



# **Seaview**

## An estimated 400,000 seafarers remain stranded at sea

The seafaring community continue to need urgent help to get through the COVID-19 crisis.

→ Page 5

#### Also in this issue:

#### **Our impact in 2020**

Seafarers UK awarded over 80 grants worth more than £3m to support seafarers in need and their families.



#### **Fundraising Heroes**

Dedicated supporters get creative with their fundraising activities during the pandemic.



www.seafarers.uk



# A warm welcome

from Catherine Spencer, Chief Executive Officer, Seafarers UK

Writing at the end of 2020, it has been an exceptionally tough year for seafarers, and hard for everyone. We sincerely hope that you have managed to endure the restrictions of COVID-19 without too much difficulty, and that you and your family have remained well.

Our work across the maritime sector has supported thousands of seafarers affected by the coronavirus pandemic - whether they have been trapped at sea, or unable to access work due to being stuck ashore. It has often felt that the impact of COVID-19 on seafarers has been forgotten by the public and the media – remarkable given that we are so dependent on their vital role. I often wonder how many people know that over 90% of what we purchase is imported by sea? This is why your support and understanding of the challenges of a seafaring life have been crucial in enabling us to carry on supporting seafarers who run into difficulty.

Your donations to our COVID-19 Emergency Appeal, which raised over £70,000 to-date, along with the £2 million released by our trustees, enabled us to support spectacular work, such as the digital chaplaincy project, enabling port chaplains and ship visitors to connect to seafarers and their families across the globe (read more about this on page 4). We also supported vital advice lines in the UK through Seafarers' Advice and Information Line and overseas, through International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network, providing immediate support for seafarers struggling with any issue. I am pleased to say that, on 1 December 2020, we launched The UK Maritime Anchor Fund to help UK merchant seafarers facing a range of challenges such as debts and relationships issues (read more about the Fund on page 6).

As well as concentrating our efforts in providing support for seafarers during the pandemic, we worked on our new strategy to ensure we do more to address the core issues that cause seafarers to fall into difficulty. Our new strategy will have five strategic aims:

- Enhanced Financial Resilience This includes information and advice lines, hardship and welfare grants, as well as access to business support.
- Increased Social Justice
   This includes access to services and
   outreach programmes, as well as
   diversity, inclusivity and human rights.
- Improved Health & Wellbeing This includes mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as accommodation and care homes, and initiatives to support relationships and tackle loneliness.

- Raised Safety Standards & Practices This includes supporting better safety practices, risk reduction and an enhanced safety culture.
- Better Working Lives at Sea This includes port-based welfare services such as seafarer centres, port welfare committees and ship visiting. It also includes support for ethical and sustainable supply chains.

As part of our work to improve Seafarers UK, we are also evolving to an adjusted name. We are sure it will include 'seafarers' and will uphold our Royal Charter, but we'd like to create a name that encourages better immediate identification of our charitable work, which appeals to younger generations and new donors, as well as our much-valued life-long supporters.

Just as all ships need a good coat of paint every few years, so do organisations to ensure that they remain suitable for purpose. The change will be an evolution, as opposed to a revolution, and will support us to support seafarers. Watch this space for an update on the Seafarers UK's new look soon.

Finally, Seafarers UK is small but mighty. I would like to thank our very small crew for continuing to work with dedication and enthusiasm throughout the pandemic. It has been a tough, but hugely rewarding year, and at the back of our minds are the thousands of seafarers still trapped at sea.



An audio version of Seaview is available. Please email **contact@seafarers.uk** or call **020 7932 0000** to request your copy.



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# The support you made possible

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, back in April 2020, we were able to launch an unprecedented Emergency Fund of £2 million, to support seafarers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants from the Emergency Fund were awarded immediately to charity partners providing essential advice and support for individual seafarers affected by the widespread coronavirus impacts.

Throughout the remainder of 2020, we dealt with 50% more funding applications than in previous years, and Seafarers UK trustees met three times more than in any usual year, to consider almost 100 grant applications.

