Officer (CDIO)

Role Specification

March 2026

About The RNLI



The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is one of the UK and Ireland's leading charities, with a singular mission: to save lives at sea.

Established in 1824, the RNLI provides a 24-hour search and rescue service around the coasts of the UK and Ireland. Its work is delivered through a unique model that combines highly trained volunteers, specialist lifeboat crews, professional lifeguards and dedicated staff who together support lifesaving operations on some of the busiest and most varied coastlines in the world.

The organisation operates a network of more than 230 lifeboat stations and provides seasonal lifeguard cover on hundreds of beaches. Alongside frontline rescue services, the RNLI plays a critical role in preventing incidents through public education, community engagement and international water safety programmes. Each year millions of people benefit from its safety advice, training and awareness initiatives.

What makes the RNLI distinctive is the scale of public support that underpins it. The charity receives no government funding for its lifesaving service and is funded almost entirely by donations and legacies. This support enables the RNLI to maintain an advanced fleet of lifeboats, invest in specialist equipment and training, and sustain a volunteer base that forms the backbone of the organisation.

Over two centuries the RNLI has saved more than 147,000 lives. Its history is defined by courage, service and innovation, with volunteers and crews responding to emergencies in some of the most challenging maritime conditions.

Today the RNLI continues to evolve as it prepares for the future. With changing patterns of coastal activity and increasing demand for its services, the organisation is investing in its people, infrastructure and capabilities to ensure it can continue to protect those who visit, work on or enjoy the water for generations to come.

Why Join The RNLI?



“ The RNLI, the charity that has saved lives at sea around the coastline of the United Kingdom and Ireland for over 200 years, is at an inflection point. Demand for our vital lifesaving service has increased fourfold in the last 50 years and the search and rescue work we undertake has changed profoundly. Today, 98% of the people rescued by our lifeguards and lifeboats are recovered within 10 nautical miles of the shore. They are now invariably individuals who start off from the shore and go out to sea, rather than the sailors and fisherman we used to save. Fewer than one in ten of our operational lifeboat crews are now professional mariners, they are solicitors, IT practitioners, firefighters, paramedics... ordinary people like you and me, who do extraordinary things in service of their communities and people that they have never met before.

We operate from 238 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and lifeguard 250 beaches in the United Kingdom and Channel Islands, undertaking drowning prevention work locally, nationally, and internationally. This remarkable organisation is powered by the passion and selfless dedication of its people and funded solely by the generosity of the public, but our mission is becoming more complex, challenging and time critical than ever before. We need to become more agile and adapt at pace to meet the changing nature of lifesaving at sea if we are to deliver upon our purpose and be sustainable into the future.

We have set a bold and ambitious head mark for the future and are seeking to transform this cherished, national institution, which is still largely analogue in nature, into a forward-looking serviced-oriented enterprise that exploits fully the opportunities that digital technology and a more data driven approach will afford us. Harnessing, amongst other things, dynamic asset tracking, the internet of things (IoT), telemetry, drones, advances in terrestrial and low earth orbit connectivity, SaaS applications and AI, to generate predictive rather than reactive operational availability and provide better support to our frontline users. Our amazing volunteers give their time and energy freely, and our staff are committed to supporting them as best we possibly can. We urgently need in turn to reduce the operating friction they encounter and enable them to be more effective, safer, and sustainable in future. The RNLI's Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO) must therefore be an accomplished and collegiate senior executive, who is able to envision, articulate, advocate for, and implement the organisation's digital and data strategy for the future, whilst taking their passionate people with them.

This is no sinecure. It is a career defining opportunity, in a values-based organisation, which will provide the successful candidate with unparalleled personal and professional satisfaction. The RNLI team, working as 'One Crew' are determined to, in common purpose, save lives at sea.

If you believe that this role, our values, and our mission speak to you, we would love to hear from you. ”



Peter Sparkes, Chief Executive

Meet The Executive Team



Peter Sparkes
Chief Executive



Ross Barraclough
Chief Engineer and Technical Director



Jayne George
Chief Fundraising and Communications Officer



Rob Faricy
Chief Delivery Officer



Carolyn Greene
Chief People Officer



Sarah Davies
Chief Finance Officer and Director of Corporate Services

Why The CDIO Role Matters Now



The RNLI is entering one of the most significant periods of evolution in its 202-year history. Through the “One Crew, One Plan” (2026 – 2030) strategy, the organisation is modernising how lifesaving services operate across lifeboats, lifeguards and water safety activity. The nature of incidents at sea has changed markedly in recent years. Today, almost 98% of the RNLI launches occur within 10 miles of shore, reflecting a fundamental shift in where and how rescues take place. As coastal activity increases and risks evolve, demand for the RNLI’s services continues to grow. At the same time, the RNLI must ensure that its volunteers and frontline lifesavers are supported by systems that allow them to focus their time where it matters most: saving lives.

Technology will play a central role in enabling this next chapter of the RNLI’s mission. The organisation’s future operating model will increasingly rely on digital capability to support more connected, informed and responsive lifesaving services.

To support this evolution, the RNLI is preparing to embark on a major multi-year digital transformation programme to modernise the organisation’s core technology platforms and information architecture and strengthen the RNLI’s ability to deliver its lifesaving mission.

It will enable:

- Faster and more coordinated rescue responses
- Improved readiness and management of the RNLI fleet and assets
- Greater situational awareness during operational incidents
- A simpler experience for volunteers and frontline lifesavers
- More effective supporter engagement and fundraising

The Information and Digital Services function currently comprises c.120 colleagues, working across infrastructure, applications, data and service delivery, supported by a number of specialist partners and suppliers. Technology investment is approximately £20m annually, with the majority currently focused on maintaining core services and operational resilience.

