

Welfare Watch



Welcome back to our newsletter!

As we move into May, we hope you all enjoyed the recent bank holiday and had the chance to rest, recharge and enjoy the brighter days that spring brings.

This time of year feels full of momentum, and that energy is reflected in this edition. Across our sector, there is continued commitment, collaboration and innovation focused on supporting seafarers, fishers and their families — and we're pleased to share some of that progress with you here.

In this issue, we highlight the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's backing of Seafarer Support, reinforcing its role as a trusted source of help for serving and retired UK seafarers and their families. We reflect on Southampton's moving service marking the Titanic anniversary, and share details of services being held around the UK for National Fishing Remembrance Day (May 10th).

We also bring you an update from our Merchant Navy Pledge roundtable, where leaders from across the maritime sector came together to shape practical, meaningful outcomes for the industry. With nominations for the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service 2026 closing at the end of this month, we also encourage you to put forward the maritime heroes who deserve recognition.

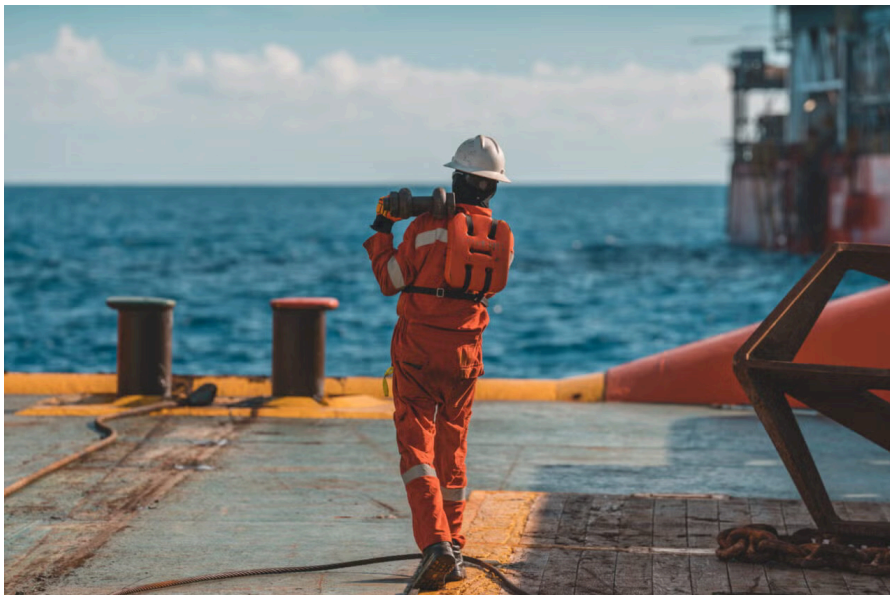
Alongside this, you'll find important guidance on direct marketing from the ICO, an update on MNWB Ambassador Gordon Foot's Arctic challenge in support of QVSR, and a preview of how MNWB and our members will come together under the Seafarer Support banner at Seawork 2026.

As always, thank you for your continued dedication and support. We hope you enjoy this edition of Welfare Watch and the month ahead.

Stuart Rivers
MNWB Chief Executive

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MCA backs support service for seafarers



The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is backing seafarer welfare support through the Merchant Navy Welfare Board.

Seafarer Support, the national helpline for UK serving and retired seafarers and their families in times of need, has been featured in Marine Information Note 734 (M+F).

The MCA has also shared it through push notifications on its guidance app to raise awareness among seafarers and their families.

Adrian Kawaguchi, Project Lead and Human Element Specialist at the MCA, said:

“The maritime community is tightknit and supportive. But it’s not always clear where seafarers and their families can access the expert help that is out there.

“We’re backing the MNWB and its excellent Seafarer Support website as the go-to place for help and advice, strengthening links between seafarers and their families.”

[Find out more](#)

Remembering Titanic heroes



Southampton marked the anniversary of the RMS Titanic tragedy with a service honouring local residents who lost their lives in 1912.

