

WAYPOINTS

WEST Magazine # Issue 02

WELLNESS AT SEA

WELLNESS ON SHORE

20

COVID-19: a harbinger of positive change?

Has the pandemic brought about a beneficial focus on seafarers' mental health?

25

A culture of compassion

We take a close look at the crew welfare policies put into practice by West Member Wallenius Wilhelmsen

28

Why wait to implement delay insurance?

If shipping delays can't be avoided, obtaining loss of earnings cover is crucial

38

Wellness at Sea

The Wellness at Sea initiative has already provided wellness training to more than 34,000 seafarers to date

SUPPORTING SAFE AND SECURE SHIPPING

As the maritime industry landscape changes, with advances in technology and the use of big data, the risk of cyber attacks increases.

Providing your ticket to sail and protecting your balance sheet, Astaara provides a range of Risk Management solutions designed and implemented by our highly experienced team of maritime industry experts.

CONTACT US TODAY:
enquiries@astaara.co.uk

www.astaara.co.uk

#safeandsecureshipping #resilienceandrecovery

Contents

05 Welcome letter

Capt. Simon Hodgkinson, Global Head of Loss Prevention, West P&I, welcomes you to the new issue of Waypoints.

06 Security in a changing world

Whatever the future of global trade holds, the International Group will be there to provide consistent cover

09 BriefCases

Consequences, lessons to be learnt and potential implications of decisions in recent arbitrations

12 MLC and abandoned seafarers

How amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention seek to protect seafarers abandoned by their employers

16 What is mental health?

The importance of techniques such as self-awareness and reflection in maintaining good mental health at sea

20 COVID-19: A harbinger of positive change for shipowners and seafarers?

The increased focus on seafarers' wellbeing in the wake of the pandemic may cue improvements which benefit everyone

25 A culture of compassion

A close look at the crew welfare policies practised by West Member Wallenius Wilhelmsen

28 Why wait to implement Delay Insurance?

If shipping delays can't be avoided, obtaining suitable loss of earnings cover is a vital course of action for shipowners

30 Crew welfare considerations: Gulf of Guinea

Widely known as a hotspot for piracy, the Gulf of Guinea continues to be particularly dangerous for seafarers

34 Qwest Care: Crew mental health

Awareness of mental health issues in the maritime industry is increasing, but consideration of the next steps is vital

38 Wellness at Sea

Wellness at Sea, a Sailors' Society initiative, has provided wellness training to more than 34,000 seafarers to date

42 Office profile

In this issue, it's the turn of West of England's New York office to share the spotlight

 Visit [Westpandi.com](https://www.westpandi.com) for more on the topics addressed in this issue and for information about West.

Follow us on   

Editorial team

Tony Paulson, Rebecca Burns, Tim Davies, Julien Rabeux, Fiona McCoig, Greg Franklin and Simon Hodgkinson.

Contact information

If you would like to get in touch with us, please email: Waypoints@Westpandi.com



Delay Insurance

A leading independent marine insurance company and provider of niche insurance products to the global maritime industry



WELCOME

Dear reader,

Being given an opportunity to help put this issue of Waypoints together has been an exciting and rewarding process. Our central focus is on crew welfare; acknowledging the seafarers who have kept trade moving round the world in extraordinarily difficult times, and heightening awareness of the mental strain which can result from any number of individual or combined factors in their working lives.

When I went to sea in the 1980s, the mental health of seafarers was not discussed or even acknowledged. If any issues regarding a crew member's mental state came to light, these would be routinely dismissed as signs of weakness. It's great to see that the subject of crew mental health is finally being spoken about openly, if rather disappointing that there's still some distance to go before the world fully catches up.

Times are mentally as well as physically challenging for those on board. More than 75% of recorded accidents at sea result from human error, with poor mental health often a factor in the root cause. In this regard, it's encouraging to see so many shipping companies leaving behind the deficiencies and outright omissions which were once so common in the maritime industry and setting welfare and training initiatives in motion to look after their crews and managers.