The RNLI CDIO Mandate & Impact



Be the RNLI's Technology Strategic Thought Leader

- Create and deliver an end-to-end Technology strategy aligned with One Crew, One Plan (2026 – 2030)
- Support the RNLI's transition to a service-led operating model, championing digital innovation and connectivity across the organisation
- Bring to life the vision of the “Connected Lifesaver”, enabling lifeboat crews, lifeguards and operational partners to collaborate through shared platforms and operational insight

Enable Data-Driven Lifesaving & Decision Making

- Establish strong data governance and information management frameworks across the organisation
- Develop the RNLI's enterprise data architecture to generate insight across lifesaving operations, engineering, fundraising and supporter engagement
- Enable better use of operational data to improve the deployment and effectiveness of the RNLI's assets
- Leverage advanced analytics and artificial intelligence to support predictive insight and improved organisational performance
- Explore the use of IoT and connected sensors to support fleet monitoring and situational awareness
- Promote a culture of data-informed decision making across the RNLI

Build Digitally Connected Lifesaving

- Transition the RNLI from predominantly analogue operational processes toward more connected, data enabled services that improve planning, coordination and asset readiness across lifeboat stations, crews and operational teams
- Ensure frontline teams have access to the digital tools and systems required to plan, coordinate and deliver lifesaving services
- Enable technologies that enhance operational awareness and decision-making during incidents
- Work closely with operational and engineering teams to ensure digital capability supports fleet readiness, operational planning and incident response

Modernise Services To Create A Thriving RNLI

- Lead the design and delivery of modern digital platforms supporting operational planning, volunteer management and training coordination
- Reduce the RNLI's technology debt footprint to lower risk and improve cost efficiency
- Strengthen digital capabilities that support fundraising and supporter engagement
- Simplify systems and processes to improve organisational efficiency
- Ensure digital services are accessible, secure and user-centred

Experience

Essential

Leadership and Strategy

- Proven executive level experience leading multidisciplinary Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) teams within complex, service based and multi stakeholder organisations
- Strategic leadership of large-scale digital transformation programmes, translating vision into clear, deliverable plans aligned with organisational goals

Technical and Digital Expertise

- Strong understanding of IT infrastructure, enterprise architecture, data governance and cyber security
- Experience applying emerging technologies including AI, machine learning and automation to improve services and operational effectiveness
- Familiarity with relevant digital standards, compliance frameworks and best practice governance

Change, Stakeholder and Risk Management

- Proven track record of leading complex organisational and cultural change
- Highly effective stakeholder engagement, with the ability to influence senior leaders and build partnerships across departments, government and external organisations
- Strong understanding of cyber and information security risk, with experience ensuring organisational resilience at a strategic level

Desirable

Sector and Organisational Experience

- Experience in the charity, emergency services or maritime sectors, and in service-led operating models
- Familiarity with volunteer led organisations, public fundraising platforms and cross organisational collaboration

Education and Professional Credentials

- Degree in a relevant discipline such as Computer Science, Information Systems or Business Administration; postgraduate qualifications (e.g. MBA or MSc in Digital Leadership) advantageous
- Professional certifications such as ITIL, TOGAF, PRINCE2 or Agile methodologies, with cybersecurity credentials (e.g. CISSP, CISM) valued

Digital Governance and Innovation

- Knowledge of regulatory frameworks relevant to data protection, digital services, inclusion and accessibility standards
- Experience introducing and scaling emerging technologies, with the ability to assess their ethical, legal and societal implications

Additional Details



Location & Working Patterns

The role is based at the RNLI's lifesaving support centre in Poole, Dorset, which serves as the operational and strategic centre of the organisation.

The RNLI operates a hybrid working model, with the expectation that the CDIO will spend meaningful time on site to build relationships across the organisation and engage with operational teams. Expected presence of approximately 3 days per week on site, depending on business needs. It is worth noting that the RNLI has its own hotel onsite that is subsidised and can be used by volunteers and staff members for weekly working arrangements.

Travel to the RNLI's locations, including lifeboat stations and operational sites, is encouraged to maintain close connection with frontline activity – this travel can be expensed.

Interview Process

1st Stage – Interview with La Fosse Executive

2nd Stage – In person interview with members of the RNLI Board and Executive team in London (22nd April 2026)

3rd Stage – In person interview with members of the RNLI Board and Executive team in Poole (5th May 2026)

La Fosse Executive Contacts



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Ross serves as Managing Partner at La Fosse Executive, where he leads all executive hiring across permanent, interim, fractional and advisory mandates, with a core focus on technology and transformation leadership. Over the past 14+ years with La Fosse, Ross has helped shape the firm's Executive Search capability while developing a particular passion and expertise in senior Technology and Cyber Security leadership.



Dominic Boshier
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Dominic specialises in the delivery of CIOs & Technology leadership. Having spent time in Product, Infrastructure, Architecture, Security, Data & RPA, Dominic brings a deep market knowledge and a consultative approach to both clients and candidates. His expertise lies in advising businesses on structuring technology functions from a strategic and commercial perspective, ensuring leadership teams are aligned for success.



Olivia Ogilvie
Head of Research – La Fosse Executive

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Olivia leads Research and Analytics at La Fosse Executive, overseeing market intelligence and delivering insight-driven support on complex searches to ensure appointments align with each client's culture, strategy and vision.



