NEWS RELEASE

Wolseley helps save lives at sea

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Wolseley UK, the UK's largest distributor of plumbing and heating products and a major supplier of building materials, has formally presented a new lifeboat to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity which provides a 24-hour lifesaving service around the UK and Northern Ireland.

Sunderland was only the second lifeboat station in the north of England to receive an Atlantic 85 class lifeboat, which is one of the lifesaving charity's most technologically advanced vessels.

The lifeboat, named Wolseley, went on service in May and has already launched 24 times, rescuing 46 people.

Wolseley raised £125,000 to fund the Atlantic 85 by encouraging its 15,000 UK employees, its customers and suppliers to support the RNLI with a number of fundraising events.

Wolseley director Paul Gordon, who named the lifeboat at a formal ceremony at Sunderland Marina on 8 September, said: "As a long-established British company, Wolseley is delighted to have been able to sponsor a new RNLI lifeboat to be based at Sunderland. Thanks are due to our staff, customers and suppliers, who have contributed generously to this lifeboat, which will be saving lives for many years to come."

The Atlantic 85 is the first RNLI inshore lifeboat to have radar, which means it can operate more effectively in

reduced visibility. It is also faster and bigger than its predecessor, with room for a fourth crew member as well as more space for casualties.

Sunderland RNLI senior helmsman Paul Nicholson said Wolseley has already proved her worth on the North East coast.

He added: “We have already carried out twenty-four rescues in the lifeboat and the increased speed together with the radar and VHF direction-finding equipment have definitely made a difference to our operational effectiveness. On behalf of everyone at Sunderland lifeboat station I would like to thank Wolseley for their wonderful fundraising efforts which have resulted in the donation of our very special new lifeboat.”