Fewer incidents will occur as seafarers' wellbeing is improved, which in turn will save time and resources: everyone wins.

It's great to see that the subject of crew mental health is finally being spoken about openly

We hope you will enjoy this issue of Waypoints, and our editorial team will look forward to hearing from you with any ideas for topics you'd like to see covered in subsequent issues.

Best wishes,

Capt. Simon Hodgkinson
Global Head of Loss Prevention,
West P&I



Nordisk Marinförsäkring AB – Nordic Marine Insurance Ltd
Narvavägen 7, SE-114 60 Stockholm, Sweden
+46 8 5511 1050 @insurance@nmip.se www.nmip.se

Follow us on 

SECURITY IN A CHANGING WORLD

The International Group is hard at work to provide consistent cover whatever the future of international trade holds, writes Nick Shaw, CEO, IGP&I

Nick Shaw
CEO,
IGP&I

In a world of rapid change and great uncertainty, any rational, level-headed source of reassurance, clarity and consistency is an invaluable asset. It is a matter of professional pride, therefore, that the International Group should be synonymous with stability, cementing trust and instilling confidence in our global stakeholders. Importantly, however, stability should not be confused with stasis. Our insurance system is a dynamic entity in which close and constant engagement with our stakeholders enables us to not only respond to fluctuating circumstances, but to also anticipate them.

As we see it, there are many impactful, fast-changing factors to take into consideration with regard to our role in helping to facilitate international trade. The pandemic is the most obvious example, of course, but we've also noticed increased concern in relation to cybercrime including localized, quickly quelled and comparatively inconsequential hacks, and also disruptive ransomware attacks on high-profile, land-based corporations.

Additionally, geopolitics – including the important ongoing trading relationship between the US and China – are a concern.

We are monitoring developments on each of these issues very closely. Another key matter engendering uncertainty is the debate over the fuel transition within the maritime industry. While there is a partial movement towards the adoption of LNG as a temporary solution, there is as yet no agreement within the industry as to whether the preferred new fuel on a long-term basis will be hydrogen, ammonia or some other fuel, or a combination of fuels. We remain very much in the research and development phase.

Our insurance system is a dynamic entity

In this respect, as on other issues, we work with our partners in the industry, such as the International Chamber of Shipping, to study these emerging topics and try to find a collective way forward. This often involves assessing the evolving risks and explaining those to our reinsurance partners. We can for example pass on the information that risks in a certain area are not in fact increasing but are either unaffected or even decreasing – and we can produce evidence to back this up.

No one is pretending that any of this is a straightforward process; but it shouldn't need pointing out that cutting corners is never an option where marine liability cover is concerned.

For the International Group, the overriding driver is seeking to maintain the highest levels of insurance and reinsurance cover (with the valuable support of our reinsurance partners) to as wide a range of shipowners as possible. Our aim is always to address any impediments methodically, dealing with situations which have arisen, or which may subsequently manifest themselves. On liability issues, the International Group is absolutely pivotal to underpinning global trade, because without the pooling and reinsurance structures that allow us to provide such comprehensive levels of cover to the global shipping fleet it would be far more difficult for vessels to move in and out of ports around the world.

Sustainability and ESG

Another current hot topic involves the sustainability of the industry and in particular marine liability/P&I's contribution to this. The dilemma for shipping companies

is devising a sustainable business model that will continue to attract investment and maintain (or ideally grow) their standing in the marketplace. The climate crisis and de-carbonising are high priorities for the industry in general, with the emphasis currently on finding ways to drive the research and development of new fuels as well as looking for efficiencies as we move towards a platform with greater digitalization.

From a P&I perspective, the Group's focus has been on supporting shipowners through this fuel transition. At the same time, we need to ensure that high and sustainable levels of cover remain available for legitimate claimants of marine incidents as and when they occur. Therefore, we need to keep the various governmental maritime authorities comfortable that shipowners, trading legitimately within the international regulatory framework, will continue to attract the Group's support.

On the Social side, we help developing nations in particular to understand the system of global trade and the provision of insurance cover that underpins this.



