

# News story: Rescue heroes given £1 million for life-saving equipment

Dozens of charities across the UK will benefit from new equipment to help volunteer search teams save lives more quickly and easily thanks to £1 million of government funding.

Today (23 December 2018) the Department for Transport revealed the 57 successful bids for the latest round of the rescue boat grant fund. The scheme was launched in 2014 to provide £5 million over 5 years to independent search and rescue teams working on inland waterways.

Over the past 4 years, 201 bids have been successful – helping a total of 98 search and rescue charities. The money has already paid for 65 new boats in addition to launch vehicles, rafts, safety gear, and other costs to support rescue teams. This year's pot will fund 15 new boats and a hovercraft.

Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Our rescue boat teams are the unsung heroes of the UK's waterways. Their commitment and skill keeps people safe on and around our rivers, lakes and inshore areas.

Lives have been saved as a result of this scheme and our additional funding will ensure that these tireless volunteers and charities can buy the craft, equipment, and other resources they need to provide vital round-the-clock services.

Among the successful applicants of this year's fund was Hornsea Inshore Rescue, which made headlines over the summer when volunteers from the organisation saved a father and son who had been swept away by a riptide off Mappleton Beach, East Riding of Yorkshire.

Another of the recipients is Salisbury-based Serve On, which is being given more than £19,500 to buy a boat and other life-saving equipment. Last Christmas, volunteers from the charity were patrolling the River Avon to highlight to students the dangers of drowning, when they spotted and rescued a 22-year-old man who had fallen into the river and was at risk of succumbing to the cold.

Actress Joanna Lumley, an ambassador to the Salisbury-based Serve On charity, said:

The inshore and inland rescue boat grant fund is a good example of how government money can enable the incredibly valuable work that voluntary groups like Serve On do in their communities.

Also receiving funding is Wiltshire Search and Rescue team which was praised by emergency services in July last year for its role in finding an 82-year-old dementia patient who had been lost in the New Forest for 3 days.

## List of Rescue Boat Fund winners 2018 to 2019

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The bids for the latest round of funding were considered by an expert panel, chaired by officials and including representatives from DEFRA and the devolved administrations as well as expert advisers from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RNLI and the Royal Yachting Association.

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## [Press release: Ban of third party sales of puppies and kittens, known as 'Lucy's Law', confirmed](#)

The government has confirmed it will be banning third party sales of puppies and kittens, Animal Welfare Minister David Rutley announced today (23 December).

The decision was taken following a [public consultation](#), from which there was over 95 per cent support for a ban. It will help bring to an end the terrible welfare conditions found in puppy farming and solve a range of existing animal welfare issues.

This will mean that anyone looking to buy or adopt a puppy or kitten under six months must either deal directly with the breeder or with an animal rehoming centre.

This will help to crack down on puppy farms and make it much harder for high volume low welfare breeders, both licensed and unlicensed, whose trade relies on third party sellers.

These include the early separation of puppies and kittens from their mothers and the increased likelihood of long journeys that puppies or kittens have to undertake. All of these can contribute to an increased risk of disease and a lack of socialisation for the puppies and kittens.

During a visit to Battersea Cat and Dogs Home, Animal Welfare Minister David Rutley said:

This ban on third party sales of puppies and kittens is part of our commitment to make sure the nation's much-loved pets get the right start in life. I pay tribute to the Lucy's Law campaign and the many stakeholders who have passionately campaigned for this ban. Today's decision builds on our previous action in this area, including banning the sale of puppies under eight weeks and tackling the breeding of dogs with genetic disorders.

I urge anyone who is thinking of buying a puppy, or any pet, at this time of year to pause and think carefully before doing so. Pets become a part of our families and it is a decision that requires careful consideration and planning. It should not be undertaken on a whim or as a surprise. That is why we promote responsible pet ownership in our welfare codes and I urge fellow animal lovers to consider the idea of rehoming a dog from the many wonderful organisations across the country.

Marc Abraham, TV Vet, and founder of PupAid and the Lucy's Law campaign to ban third party puppy and kitten sales, said:

This is a real victory for grass roots campaigners as well as the UK's dogs and cats. On behalf of my phenomenal Lucy's Law team I thank the government, and every animal lover, ethical animal welfare organisation, parliamentarian, and celebrity that's helped make Lucy's Law's ban on third party puppy and kitten sales a reality.

