

the seafarers' charity

Rolling Updates: Q1/2023

The Seafarers' Charity has forged strong links with organisations and individuals who care and are working towards the same goal as us, improving the lives of seafarers.

Here is an update on the charity's recent activity for our amazing network of advocates out there in their local communities supporting seafarers.

April 2023

Grants: Our Impact Committee met on 28 March and already, so far this year, our trustees have agreed to award 23 grants totalling £875k to support the safety and welfare of seafarers and their families. It is anticipated that in 2023 we will, once again, release at least £2m from our reserves to support maritime welfare services for seafarers in the UK and internationally.

Women at Sea: In partnership, with the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA), a webinar was held for maritime welfare charities to discuss Supporting the Welfare of Women at Sea. The webinar was chaired by Sara Baade, the Chair of ICMA and included a presentation on new research on [The Port-based Welfare Needs of Women Seafarers](#). Participants also heard from Deborah Layde, Chief Executive at The Seafarers' Charity, and ship visitors from Mission to Seafarers at the Port of London, Stella Maris in Hamburg, and the Ministry to Seafarers at the Port of Montreal about their experience of supporting women seafarers.

Some of the issues discussed by the maritime charities included the need for greater awareness about women's welfare needs, sexual violence onboard, increased recruitment of female port welfare staff, and the basic, fundamental need for women to be able to purchase and dispose of sanitary products at port welfare facilities. A recording of the 80 minute webinar is available on The Seafarers' Charity's YouTube page - [Webinar on Supporting the Welfare of Women at Sea - YouTube](#)

Sexual Violence at Sea: The research report and webinar included horrific evidence of women's fear of, and experience of, sexual violence and harassment at sea. To support seafarers experiencing sexual violence, abuse, bullying and harassment, The Seafarers' Charity funds ISWAN's [Seafarer Help](#) multilingual helpline, [Safer Waves](#) who provide an email based emotional support service and [Befriends Worldwide](#) who support seafarers considering suicide. In addition, we have recently announced two years funding for [Salute Her](#) to enable them to expand their women-centric trauma therapy services, from the military, to include women working at sea – both in the merchant service and in commercial fishing. This new service can be accessed in the UK and internationally. More information: [Supporting Women Seafarers to Overcome Sexual Violence at Sea | The Seafarers' Charity \(theseafarerscharity.org\)](#) and [Sexual Violence at Sea | The Seafarers' Charity \(theseafarerscharity.org\)](#)

Fishing Remembrance Day: We are expecting an announcement from the Maritime Minister about a new National Fishing Remembrance Day which will take place for the first time on **Sunday 6th August**. There are plans to encourage community events and services of remembrance at local memorials, which will be led by Fishermen's Mission and Stella Maris. To support public engagement on the day, The Seafarers' Charity is working with the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich to develop a new national database and map of fishing memorials around the UK.

Migrant fishing crew and transit visas An important measure within Section 43 of the Nationality and Borders Act came into force on 12 April 2023. It will close a legal loophole and grey area relating to enforcement activity which previously existed. It is now clear within the law, and legally enforceable, that fishing vessels which employ migrant crew on transit visas should not be operating within UK territorial waters. New guidance will soon be published by Seafish to help fishing businesses navigate the Skilled Worker Visa application process. [New Guidance on Skilled Worker Visas](#)

Maritime Safety Week is expected to take place during the week commencing **3rd July**. As we did in 2022, The Seafarers' Charity will be delivering a Muster Safety Drill competition. All sizes and types of vessels are welcome to take part in the competition and win some great prizes. The aim is for crew to practice the muster safety drill with the aim of improving their time and thereby increase their preparedness for emergencies. More information will be available soon. Meantime, take a look at some of the photos and videos from last year's winners - [The Seafarers' Charity Announces Maritime Safety Week Competition Winners | The Seafarers' Charity \(theseafarerscharity.org\)](#)

Annual Meeting: The date for the charity's Annual Meeting is **28th June**. It will be held at Watermen's Hall which, since 1780, has been at St Mary at Hill, London, EC3. If you would like to attend please email: contact@theseafarerscharity.org

March 2023

80th Anniversary of Battle of the Atlantic: Paul Butterworth, our Chair, was invited by the Merchant Navy Association to provide a foreword, on behalf of the Merchant Navy sector, for inclusion in the official programme of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic commemorations. The event will take place between **26-28 May 2023**.

EDI: The Seafarers' Charity were pleased to be one of three finalists in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Champion at the Maritime UK awards in Hull. We have also been shortlisted for Safety4Sea's Crew Welfare Diversity and Inclusion Award for focusing on the welfare needs of women on cargo ships. Our EDI journey began three years ago and continues every day under the leadership of our staff-led Diversity Group. Read more about our work on EDI - [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) | The Seafarers' Charity \(theseafarerscharity.org\)](#)

Women Seafarers: The Seafarers' Charity published [new research](#) about The Port Based Welfare Needs of Women Seafarers – specifically focused on women working on male dominated cargo ships. The research, funded by The Seafarers' Charity and led by the Seafarers International Research Centre at Cardiff University revealed

harrowing stories about women's feelings of fear and isolation within a male dominated work environment.

Harbour Master Sailing Challenge: This year Mark Ashley-Miller will complete his 8,000 nautical mile challenge to visit every harbour master in the UK by circumnavigating Ireland and visiting the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Already Mark and his 34ft Nauticat, Good Dog, have sailed clockwise around the UK and visited over 250 ports and harbours to raise nearly £20,000 to support seafarers' welfare. Follow Mark's journey - [Mark Ashley Miller \(@harbourmastersailingchallenge\) | Instagram](#)

February 2023

Ukraine: The Seafarers' Charity was a signatory to the International Chamber of Shipping's open letter to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) which called for the 331 seafarers, stuck in Black Sea & Sea of Azov since Ukraine war began, to be released and got home. The letter has been acknowledged by the Secretary General of the IMO. Read the letter [here](#).

North East dead shellfish: The Seafarers' Charity awarded an additional £10,000 to Fishermen's Mission to support hardship grants for fishers in the North East whose livelihood has been impacted by the ongoing incidence of dead crustaceans since September 2021. This is in addition to a £5,000 grant first awarded in February 2022.

January 2023

Fishing safety: The Seafarers' Charity launched a new fishing safety project in Northern Ireland which will see an extension of the Fishing First Safety Management System roll out for fishing vessels in Northern Ireland. Expanding on our Fishing First project in South West England, this project aims to develop a new and transparent grievance reporting system for crew on vessels as part of the project. Read more: [Northern Ireland Set to Improve Fishing Safety & Supply Chain Transparency | The Seafarers' Charity \(theseafarerscharity.org\)](#)