ONE CREW, ONE PLAN: RNLI 2026-30

WHY WE NEED TO EVOLVE
WHAT WE NEED TO DO
HOW WE'LL MAKE IT HAPPEN

SEPTEMBER 2025



Contents

- 1. **Leading the way to 2040**..... 4
- 2. **Why do we need to evolve?**..... 7
- 3. **What do we need to do?**..... 11
- 4. **How are we going to deliver this plan?** 18

In the 201 years since the RNLI was founded, we have saved more than 146,000 lives. This has, in turn, resulted in 4M lives lived by those we have rescued and their descendants*. This represents an extraordinary contribution by the RNLI to our society and the countries and communities we proudly serve. Powered by the courage, selfless commitment and dedication of our people, and funded by the generosity of the public – who so thoughtfully give their money to us in trust – the RNLI is an organisation cherished by our nations and depended upon by those who need us most.

However, the nature of lifesaving at sea has changed profoundly in recent years. More often than not, we are now rescuing people who begin onshore and get into difficulty, rather than the professional mariners shipwrecked or sinking offshore we once saved. Today, 98% of all our launches are to incidents within 10 miles of the shore. As those who have come before us have done, on our watch, we must evolve and adapt over the next 15 years to ensure that we continue to fulfil our vital purpose, to save lives at sea and remain sustainable into the future. Mindful of our heritage, we must look forward and focus our effort and investment on those activities which will have the greatest impact on our mission.

Under this plan, we will provide a layered and better integrated lifesaving capability. So we will start onshore and work outwards, with water safety initiatives in our inland – as well as coastal – communities. There will be enhancements to our lifeguard capabilities and facilities; and we will bring more modern and effective day and night coastal lifesaving assets into service. This is all whilst rationalising and, where appropriate, exiting our legacy all-weather lifeboat classes. We will work at pace to upgrade the conditions, material state and amenities in our lifeboat stations and lifeguard units – improving the experience for all. The way in which the Lifesaving Support Centre and our regional staff operate will shift to being even more focused on serving the needs of frontline lifesavers and volunteers. We will simplify and rationalise processes, in recognition of a need to value better our volunteers’ precious time, to improve organisational efficiency, and to translate our donors’ generosity into lifesaving impact more readily.

This is an ambitious plan and an incredibly exciting moment in the history of this remarkable Institution. To deliver it we will need to unite, in common purpose, and as One Crew pull together. I have been inspired and encouraged by all the



amazing people who I have met in my first year in post and I have real confidence that everyone who is part of the RNLI – who loves, supports and depends upon us – wants us to be even better tomorrow, than we are today.

Whatever your role in delivering *One Crew, One Plan* and enabling us to realise our vision for the future, thank you for your passion, talent and kindness.

Sincerely,

Peter Sparkes
RNLI Chief Executive

* 2025 report compiled by The Worshipful Company of Actuaries for the RNLI, figure estimated using analysis based on lives saved data and number of descendants born following a life saved.



Our purpose

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

Our vision

To save every one

Our values

Courageous, dependable, selfless, trustworthy

Whoever we are Wherever we are from

We are one crew

Ready to save lives

We're powered by passion **talent** and **kindness**

Like generations of selfless lifesavers before us

This is our watch

We lead the way

Valuing each other Trusting each other **Depending on one another**

Volunteering to face the storm together

Knowing that **with courage nothing is impossible**

That is what has always driven us

to save every one we can

It's what makes every one of us

a lifesaver

Leading the way to 2040

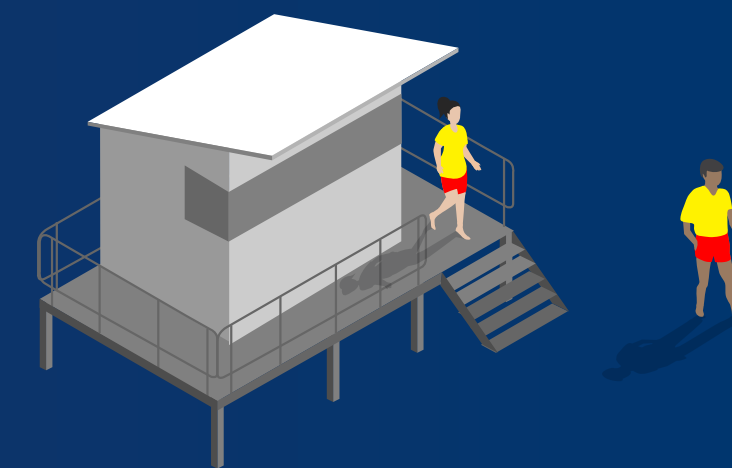
How should the RNLI operate in the future, if we're going to save more lives in a changing world?

What is it about our charity that we need to protect - and what do we need to evolve? What do we need to do to secure our future, and the futures of thousands of people who will need our lifeguards, lifeboat crews and water safety work?

This plan aims to address these challenges and answer those questions. Building on our 201-year history of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, it sets out the next chapter. You'll read about how the RNLI will ensure we are ready to save even more lives at sea over the next 15 years and beyond – and what we will do between now and 2030 to help get us there.

LIFESAVING EFFECT

The RNLI will continue – and evolve – its three key ways of saving lives:



LIFEGUARDS

LIFEBOATS



WATER SAFETY





Watch: 2040 in motion

RNLI 2040: our evolution



An updated lifeboat fleet, ready for the increased number of nearshore rescues – including a new class of coastal lifeboats.

Rescue services that work with each other more closely: lifeboats, lifeguards, coastguard and other emergency services, saving lives together safely.