# In 2020, your donations helped us to:



Support more than 50 organisations

£2m

Release £2m in funding to support seafarers affected by COVID-19



Award over 80 grants

£3m

Award over £3m in total funding Ship's Chef in Tilbury Port, Londor



#### Support for seafarers affected by COVID-19

## **Projects supported by our funding**

# Digital support for seafarers and their families

£38,000 was awarded to Mission to Seafarers to help ship-visiting teams, who are unable to provide face-to-face chaplaincy services due to the coronavirus restrictions, to continue supporting seafarers and their families by transitioning to virtual services.

The digital chaplaincy project, 'Chat to a Chaplain', is led by Mission to Seafarers in partnership with the International Christian Maritime Association, and enables ship visitors and port chaplains to connect to seafarers and their families across the globe 24/7, and offer access to services such as:

- One-to-one counselling
- Signposting on issues related to employment, extension of contracts and repatriation during the pandemic
- Support for seafaring families
- Spiritual services
- Referral to a chaplain in the local area who may be able to arrange a gangway visit

The Chat to a Chaplain service, launched on 20 April 2020, has achieved over 536 meaningful interactions with users and responded to 213 requests for assistance.

# Supporting local fishing communities through the COVID-19 pandemic

£3,400 was awarded to Seafood Cornwall Training Ltd to fund the provision of free meals to those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the fishing village of Newlyn, Cornwall.

The healthy and ready-to-eat meals, which include locally sourced fish, have been helping those who would otherwise not qualify for assistance from any other agency, such as: elderly residents, those who suffered from domestic violence, those who struggle with their mental and physical health, children who missed out on free school meals during school closures, retired and injured fishers, as well as active fishers who have been unable to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the provision of fish-based meals, the project has been able to support the local fish market as well as a cross-section of people in the community, including a 14-year-old boy who has been losing weight due to anxiety brought on by the coronavirus lockdowns. The free meals have gone a long way to helping him to cope with the pandemic.

## Supporting seafarers stranded in ports



£35,000 was awarded to Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest to support the work of the Seafarers Centre in Tilbury Port, which assisted 1,600 seafarers stranded on cruise ships as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Indonesian Deck Officer, Adika, and 600 shipmates were trapped on their ship at Tilbury Docks by

COVID-19. They had been forbidden to disembark or set sail again by the UK authorities after a six-month stint at sea and were forced to endure further six months locked down on-board. Many were made redundant and everyone had problems securing their wages.

For father-of-one, Adika, a seafarer for 14 years, this was a particularly stressful time as he was left entirely without funds and could not continue to send money home to his family. Even worse, he was unable to let his wife know why the money she relied on so much had stopped – he could not pay his phone bill and the crew's employer had cut off all company devices and on-board Internet access.

The Tilbury Seafarers Centre became 'lifesavers' for this crew, providing essential supplies such as soaps and razors, as well as SIM cards and handheld Internet units (Mi-Fi devices), allowing everyone on-board to speak to their loved ones.

Adika said: 'Being able to communicate with our families, reassure them we were safe and find out how they were, was incredible. The Tilbury Seafarers Centre became an irreplaceable bridge between us and the outside world.'

## **The COVID-19 crisis continues**

#### Can you help seafarers connect with their families?

2020 was a very difficult and challenging year for many of us, but the impact of the pandemic has hit the seafaring community especially hard. As we start the new year and additional lockdowns, the crisis is far from over.

Hundreds of thousands of seafarers continue to be thousands of miles from home. Many seafarers working on merchant ships have now been stuck at sea or in ports for more than 12 months. They're unable to get home due to travel restrictions, trapped on-board due to bans on shore-leave, or stranded because crew change-overs simply haven't been possible. They feel like prisoners. It is estimated that 400,000 seafarers are stranded at sea globally.

### The situation has become increasingly desperate

In addition to the isolation and uncertainty they feel, many stranded seafarers haven't been paid for months because their fixed-term contracts have expired.

We have heard from seafarers who have been abandoned in foreign ports, without money or food – and feeling desperately anxious because they can't send money home to feed their families.

This cruel and unfair situation has had a devastating impact on many seafarers' mental wellbeing. Seafarers are struggling with money worries, loneliness, anxiety and depression – at a time when they're also extremely concerned about their loved ones back at home.

