



## MERCHANT NAVY WELFARE BOARD

### MERCHANT NAVY WELFARE BOARD STRATEGY 2017/18 And review of outcomes in 2016

**"Supporting the provision of quality welfare services for seafarers and their dependants"**

#### INTRODUCTION

**Council:** The Board's trustees are known as its Council. Members are appointed on the basis of the skills and experience required to carry out their responsibilities effectively in the best interest of the charity. Each is appointed for a three-year term of office but can seek reappointment. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected by Council.

**Constituent Member Organisations:** These consist of: Chamber of Shipping – representing the ship owners and ship managers; the two maritime trade unions – Nautilus International and RMT representing the seafarers; and 43 maritime charities. The Board works closely with its Constituent members to monitor, develop and improve welfare provision. There were no changes to Constituent membership in 2015.

#### KEY AIMS & OBJECTIVES

#### STATUS

The key objectives of the Merchant Navy Welfare Board are to:

*Help improve the effectiveness of all those charities caring for merchant seafarers, fishermen and their dependants, irrespective of nationality, religion or ethnic background*

**Fundraising:** The Board is not an active fundraiser and whilst it welcomes contributions and legacies, it is largely reliant on investment income. However, at the suggestion of the Board, in 2012 it went into partnership with Seafarers UK to set up the 'Merchant Navy Fund' using the combined expertise of both charities. The Board provides its unique knowledge and understanding of the Merchant Navy whilst Seafarers UK utilises their fundraising expertise. Whilst the Fund is administered by Seafarers UK, the Board meets half the costs. This initiative is intended to raise money from MN associated personnel and their families specifically to support those with an MN background.

*Ongoing*

**Port levies or contributions to welfare provision:** During 2014 the Board began project work, as lead charity of a consortium of those voluntary societies providing port based welfare, to lobby for and encourage the establishment of additional voluntary port levies or donations around UK ports. This is intended to meet an increasing shortfall in revenue as those charities struggle to meet increased demands against a background of reducing donations, legacies and investment income. This is being seen as a major priority to ensure stability of welfare provision. The Board is ideally placed to lead this project as it now maintains a database of welfare provision in all major and many medium size UK ports. There are a number of successful schemes in place within the UK and these can be used as templates. In 2014 one major (Port of Tyne) and one small port were selected to pilot this project. The scheme on the Tyne began to support the local welfare provision in late 2016. Unfortunately, the chaplaincy service was withdrawn from the smaller port and the scheme has not come to fruition. The intention is that the Board will begin, with the support of its partners and PWCs, to lobby for

financial support for welfare in other ports. Furthermore, the Board has subsequently been reviewing a number of key seafarers' centres, some in ports where levies already exist. These projects are complimentary and will therefore be ongoing for some time. *Ongoing*

**Strive to ensure that all welfare needs are met through the most effective deployment of resources**

**Co-ordination:** The Board endeavours to improve the level of co-ordination amongst Merchant Navy charities and voluntary organisations to identify gaps in provision and ensure that inappropriate duplication is reduced, through a number of sources included in this review. This is a core role. *Ongoing*

**Working Groups and Forums:** Working groups and forums are an important means of bringing together those maritime charities, with common aims, to review requirements and promote recommendations. There are now two working groups in place: *Serving Seafarers* and *Older Seafarers & Families*. The latter includes provision of financial and other support, including accommodation. Each working group normally meets twice yearly. They: share information of common interest; monitor the impact of changes; make recommendations on best practice; consider priorities, particularly in relation to funding arrangements; act as a co-ordinating lobbying force to make representation to maritime funding charities and other appropriate organisations and; prepare and publish biennial reports under the editorship of MNWB. In 2016 both Groups completed reports outlining current provision and anticipated future needs. *Ongoing*

**Evaluation studies:** At the request of its Constituent members, the Board can arrange evaluation, or feasibility studies of various ports and other seafarers' facilities. This is to help promote the most effective and highest standards of welfare services for both serving and retired seafarers within the UK and Gibraltar. In early 2015 three of the societies, jointly responsible for administering several seafarers' centres, asked the Board to review of usage, services, structure and governance. Work commenced in with a survey of working seafarers' current needs and aspirations whilst visiting UK ports. During the course of 2016 the Board reviewed all jointly run centres and produced reports with recommendations. An report looking at the joint governance and management arrangements is in preparation. If requested, the Board will also review other UK centres operated by individual charities. *Ongoing*