Digitally-enabled lifesaving that simplifies our digital services and harnesses new technologies, such as sensors and remote monitoring of our lifeboats.



Better support for volunteers and frontline lifesavers so that they can focus on their lifesaving work and come home safely.

Volunteer and frontline lifesaver roles that are more inclusive and flexible, so that more people want to become – and stay – part of the RNLI.

Everyone sees safety as their responsibility.



Lifeboat stations and lifeguard units that are fit for purpose – with modernised facilities that meet the needs of our people and their communities (from lifesavers and those they rescue, to those in need of safety advice).

A reduced impact on the environment with increased resilience around climate change.



Partnering and influencing work that ensures domestic and international drowning prevention is well-resourced in high-priority locations – with all children in the UK and Ireland knowing about water safety.



A sustainable financial outlook – spending the money given to us in trust wisely, better looking after our supporters and diversifying our income streams.

Why do we need to evolve?

Our purpose is to save lives at sea. Our vision is to save every one. All the while, we strive to stay true to our values; courageous, dependable, selfless and trustworthy.

But we can't deliver on that purpose, pursue that vision, or live those values without evolving – not in a world that continues to change so much, and so rapidly.

So, what is changing, and how does it affect the RNLI?

People

- The coast is being used in different ways – which means new risks. 1 in 4 children leave primary school unable to swim in the UK* and 1 in 4 Irish adults can't swim**.
- There is an increasing demand for our vital lifesaving services, while our lifesavers are facing more challenges, including incidents involving vulnerable people.
- Drowning is a complex, changing problem that is not always a priority for decision makers. Around 300,000 people drown worldwide each year***.
- Only around 1 in 10 people who join lifeboat crews have professional maritime backgrounds.
- People's expectations of volunteering – and how much time they can offer – are shifting.
- The populations of the UK and Ireland are becoming more diverse, along with the needs of our volunteers, staff, supporters and those we rescue.
- Rapid changes in technology have created new opportunities for how and where we do our work.

*Source: Royal Life Saving Society, 2022

**Source: Ireland National Swimming Strategy, 2024

***Global Health Estimates 2024, World Health Organization

Charity

- The challenging economic climate has driven up inflation and the cost of operations, while the fundraising environment has become more competitive.
- Increasing regulation and compliance requirements have meant more costs for charities.
- Shifting legal requirements and social expectations provide a constant need for charities to change their ways of working, update their policies and procedures and this often results in increased costs.
- In an unpredictable world, society is increasingly polarised, bringing challenges such as antisocial behaviour which we must address to protect our people and reputation.



Environment

- The climate is changing in many ways, including rising sea levels, erosion, flooding, and heatwaves.
- This is all affecting coastal infrastructure, landscapes, hazards and sea use. More frequent heatwaves and warmer, drier summers are driving increased use of beaches and coastal waters.
- Drowning prevention has a higher profile internationally as the effects of climate change and public health are increasingly part of the global agenda.
- Decarbonisation, plastic reduction and water quality are examples of areas where organisations need to meet changing public and regulatory expectations.

What do we need to do?

We have set three long-term goals which describe what the RNLI aims to achieve in order to continue fulfilling our lifesaving purpose in a changing world:

Goal 1:



TO CONTINUE TO BE AN INDEPENDENT, VOLUNTEERING CHARITY AND WORLD-RENOWNED RESCUE SERVICE

Goal 2:



TO DELIVER A SUSTAINABLE, FUTURE-FIT LIFESAVING SERVICE

Goal 3:



TO BE AN INFLUENCER AND CATALYST FOR DROWNING PREVENTION GLOBALLY, NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Each goal has a set of strategic objectives for 2026–2030, which will guide the decisions we make and where we focus our effort. Each objective aligns to a set of measurable outcomes. These are our criteria for success that we will monitor to ensure our plan is on track.



Objectives:

Outcomes:

Measures*:

- Strategic objective 1.1**

We will save lives in, on and around the water by delivering a **safer and more effective lifeboat and lifeguard service**
- Strategic objective 1.2**

We will sustain a safer, more effective and inclusive One Crew by attracting and retaining volunteers and staff who are set up with **the right skills, training and equipment**
- Strategic objective 1.3**

We will maintain the RNLI's status as an independent lifesaving charity by **raising funds from a more diverse range of income streams**
- Strategic objective 1.4**

We will safeguard the RNLI's licence to operate in the communities we serve by **managing our reputation and ensuring more effective governance of our services**
- Strategic objective 1.5**

We will ensure donors' money is spent wisely by delivering services that provide **improved value for money**

- Fewer lives lost

Improved lifesaving service readiness

Our people are safer
- Improved lifesaving service resilience

More positive RNLI experience

Our people are safer
- Improved funding resilience
- More effective governance
- Improved value for money

- Lives saved

Service availability

Injury rate
- Trained lifesavers

Volunteer/staff engagement score

Injury rate
- Income pipeline health
- Policy management
- Delivery to plan

*From 2026, annual monitoring of these outcome measures will be supported by monthly tracking of leading key performance indicators through a balanced scorecard

Activities:

Upgrading lifeguard and lifeboat facilities

Our lifesaving facilities are in locations exposed to harsh weather and sea conditions. The needs of the people who use those facilities are changing – and so is the climate they operate in. So, where possible, we need to retrofit and refurbish lifeboat stations so they are right for our people and lifesaving assets. That includes ensuring the provision of private changing rooms in all existing and new stations. Many of our lifeguard units need to be replaced entirely, as they have reached the end of their operational life.