SECURITY

Let's say a large oil tanker has had a spill near their shores: they won't necessarily know what to do unless they've been properly trained. We see part of our role as helping maritime authorities understand that we can partner with them to ensure that they have a prompt incident response plan, leading to an efficient clean-up of any pollution and the restoration of the marine environment.

As a core component of our educational drive, we also have our P&IQ exam program which is becoming more and more popular with clubs, lawyers, and Clubs' P&I correspondents around the world as well as government authority representatives who really want to understand the P&I system. We now have around 300-400 candidates every time we hold the exams, twice yearly; and even though some candidates might fail to attain the diploma, the very process of going through and learning the materials should enable them to operate more effectively and react swiftly to maritime incidents within their own jurisdictions.

Global shipping demands global solutions

Governance-wise, meanwhile, we keep an eye on how to improve the Group structure, ensuring fairness between Clubs and also the mutual sharing of liabilities between shipowners, whatever their location and whatever their vessel type. This is a fundamental principle of mutuality.

The challenge of regionalized regulation

Another challenge to trade fluidity which we're working hard to mitigate is the regulatory disparity which currently exists between different countries or regions, for example in relation to carbon emissions. Global shipping demands global solutions, and that in turn requires, wherever possible, a global regulatory framework. This ensures consistency and fairness between nations.

As such, we try to encourage states and regions to seek any changes to regulations through the IMO so there is uniformity across the board. Where this does not occur, then shipowners face having to comply with different regulations in different regions of ports that they visit. This can lead to uncertainty and delay.

At the Group, our workload is forever expanding. As well as the factors already mentioned, we have the move towards automated vessels, greater concerns about life beneath the ocean surface, and increased digitalisation across the industry all raising new concerns for us to address.

In addition, more and more engagement on all these issues is now required with our reinsurance partners and other stakeholders, so we're strengthening the secretariat accordingly. In the last few months, we have been delighted to welcome Camilla Slater and Danielle Datta, both of whom have hit the ground running in helping with some of the many issues facing the Group. They will also help drive communication to our Club and Shipowner members going forward.

Nick Shaw

CEO,
IGP&I

Nick was appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the International Group of P&I Clubs in July 2019. He is responsible for co-ordination of the collective activities of the International Group member Clubs including the internal organisation of the Group activities, co-ordinating the formulation and development of Group policies, the operation of the Group large claims pooling and reinsurance arrangements and the representation of the Group at inter-industry, government and intergovernmental levels.



BRIEFCASES

Speed and Consumption

We look at the details of some of the recent cases relating to Speed and Consumption. We discuss the lessons to be learnt and examine the consequences and potential implications of each decision

London Arbitration 22/18: Does a good weather period exceeding 12 hours make the whole day a 'good weather day'?

The charterparty clause:

"SPEED/CONSUMPTION BASED ON GOOD WEATHER CONDITION AND SMOOTH SEA, NO ADVERSE CURRENT AND NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF SWELL, UP TO BEAUFORT SCALE 4 AND/OR DOUGLAS SEA STATE 3, OWNERS TO HAVE BENEFIT OF POSITIVE CURRENTS."

The Weather Routing Company (WRC) stated in its report that if more than 12 hours out of 24 hours were of good weather, the whole day would be considered as a good weather day. Similarly, if more than 12 hours out of 24 hours consisted of bad weather, the whole day would be counted as a bad weather day. The tribunal did not agree with this method of calculation. Only good weather periods should be counted.

Lesson to learn:

WRCs often make this mistake. It is important to check the report to see whether any bad weather periods have been counted within the good weather days. This can severely affect the average good weather day speed of the ship.

THE CORAL SEAS [2016] EWHC 1506 (Comm): continuous warranties and hull fouling

Charterparty clause: "Throughout the currency of this charter, Owners warrant that the vessel shall be capable of maintaining and shall maintain on all sea passages..."

The vessel had not maintained the warranted speed. This was caused by underwater fouling of the hull and propeller by marine growth which had developed during a lengthy stay in tropical waters as a result of following charterer's orders.

