

Small investments can make a tangible difference to the lives of seafarers as revealed in latest Seafarers Happiness Index

LONDON, 27 JANUARY 2021 – The latest Seafarers Happiness Index report, published by The Mission to Seafarers, reveals that small investments can make a tangible difference to the lives of seafarers.

The survey, with the support of the Shipowners' Club and Wallem Group, reports on the experiences of seafarers between October and December 2020. The report highlights the continued struggle with crew changeovers and workload. However, it also reveals that the simple steps taken by some ship owners can make a huge difference to the day to day lives of seafarers, improving [mental health](#) on board and renewing passion for their work.

Small changes make a big difference

Many seafarers have reported that ship owners have started to make changes which have improved the quality of life onboard. Free data or free calls, more investment in food and new gym equipment have been appreciated according to the survey respondents. With the lack of shore leave and limited Wi-Fi as major concerns earlier in 2020, this appears to show that shipping companies are making an effort to improve the circumstances onboard, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training improves mental mindset

Seafarer training is a divisive issue, with some receiving high quality training, but others receiving none at all. Where training does take place, it provides focus, important skills and positive learnings for those onboard. However, some training seems to then be voided due to outdated equipment onboard. For example, the entry into force of Resolution MSC.428(98) IMO rules on cyber security was a catalyst for a rush of training at the end of 2020 to prepare crews for the imminent changes. However, the training was not supported by secure and updated systems and equipment, leaving seafarers feeling like the training was counter-productive.

Crew change challenges continue

The Q4 report shows that there are still huge challenges with crew changes, not only in the limitations of leaving or joining a ship, but also the treatment and facilities provided during quarantine. Seafarers highlighted that they are subjected to degrading and frustrating treatment,

making it clear that the entire process needs to be reviewed and improved.

The impact of the crew change crisis is being acutely felt, and some senior officers said this was the worst situation they have known in decades in the industry. The effect on morale and on the mental health of crew was evident, with calls for broader industry progress, particularly as the pandemic continues.

Andrew Wright, Secretary General of The Mission to Seafarers, said: *“The Seafarers Happiness Index for Q4 has demonstrated the ongoing need for real action. Countries, organisations and governments have had plenty of time to facilitate crew change programmes and arrange logistics, and yet we continue to see a lack of shore leave, challenges with crew changes and unsupported seafarers. The positive news we see within these results is from those ship owners who have invested in onboard WiFi and gym equipment or facilitated shore leave. They are due credit for these steps and would encourage all owners to take action to improve life onboard.*”

We hope this report will provide further guidance to the industry on how to make 2021 a year of positive action in support of the men and women serving at sea. Thank you to all those seafarers for sharing their experiences and helping the industry change for the better.”

Louise Hall, Director – Loss Prevention at the Shipowners’ Club, commented: *“The results from Q4’s Happiness Index highlight the benefits of continued learning, personal development and connectivity on board during these most challenging times. In aberrant operating conditions we must find new resources and mediums to connect with our seafarers in order to offer them the support and mental stimulation they require. The results from the Happiness Index provide us with the knowledge and understanding we need to deliver these initiatives in the most effective way possible.”*

John-Kaare Aune, interim CEO, Wallem Group, commented: *“The uncertainty of timely crew reliefs that has been experienced during the Covid crisis is clearly reflected in the resignation and antipathy that was seen in the responses. Timely crew reliefs is not just a humanitarian issue, but can also be a safety issue. The governments must start to walk the talk when it comes to “key worker” status for crew and the facilitation of crew changes.”*

To read the latest Seafarers Happiness Index report, [click here](#).



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Notes for editors

About The Shipowners' Club:

The Shipowners' Club is a mutual marine liability insurer, providing Protection and Indemnity insurance for small and specialist vessels since 1855. The Club is a member of the International Group of P&I Clubs and works with more than 600 brokers globally to insure over 33,000 vessels across a range of operating sections and geographical areas.

The Mission to Seafarers provides help and support to the 1.5 million men and women who face danger every day to keep our global economy afloat. We work in over 200 ports in 50 countries caring for seafarers of all ranks, nationalities and beliefs. Through our global network of chaplains, staff and volunteers we offer practical, emotional and spiritual support to seafarers through ship visits, drop-in seafarers' centres and a range of welfare and emergency support services.

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