

Policy

Policy Number:

PO1049

Policy Title:

Multilingualism (Language Provision)

Applicability:

RNLI staff and volunteers

Reason for Policy:

To clarify the circumstances under which the RNLI will offer multilingual service provision.

Objective of Policy:

This policy sets out the RNLI approach to multilingual service provision for our volunteers, supporters and staff.

Policy:

1. POLICY INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Whilst the RNLI's primary verbal and written language is English, the charity's geographical extent includes an array of cultures and a number of nations and regions where people speak languages other than English.
- 1.2** While at present the RNLI is not subject to legislation regarding language provision, the RNLI's aim is to promote an RNLI culture that is inclusive and values diversity and the benefits this brings to saving lives at sea.
- 1.3** The following policy is a statement of commitment by the RNLI to consider the languages of our operational area, whether the UK and Ireland or international, on the basis of equality and signals our respect for the cultural diversity of the countries in which the RNLI operates.
- 1.4** The scope of our commitments in this policy should be interpreted practically; they are limited to activities and services in areas where a second language is spoken widely.

2. POLICY

- 2.1** It is our duty as a charity to ensure that all of our financial resources are targeted to produce the best possible outcomes. As such the RNLI must take the cost of providing multilingual services into account and consider where such provision will benefit the aim of the organisation.

- 2.2** RNLI value streams must ensure that the requirement for languages other than English is taken into account at the earliest stage when planning communications, projects and activities with our volunteers, supporters and staff.
- 2.3** If information is offered in a multilingual format, then the languages used should be presented in equal prominence and size. Internal staff and volunteers must consult the RNLI Bilingual Provision - Best Practice guidance.
- 2.4** In the UK and Ireland, when translation of RNLI documentation is required, this must occur through an approved provider to ensure consistency in quality. For further information on translation service providers contact Creative Services at Creative@RNLI.org.uk.
- 2.5** Where the RNLI operates internationally, and translation of material or services is required, the RNLI International team may work with local partners or put the requirement out to tender.
- 2.6** The RNLI will not expect RNLI staff or volunteers to act as translators unless this forms a part of their job description and they have the necessary skills to enable them to deliver this service to a high standard.
- 2.7** Currently we cannot guarantee a multilingual service in our face-to-face communications but the RNLI welcomes the use of other languages by RNLI staff and volunteers who are able to do so.
- 2.8** HM Coastguard offers a verbal translation service for operational calls in the UK. If translation is required on service, once the language of the casualty has been established, contact the Coastguard and ask for the translation service.
- 2.9** In accordance with International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations, English is the primary maritime language and must be used in operational communications between the RNLI and search and rescue (SAR) agencies.
- 2.10** In the UK and Ireland, training and all documentation, including signage, relating to lifeboat operations, will be in English.
- 2.11** Where the RNLI operates overseas, the RNLI may use the language appropriate to the country in training, documentation and signage.
- 2.12** The RNLI will not provide any language training to operational personnel. Some may be proficient in languages other than English and may be used as translators in the operational environment at the discretion of the coxswain and SAR mission coordinator (SMC).
- 2.13** Currently, the title of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, when used to indicate our name and brand, will be in English only.

Reference Documents:

NA

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidance:

[Inclusion and Equality](#) policy

Related Forms & Instructions:

NA