**MNWB Data Integration System (DIS) Project and UK Port Survey:** This is a large project to enable societies to review, on a port by port basis, welfare provision against any gaps or duplication. Evaluation of all major ports has been completed and work is underway in all the medium size ports. The information includes port structures, commercial traffic (shipping) and local welfare provision, including centres, chaplaincy, transport and volunteer numbers. Subsequently the Board commissioned Southampton Solent University to place this database on-line, to enable all interested organisations to review the activities in each port. This is now completed and from early 2017 will enable societies to determine what welfare resources are, ideally, needed. Selected personnel will be able to amend the information pertinent to themselves. The database will build on the database to include smaller ports. All content will be updated on an on-going basis utilising the knowledge amongst the PWCs.

The software package is intended to be made available for use in other parts of the world under the IPWP Programme (*see later in this review*), strictly under agreed terms under the Board's copyright. *Ongoing*

**Mutual support for wives and partners of Merchant Navy Seafarers:** The Board secured a grant from the Merchant Navy Fund and in 2014 begun work in partnership with the 'Watch Ashore' (an organisation set up to include the provision of mutual support for wives and partners, whilst their husbands were at sea) to establish a web based social network. This enables members to share problems and experiences and hopefully engender support and friendship for women sharing similar experiences. This has now begun attracting new members and all responsibility has been transferred to the Watch Ashore. *Completed*

**IT Support for Older Seafarers:** The Board secured a grant from the Merchant Navy Fund in 2014 to provide low cost user friendly IT hardware and software for older people with an MN background and no previous experience with IT. A successful trial was completed, in 2016, in three seafarers' homes. The Board is looking at ways in which this can be extended to more isolated persons living outside seafarers' communities. The greatest challenge is finding ways to support new users. *Ongoing*

**Facilitate the work of Constituent organisations through the provision of grants and specialist support services**

**Vehicle Replacement Programme:** The Board in partnership with three other funders: ITF Seafarers Trust, Seafarers UK and Trinity House continues to fund and manage the port based vehicle replacement programme. The Board secured sufficient funds for 2016, allowing replacement of all vehicles after 5 years. All recipient charities are required to agree a Memorandum of Understanding. Subject to adequate funding from the other partners, the project will continue in 2017. It is hoped that there will be an opportunity to trial at least one electric EPV in 2017. Whilst these will not be suitable in all environments, they will almost certainly reduce running costs where they are usable. Unfortunately, there are no electric minibuses currently available. *Ongoing subject to annual reviews*

**Central Register of Grants to Individuals:** The AlmReg database is maintained on behalf of those Constituent members making regular and one-off grants to individuals, meeting the requirements of the Data Protection regulations. This includes information on all those who are in receipt of regular grants, have received a 'one-off' grant, are currently seeking assistance, or ultimately have been refused. The database provides access to statistical and demographic information to allow all interested organisations to better plan for future demand and also can be used to identify duplication. *Ongoing & updated*

**Training:** The Board provides and arranges the following training courses, subject to demand, for the benefit of its Constituent organisations and PWC members:

- **Bereavement Awareness:** No course was held in 2015 due to the retirement of the trainer . It is hoped the Mental Health course trainer will take this course on for us in 2016.
- **Caseworking:** SSAFA Forces Help has kindly opened its own courses, in various locations, to MN and Fishers welfare workers.
- **Health & Safety**
- **Lone Working**
- **Managing Aggression & Violence**
- **Managing Volunteers**
- **Mental Health Awareness**
- **Understanding the Merchant Navy:** This will be made available on request from late 2017
- **Substance Abuse Awareness**
- **Ship Welfare Visitor:** The Board is to provide an on-line training package that will be supplemented by face to face training. *Ongoing with reviews*

