



MERCHANT NAVY WELFARE BOARD



**REVIEW OF THE UK PORT WELFARE CONFERENCE
HELD ON 4, 5 & 6 SEPTEMBER 2019
AT THE CHILWORTH MANOR HOTEL, SOUTHAMPTON**



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DAY 1

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

The Chairman formally opened the conference by welcoming delegates to Southampton. He highlighted the UK's developed and advanced seafarers' welfare network, and commended the work of port chaplains, ship welfare visitors, and seafarers' centres in providing vital welfare support to seafarers visiting UK ports. He explained that the conference would focus on the provision of front-line welfare services for seafarers and fishermen, and encouraged delegates to utilise the opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and share best practice.



Presentation One - Seafarers' Welfare - the role of the ILO conventions

(Julie Carlton MBE, Seafarer Safety and Health Manager, Maritime & Coastguard Agency)

Ms Carlton briefed delegates on the current position of the **Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)**, explaining that in August 2019, 93 countries had ratified the Convention; a representation of 91% of the world's



tonnage. Briefing delegates on the current position of the **ILO 188: Work in Fishing Convention**, she reported that 14 countries had ratified the Convention in August 2019, and compliance inspections had commenced. She added that where there was an insufficiently developed infrastructure, progressive implementation was permitted; this included the crew of smaller vessels not requiring a valid medical certificate until 2023. Both Conventions implemented an inspection and certification regime for living and working conditions, outlined requirements regarding documentation for seafarers, and facilitated a formal complaints process. The welfare provisions included under both MLC, 2006 and ILO 188 included hours of work and annual leave, repatriation, crew

accommodation, food and water, medical care, and shipowner liability. In addition, MLC, 2006 included provision for shore leave, protection in case of abandonment, and access to welfare services ashore. Ms Carlton went on to brief delegates on the specific legislation relating to hours of work, work agreements, repatriation, and social security protection. Reporting on enforcement procedures, she noted that under MLC, 2006, the **Paris Memorandum of Understanding (Paris MoU) on Port State Control** would apply. She concluded her presentation by advising that 2018 amendments to MLC, 2006 included protection for seafarers held captive in cases of piracy or armed robbery. She highlighted the following websites for further reading: www.gov.uk/guidance/mlc-2006-titles-1-to-5-regulations-guidance-and-information, www.gov.uk/government/collections/ilo-work-in-fishing-convention.

DAY 2

Presentation Two - Modern Slavery in the Maritime Sector (David Fortey, Regulation Officer, Falmouth Harbour Commissioners)

Mr Fortey commenced his presentation by explaining that modern slavery offences in the maritime industry often included exploitation, human trafficking, or domestic servitude. Common indicators of potential modern slavery cases onboard vessels might include crew unrest, wage disputes, lack of supplies, medical issues, poor conditions, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), or denied access to shore leave. Mr Fortey referenced cases of concern relating to the vessels **Saruna** in Falmouth, **Seccadi**, in Ellesmere Port, **Southern Star** in Chatham, **MV**

Tahsin in Sharpness Dock, **Sea Lady** in Portsmouth, **Donald Duckling** in North Shields, **Malaviya Twenty** in Great Yarmouth, and **Alter Ego** in Falmouth. He advised that when crew had not been paid for more than two months, had not been repatriated, and had not been provided with the basic food requirements to sustain a healthy diet, they were considered to be abandoned seafarers.

Briefing delegates on the actions to be taken when a modern slavery case was suspected, Mr Fortey advised that reassurance should be provided to seafarers, adding that the matter should be discussed in a safe and non-threatening location. As many details as possible should be recorded, such as the date, the name of the vessel, and location. The key points of any discussion or conversation should also be documented, in addition to notes made on the seafarers' general condition, demeanour, and health. The concerns should then be reported to either the police, UK Border Force, MCA, Crimestoppers UK, Project Kraken, or the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700. Mr Fortey highlighted port chaplains and ship welfare visitors' roles as the 'eyes and ears' within the ports and encouraged delegates to report any concerns whatsoever regarding modern slavery.



Advising on the roles of the national agencies, Mr Fortey explained that the police investigated and prosecuted all aspects of modern slavery criminality, and UK Border Force held national responsibility for safeguarding modern slavery victims at the UK border. The National Crime Agency (NCA) held overall responsibility for the investigation of modern slavery within the UK. The Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) investigated organised crime and gang related human trafficking, and the Gangmaster Licencing Abuse Agency (GLAA) investigated and prosecuted cases involving the exploitation of land-based workers. Mr Fortey highlighted the website **Equasis.org** as a valuable tool used to investigate the port state control inspection history of a vessel. He concluded his presentation by encouraging delegates to familiarise the **Modern Slavery Act 2015**, the **Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)**, and the **ILO 188 Work in Fishing Convention**.

