

# ‘Exciting time’ says permanent secretary

The Department for Transport’s most senior civil servant says she’s confident the survey and inspection programme will meet the coming challenges.

Bernadette Kelly, who is permanent secretary at the DfT, has welcomed the work of the MCA to bring in those changes.

## Challenge

She said: ‘This is an exciting time for the Maritime & Coastguard Agency. It has taken up the challenge laid down by the Maritime Growth Study to build on the significant value and role that the maritime sector brings to the UK economy.

‘The MCA has worked hard to start the process of transforming how it delivers its ship survey and inspection services.

The improvements so far and those in the pipeline will fundamentally change and improve the customer service experience.

She added: ‘There will always be challenges of course, but I remain confident that the programme will more than meet those, so that the MCA proves itself as a Regulator that is passionate about maintaining safety and delivers that commitment in a way that both champions and supports the growth of the maritime sector.



## SITP: The journey so far...

The Survey & Inspection Transformation Programme began early in 2015. A business case, was submitted to the Department for Transport in September 2015 and approval granted in March the following year.

After a period of consultation, we entered into formal discussions and negotiations with the trade union representatives.

One of the outcomes, new terms and conditions for Marine Surveyors, together with a revised package was presented to union members and a ballot opened in December 2016.

The vote was overwhelmingly in favour and, in January this year, the Survey & Inspection Transformation Programme Steering Board ratified the decision to move into implementation.

Recruitment for the new roles started immediately and by the end February, both new Assistant Directors had been appointed.

Internal recruitment is largely complete and where there are vacancies we have started to recruit externally.

The number of applications received so far is a positive indication of the interest in joining the new Survey and Inspection world.

## News from us

### Katy Ware Director



‘As the lead for this programme, I am delighted to say we are on track to deliver our programme benefits. These will be the catalyst for the benefits that we want to deliver to you, our customers.’

### Tom Elder Assistant Director (North)



Since staff voted to accept the proposals for change, there has been a very busy recruitment schedule. Existing staff took advantage of the opportunities within the new structure. I am confident that we have the right people in post to lead staff through the changes to come.

### Tony Heslop Assistant Director (South)



We have also been making changes to how we work, including the introduction of Business Managers to manage the allocation of work at each Marine Office, the development of working patterns that will introduce a seven day working week, and modification of operational processes to make use of new technology and systems.

## Still to come...

External recruitment for vacant posts has started. The advert for vacant Business Manager roles recently closed but new vacancies will be published on Civil Service Jobs & social media.

We are on track to achieve one of our key benefits which is to deliver real transformational change. This means that by December, our surveyors will be working under new terms and conditions, including a seven day working week, out of hours working and remote working.

The introduction of remote working will, eventually, result in some MCA surveyors being based in the locations where there is greatest demand.

This, in turn, will provide better access to surveyors for many customers and improve efficiency.

We look forward to meeting a number of you at the London International Shipping Week in September where we hope to tell you more about what's to come.



## Exam centre opens

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has officially opened the new North East Exam Centre, which is based at South Tyneside College. The centre will provide a location for Deck, Engineering and other Oral Examinations for the maritime community. The Exam Centre has been opened as part of a new way of working for the MCA's Survey and Inspection, replacing the Tyne Marine Office which closed on 3rd March. Surveyors who worked at the Tyne Marine Office are now working remotely, a move which follows a period of extensive consultation in 2016.

## Meet the surveyor: Bill Bennett

Bill Bennett, has been Surveyor in Charge and Area Operations Manager at the Belfast Marine Office since 2002.

Recently, he was appointed as Technical Manager of Belfast Marine Office, one of the new roles in the SITP management structure and is really looking forward to the new way of working.

He said: 'I'm very excited about the opportunities that the Survey and Inspection Transformation Programme is bringing. The new roles of Technical and Business Manager will allow me to focus on our individual strengths which means we can deliver the best service to our customers.'

'My role is to lead a team of professional surveyors to ensure that, together, we have the best technical knowledge available and also the flexibility to support not only the local demands but those of the UK as a whole.'

He added: 'The SITP package of reforms to our way of working and the associated improvement in our conditions of employment reflects the MCA's investment in a bright future for the S&I network.'

'We will be in a position to recruit from the best candidates in the marine industry to join our existing highly experienced staff to ensure that we have the resources and expertise to service our current customers and those of the future as we grow the UK flag over the coming years.'



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