Goal 1:



TO CONTINUE TO BE AN INDEPENDENT, VOLUNTEERING CHARITY AND WORLD-RENOWNED RESCUE SERVICE



Keeping our people safe and saving lives with the right skills and equipment

When it comes to safety, we will have the courage to put ourselves and each other first – because if we are at risk of harm, our lifesaving mission is at risk too. There are a variety of systems, ways of working and projects that will make our people – and those they rescue – safer all round. We will embed the new Operational Competence Framework and Safety Management System, with improved training on mental health, antisocial behaviour, casualty care and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This training will be more accessible to volunteers as part of a wider strategy to improve the volunteer experience. Meanwhile, a new inshore rescue hovercraft will ensure our crews have the right replacement to launch to the rescue.

Generating income and spending it wisely

In order to secure the income we need to realise our 2040 aims, our fundraising strategy includes recruiting thousands of new supporters and treating them amazingly well. We will also need support from new partners, and to grow income through our online retail operations. We will continue to ensure we spend our donors' money wisely, finding opportunities to be more cost effective. For example, we will rationalise our estate and use more commercial off-the shelf solutions such as modular buildings.





Objectives:

Outcomes:

Measures* :

Strategic objective 2.1
 By 2030 we will have started to **modernise the lifesaving service** to better meet the changing profile of lifesaving demand and the changing needs of our frontline lifesavers

Fewer lives lost
 Improved lifesaving service resilience

Lives saved
 Trained lifesavers

Strategic objective 2.2
 By 2030 we will be making better use of our people's time and donors' money by moving to a **service-led operating model that is more efficient and effective**

More positive RNLI experience
 Improved value for money

Volunteer/staff engagement score
 Delivery to plan

Strategic objective 2.3
 By 2030 we will have a more integrated approach to **growing our relevance with the next generation of RNLI lifesavers and supporters**

Greater audience relevance and brand health

Brand Health Index

Strategic objective 2.4
 By 2030 we will have improved our climate resilience and **reduced our environmental impact** by making progress against our environmental goals

Improved lifesaving service readiness
 Improved environmental sustainability
 More effective governance

Service availability
 Carbon footprint
 Policy management

*From 2026, annual monitoring of these outcome measures will be supported by monthly tracking of leading key performance indicators through a balanced scorecard

Activities:

Goal 2:

TO DELIVER A SUSTAINABLE,
FUTURE-FIT LIFESAVING SERVICE

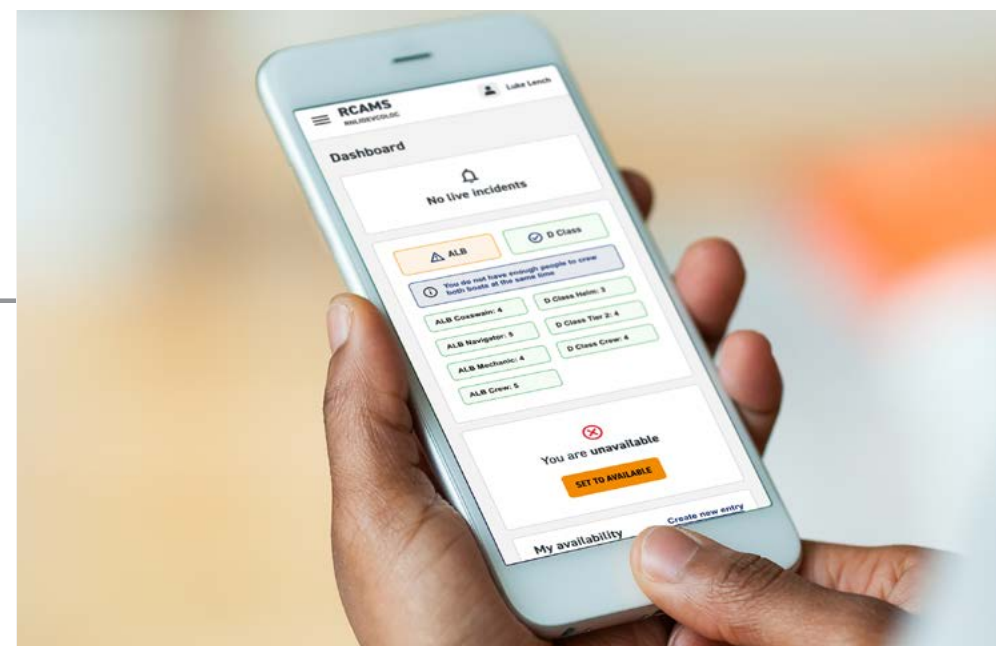
Modernised lifesaving

A new class will join our fleet - the coastal lifeboat - as part of a lifeboat fleet ready for more nearshore rescues. Following the procurement of a prototype, we aim to have the first coastal lifeboat on service in 2028. Meanwhile, work to retrofit our Atlantic 85 lifeboats will deliver improved ergonomics, seating configuration and digital connectivity. In both cases, volunteer involvement will bring the benefits of their frontline experience to the fleet modernisation. We will continue to work with lifesaving communities to ensure the right lifeboats are in the right locations – assets that use our donors' money in the best way, to achieve the best lifesaving effect.



Digitally-enabled lifesaving

We will improve the capturing, processing, and recording of lifeguard data, by using digital devices on-site and lifeguard unit cameras. Digital systems will evolve to provide a single source of reliable data and make life easier for frontline lifesavers and volunteers. Our core business IT systems will transition to new, modernised systems that keep the charity running, improve the experience of frontline lifesavers and volunteers, and drive more efficient ways of working.



