Maritime & Coastguard Agency

**MARINE INFORMATION NOTE**

# MIN 734 (M+F) Amendment 2 Welfare support for seafarers and fishers

Notice to all Seafarers, fishers, Retired Seafarers, Cadets, Families of personnel, Shipowners, Operators, Manning Agents, Training Providers and Maritime Welfare Personnel.

This notice should be read in conjunction with MIN 732 (M+F) Amendment 1, which remains relevant to the subject matter.

MIN 734 (M+F) Amendment 2 replaces MIN 734 (M+F) Amendment 1.

Amendment 2 updates section 5.

This MIN expires 1st May 2028

## Summary

This Marine Information Note highlights the charity and welfare support available to seafarers, fishers, retired seafarers, cadets and their families across the United Kingdom, by providing a clear route to help for those experiencing hardship, isolation, stress, or any welfare-related difficulty. It signposts users to the UK's central maritime welfare directory, maintained by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB), which acts as the primary and continually updated source of information on maritime charity services. In a context of heightened international uncertainty surrounding the situation in the Strait of Hormoz, these services provide trusted, practical support for seafarers and their families who may be affected by challenging or destabilising circumstances.

## 1. Introduction/background

1.1 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is committed to supporting the wellbeing of seafarers and fishers, and recognising the vital role played by their friends and family in supporting them. Ensuring that both those at sea and their families can quickly access trusted welfare information is therefore an important part of safeguarding seafarers, retired seafarers and cadets. In a period of heightened international uncertainty, it is particularly important that

seafarers and their families are aware of, and able to access, reliable sources of welfare information and support.

1.2 The UK benefits from a strong network of maritime charities and welfare organisations, each providing valuable and specialised support. This Marine Information Notice aims to raise awareness of the existing provision by directing seafarers and their families to a single, reliable starting point for welfare information (as outlined in sections **4 and 5 of this MIN**). This includes a dedicated route for friends and family seeking guidance on behalf of a seafarer. The intention is to bring greater visibility to these resources and help ensure they are easy to find in moments of need.

1.3 In light of recent events which have disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and the resulting impact on seafarers and fishers operating in or near the region, particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that those affected are aware of the welfare support currently available. In addition to the information provided in Sections 4 and 5, which includes links to maritime charities and welfare organisations, the MCA Seafarer Wellbeing App provides a central point of access to up-to-date welfare information and signposting to support services, including relevant Marine Information Notices and charity contacts.

# 2. Seafaring Pressures

2.1 Seafaring is a uniquely rewarding profession, offering a clear pathway for progression, diverse career opportunities, and the chance to play a vital role in a truly global industry. It demands skill, resilience, and professionalism, providing seafarers with experiences and responsibilities that not only benefit them at sea but also equip them with valuable competencies for future shore-based roles. At the same time, it is a career with its own distinctive challenges.

2.2 The nature of life at sea can mean spending extended periods away from land, family, and loved ones, which can create emotional strain and make it harder to stay connected. Seafarers may face issues such as fatigue, stress, medical concerns, or the need for financial and legal guidance while working in a complex and fast-moving environment. These pressures can affect not only the seafarers themselves but also the families who support them from shore, often managing significant responsibilities at home while maintaining their own wellbeing. Families, partners and friends are often the first to notice when a seafarer needs help and require clear routes to advice and support.

2.3 Research commissioned by the Maritime Charities Group (MCG), Seafarers 2040: Understanding UK Demographics and Welfare Needs, found that many seafarers and their families are unsure what welfare support services are available from maritime charities and how to access them. The report also identified emotional and psychological strain, loneliness, and social isolation as key issues experienced by families and seafarers alike. Interviews with seafarers and their families further showed that stronger social and community connections — including opportunities for families to connect with others in similar situations — can increase resilience, helping them better support their seafaring family member during periods at sea.

# 3. Current Context

3.1 The MCA is publishing this information at this time in recognition of the valuable contribution made by the United Kingdom’s maritime charities and the wide range of services they provide to support seafarers and their families. Seafaring is a rewarding and dynamic profession that offers clear routes for progression, meaningful responsibility and the opportunity to build skills that are highly transferable both within the maritime industry and in

future shore-based roles. Like all professions, challenges can arise from time to time, whether related to work or personal circumstances, and these can affect a seafarer's physical or mental wellbeing or create pressures for those supporting them at home.

3.2 Maritime charities play a vital role in helping seafarers navigate these moments. Beyond offering assistance in times of hardship, they provide practical guidance, confidential advice and access to specialist services covering areas such as health, finance and family support. Many charities also contribute to professional development through training, mentoring, learning opportunities and peer networks that help seafarers grow in confidence, build resilience and progress in their careers. These organisations are an integral part of the wider maritime community, offering support that enhances both wellbeing and career development.

3.3 The findings from the Maritime Charities Group's Seafarers 2040 research indicate that many seafarers and their families are not fully aware of the breadth of support available or how to access it. In response, this MIN aims to signpost users to a clear and reliable starting point, helping ensure that the strong support already offered by the charity sector is more visible, easier to navigate and accessible when it is needed most.

# 4. Information for Seafarers and their families

4.1 The Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) Seafarer Support will guide you and your family to services available from a range of UK charities and organisations. This might include advice, or finding financial support, accessing accommodation or finding a listening ear. Seafarer Support was launched in 2010 as a signposting service for serving and retired personnel and their dependants from the Merchant Navy, Fishing Fleet and the Royal Navy.

MNWB Seafarer Support Hub:
**https://seafarersupport.zendesk.com/hc/en-gb**

Telephone support:

Freephone: 0800 121 4765
(Free from most landlines; charges from mobile networks may vary.)

Users can speak to an adviser who can help identify the most appropriate charity or service for their circumstances.

# 5. To Find Out More

5.1 The following MCA resources may be helpful to seafarers, families, operators and welfare leads seeking additional wellbeing information and practical guidance.

**MCA Wellbeing Resources**

Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (COSWP)
MCA guidance covering health, safety, wellbeing, fatigue, and good working practices onboard UK ships.
Referenced alongside MCA wellbeing publications:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-safe-working-practices-for-merchant-seafarers-coswp

MCA/TSO Seafarer Guidance App
TSO, as MCA's official publisher, has developed a guidance app in collaboration with the MCA, providing accessible information on safety, physical and mental health for seafarers. Details at: https://www.tso.co.uk/news-and-insights/tso-and-mca-launch-guidance-app

Download the app:

Android (Google Play): https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.gov.mca.seafarer

iOS (Apple App Store): https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/official-mca-guidance/id1617805332

Leading for Safety (MCA Leadership Guidance) A practical MCA guide for leaders and senior officers on improving safety culture, decision-making, communication, and human-element awareness onboard.

Latest edition available on GOV.UK:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mgn-351-m-amendment-1-leadership-qualities-for-safety-management

**More information**

Seafarer Safety and Health
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/9
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Email: humanelement@mcga.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/mca

General enquiries: infoline@mcga.gov.uk

Please note that all addresses and telephone numbers are correct at time of publishing.