#### How your gift can help

Staying in touch with family and friends is one of the most important things for a seafarer far from home. Your gift to Seafarers UK can help fund Mi-Fi units which provide free Internet access for ships visiting UK ports, providing a much-needed lifeline for many seafarers wanting to connect with their families.

It costs £336 a year to obtain one Mi-Fi unit, which can then be supplied to multiple ships visiting UK ports. Most importantly, it could be the closest thing many seafarers have gotten to their family in recent months. We don't receive any government funding, so reaching out to seafarers stranded at sea is only possible thanks to the continued support of people like you. The seafaring community need your support more than ever to help them through this crisis. Whatever help you can give will be truly appreciated.

A seafaring family connecting via a video call

after many months of separation

#### 0

'I've been at sea for 13 months and miss my family. I have two daughters and a baby, who I haven't seen yet, only photos.' Minh





#### Please help seafarers connect with their families

Please return your completed form to: Seafarers UK 8 Hatherley Street LONDON SW1P 2QT

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#### please complete the reverse of this form. Thank you.

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Seafarers UK (King George's Fund for Sailors) is a Registered Charity in England and Wales, No. 226446, incorporated under Royal Charter. Registered in Scotland SC038191. To spread the cost of your donation and help us to save on administration costs, you can set up a regular donation by Direct Debit. Regular income also means we can plan our work more effectively and will guarantee our commitment to support those in the maritime community that truly need our help.

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You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your Bank or Building Society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify Seafarers UK.

#### Seafarers UK has launched The UK Maritime Anchor Fund

#### THE UK MARITIME

Seafarers UK has created the UK Maritime Anchor Fund with key delivery partner charities to provide support for seafarers experiencing hardship

due to COVID-19. Up to £200K has been allocated from Seafarers UK's COVID-19 Emergency Fund to support UK merchant seafarers through the new UK Fund.

The Fund is open to any working age UK national seafarer experiencing hardship due to financial problems caused by COVID-19, regardless of length of service or rank. Grants are available to cover a significant reduction in income, top-up of Universal Credit and payment of priority debts relating to mortgage or rent, as well as confidential advice on financial matters, relationship counselling, and mental health support.

Seafarers UK's Chief Executive Officer, Catherine Spencer, said: 'We're pleased to offer help to UK seafarers through the UK Maritime Anchor Fund and encourage UK seafarers to call Seafarers' Advice and Information Line (SAIL) to discuss how the Fund can help. This new Fund is a great illustration of how our new strategy will get to the heart of issues to provide meaningful help for seafarers.' Seafarers UK has collaborated widely to set up the Fund, working with SAIL, Seafarers Hospital Society, Shipwrecked Mariners' Society and Relate, and employed a wide range of methods to reach out to merchant seafarers, including Nautilus International, the RMT Union, Maritime UK and UK Chamber of Shipping and their members, and Seafarers' Support.

Sandra Welch, CEO at Seafarers Hospital Society said: 'We're delighted to be involved in this important initiative. We want merchant seafarers to know that support is out there for them and their families. It's not just about money, this is a holistic approach that addresses their wellbeing as well as their welfare needs.'

UK merchant seafarers needing help should contact SAIL, a Citizens Advice service for seafarers and their families. SAIL supports seafarers by phone, email and face-to-face appointments via Skype and Zoom. SAIL can be contacted by phone on 0800 160 1842 or email advice@sailine.org.uk



of 1,687 vessels. 50% of active fishing vessels in the UK are registered users, including 23% of the UK's under 10 metre fleet.

Robert Greenwood explained: 'The grant awarded by Seafarers UK, will support the incorporation, marketing and core costs for the Safety Folder, enabling a shift from a part-time volunteer endeavour to a more formal structure, including the creation of a Community Interest Company.'

Seafarers UK CEO, Catherine Spencer, commented: 'This grant award is the latest example of how our solutionfocused work in the fishing sector will help raise safety standards and practices for UK fishers. Seafarers UK is getting to the root of problems and working with a range of delivery organisations to improve life for fishers.'