Was it a defence for Owners to prove that the underperformance resulted from compliance with the Charterer's

orders? The court rejected the Owner's argument that the continuing performance warranty was given on the basis that the vessel continued to have a clean hull. Hull fouling is a foreseeable risk, and therefore it was a risk which the owners had contractually assumed at the time of entering into a contract.

Lesson to learn:

Words such as "throughout the currency of the charter" are onerous and impose a continuous warranty that the vessel will perform as per the warranted speed and consumption.

If such terms are to be accepted, owners should have a specific clause in the charter dealing with issues which could affect the performance of the ship, such as a "hull fouling clause".

London Arbitration 25/17: Liabilities for underperformance in a follow-on fixture

The vessel underperformed on a follow-on fixture due to the fact that the hull had been fouled during the previous charter.

Previous charterers had not cleaned the hull despite their obligation arising out of a hull fouling clause and their obligation to redeliver the vessel “in like good order and condition, ordinary wear and tear excepted...”. Owners were able to claim an indemnity against the previous charterers for the performance claim presented by the follow-on charterer.

Lesson to learn:

Charterers may still be liable for an underperformance in a follow-on charter as a result of a breach during the currency of the previous charter. Owners, however, have a duty to mitigate their losses and clean the hull as soon as practicable.

Charterers may still be liable for an underperformance in a follow-on charter as a result of a breach during the currency of the previous charter

The OCEAN VIRGO: Polaris Shipping Co Ltd V Sinoriches Enterprises Co Ltd [2015] EWCH 3405 (Comm): Must a good weather day be 24 consecutive hours from noon to noon?

The charterparty contained performance warranties on the basis of “good weather/smooth sea, up to max BF SC4/Douglas sea state 3, no adverse currents, no negative influence of swell”.

Owners disputed charterer’s claim by arguing that there were no admissible periods of good weather on which the vessel’s performance could be assessed and that in order for a period of the voyage to be admissible, that period must be at least 24 consecutive hours from noon to noon.

In the present case there were only 14- and 16-hour periods of good weather respectively. The court held that the charterparty did not limit the admissibility of good weather periods in this way since there were “no words in the charterparty which justify construing good weather as meaning good weather days of 24 hours from noon to noon”. The court held that it was a question of fact to reconsider whether the 14- and 16-hour periods of good weather were sufficient samples on which to judge the vessel’s performance.

Lesson to learn:

If owners only want good weather periods of 24 consecutive hours to be counted as good weather day, then the charterparty must clearly say so.

London Arbitration 21/18: Effect of currents – calculation of vessel’s performance

The charterparty contained the following clause:

SPEED AND CONSUMPTION: ABT 14K ON ABT 29T IFO 380 MDAS ABT 13K ON ABT 26T IFO 380 NDAS. ABOVE SPEED AND CONSUMPTION WARRANTIES ALWAYS UP TO BEAUFORT SCALE FORCE 4/ DOUGLAS SEA STATE 3 AND WITH A TOLERANCE OF 5PCT ABOUT. NO NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF CURRENTS/SWELL. DSS3 MEANS 1.25M SEA AND SWELL COMBINED.

The owners referred to London Arbitration 15/07 (2007) 720 LMLN 4, which stated in relation to the words “no adverse currents” that charterers could not claim a benefit for favourable currents and deduct the positive currents from the good

weather speed. The charterers referred to London Arbitration 4/12 (2012) 854 LMLN 4 in which it was held that once non-compliance with the warranted speed had been established by reference to periods of good weather and no unfavourable currents, the application of a current factor was permissible to compensate for periods both of favourable and adverse current

The tribunal held that if the parties had wished to provide that the vessel’s performance was to be adjusted to reflect any positive influence of currents/swell they might easily have done so by providing for such an adjustment to be made in the clause itself.

Lesson to learn:

Most tribunals will hold that the words “no negative influence of currents” will mean that charterers cannot deduct positive currents from the average good weather speed. However, Members must remember that awards are not binding and that other tribunals may have a different view. It is therefore best to have a charter party clause which deals with such an issue in order to avoid future disputes.

