



Department for Transport

Mr Dean Beale
Chief Executive Officer
The Insolvency Service
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London
E20 1HZ

From the Secretary of State
Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP

Great Minster House
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Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: -
Your Ref: -

October 2024

Dear Mr Beale,

Following P&O Ferries' dismissal in March 2022 of 786 seafarers without consultation or notice, I was pleased that the Insolvency Service promptly launched criminal and civil investigations. I am aware that you have since completed and closed the criminal investigation with no further action.

I am writing to seek an update on the ongoing civil investigation. I appreciate that it is a confidential investigation, and I am certainly not seeking to influence it in any way.

I am aware that you consider that the investigation is "nearing its conclusion", but would appreciate some clarity over what that means as the outcome is increasingly anxiously awaited and has far-reaching implications for the maritime sector and beyond. Employment protections are a critical part of the Government's mission to kickstart economic growth and it will be useful to your conclusions on whether the existing law is considered to be fit for purpose in circumstances such as these. It is vital that those working in the maritime sector enjoy better in-work security, pay protections and autonomy in their workplaces.

Therefore, I am seeking confirmation from you of the timing of the outcome of the investigation and any interim milestones. In addition, if there are any issues that I or my fellow Ministers could assist with to ensure the investigation can be concluded swiftly then please advise.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT



The Insolvency
Service

Inspector General and Chief Executive
The Insolvency Service
16th Floor, 1 Westfield Avenue
London
E20 1HZ

<http://www.gov.uk/insolvency-service>

Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP
Secretary of State for Transport

By email only to: louise.haigh@dft.gov.uk and
DFT.Ministers@dft.gov.uk

Our ref: ACE/11/2024
e-mail: Chief.Executive@insolvency.gov.uk
Date: 18 October 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

Thank you for your letter of 8 October 2024 seeking an update on the ongoing civil investigation into P&O Ferries Division Holdings Limited.

In particular, you wanted clarity over our previous statement that the investigation is “nearing its conclusion” and confirmation of the timing of the outcome of the investigation and any interim milestones.

I note that you are aware that information gathered by the Insolvency Service in the course of all of its investigations is confidential. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You will appreciate therefore that I am only able to provide limited information at this stage of the investigation.

Regarding the timing of the outcome of the investigation and any interim milestones. I would like to assure you that the investigation is progressing, and we are in the process of finalising the factual evidence which involves some further clarification with the company and the relevant directors. We expect this phase to be concluded by the end of November unless the company and/or directors make reasonable representations for an extension to the deadlines we have set. At that stage we will seek further advice from King’s Counsel on next steps.

Thank you for writing again to highlight your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Dean Beale, Chief Executive