£16,500 to the Safety Folder, a unique<br/>safety aid for professional fishers, to<br/>increase its use by fishing boat owners,<br/>skippers and crew across the UK.of all sizes<br/>maintain r<br/>to Maritim<br/>inspectorsCreated by Safetyers LIK trustee Debotybeen rout

Created by Seafarers UK trustee Robert Greenwood, the Safety Folder is a free online resource that aims to improve

Seafarers UK has awarded a grant of

safety culture on-board fishing vessels of all sizes by making it easier to maintain records and provide evidence to Maritime & Coastguard Agency inspectors that risk assessments have been routinely carried out.

Since its launch in 2012, the Safety Folder has been adopted by owners

To find out more about the Safety Folder, visit www.safetyfolder.co.uk

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# Fishing Without a Safety Net

In October 2020, Seafarers UK launched a new research report 'Fishing Without a Safety Net' at a webinar chaired by the charity's CEO, Catherine Spencer

Authored in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University, the research reveals financial problems experienced by 431 fishers who turned to maritime charities for support when they were unable to earn their income from fishing.

Seafarers UK Director of Impact, Deborah Layde, explained how Seafarers UK is planning to action the report's ten recommendations to create a much-needed financial safety net for fishers, such as: providing access for fishers to a credit union, a training programme to enhance fishers' financial capability, and a 'Share-Fisher Plus' co-operative to provide a single access point to a range of appropriate and affordable financial products.

Self-employed share-fishers lack many benefits and protections that others often take for granted; such as sick pay, paid holiday and auto-enrolled pensions. It is therefore important that fishers can access a range of financial products which can help them to create their own safety net. The report also outlines six policy recommendations for the Government on issues such as tax, pensions and Universal Credit.

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Watch the recording of the webinar and download the 'Fishing Without a Safety Net' report on our website: **www.seafarers.uk/safety-net** 





# mages with thanks to Seafish, www.seafish.org

#### A new home for the Maritime Charities <u>Group</u>



The Maritime Charities Group (MCG) has a new home from January 2021. Many thanks to Seafarers UK for hosting us for several years. Our new home is with a long-standing MCG

member organisation, Nautilus International.

Last year was challenging for everyone, but regular monthly video calls ensured that all members were able to benefit from timely exchange of information and data about the effects of COVID-19 on seafarers and their families, as well as the demands on maritime charity funds to mitigate need.

In 2020, Maritime Charities Group, with members from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and Trinity House, joined forces

with the Marine Society to launch a bursary fund for seafarer training. The fund is aimed at merchant seafarers who are based in the UK and are facing redundancy or loss of employment as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. To learn more about the fund, visit www.marine-society.org/redundancy-fund.

Looking ahead, the MCG will continue to focus on the wider effects of COVID-19 on seafarers and maritime charities. We will be considering how our members can support health initiatives aimed at seafarers and will review the scope and effectiveness of current services. Finally, look out for our bi-annual conference scheduled to take place in October 2021!

Graham Hockley Chairman MCG



To learn more about the Maritime Charities Group, email enquiries@maritimecharitiesgroup.org

#### Fundraising events

## **Fundraising Heroes**

When it comes to events, it's fair to say that 2020 wasn't the year that we were hoping for. Like many charities, we have seen a huge loss in income with the cancellation of all events including the London Marathon and our flagship event, the 24 Peaks Challenge. We have been overwhelmed by the number of dedicated supporters who haven't let the pandemic get in their way by taking on events of their own and raising vital funds to help seafarers who have been stranded due to COVID-19. We wanted to take this opportunity to share some of their amazing stories and to say a massive THANK YOU to every one of our supporters who have taken part in events for Seafarers UK in 2020.

#### A Nautical Approach



With the London Marathon cancelled, 17 of our supporters decided to take to

the streets and earn the 40th race medal in the first ever Virtual London Marathon on a very rainy Sunday, 4 October 2020. One supporter, David Hill (pictured), planned a nautical-themed route from the Shell office in London all the way to his home village of Otford. David stopped at various landmarks along the way, including HQS Wellington, the Merchant Navy Memorial by Tower of London, and the Cutty Sark at Greenwich.

#### Asbjorn's Double Marathon



You will remember reading the story of Maersk's Head of Product for the

UK and Ireland, Asbjorn Kops, lockdown marathon on the original London Marathon date, 26 April 2020, which he completed by running 210 laps of his garden.