 [Click here for further information on this subject and read our guide](#)



Julien Rabeux

Senior Claims Manager,
West P&I

E Julien.Rabeux@Westpandi.com

Julien is a Senior Claims Manager in West’s Singapore office. He studied law in France and England before qualifying as a solicitor in a London shipping law firm. Julien worked at West’s office in Hong Kong for five years before moving to Singapore.



MLC AND ABANDONED SEAFARERS

THE THEORY AND THE PRACTICE

The 2014 amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) entered into force in early 2017 with the aim of protecting seafarers who had been abandoned by their employers

Tony Paulson
Corporate Director,
West P&I

Qualifying ships are required to have certification on board from a financial security provider which guarantees payment of up to four months' wages, the costs of repatriation and the supply of essentials such as fuel, food and water to abandoned seafarers where necessary until the crew can go home.

The IG Clubs supported their Members by agreeing to provide the necessary certification for what are largely uninsured, non-P&I risks. But they did so against an understanding of how the Convention would work in practice which has, in some places, not been borne out.

This is resulting in significant delays in repatriation and payment of wages to some seafarers marooned on deteriorating ships, as well as issues for the insurers concerned. What's gone wrong?

The theory

Regulation 2.5 of MLC deals with repatriation and its stated purpose is to "ensure that seafarers are able to return home". Standard A 2.5 sets out the means to accomplish that and includes the following obligations on States Parties:

- "Each [State] shall facilitate the repatriation of seafarers serving on ships which call at its ports or pass through its territorial or internal waters, as well as their replacement on board."
- "In particular, a [State] shall not refuse the right of repatriation to any seafarer because of the financial circumstances of a shipowner or because of the shipowner's inability or unwillingness to replace a seafarer."

So when seafarers are abandoned (and in practice that's invariably when they haven't been paid for two months or more) and the ship arrives in a port of a contracting state, the local maritime authorities should take steps to facilitate the repatriation of those seafarers. That means bringing the ship alongside (to, say, a lay-up berth) and allowing the seafarers off as soon as is practicable.

The authorities can then take whatever action is necessary to recover their costs, including arrest and judicial sale of the ship.

The Clubs stand ready to assist with tickets home, wage payments of up to four months and any medical care for the abandoned crew. If there's a need for any immediate supplies to the ship of fuel, water or food until repatriation can be arranged then they'll be provided.

In many States this model has proven to work well and abandoned seafarers in these ports are repatriated quickly and efficiently. But in others it hasn't, and it's where States choose to ignore some or all of their obligations under MLC where the problem lies.

The practice in some States

Let's look at what happens in those States. The ship arrives with an abandoned crew. The local maritime authority decide that they don't want the risk or cost of a laid-up ship with no crew on board within the jurisdiction of their port so demand that she remains out at anchor with a skeleton crew. That immediately places the Master in the invidious position of deciding who goes home and who stays.

The authorities say that the only way all the original crew can all come off the ship is if they're substituted by replacement crew. But the Convention doesn't require the financial security provider to arrange replacement crew and doing so would in any event be tantamount to a hostage exchange – it's surely no solution to put other people on board an abandoned and deteriorating ship.

More fundamentally however, the State concerned is quite clearly acting in breach of its Standard 2.5 obligations to facilitate the repatriation of abandoned crew irrespective of the "shipowner's inability or unwillingness to replace a seafarer".

The result in these cases is an impasse, with the abandoned crew stuck on board because no replacement crew can be arranged and the maritime authority is unwilling to allow them to go home without replacements.

Very sadly, in two recent cases West has been involved in this has seen abandoned crew remain on board deteriorating ships for 13 and 16 months respectively post-abandonment, and this is over and above their prior time on board. Sometimes these seafarers are on board for more than two years in total and often in poor and deteriorating conditions.

MLC is all about protecting abandoned seafarers and not dealing with abandoned ships

The financial security provider then has to provide fuel, food and water throughout this prolonged period of detention, and this unnecessary and often significant additional financial burden is creating a serious issue for insurers in light of the claims experience in some ports and regions.