Presentation Three - Chinese Seafarers: Understanding their Needs for Port Welfare Support & Services **(Professor Minghua Zhao, Professor Emeritus, Solent University Southampton)**

Professor Zhao began by highlighting the scale of Chinese shipping, noting that China held the second largest merchant fleet by number of vessels, and the largest by volume of ship building. By nationality, China currently had the largest number of registered seafarers: 1.58 million, of which 240,000 were female. She added that 50% were employed by shipping companies, and 50% were freelance or registered with agencies. Professor Zhao outlined the findings of the **Seafarers' Welfare in Chinese Ports Project (SWiC)** which had concluded that Chinese seafarers shared the majority of the essential needs relating to welfare support and services, as required by seafarers of other nationalities. The project had highlighted certain cultural and institutional characteristics displayed by Chinese seafarers which shaped their unique attitudes and behaviours, such as the 'three together rule' whereby to ensure seafarers' safety whilst in port, crew usually went ashore in groups of three. Professor Zhao went on to highlight the roles and responsibilities of the Sailing Political Commissar, who still sailed on many state-owned and Chinese flagged vessels. Professor Zhao concluded her presentation by highlighting suggestions to assist in the provision of welfare support to Chinese seafarers whilst in port. These included the utilisation of local Chinese speakers to act as translators, and providing local information such as Port Information Leaflets, in Chinese.



The CEO introduced guest speakers, Lysanne Wilson, Health Development Manager, Seafarers' Hospital Society, Caitlin Vaughan, Project Manager, ISWAN, and Sandra Welch, Chief Operating Officer, Sailors' Society to talk about the **Developments in seafarers' mental health & wellbeing programmes**.

Presentation Four - Lysanne Wilson, Health Development Manager, Seafarers' Hospital Society

Ms Wilson began by briefing delegates on the objectives of the Seafarers' Hospital Society, which worked to improve the health and wellbeing of UK based seafarers. She explained that the organisation awarded grants, produced self-help guides, assisted with the operation of the **Seafarers' Advice & Information Line (SAIL)**, and managed projects promoting the health and wellbeing of seafarers. She explained that grants were available to individuals to assist with mobility aids, urgent living expenses, priority debts, respite care, funeral costs, or household repairs or adaptations. SAIL provided free, confidential, and impartial advice and information relating to benefits, pensions, employment, and debt. The **Dreadnought Medical Service**, based at Guy's & St Thomas's Hospital, provided priority medical and dental treatment for seafarers, with individuals' travel expenses often funded by Seafarers' Hospital Society. Ms Wilson went on to brief delegates on the **SeaFit Programme**, which was operated in partnership with the Fishermen's Mission and offered a range of free health and wellbeing projects for fishermen and their families. These included free health checks, dental treatment, physiotherapy, and access to mental wellbeing support. Ms Wilson concluded her presentation by briefing delegates on a recent project to fund a Dementia Nurse at Mariners' Park Care Home in Wallasey.



Presentation Five - Caitlin Vaughan, Project Manager, International Seafarers' Welfare & Assistance Network (ISWAN)

Mrs Vaughan briefed delegates on ISWAN's work, explaining that the organisation was an international NGO that actively promoted the welfare of seafarers worldwide. A membership organisation which included ship owners, unions, and welfare organisations, ISWAN worked for effective implementation of **MLC, 2006**, particularly section 4.4 relating to access to port-based welfare provision.



In addition, the organisation managed a wide range of programmes and projects, most of which focused on the health and wellbeing of seafarers. Mrs Vaughan highlighted the factors that often had a negative impact on the mental wellbeing of seafarers, which included lack of shore leave, small crew numbers, separation from family, fatigue, long voyages, and harassment or bullying. Mrs Vaughan briefed delegates on ISWAN's main service, **SeafarerHelp**, a 24-hour, free and confidential helpline for seafarers and their families. The team, who spoke 12 languages, had dealt with 3,500 cases involving 8,700 seafarers in 2018. Mrs Vaughan went on to brief delegates on the range of self-help guides produced by ISWAN, including **Steps to Positive Mental Health**, **Managing Stress and Sleeping Well at Sea**, and **Psychological Wellbeing at Sea**.

The guides were available in six languages and could be downloaded from www.seafarerswelfare.org. Mrs Vaughan concluded her presentation by highlighting ISWAN's 1-day **Mental Health Awareness Training Course**, aimed at management level personnel both ashore and onboard ships.

