

Campaign! Make an IMPACT

Campaign Grid

The campaign for a national
lifeboat rescue service
around the coast of Britain

Steps to success	Key questions	Evidence
1. What was the campaign about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the problem that was being addressed? • Which communities did it involve? 	<p>In the 1700–1800s (before the invention of motor vehicles, planes and trains) the seas around Britain were used by all types of vessels for transport, fishing, naval defence and leisure. While trying to earn a living from the sea, many of these vessels were shipwrecked around the coast, often driven ashore by the frequent onshore gales, by mistakes made by the Captain or crew and/or because the vessels were in poor condition.</p> <p>At the time there was no countrywide provision or organisation that coordinated the rescues and many people's lives were lost at sea, often leaving their dependants poverty-stricken.</p> <p>Evidence to support this can be found in the following historical sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 1: Shipwreck! • Source 2: HMS <i>Racehorse</i>
2. What was the goal of the campaign?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the community improved as a result of the campaign? • What was the vision for a 'better tomorrow'? • Who ran the campaign? 	<p>The late 18th century was a busy time for shipping around the coast of Britain. Shipwrecks occurred and often thousands of onlookers watched helplessly as they broke up, unable to save the crews.</p> <p>The fatalistic view that shipwrecks were caused by the hand of God was replaced by an attitude of saving life at all costs. Greater value was placed on people's lives and the idea of having special boats stationed at various points on the coast, with a skilled crew who could go to the rescue if a ship got into distress, dates from this time.</p> <p>Appalled at the number of shipwrecks and loss of life he saw from his home on the Isle of Man, Sir William Hillary, a retired soldier, introduced the idea of a national lifeboat service, which would dramatically reduce the danger of sea travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 3: Early lifeboat stations • Source 4: How to solve the problem of shipwreck • Source 5: Lukin's 'unimmervible' boat • Source 6: The <i>Original</i> lifeboat • Source 7: Captain Manby's lifesaving apparatus

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<p>3. How did the campaigners become experts on the issue?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information and statistics were available to support their position? • How did they learn about both sides of the issue? 	<p>After witnessing first-hand the destruction brought by shipwreck, campaigners were moved to action to introduce the first lifeboats and develop a nationally coordinated lifeboat institution. They were also inspired by the initial inventions and efforts for saving lives at sea. By collecting and publishing eye-witness accounts, as well as gathering facts about loss of life and property to shipwreck, campaigners gained further support for their point of view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 8: HMS <i>Vigilant</i> • Source 9: Appeal to the British Nation
<p>4. Was there a resource pool?</p> <p>Who were their allies?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills and talents did they have? • Who did they know that could help? 	<p>Sir William Hillary gained support for the victims of shipwreck from his local community, the Isle of Man press and officials, and to some extent the British Admiralty. Around Britain, pioneering local lifeboat organisations had already sprung into existence, with more coordinated countywide organisations inspired by Sir William Hillary's Appeal pamphlet – <i>An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of Forming a National Institution for the Preservation of Lives and Property From Shipwreck</i>. Hillary's campaign was also supported by Trinity House, Lloyd's (the marine insurer) and the Royal Humane Society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 10: Organisations supporting the cause of saving lives at sea • Source 11: Newspapers praise appeal • Source 12: Establishment of the Norfolk Association for Saving the Lives of Shipwrecked Mariners
<p>5. Who were the campaigners' opponents and who stood in their way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who were their opponents and why? • What other issues may have been a problem for them? 	<p>Many people at the time believed that it was up to the individual to take care of themselves, believing that people who chose to travel at sea knew the risks and should accept their fate. Some people even stood to gain from shipwreck through salvage. Even those organisations that acknowledged a sense of duty to help fellow human beings did not want the burden of creating a national lifeboat service that would need a lot of money to set up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 13: Response to Sir William Hillary's letter to the Admiralty

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6. How did they plan for success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there a leader or a campaign champion? Did they look organised? Was there a plan? 	<p>Thomas Wilson, MP for London, joined the campaign and recommended that, in the absence of support from the Government and Admiralty, Sir William Hillary should seek funding for the national lifeboat service from wealthy philanthropists. He stirred up support in his constituency and in parliamentary circles, while another campaigner, George Hibbert, Chairman of the West Indies Merchants Company, sought support from shipping businesses.</p> <p>Both worked to raise the profile of the campaign by convincing influential people to attend their second meeting in London on 4 March 1824. At this meeting, the National Society for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck (today's RNLI) was formed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 14: Letters from Sir William Hillary to The King and the Admiralty Source 15: National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck is officially formed Source 16: Consultation with other maritime organisations
7. What campaign tactics and media did they use to get their message across?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which different media were used to communicate the campaign message? 	<p>Supporters of the campaign were numerous. They included royalty, politicians, shipping companies and the press, as well as fishing communities throughout the country. Pledges of £25,000 were made at the first meeting. Lifeboats were needed all around the coast and this meant that the message about the campaign needed to be communicated in a variety of different forms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 17: Sir William Hillary's Gold Medal Source 18: The wreck of the <i>St George</i> Source 19: Praise for Sir William's rescue Source 20: <i>Rising Sun</i> supports fledgling organisation Source 21: Sir William Hillary receives support from the King of Denmark