What can be done?

The situation encountered in these ports when dealing with abandoned seafarers is clearly unacceptable.

As we've seen, allowing the MLC to malfunction in this way is causing additional stress and suffering for seafarers who have already been abandoned by their employer. It is contrary to the stated intention of Regulation 2.5 and undermines the objectives behind the introduction of the 2014 amendments to the Convention.



It's been suggested in a recent paper to the IMO Legal Committee that the Convention should be amended again to make the financial security provider liable for providing replacement crew. But this isn't a solution; it merely perpetuates the problem by just placing a different set of people in the same degree of peril and ignores the practical difficulties an insurer, who naturally has no experience of making crewing arrangements, would have in sourcing a crew willing to go on board an abandoned ship – where flag and class may have been withdrawn – and sit out at anchor for an unknown and probably protracted period.

Following a recent particularly challenging case we've had at West with two ships abandoned in a particular port and seafarers marooned on board for over a

year until we could get them home, we managed with the help of the International Group to build a broad coalition of industry partners and UN international agencies to bring pressure to bear on the maritime authority concerned in that case. However, despite the considerable efforts of this coalition, resolution was achieved only when the ships were sold to a new owner.

It is hoped that the Clubs can now work with the coalition to highlight this issue to all the MLC States Parties and emphasise that the solution doesn't lie in replacement crew but rather in all States complying with their obligations if the goals of the Convention to protect abandoned seafarers are to be met. After all, MLC is all about protecting abandoned seafarers and not dealing with abandoned ships.

Tony Paulson

Corporate Director,
West P&I

Tony is the Club's Corporate Director. He joined the West of England in 1990 and having worked in the Claims Department which included a secondment to the Hong Kong office, he was appointed a Director in 2005. Tony's responsibilities encompass technical insurance matters including the content and interpretation of liability and compensation regimes such as MLC. He also works extensively with the International Group of P&I Clubs, where he sits on a number of Committees.



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. World Health Organisation

Emma MacCarthy
Loss Prevention Officer,
West P&I

Mental health is more than just the absence of mental health problems. It encompasses a broad spectrum ranging from thriving to struggling. Mental health is unique to each individual, and the same situation can affect each of us differently.

Mental health problems

You have reached the stage where you can't cope on your own and need medical help to recover your mental health.

Struggling with Mental health

You may not be coping so well with the stresses that life is presenting you with, and your productivity is decreasing. Issues such as pressure from work or college, money worries or a bad night's sleep may make us feel like this.

Average mental health

This is where most of us find ourselves. You are coping with life and getting on alright.

Good mental health

You feel good, you're enjoying life and everything is working out well.

Emotional wellness is our ability to understand and accept ourselves and handle the day-to-day challenges that we face in our everyday lives. If we are emotionally healthy we increase our mental resilience, which in turn makes us able to bounce back from setbacks much faster.

Although there are several different factors that influence mental health, having good emotional wellness can have a very positive impact on your mental health.

Emotional wellness is one of the core dimensions of wellness which makes up

a person's overall health. It's important to remember that our mental health is not a fixed state but something that fluctuates throughout our life, sometimes even on a day-to-day basis.

What is self-awareness and why is it so important?

Self-awareness is the simple act of stepping back and noticing how you feel in a given situation. How do I feel right now? Self-awareness also entails observing how you think, act and how your body feels. Consider the difference in your body language when

having an uncomfortable conversation, compared to a pleasant chat with a close colleague over coffee. When working at sea, our emotions can feel heightened, unlike when we're relaxing at home with our families and friends. We can easily feel overwhelmed, and that is why it is so important to improve our self-awareness, which we can do through reflection.



Reflection

Through reflection, we cultivate the habit of checking in with ourselves to examine our state of mind in a protected mental environment.

Sometimes the act of reflection can be difficult, especially if you've not practiced it before. The technique of Notice, Name and Normalise can help with this. Simply sit in a quiet place and begin to notice how you feel, then name that emotion without judging or criticising yourself. Noticing and naming how you feel can help to reduce the intensity of your emotions.