Future-fit lifesaving

We will engage a new generation of supporters with the RNLI, with opportunities including the 25th anniversaries of lifeguards (2026) and Thames lifeboats (2027) to help with the ongoing relevance and reach of the charity. As we mark this milestone for lifeguards we will also be looking ahead to opportunities for future evolutions through the development and implementation of a new Lifeguard Strategy. We will also become more environmentally sustainable. This will be achieved by using low carbon fuel, retro-fitting renewables and switching to electric vehicles in the car fleet.



Goal 3:



TO BE AN INFLUENCER AND CATALYST FOR DROWNING PREVENTION GLOBALLY, NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Objectives:

Outcomes:

Measures* :

Strategic objective 3.1
 By 2030 there will be **more evidence to demonstrate the impact of water safety interventions** developed and deployed with and through others

More impactful water safety partnerships
 Fewer serious water-related incidents

Sharing lifesaving expertise
 Water safety awareness
 Serious water incidents

Strategic objective 3.2
 By 2030 we will have influenced decision-making organisations to **increase the prioritisation and resourcing of drowning prevention** in high-risk locations and for high-risk groups

Greater prioritisation of drowning prevention
 Fewer serious water-related incidents

Influencing global decision makers
 Serious water incidents

*From 2026, annual monitoring of these outcome measures will be supported by monthly tracking of leading key performance indicators through a balanced scorecard

Activities:

Goal 3:

TO BE AN INFLUENCER AND CATALYST FOR DROWNING PREVENTION GLOBALLY, NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Working with partners

We will explore opportunities to work with new and existing partners on innovative ways to keep people safe in and around water, for example, using technology. Meanwhile, we will continue to work with existing partner organisations such as the Black Swimming Association and the Gaelic Athletic Association on interventions that are already having an impact (such as the Float to Live campaign). Internationally, that will include continued drowning prevention interventions in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India and Tanzania. For example, in Bangladesh, new approaches will be piloted to reduce drowning risk for children under 2 years old. This is fully funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and will be delivered in collaboration with the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research Bangladesh (CIPRB) and other partners.



Influence and advocacy

This will be at a global level, through work such as our continued collaboration with the World Health Organization. We will also work to ensure that drowning prevention is embedded in any updates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (which run to 2030). In the UK and Ireland, we will develop water safety influence and advocacy plans with national water safety forums. We will also continue to play our part in World Drowning Prevention Day each year. This is an important opportunity to raise awareness of drowning prevention in the UK, Ireland, and globally.



Evidence and insight

Our water safety work will benefit from evidence and insight showing how and why people get into danger in the water. We will regularly review our insight into high-risk locations and groups, drawing on a range of sources and working in partnership with other organisations on our response. It will all help inform our continued delivery of targeted local, regional and national water safety initiatives in the UK and Ireland.



How are we going to deliver this plan?

Crew, lifeguards, volunteers, donors,
staff and partners will be able to
SAVE MORE LIVES
if we provide

SIMPLIFIED

processes and operations,
adopting industry standards
to ensure everyone is **safer**

SUPPORT

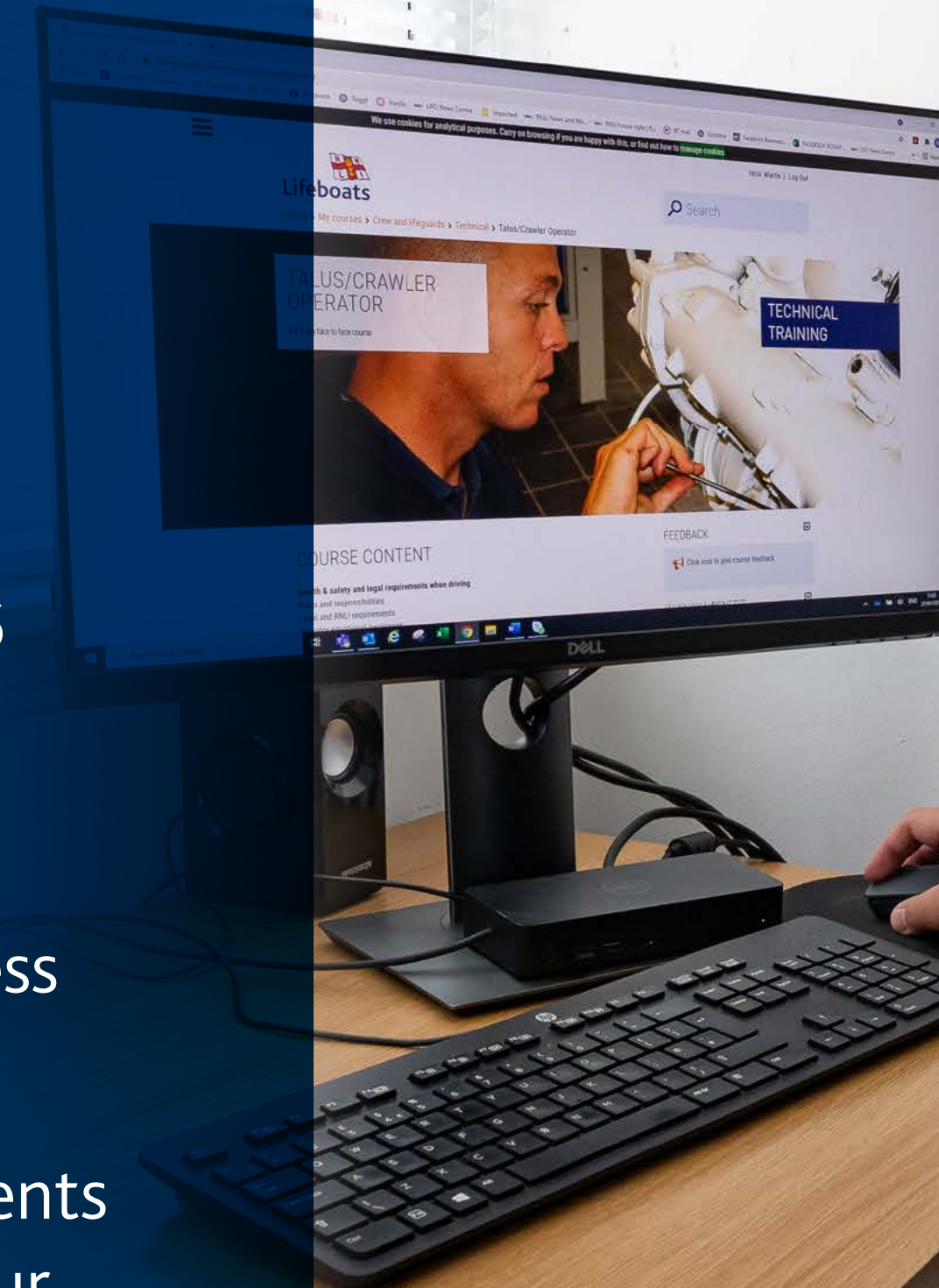
services that are geared towards
better-serving the needs of
volunteers and lifesavers

