

On 18 Mar 2018, at 11:31, Mark James <M.James@gov.je> wrote:

Dear Kristina,

As requested please find below some lines for the debate. I am not privy to the details of the dispute other than what has already been published but this seems to all boil down to a dispute between one individual and the RNLI management, what in all normal circumstances should be dealt with by an organisations HR team and managers.

With regards to current and future provision of lifeboat cover in Jersey, some keys points to note:

The RNLI have not had any similar issues at St Catherine's lifeboat station and they have significantly improved the beach lifeguard service since taking it over, most recently opening the RNLI Support centre at Beaumont. So this isn't an inherent problem with the RNLI in Jersey, only the issues at one station.

The RNLI have operated lifeboats in Jersey since 1830 and they are still committed to provide a lifesaving service in Jersey despite the recent dispute with the St Helier crew.

The above is evidenced by the fact that they have spent £10,000s training firefighters, local RNLI volunteers and sending over UK staff to keep the lifeboats at St Helier available since the dispute started. The RNLI are now in the process of re-building a fully operation crew in St Helier, supported by an RNLI Jersey Lifeboat Operations Team. This has assured that the RNLI Inshore Lifeboat at St Catherine's has never been unavailable, the Inshore Lifeboat at St Helier has been available 100% since 5th December 2017 and the All Weather Lifeboat 88.8% since 13th Dec 2017.

The RNLI are acknowledged by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency, the UK Emergency Services and UK Government as the leading volunteer maritime rescue service in the British Isles. They were formed in 1824 and have saved more than 140,000 lives around the UK, including Jersey.

The RNLI have a wealth of experience and huge resources to support their lifeboat operations. Their annual income is approx. £200m and they have funds of £745m. They currently operate 238 lifeboat stations, patrol 240 beaches, operate 350 lifeboats and have over 100 lifeboats in a relief fleet read to temporarily replace station lifeboats whenever they require regular or emergency maintenance. They operate a world class training centre and a dedicated lifeboat construction facility (see attached photo I took on a recent visit) at Poole supported by their professional HQ staff including dedicated research and development, procurement, HR team, comms and sea safety education to name a few.

As the Chief Fire Officer with responsibility for providing an inshore water rescue capability I am fully aware of the difficulties of running lifeboats without the back-up of the RNLI. This is why we are now developing stronger links with them following our recent agreement to crew the St Helier Inshore Lifeboats. Their resources, knowledge, training, maintenance support and equipment development are unequalled.

My professional advice as Chief Fire Officer and Emergency Planning Officer is that Jersey should maintain its long and until recently, very successful relationship with the RNLI. Through this local dispute they have shown their commitment to the Island and without question provides the best lifeboat cover, as demonstrated by the 350 lifeboats operated across the UK. To choose a fledgling local independent lifeboat to replace the current RNLI cover lifeboat provision is fraught with many risks and could ultimately cost lives.

Kind regards

Mark James
Chief Fire Officer / Emergency Planning Officer