To take the practice a step further, we can engage in written reflection.

The act of handwriting has the cognitive benefit of allowing you to slow down your thought processes. It goes beyond the step of noticing and naming how you feel and investigates why you're feeling the way you do. If you're feeling happy, note down the reason why: what is bringing you joy right now?

Handwriting is a tool to facilitate reflection. Once completed, feel free to destroy what you have written or keep it if you feel so inclined.

Simply sit in a quiet place and begin to notice how you feel, then name that emotion without judging or criticising yourself

A seafarer's example of written, free-flowing reflection:

I feel sad. Why? I feel lonely. Why? The colleague I'm friendly with was paid off last week and I miss the time we used to spend together. What can I do to feel less lonely? I could start a conversation with the new Third Officer and see if we have any common interests, or suggest a movie night or a game of cards after dinner some evening.

The reflective practice increases self-awareness, which in turn builds our emotional intelligence and mental resilience. With continued practice, reflection builds into your daily routine and can become as normal as brushing your teeth. You can practice it on board the ship and when you're at home on leave.

How to practice 'checking in with yourself'

- If you're feeling overwhelmed in a situation, stop and use Notice, Name and Normalise. Remember that naming how we're feeling can reduce the intensity of the emotion: if you're feeling anxious or angry, this can help soothe the situation temporarily.
- Take 5 minutes when best suits you, and reflect by either:
 - Sitting with your thoughts, or
 - Reflective writing.

Emma MacCarthy

Loss Prevention Officer, West P&I

Emma is a Loss Prevention Officer in West's London office. Emma joined West from Shell Shipping Management Ltd, sailing as a Second Officer on tanker vessels, both oil and chemical. Emma is well placed to offer valuable insights into the effects of mental health, having previously studied mental health nursing at University College, Cork.



If you find you're struggling with your mental health on board, reach out and talk to your line manager.

Additionally, The Sailors' Society is a Christian charity dedicated to caring for merchant seafarers. Their emergency helpline and instant chat facility are available 24/7.

Emergency Helpline: + 1 938 222 8181
Helpline instant chat: www.sailors-society.org/helpline

COVID-19: A HARBINGER OF POSITIVE CHANGE FOR SHIPOWNERS AND SEAFARERS?

The pandemic has been disastrous for seafarers: but the increased psychological focus on their mental wellbeing might cue improvements that benefit everyone



Monica Lambrou-Whiting
Senior Claims Manager,
West P&I

The colossal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered many things in society, from our perception of the world and each other to the way we live, work and communicate. It has also highlighted the importance of how the seafaring community functions in the world economy and accentuated the need to safeguard crews' mental health.

The global dependency on the shipping industry was brought into sharp focus when supermarket shelves started emptying of items. An estimated 90% of world trade is carried by sea, and the potential and actual shortages of some goods made shoppers appreciate how pivotal supply chains are to our everyday lives. This in turn highlighted an appreciation of the mental and physical strain endured by seafarers, having to keep freight moving in the face of stringent lockdown restrictions, legally obliged in many cases to remain on their vessels for months beyond their contracted time.

As we shall see, many organisations and charities have been determinedly placing seafarers' mental health front and centre for several years. Commendably, numerous shipowners had already taken this on board well before the pandemic; but the latter event has forced others within the maritime industry to address the mental welfare of vessel crews as a matter of urgency.

Thankfully, science-based mental health initiatives which began in the wake of the Covid outbreak can be used to point the industry towards a more productive future. The hope is that positive psychology can bring about a significant improvement in the working lives and mental wellbeing of crews, with a happier, safer, and consequently more efficient workforce. This outcome may sound somewhat idealistic, but an examination of the most common crew claims received by P&I Clubs reveals a recurrent pattern of issues which could be addressed quite rapidly with the right tools.