How will we improve the support to our frontline services?

To ensure we meet the needs of our lifesavers and volunteers, we will shift to a service-led operating model.

That will make it easier for volunteers and frontline lifesavers to access the services and information they need.

But improving our frontline services is impossible without improvements to the back-office functions supporting them. So we will simplify our processes and governance, supported by technology, to ensure that our services are effective and easy to use.



How will we digitally transform the RNLI?

We must utilise existing and emerging technology to enhance how our people provide lifesaving services.

We already use digital solutions and technology extensively – we need to continually evolve them in line with emerging needs, and ensure we're making the best use of supporter funds.

In the short term, we will be addressing any risks created by existing technology becoming obsolete. And we'll make some smaller scale changes to improve people's experience of our current tools and systems. Over the long term, we will make some strategic changes that create an information architecture for the RNLI that is fit for the future.

Over the next 5 years, that will include:

- Designing our processes to ensure we are able to deliver services quickly and effectively, and then enhance those processes with appropriate technology
- Targeted improvements to the user experience for volunteers and staff
- Building the underpinning technology architecture to enable more agile adoption of new technology
- Providing new core platforms for Finance, People, Engineering and Lifesaving Operations teams, adopting industry-standard core processes where possible
- Safely and securely exploring AI and other innovations to deliver our 2030 goals.

How will we manage our estate?

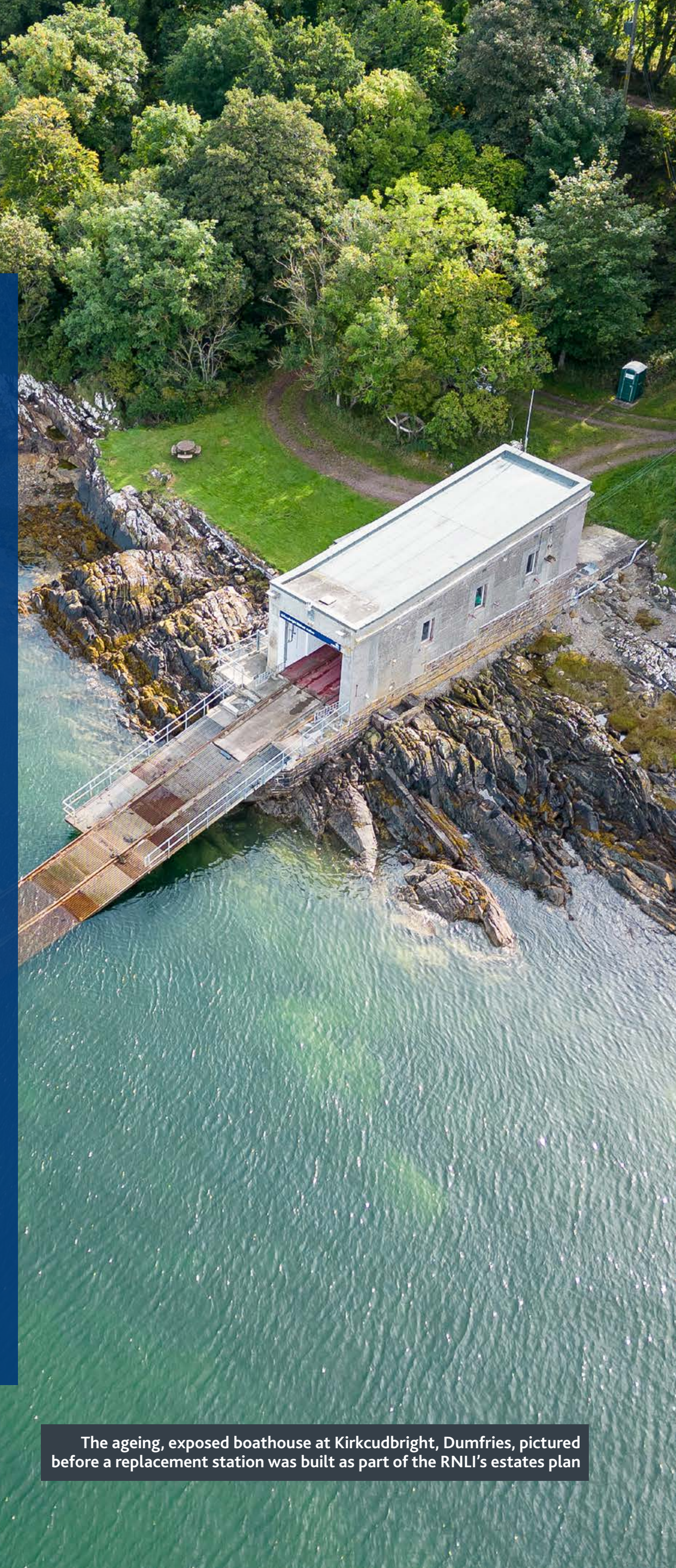
Maintaining and upgrading the RNLI estate will be a key focus in the next 5 years.