Asbjorn also took on the postponed and Virtual London Marathon, which he ran in Copenhagen. Massive thanks to Asbjorn for going above and beyond in raising over £3,000 for Seafarers UK in 2020.

#### 150 loops on deck!



Our amazing supporter, Andrew Ferguson, wasn't going to let the

cancellation of the Bristol 10K stand in the way of him completing the distance. He ran over 150 loops on-board the Maersk Installer's helideck to reach the distance. He said: 'There are many seafarers in a worse situation than me. We are the lucky ones with Wi-Fi on-board to talk to our families at home. It makes the running even more poignant knowing how many seafarers are trapped away from their homes and families.'

#### KGFS Isle of Man Summit Snaefell!



Following the cancellation of the annual Trafalgar Ball, four members of the King George's

Fund for Sailors (KGFS), Isle of Man, embarked on a six-hour trek to the highest point of the Snaefell Mountain, raising an incredible £2,000 for Seafarers UK. Captain Lee Clarke, the honorary secretary of KGFS, said: 'Our fishers have done such an amazing job throughout the pandemic. We wanted to give them recognition.'

#### 100th Harbour Master Mark



We were delighted to hear that Mark Ashley-Miller was able to complete another section of his

challenge to visit all Harbour Masters in the UK, despite the pandemic. Mark managed to travel around Scotland from July to October 2020 and visited his 100th Harbour Master at Wick. As well as this, Mark has raised over £5,000 for Seafarers UK so far. We look forward to seeing him and his boat, Good Dog, back on the water this year!

#### Maersk Peak in 24 Hours



One of our devoted supporters, Maersk, decided that a pandemic wasn't going to stand in

the way of them taking on their own 24 Peaks challenges on the original event weekend, 4–5 July 2020.

The group walked, cycled and ran different distances in 24 hours, covering over 300 miles and raising £6,000 for Seafarers UK. What an incredible effort!

Fundraising events

### **Fundraising events 2021**



#### The Vitality Big Half 25 April 2021

London's most exciting half-marathon, The Vitality Big Half, is planned to return in 2021!

Take on the streets of the capital on 25 April for this unique 13.1-mile challenge,

starting at Tower Bridge and finishing at the iconic Cutty Sark in Greenwich, making this race truly connect to the maritime work of Seafarers UK.

As a member of Team Seafarers UK, you will receive full support and personalised fundraising advice from our team, as well as a branded Seafarers UK running vest.



To register your place at The Vitality Big Half, email **events@seafarers.uk** 



#### The 24/7 Challenge Virtual event

Life at sea can be tough. COVID-19 has resulted in a hidden crisis. It is estimated that 400,000 seafarers are stranded at sea.

Imagine being disconnected from family and friends for 15 months, missing out on key milestones with no end in sight. Imagine the toll that takes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for many months.

Join us in The 24/7 Challenge to show seafarers that they are not alone during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bake 24 cakes in 7 days, swim in the sea for 7 minutes a day for 24 days, run for 24 minutes a day for 7 days – it can be anything relating to the numbers 2,4 and 7.



To take on The 24/7 Challenge for free, visit https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/ The247Challenge or email events@seafarers.uk

# WIN UP TO £25,000

each week and support seafarers in need and their families as you play.

Find out more www.seafarers.uk/our-lottery

# Merchant Navy Day 2020





Crew on NorthLink Ferries on Merchant Navy Day 2020

All participants are listed on Seafarers UK's 'Roll of Honour' at www.merchantnavyfund. uk/merchant-navy-day To view a selection of photographs from Merchant Navy Day 2020, visit https://bit.ly/FlyTheRedEnsign2020

Since 2000, Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September has honoured the brave men and women who kept the UK afloat during both World Wars, and celebrated our dependence on modern-day merchant seafarers who are responsible for more than 90% of the UK's imports.

In 2020, for the sixth year running, Seafarers UK campaigned for the Red Ensign – the UK Merchant Navy's official flag – to be flown on 3rd September on civic buildings and landmark flagpoles to raise awareness of the UK's ongoing dependence on merchant seafarers, and give thanks to past and present seafarers who continued to keep Britain supplied throughout world conflicts, as well as the coronavirus pandemic.