The third party trade supports and sustains both legal and illegal puppy dealing, inappropriate activities suffering exactly the same negative welfare implications; effectively the puppy or kitten (and their mum) is damaged before reaching the licensed or unlicensed seller. Thanks to Lucy's Law's ban on third party dealers, every breeder now becomes accountable and transparent, prospective owners will always see mum interacting with puppy or kitten in the place they were born, and illegally smuggled pups become more difficult to sell, making it the first major step in tackling irresponsible dog and cat breeding in the UK and beyond.

Lucy's Law will help end puppy farming, protect the future health and happiness of dogs like poor little Lucy, as well as encourage prospective pet owners to adopt from their local rescue shelter too.

Battersea's Chief Executive Claire Horton said:

Battersea welcomes today's government confirmation that third party sales of puppies and kittens will be banned. Properly enforced, this will help put an end to dogs being used as breeding machines and kept in shocking conditions.

The days of unscrupulous puppy dealers lining their pockets with no regard for animal welfare must now come to an end. This ban makes breeders properly accountable for the puppies they produce and will now give future owners the reassurance that they can adopt their new dog or cat from a safe and trusted source and ideally from a rescue centre.

Christmas time is often a popular time for puppy and pet purchases but this carries a number of risks and can have tragic consequences for animal welfare when pets are either abandoned or given to rehoming centres to deal with.

The government fully supports those charities who have been calling for responsible dog ownership and for people to consider carefully whether they want to buy a pet for Christmas before doing so. Pets should not be bought as a surprise.

A Dog Trust spokesperson said:

Today's announcement is a positive step for animal welfare and we are also pleased that our recommendation to regulate the rehoming sector is being seriously considered.

We already know of cases where unscrupulous sellers set themselves up as fake breeders, with fake homes and fake puppy mums, while shipping in puppies from puppy farms or overseas. By looking to address this loophole we can also prevent unscrupulous sellers from setting themselves up as a rehoming organisation in order to continue their devious trade. This is one of a package of measures which must be addressed for a ban to be fully effective.

We ask everyone to remember our famous slogan, 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas®,' when deciding to welcome a puppy into their lives.

The government will also continue to work with stakeholders on the issue of whether non-commercial rescue and rehoming centres will require a licence to operate. Over 90% supported this idea in a call for evidence.

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## **Press release: PM statement on Lord Ashdown**



Prime Minister Theresa May said:

It is with great sadness that I have learned of the passing of Lord Ashdown.

Paddy Ashdown served his country with distinction from his career in the Royal Marines and intelligence services, as Member of Parliament for Yeovil, Leader of the Liberal Democrats and later as High Representative of the International Community and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He dedicated his life to public service and he will be sorely missed. My thoughts and condolences are with his family and friends at this difficult time.

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## **Press release: PM statement on Lord Ashdown**

Prime Minister Theresa May statement following the passing of Lord Ashdown.

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## News story: Defence Secretary reaffirms support to Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson reaffirmed the United Kingdom's commitment to working closely with Ukraine in the face of shared threats when he met Ukrainian Defence Minister Stepan Poltorak on a visit to Odesa.

Mr Williamson visited Royal Navy vessel HMS ECHO, whose planned deployment to the Black Sea and Ukraine he accelerated. This is a clear demonstration of the UK's unwavering support both to Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and freedom of navigation. This followed the latest in a pattern of Russian hostile acts, the illegal seizure of Ukrainian vessels and 24 servicemen by Russia last month.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The UK is a steadfast partner to Ukraine as it faces continued illegal acts of aggression against its sovereignty.

HMS Echo's deployment is a further demonstration of our resolute support and commitment to cooperate with the Ukrainian military.

While in Odesa the Defence Secretary also gained an insight into the personal cost Russia's actions have wreaked on the people of Ukraine when he met with families of the detained servicemen.

He reaffirmed that the UK stood shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the international community in calling for their immediate release.

In conversations with Mr Poltorak the Defence Secretary discussed the progress being made on the UK's military training mission to Ukraine Operation Orbital, which he announced would be extended until 2020 on his last visit in September.

Further to the deployment of HMS Echo – whose passage through the Black Sea was notified to regional authorities through the Montreux Convention – the UK will also be offering support and mentoring to the Ukrainian Navy and deploying training teams made up from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the Army in January and March 2019.

The UK and Ukrainian Armed Forces will also gain further opportunities to develop capability and share expertise by committing to bilateral exercises next year.

Since the start of 2015, British personnel have trained over 9,500 of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.