Whenever possible we will use commercial off-the-shelf solutions from pontoons and maritime infrastructure, to lifeboat stations. This new approach will enable projects to move from concept to delivery more quickly, as well as being more cost effective than traditional construction methods.

In 2025 we implemented a new Estates Management System which we will continue to deploy and roll out over the next few years. This system will give a view of all property interests and build the ability for volunteers to raise repairs and view core documents in real time.

It will also support and enable the tracking of compliance tasks, management of condition surveys with their resulting actions, and oversight of construction projects and programmes.

Facilities that enhance the volunteer experience will be prioritised – especially when it comes to creating a safe and inclusive environment for our people. This includes the provision of private changing facilities and a Property Maintenance Strategy which will ensure all of our buildings are safe and compliant.



The ageing, exposed boathouse at Kirkcudbright, Dumfries, pictured before a replacement station was built as part of the RNLI's estates plan

98%
OF LAUNCHES
ARE LESS THAN

10 NAUTICAL MILES
OFFSHORE

1.8%
ARE BETWEEN

10NM AND 25NM
OFFSHORE

0.2%
INCIDENTS ARE

MORE THAN
25NM OFFSHORE



How will we evolve our fleet?

As this plan makes clear, the nature of lifesaving is changing, at a time when demand for our vital service is increasing.

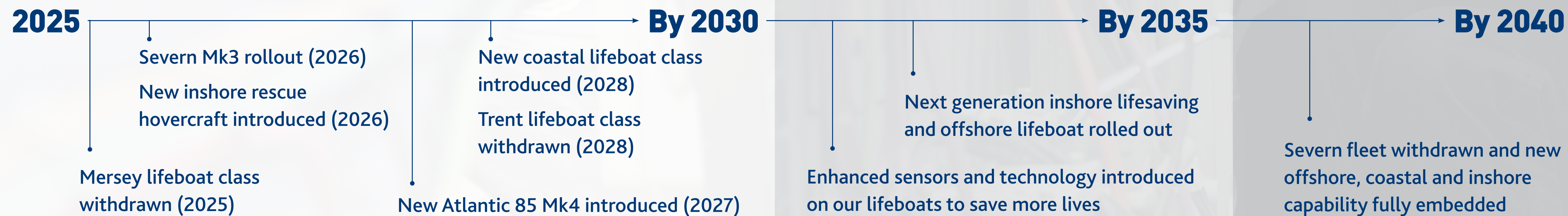
So we must ensure that we have the appropriate lifeboats in the right places, which will save the greatest number of lives in the most effective way.

In-depth data, insights and specialist knowledge have informed what capabilities are needed from the RNLI's lifeboat fleet and which lifeboats could deliver these capabilities.

This has led to a fleet strategy that will:

- Deliver all-weather cover to inshore lifeboat stations within 60 minutes of launch
- Provide all-weather coverage out to 75 nautical miles from the vast majority of the UK and Ireland coasts
- Provide large tow capability to known historic risk locations
- Streamline the RNLI's all-weather lifeboat fleet. The Mersey, Trent and Severn class lifeboats will gradually exit from the fleet
- Deliver a new concept of training
- Explore future-proofing the service by reducing crewing demand and allowing digital enhancement of lifesaving through connectivity.

Indicative timeline of key milestones in delivering the fleet strategy



In summary

WHAT IS THE 5-YEAR PLAN?

It shows how we'll invest in new and existing areas of infrastructure, estates, technology, and equipment so we can save more lives in a changing world. It also shows how we'll better serve our volunteers and frontline lifesavers by simplifying our services, reducing duplication and delivering the best possible value for our donors' money.

HOW WILL THE RNLI FUND THESE PLANS?

Thanks to the continued generosity of our incredible donors and supporters – and the careful decisions made over the last few years – we can respond to changes in society, economics, and technology, to ensure the RNLI is sustainable in the future.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 2030?

This is the first of three 5-Year Plans designed to ensure we are ready to save more lives at sea in 2040 and beyond. This first plan focuses on investments and our appetite to make tough decisions to ensure we are prioritising the right activity to support our volunteers and frontline lifesavers and better serve our communities.



Lifeboats

Thank you

Photos: Cloud Dancer Photography, Stephen Duncombe, EMEDO, Oscar Johnson, Nicholas Leach, Laura Lewis, Andy Lyons, Paul Martin/twonamesphotography, RNLI/ (Harrison Bates, David Edwards, Michael Jess, Neil Longdin, Nigel Millard, Nihab Rahman, Nathan Williams) Hannah Scouler, Shutterstock, Whitstable Lifeboat Station/@imagedrum

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

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