In 2016 the Board funded and worked in partnership with the North American Maritime Ministries Association (NAMMA) to transfer the contents of the Ship Welfare Visitor Course to an on-line training package. This was successfully trialled in the latter part of the year and will be launched in early 2017. The intention is to overcome the difficulties of providing sufficient courses in numerous locations and will also negate delays for personnel awaiting a course. The Board has agreed that this can be released to other partners globally. Each applicant, outside the UK and Gibraltar, will need to be approved by an ICMA member or ISWAN. The Board will retain a register of all those who have successfully completed the course and issue an identity card. It will charge a small administration fee to cover the costs. *New and ongoing*

The Board remains open to suggestions for other training packages that will be of benefit to its Constituents. *Ongoing*

**Publications.** The Board, on behalf of its Constituents, publishes and distributes the following:

- **'Remembering those left behind':** This booklet provides advice for both those seeking to make funeral plans before their death, and for people who are faced with making the arrangements with no plan in place. Further copies will be printed on demand and the booklet will be reviewed regularly. *Ongoing*

- ***‘Arrested and Detained Vessels and Abandoned Seafarers – A Guide to Who Does What’***: In 2014 the Board published this booklet, both in hard copy and on-line. It is intended to be a simple guide explaining the duties of the various authorities when voluntary societies encounter seafarers on arrested, or detained vessels, or who have been abandoned. This will be reviewed regularly and updated when necessary. ***Ongoing***
- ***Port Information Leaflets***: The Board currently publishes (and updates) 33 Port Information Leaflets for seafarers throughout UK ports and Gibraltar. These are welcomed as they focus on seafarers needs, when ashore, in the limited time that most have available. These are also included on the Board’s website. During 2016, no additional leaflets were added, although there were a number of reprints. ***Ongoing***

**Rationalisation of Back Office Services:** The Board is reviewing opportunities for rationalising back office services and potential savings as part of the review of seafarers’ ***Ongoing***

**Provision of Information:**

- The Board maintains a database of Merchant Navy related bodies, such as company and school societies, Merchant Navy Associations, etc. This was intended to be updated in 2016, but was deferred due to other priorities. ***Ongoing and to be updated***
- The Board provides a biennial survey of regular and one-off grants made by Constituent members, examining levels, length of service and conditions imposed etc. on a biennial basis. A new survey was undertaken and the results were published in 2016. ***Ongoing***
- The Board acts as an information provider by circulating updates and information on welfare issues and policies to the maritime sector, through its Constituent members and PWCs. ***Ongoing***
- **Additional Lobbying:** subject to demand, the Board will provide support for Constituents on issues of national policy such as proposed charity legislation from the Charity Commission and liaising with appropriate Government departments and agencies, on behalf of the maritime charities sector, as necessary. ***Ongoing***

**Provision of Grants - The Board currently provides 2 Capital Grant Programmes**

- **Small (Minor) Grants Programme:** This is available for grants of up to £5,000 (up to an agreed overall maximum of £50,000 in any one year) at any time during the year, subject to the approval of its Council. Applications can be made by local organisations, but where applicable they must be supported by their parent organisation. This programme will continue in 2017. ***Ongoing***
- **Larger Grants:** Larger grants towards capital projects and start-up costs for its Constituent members are awarded towards the end of each year.

The total amount awarded in grants in 2016 was £233,016 (2015-£250,360) and all were for capital projects. ***Ongoing***

**Provide a dedicated welfare support and referral service for UK seafarers and their dependants**

**Seafarer Support & Maritime Charities Welfare Guide:** The Board maintains a single point of contact for all seafarers – Seafarer Support - on behalf of the Maritime Charities Group. This referral line is for working and retired seafarers and their dependants (or those acting on their behalf), who are seeking advice and help from the maritime charities and elsewhere. It is open to all those with a Merchant Navy, Royal Navy and fishing background (and the dependants of each), although the largest

number of enquiries are from the Merchant Navy and their families. The ‘Maritime Charities Welfare Guide’ is also part of the interactive Seafarer Support website. This guide enables any person seeking assistance to identify the maritime charity, or charities, best able to help. It also provides a definitive guide to all maritime charities. The service is part funded by the Board and supported by grants from Seafarers UK, Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity and Trinity House. In 2016 the Board printed and distributed a number of hard copies. *Ongoing*