The service took place on Wednesday 15 April at the Titanic Engineers’ Memorial in East Park, paying tribute to the seafarers who died, including 35 engineers and electrical officers.

Organised by the MNWB's Southern Port Welfare Committee alongside the IMarEST Guild of Benevolence, the service was attended by around 50 people, including the Lord Mayor of Southampton and MNWB ambassador Neil Atkinson. Wreaths were laid by members of the maritime community.

Thank you to everyone who attended to pay their respects.

Services being held for fishermen



The Fishermen's Mission is holding services around the UK for National Fishing Remembrance Day on Sunday 10 May.

Fishing remains one of the most dangerous peacetime professions with fishermen facing 100 times the risk of death compared to the average worker.

Each year on the second Sunday of May, fishing communities around the UK hold services to remember those fishermen who have lost their lives in the the UK fishing industry. For coastal communities across the UK, the day provides an opportunity for remembrance and to recognise the ongoing role of the fishing industry in local life.

If you want to learn more or find your local service, click below.

[Find your local service here](#)

Leaders discuss pledge initiative



Leaders from across the maritime sector came together to explore how the Merchant Navy Pledge can deliver real, practical benefits for the industry.

Hosted by MNWB at Trinity House on 5 May, the roundtable sparked constructive discussion and clear ideas on what success for the Pledge should look like. The event was well attended and chaired by former Maritime Minister Robert Courts, who is MNWB's Vice President.

Alongside feedback from the Merchant Navy Pledge surveys, the roundtable has provided valuable insight to help shape improved welfare for seafarers now and in the future.

An open webinar and the official Pledge launch will follow. Organisations interested in supporting the initiative are encouraged to get in touch.

[Read more](#)

Nominations closing soon for medal



Nominations for the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service 2026 are closing soon.

With just over three weeks left, nominate your maritime hero who has served at sea and made an exceptional contribution to the Merchant Navy and the wider maritime community.

Applications close on Sunday, May 31.

Nominate your hero today.

[Nominate now](#)

Charity guidance on direct marketing



The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has published updated guidance on electronic marketing under the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR).

This guidance builds on the short overview in the *Guide to PECR* and is best read after that introductory section, which explains the main rules and key points.

It's designed for people with responsibility for data protection and marketing compliance within organisations and is recommended reading for MNWB member organisations.

To find out more about the ICO's guidance on direct marketing by electronic mail, click below.

[Learn more](#)

MNWB Spotlight: Ambassador's epic challenge for QVSR



MNWB Ambassador Gordon Foot is preparing for an epic eight-day Arctic hiking challenge to raise awareness of seafarer homelessness and support QVSR.

His route, starting August 2nd, will take him between remote mountain huts inside the Arctic Circle, helping generate vital funds for QVSR's 175-bed seafarers' rest home in East London and its centres across the UK.

Gordon is currently at 77% of his £8,000 target. To learn more about Gordon's Nordic challenge — or to donate — click the link below.

[Support Gordon](#)

Member Feature: Visit our members at Seawork 2026

In each newsletter, we will be promoting our members in this section. If you want to share anything you have been up to, please don't hesitate to reach out and we can feature you.



MNWB will be exhibiting at Seawork 2026 under the Seafarer Support banner, alongside nine member organisations, from 9–11 June.

Seawork is a three-day exhibition focused on building networks and developing international relationships, attracting visitors from more than 60 countries.

At Seawork 2026, MNWB's stand will promote Seafarer Support and its vital work supporting serving and retired UK seafarers.

We are in Pod WBa, which is in the Workboat Pavilion.

[Discover more](#)

Seafarer Support is here to help



Are you a serving or
retired UK Seafarer?


0800 121 4765

Seafarer Support is a free confidential telephone and online referral service helping to support serving and former UK seafarers and their families.

If you need advice or help with:

- [→ Accommodation](#)
- [→ Training](#)
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