Presentation Six - Sandra Welch, Chief Operating Officer, Sailors' Society

Mrs Welch commenced her presentation by highlighting a survey conducted by Yale University in 2017/18, which had found that 26% of seafarers felt 'down, depressed, or hopeless', and 45% of those had not sought help or assistance. She noted that suicide accounted for 6% of seafarer deaths, however in contrast, 1% of deaths in the UK in 2017 were recorded as suicide. She highlighted the triggers relating to mental health amongst seafarers as separation from family, financial issues, social isolation, working hours, lack of good quality sleep, tight deadlines, cultural diversity, technology, port migrations, and life at home. She briefed delegates on several case studies, provided by seafarers who had suffered from issues relating to mental health, and the positive support they had received from port chaplains and welfare providers. She then went on to highlight the Sailors'



Society **Wellness at Sea** app, which provided interactive challenges, exercises and recipes, contacts for maritime welfare services, and the ability to monitor daily wellness. Seafarers were able to work through each of the five key areas of Wellness at Sea, which included Social, Emotional, Physical, Intellectual, and Spiritual Wellness. Exercises and recipes assisted seafarers to calculate their BMI and aimed to combat high rates of cardiovascular conditions and mental health problems.

Presentation Seven - Seafarers Emergency Welfare Plan (Aidan Webster, Centre Manager, North Tees Seafarers' Centre)

Mr Webster began by explaining that although all emergencies differed and it was impossible to come up with a one-size fits-all response, the welfare organisations based on the Tees had put together a welfare emergency plan that provided the framework for an effective and efficient response to emergencies. The plan was designed so that it could be modified to suit other ports, and as such it was ready to be distributed for others to use.



He reported that an **Emergency Planning Group** had been established that included key personnel from the welfare organisations operating on the Tees, in addition to representatives from the port and Local Authority. Once a policy statement had been agreed, work on implementing the plan, which included a manual, had begun. He explained that a simple contact list had been circulated to those people who were most likely to inform the group of an emergency that might have an impact upon seafarers. Supplied with the contact list was a list of information that the caller required to enable the emergency response group to react. The individual contacted assumed the tactical role of 'emergency coordinator', whose role it was to mobilise response teams on the ground. Mr Webster explained that it was the role of the emergency coordinator to ensure good and effective communication between all parties, to direct response teams as required, record all expenses, activities and decisions, and assess the risk level of any hazards that operational teams might encounter.

Within the manual was a quick reference guide outlining the main duties of the seafarers' emergency welfare coordinator, in addition to a set of procedural guidelines. The manual also explained the role of the four emergency welfare teams on the Tees; the chaplaincy team, ship visiting team, seafarers' centre team and transport team. Other information sheets in the pack included information on strategic command, which might be required in the event of a major incident, and a section on the importance of effective debriefing sessions, following the emergency. These were beneficial in identifying areas that went well and areas that could be improved. Mr Webster invited delegates to contact him if they wished to receive a copy of the **Emergency Welfare for Seafarers: Policy & Procedures** document.

Presentation Eight - International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) (Dr Jason Zuidema, General Secretary, ICMA)

Dr Zuidema began by briefing delegates on ICMA's vision and mission, explaining that the association unified Christians engaged in services to seafarers, fishers and their families. The Association connected maritime ministries around the world and promoted their co-operation and development, in addition to researching new challenges and opportunities for maritime ministry. Sharing knowledge among its member ministries through publications and educational programmes, it advocated for maritime workers with a unified voice. Dr Zuidema advised that ICMA had been granted consultative status with the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** and was included in the list of the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** Special List of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs.) Citing ecumenism, collaboration, and compassion as ICMA's core values, Dr Zuidema explained that the association worked in partnership with the **North American Maritime Ministry Association**



(**NAMMA**), and held training courses, regional meetings, and conferences. Dr Zuidema highlighted the **Ship Visitor App**, which assisted to support the welfare of seafarers around the globe, and the **Online Ship Welfare Visitor Course**, which had been produced in collaboration with the MNWB. He went on to highlight the provision of further online training, including courses entitled **Vision and Mission of NAMMA**, **ICMA Crisis Preparedness Training**, **Effective Ship Visiting**, and **Organisation and Operation of a Port Welfare Board/Committee (PWC)**, all of which were available via www.maretraining.com. Dr Zuidema concluded his presentation by highlighting a magazine for seafarers' welfare professionals, entitled **MARE**, which was available via <https://marereport.namma.org>.

Workshop: Collaborative Working - Dr Jason Zuidema, General Secretary, International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA)

Dr Zuidema began by outlining a brief history of collaborative working, and providing a background to ICMA and NAMMA's collaborative work with other organisations such as the MNWB and ISWAN. He then encouraged



delegates to consider and identify the continued challenges of collaborative working in the maritime industry. Dr Zuidema highlighted the potential barriers to collaborative working as mission and vision, diaconal and administrative work, restrictions relating to financial or geographical considerations, and restrictions associated with religion, politics, ideology, sacraments or ordination. He emphasised the need to focus on the seafarers, fishers, and their families when encountering any barriers to collaborative working. Outlining potential

models in which to work collaboratively, he noted that unofficial teamwork, the sharing of resources, and amalgamation of operations would assist organisations or individuals to work together. He highlighted participation in local **Port Welfare Committees** as a beneficial way of promoting collaboration. Dr Zuidema concluded the workshop by suggesting ways in which to promote best practice, which included the understanding and respect of the mission and vision of all parties, the production of written agreements to outline co-operation and collaboration, and regular communication with the opportunity to air grievances and resolve potential issues.