**Caseworker Home Visits:** The Board arranges for, and funds the costs of MNWB and SSAFA trained volunteers to carry out caseworking, via home visits for both new applicants and reviews of annuitants, on behalf of those nautical charities responsible for making financial grants to individuals. In addition the Board funds some of the cost of visits for the Shipwrecked Mariners’ Society, which continues to make its own arrangements for home visits. The Board pays £30 per case to cover all home visits undertaken by SSAFA, which is increased when exceptional travel is needed. This provision also enables appropriate charities to review their existing annuitants. The Board, through its Working Group, continues to review caseworking models to identify any gaps in the quality of provision. The Board has set aside funds to allow visits by trained caseworkers including a grant to Shipwrecked Mariners to assist with covering their costs. *Ongoing*

### Manage and support Port Welfare Committees to develop local welfare services

**Port Welfare Committees (PWC):** The Board administers 15 PWCs in the UK. In October 2016 the Gibraltar PWC was renamed the Gibraltar Seafarers’ Welfare Board (GSWB), which properly recognises the Crown Colony’s role as a maritime state. This remains under the administration of the MNWB. Membership for all PWCs is taken from local organisations with a direct or indirect role in seafarers’ welfare provision. Each committee (and Board) meets three times annually, one of which includes an AGM, and all are supported and managed by members of staff who attend each meeting. A Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected by the members at the AGM. The PWCs role is to review the provision of seafarers’ welfare locally, share expertise and make recommendations for changes and improvements. *Ongoing*

The Board ensures that membership of its 15 PWCs and GSWB is, where possible, representative of organisations concerned with issues of seafarers’ welfare within the designated geographical area. These assist voluntary societies and others to ensure that seafarers’ welfare services are deployed in the most effective manner within their area. In 2015 there were 48 general meetings and 16 AGMs in the UK and Gibraltar (as per 2015) and the same number are planned for 2017. Issues and ideas, that have a wider impact, are shared both between all the PWCs and when appropriate, the Council. *Ongoing*

### **Committees are encouraged to:**

- PWC and SWB members have a unique local knowledge and therefore are asked to comment on appropriate local grant applications (to all maritime funding charities). Subsequently they should monitor the impact of these capital projects. Information is disseminated among appropriate members of the MCG. *Ongoing*
- Evaluate the need for port welfare services and centres. *Ongoing*
- Endeavour to facilitate better interface with professional and trade organisations (such as port users) and port authorities. *Ongoing*
- Encourage the establishment of voluntary port levy schemes, where applicable, to assist in support costs on behalf of the local voluntary societies. *Ongoing*

### **Consideration to extending the network**

At the request of Constituent members, the Board reviewed the need for a PWC in the Channel Islands (currently covered by the Southern PWC) and the Isle of Man (currently covered by the North West PWC). There is currently no evidence of demand, but this can be revisited at any time. *Completed*

**Encourage the establishment of PWCs in Red Ensign Group states:** Consider advising on the establishment of PWCs in UK Protectorates, when requested and provide on-going support if appropriate. The Board has received confirmation that a PWC has been established in Port Stanley, Falklands Islands and has been asked to consider

giving support. A PWC was established in Antigua and Barbuda through the IPWP Project. The Board remains open to further requests for support from other UK Dependencies within the Group. *Ongoing*

**Review the changing needs of seafarers locally:** The PWCs are being encouraged to take a more proactive approach to reviewing the changing needs of seafarers locally and any impact on welfare provision. One PWCs has established a local strategy and others are considering this with the support of the Board. *Ongoing*

**Encourage and enable closer collaboration amongst both Constituent organisations and Port Welfare Committees**

**Conferences for its Constituents and PWCs:** The Board holds a biennial conference of its Constituent and PWCs members. The most recent was held in November 2016 and the next will be arranged in 2018. In 2017 the third biennial meeting exclusively for PWC and GSWB representatives will be held and Chairmen and one member from all 16 will be invited to attend. *Ongoing*

