

News story: Nomination for Coastguard Rescue Teams who saved a life on St Kilda

It became clear that the helicopter from Stornoway would not be able to get him out. Step forward the coastguard rescue teams, who've been nominated for an award and have been retelling the story of that day.

Ask station officer Willie Campbell about the geographic challenges the teams faced that day and he'll shake his head. 'Imagine the most remote place you can think of,' he said, 'And even then it's probably not as remote as this cliff in St Kilda.'

The call came in around 12.20pm on 26 June 2018. Stornoway coastguard operations centre was told that an 87-year-old man had slipped and fallen. It was quickly decided to send a coastguard rescue team with rope rescue equipment so the man could be loaded to the helicopter for transfer. Stornoway, South Lochs, Bragar, Tarbert and Scalpay coastguard rescue teams were despatched and the HM Coastguard helicopter from Stornoway put on standby to move out.

On scene, it became very clear, very quickly that while the man was still alive, his position was precarious, to say the least. If he moved, there was a 200 foot drop awaiting him. Those on scene saw that sending in the helicopter could prove fatal to him – the down draft could blow him over the edge. There were no safe helicopter options. A back up team was called to make the journey with extra equipment, along with Leverburgh RNLI lifeboat.

Rope technician Nathan Harris had been sent down because it was clear the man had slipped further. His position was becoming increasingly more precarious. As Nathan arrived, two things were apparent – the first was that the injured man's legs were dangling dangerously over the edge of the precipice above the 200-foot drop and the second was that the man was too exhausted and hurt to be able to do much to help those helping him. Nathan secured him with a rescue strop.

Senior coastal operations officer Ronald Maclean, along with his fellow coastguards and the helicopter crew decided that they couldn't wait for back up. The rescue needed to be carried out as soon as possible. It was already nearly half past two and time was running out. The challenge was immense. They only had one set of rope rescue equipment and it would mean having to adapt normal procedures to get to the man. If they waited, there was the distinct danger the injured man might die. It was a stark choice. In fact there was no choice.

Ronald said: 'The conditions were difficult. It was a very hot day making the hard work seem even harder. But we had to move as fast as we could or the man could have died.'

A second technician – the station officer – Willie Campbell was sent down with a stretcher to work alongside Nathan to bring the man back up. Working together in the kind of teamwork that saves lives, the two men made the man safe on the stretcher and he was gently raised to the top. It took some time. He was finally back at the top along with the two technicians just before 4.50pm.

He was taken on board the helicopter and taken to Western Isles hospital. The man has recovered well and is apparently planning his next adventure.

Coastal operations area commander Murdo Macaulay has nominated all those involved for a special award.

He said: 'We often talk about the professionalism of our teams in difficult spots. This was one of those occasions where this coupled with decision making in life or death situations undoubtedly saved this man's life.'

News story: Coastguard helicopter rescues fallen walker on Isle of Skye

Just before 10:30am on 29 December we received a call from police Scotland asking us to support Skye mountain rescue team SCIO after receiving a report of the injured walker on Quiraing, Isle of Skye.

We sent in our helicopter who airlifted the man and took him to Stornoway airport for onward transfer to hospital. We wish him a speedy recovery and a good new year!

[Quiraing rescue footage](#)

Press release: £2.7 million fund to tackle parental conflict

A £2.7 million fund to increase support for disadvantaged families at risk of parental conflict has been announced by the Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance, Justin Tomlinson.

Parental conflict can range from a lack of warmth and emotional distance, right through to verbal abuse. If children are exposed to this sort of distress over longer periods of time, their emotional and social development

can be significantly affected. It may stop children from doing as well at school or even impact their career chances in later life.

Children most at risk are those with parents who are out of work, on low incomes, or struggling with physical and mental health conditions.

The fund will be made up of 2 separate strands.

£1.1 million of funding for projects to support families at a greater risk of parental conflict

Parental conflict could be caused by a range of complex issues experienced by families, including debt trouble, divorce and mental health issues. Projects will look at new solutions to address parental conflict as part of these wider family challenges.

Innovation might include suggestions on how local services can work together better or targeted interventions for families.

£1.6 million of funding for digital support to help parents find help online

Pioneering approaches are needed to better improve access to digital support for families at risk of parental conflict.

Grant participants will be asked to develop creative solutions which target digital help at parents with low digital skills and who live in low income and workless households.

The Reducing Parental Conflict Challenge Fund is part of a wider programme which encourages councils across England to integrate approaches addressing parental conflict into their local services for families.

The Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance, Justin Tomlinson, said:

Conflict between parents can have a devastating and long-lasting impact on children, and it's often caused by external stresses. We want families experiencing problems to have easier access to help.

This innovative fund will develop solutions for parents to repair their relationships, resolve any conflict and provide a safer environment for their children to grow up.

The main fund will be managed by Ecorys UK and Family Lives. They will review applications for funding and oversee the delivery of the final projects, taking place between April 2019 and March 2020.

Eligible bidders could include local authorities, digital organisations,

organisations from the public and private sector, voluntary and community organisations, and social enterprises.

More information

Potential applicants can register their interest from 11 January 2019 and apply between 21 January and 15 February 2019. More information is available on the [Reducing Parental Conflict Challenge Fund](#) website.

Share your thoughts about the fund on social media using [#RPCchallengefund](#).

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[Press release: £2.7 million fund to tackle parental conflict](#)

The fund is the latest in a range of government measures that aim to reduce the risk of parental conflict.

[Press release: A helping hand to set up new businesses](#)

Over 200,000 new businesses have used a new cross-government service allowing new start-ups to register their company and register for tax at the same time.