DAY 3

Presentation Nine - MNWB Projects Update (Sharon Coveney, MNWB)

Miss Coveney commenced her presentation by briefing delegates on the Board's structure and operation, before providing an update on the **Port Welfare Vehicle Replacement Programme** which had so far provided a total of £1.5 million in vehicle grants. She highlighted **Seafarer Support**, a signposting service managed by the Board, which had so far generated a total of £57,000 in grants. Briefing delegates on the work of the Board's **Port Welfare Committees**, she highlighted the **PWC Promotional Grant Fund**, which provided £500 to each committee per annum to assist with raising awareness, and the **Emergency Fund for Abandoned Seafarers** which assisted to provide social or recreational respite for the crew of arrested or detained vessels. Miss Coveney went on to brief delegates on the success of the **UK Port Mi-Fi Pilot Project**, which supplied 60 portable Mi-Fi units in ports around the UK, each with 50GB of data per month. Miss Coveney went on to highlight the success of the **International Port Welfare Partnership Programme (IPWP Programme)**, advising that 412 expressions of interest had so far been received from 161 ports, in 75 countries, and 27 new PWCs had been established. She concluded her presentation by highlighting the Board's **Training Courses**, noting that in addition to the existing range of courses, new offerings included **Managing Aggression & Violence**, **Drug & Alcohol Awareness**, and **Emotional Resilience**.



Presentation Ten - Demonstration of Seafarers' Welfare Board Software (Peter Tomlin MBE MNWB)

Peter Tomlin provided delegates with a live demonstration of the IPWP Seafarers' Welfare Board Software, which is still under development. His demonstration highlighted the ability of the software to capture information input from multiple welfare providers in order for the maritime industry to report on seafarers' welfare in port. Members were pleased to note that the software provided the local maritime community with the capacity to conduct a quantitative review of seafarers' welfare in ports on behalf of the Port Welfare Committees. Members noted the formation of welfare boards or PWCs was a mandatory requirement of ILO MLC, 2006. The software is expected to be launched, after beta testing in the UK, in mid 2020.



CLOSING REMARKS

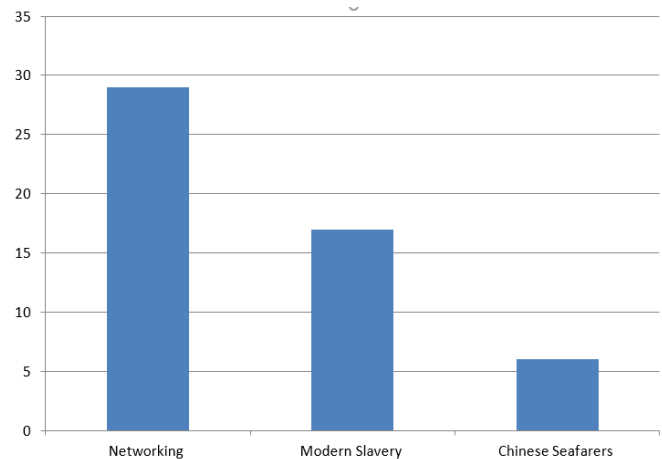
The Chairman formally closed the conference by recording his thanks to the presenters for their informative and interesting briefings, and to all delegates for their valued contribution and their ongoing work in support of seafarers' welfare. He highlighted the success of the conference in providing an opportunity to educate and inform, in addition to providing the opportunity for colleagues to network and share best practice.

Summary of the feedback received from the conference delegates

Delegates were asked to complete a feedback form for the Board to evaluate the conference. In total, 89.42% of the delegates rated the conference as excellent, 5.39% as good and 1.29% voted it as average. There were no votes for poor.

A substantial amount of positive feedback was received about how beneficial the delegates found the networking opportunities that the conference presented. There was significant interest in the modern slavery presentation as well as learning about Chinese seafarers and discussing the mental health and wellbeing of seafarers.

The few suggestions on ways the Board could improve future conferences included; splitting delegates into different groups when seated to avoid personnel from the same organisations grouping together on one table and additional workshops for greater organisational interaction.



Positive comments included praise for the MNWB staff and the conference venue. It was reassuring to know that 100% of the respondents said they would like the Board to host a similar conference in the future.