**Maritime Charities Group (MCG)** formerly the Maritime Charities Funding Group (MCFG): The Board is an active subscribing member of the MCG and attended all meetings. It will continue its support in 2017. *Ongoing*

**Represent and raise awareness of seafarers' welfare issues at national level**

**Promotion:** The Board actively continues to promote and raise awareness of the work of the Maritime Charities sectors, both on its own and as part of the Seafarer Support (see below) programme managed on behalf of MCG. In 2015 the Board was represented at The Gathering – a Scottish annual charity fair in Glasgow, during Seafarers' Awareness Week in West Quay Shopping Centre, Southampton (during Seafarers' Awareness Week) and at a Social Workers Convention in York. The Board promotes and profiles the services available through all forms of media both regionally and nationally. It also cascades information through its Constituent members and PWCs. The Board makes available grants of up to £500 for each PWC and GSWB to enable them to promote and raise awareness regionally. This programme will be continued during 2017. *Ongoing*

**In addition the Board will:**

- Monitor the impact and effectiveness of the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention 2006 following the welcome ratification by the governments of the UK and Gibraltar. *Ongoing*
- Maintain membership of appropriate charity umbrella organisations to monitor and input into national policy and when appropriate, general charitable issues. *Ongoing*
- Continue active participation, as a member of the International Seafarers Welfare & Assistance Network (ISWAN). *Ongoing*
- Support agreed campaigns to improve awareness of the maritime sector. *Ongoing*

**Merchant Navy Medal:** The Board, on behalf of the maritime sector, administers the Merchant Navy Medal Fund and its committee. Up to and including 2015 the Merchant Navy Medal was awarded by the industry for acts of courage afloat and meritorious service. The medal was awarded annually and the Board arranged the event. As from the end of 2015 HM The Queen graciously agreed that a new National Honour should be established for the Merchant Navy and the first such awards were presented in 2016. The Board will continue to administer the committee which, by agreement with the Department of Transport, will act in an advisory capacity. The committee will recommend awards to persons from the maritime industry which will include higher Honours and medals for acts of courage. *Ongoing*

**National Memorial Arboretum – Merchant Navy Convoy Grove:** The Board was originally responsible, in 1998, for raising funds to plant a wood in the National Memorial Arboretum to commemorate all those personnel from the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who have sacrificed their lives in conflicts from the beginning of the

20<sup>th</sup> Century. The wood is known as the ‘Merchant Navy Convoy’ representing vessels and more importantly the seafarers lost in World War II. The Board regularly monitors the progress of the growth of the trees and is taking an active interest as the time approaches when the existing site will need to be thinned. **Ongoing**

**Fulfil any additional objects for which MNWB was established**

**Ongoing**

**In addition to core objectives**

***Managing, on behalf of ISWAN, a project to establish National Seafarers’ Welfare Boards and Port Welfare Committees Internationally:*** With effect from September 2014, the Board began managing a pilot project, on behalf of the International Seafarers Welfare & Assistance Network (ISWAN), to assist and mentor national seafarers’ welfare boards and PWCs around the world. This, even as a pilot, was a significant project for which the Board has received external funding. The Board is ideally placed to act in this capacity with its long expertise and because the ILO and others see it as a template for a welfare board with PWCs. The project originally intended to establish up to 5 PWCs or national seafarers’ welfare boards over a period of 18 months, but it achieved establishing ten, notably: Antigua & Barbuda; Australia (Brisbane and Gladstone); Porto Novo (Benin); Canada (Toronto), Tema (Ghana); Mauritius (Port Louis), Rotterdam (Netherlands); South Korea (Busan) and Spain (Barcelona). Subsequently the Board has been commissioned, by ISWAN, to undertake a three-year programme. Funding for this is being provided, in equal parts, by ITF Seafarers Trust, Seafarers UK, TK Foundation and MNWB itself. This is expected to formally begin in 2017 once staff resources are in place (funded by the programme). However, responding to an important opportunity, the Board’s DCE, supported the establishment of a PWC in Savannah, Georgia (USA). The Board has attended a number of overseas conferences to promote the programme. **Ongoing**

**Ends**