Parish, community, town, city, district, and borough councils were all invited to take part in safe, socially distant and COVID-19 secure environments and, for the first time, were encouraged to Fly the Red Ensign digitally on social media platforms.

Seafarers UK Chief Executive Officer, Catherine Spencer, said: 'Despite the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19, seafarers have been keeping the UK supplied with food, fuel, medicines and other essential goods.

'But despite being recognised by some governments as key workers, seafarers are prevented from disembarking in most ports on global trade routes, which means they are effectively permanently 'quarantined' on-board vessels.

'Hundreds of thousands of seafarers have been compelled to continue working for many months after their contracts were completed, as replacement crews are unable to leave their home countries to start work in ships all around the world.'

## In Memoriam

We'd like to thank the families and friends of those recently deceased, who have chosen to support Seafarers UK in their memory and for thinking of our charity in such a special way.

We would also like to thank those people who have chosen to make a quiet personal remembrance of a friend or relative anonymously. We may not have their names, but we acknowledge them all with honour and respect.

Mr William (Bill) Anderson
Mr Ray Barnett
Mrs Barbara Beard
Mr Reginald Terrance Boyle
Captain Ivan Constance MBE
Mr Malcolm Edwards Snr
Mr Leonard Heal

Lt Roy Coggan Hill RN Hearty Florence Hill WRNS Mr Eric Holmes Mr Dennis Isley Commander M L John RN Commodore Oliver R T Lindsay MN Mr John McNeill

Mr Morgan O'Malley Commander Michael Porter **OBE RNR Rtd** Mr Peter Smith Lt Commander Geoffrey Varley RN Mr Douglas (Doug) Harold Wallis

Donating or fundraising in memory of a loved one is a very special way to celebrate and honour their life while supporting seafarers in need and their families. If you want to find out how you can make a donation online, by post or by phone, or if you would like to set up an online tribute page, please visit our website for more details: www.seafarers.uk/in-memory or contact Carole Hunt on 020 7932 5991, email carole.hunt@seafarers.uk

# Donate in memory of someone special

A donation celebrating the life of a loved one will provide a lifeline of support to seafarers and their families at a time of need.

#### Learn more

www.seafarers.uk/in-memory

Seafarers UK was originally set up in 1917 as King George's Fund for Sailors, with the aim of helping people in the maritime community by providing vital funding to support seafarers in need and their families.

Now operating under the name Seafarers UK, the charity continues this work by giving money to organisations and projects that make a real difference to people's lives, across the Merchant Navy, Fishing Fleets, Royal Navy Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Royal Marines.

#### Seafarers UK 8 Hatherley Street London SW1P 2QT

Telephone Website

020 7932 0000 www.seafarers.uk

Our website has up-to-date information on fundraising events, campaigns, ways to donate, how to apply for grants or get help for seafarers in need.

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Chief Executive Officer Catherine Spencer

To keep up to date with all our fundraising activities and to find out how to get involved, sign up to our regular email newsletter, Seapost. Simply email seafarers@seafarers.uk or visit www.seafarers.uk. If you're already receiving our email newsletter and would like to unsubscribe, please click on the 'unsubscribe' link in the footer of the latest issue received.

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THE WORK OF LIVERPOOL SEAFARERS CENTRE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE URGENT.

CORONAVIRUS HAS LED TO ENORMOUS SUFFERING AND UNCERTAINTY FOR THE WORLD'S 1.5MILLION SEAFARERS.

UP TO 400,000 REMAIN STRANDED UNABLE TO RETURN HOME DUE TO TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS. MANY ARE NOW AT SEA FOR OVER 15 MONTHS, FAR BEYOND THEIR NORMAL 8-11 MONTH CONTRACT PERIOD.

HELP US TO HELP THE THOUSANDS OF SEAFARERS PASSING THROUGH MERSEYSIDE PORTS.

WE ARE AN ECUMENICAL CHARITY AND RELY ON DONATIONS TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO 50,000 SEAFARERS EACH YEAR.



Pictures: Seafarers visiting Liverpool during the pandemic

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