



6 July 2020

Seafarers keeping global supply chain afloat - UK P&I Club comments

As Seafarers Awareness Week begins (6-12 July), Sophia Bullard, Crew Health Director at UK P&I, discusses the vital role seafarers are playing during the pandemic, and why wider recognition is deserved:

“This year, more than ever, we should be grateful for the tireless efforts of seafarers who are working under extremely strenuous circumstances, keeping global supply chains open and delivering vital medical supplies and essential PPE.

“At the very best of times, life at sea is demanding. Long periods away from loved ones, a relatively high-risk working environment and the physical nature of the job can lead to social isolation, fatigue and more serious medical ailments. The situation has been exacerbated in recent months by the lack of crew changes and anxieties around contract expiry. In extreme scenarios, crew have been left stranded on vessels, suffering loss of income, inappropriate quarantine and little assistance in repatriation.

“Despite this enormous toll, seafarers have endured, continuing to keep the global shipping industry afloat and the flow of goods steady. From an industry viewpoint, we must ensure these unsung heroes are provided with the necessary support structures. To the maritime sector’s credit, crew welfare resources have steadily improved in recent years, and even in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

“We’re witnessing various new initiatives and projects from our maritime partners, including Sailors Society, ISWAN, Marlins and The Mission to Seafarers, which include a wellness app, counselling support via an emergency COVID-19 helpline, online training on stress management, personal resilience e-learning resources and a financial literacy programme. The immediate focus of the Crew Health team at UK P&I Club is to assist our members and their crew by providing knowledge, guidance and a resource hub for all things related to crew health, welfare and wellbeing.

“During this week, we should all take some time to reflect on the adversity and hardship that seafarers face. Their sacrifices mean our hospitals are adequately supplied with PPE, our supermarket shelves aren’t empty, and that we’re able to live a more normal life in abnormal times.”

For more information on Seafarers Awareness Week, which is coordinated by Seafarers UK, visit: <https://www.seafarers.uk/campaigning/seafarers-awareness-week/>

Ends

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Notes to Editors

The UK P&I Club is a leading provider of P&I insurance and other services to the international shipping community. Established in 1869 the UK P&I Club insures over 244 million tonnes of owned and chartered shipping through its international offices and claims network. 'A (Stable)' rated by Standard & Poor's with free reserves of \$505m, the UK P&I Club is renowned for its specialist skills and expertise which ensure 'best in class' underwriting, claims handling and loss prevention services.

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