Thankfully, science-based mental health initiatives which began in the wake of the Covid outbreak can be used to point the industry towards a more productive future

POSITIVE



Common thread

The Clubs report that approximately one-third of all claims they see pertain to crew injury and illness. Heart attacks, strokes and respiratory illnesses crop up often, with work-related stress regularly cited as a contributory factor. Chronic fatigue is another major contributing factor which, combined with stress, prevents crew from thinking straight and may lead to horrific accidents. With their attention wavering, carelessness and calamities are inevitable.

With stress as a common thread, it's hardly surprising that mental health problems arise, with incidences of suicide still increasing.

A 2019 study by Yale University, based upon 1,572 seafarers representative of crews around the world, indicated that 25% of seafarers suffer from depression. (See <https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/news/2019/yale-study-reveals-worryingly-high-levels-of-depression-anxiety-and-suicidal-thoughts-among-seafarers>) The International Association for Suicide Prevention suggests that depressed people are 20 times more likely to commit suicide than those without depression. (See <https://www.iasp.info/references/>) Categorical data is difficult to obtain for seafarer suicides, but The Sailors Society's Wellness at Sea programme estimates that approximately 6% of deaths at sea are attributable to suicide.

Charities such as The Sailors' Society and ISWAN (the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network) provide advice, information and adaptive training solutions to engender proactive onboard mental health regimes, taking cultural and religious differences into consideration.

More than 85% of accidents at sea are the result of human error, in many cases stemming from hard-wired fight-or-flight responses in life-threatening situations

The post-COVID world and the human brain

The fact that mental health policies advocated by seafarers' charities and unions have seen a marked uptake among shipping companies in recent months is highly encouraging; but the challenge may be maintaining this investment in a post-COVID world. Acknowledging the crucial importance of crews' mental health is the first step towards initiating a healthier working and living environment on board. However, equally important is acknowledging human mental behaviour at work. More than 85% of accidents at sea are the result of human error, in many cases stemming from hard-wired fight-or-flight responses in life-threatening situations (for example, rushing

to assist colleagues in an enclosed space without first donning appropriate safety equipment). Therefore, an understanding of innate human behaviour will be key to devising more effective training programs.

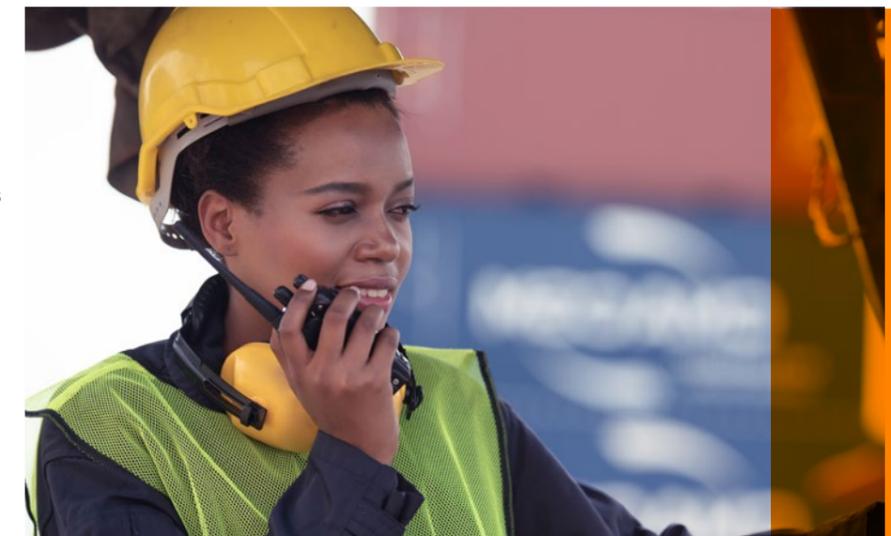
With some jobs, no amount of training will ever overcome this hard-wiring. Instinctive, pre-rational modes of human behaviour are an immutable scientific fact, and in many instances will override 'hard skills' training (ie, a fundamental nuts-and-bolts demonstration of how to carry out tasks). With this in mind, it may be better to channel money and resources into finding new and more effective methods to get the job done which take into account these hard-wired psychological impulses.

At a management level, just as fundamental as providing crews with suitable conditions for rest and sleep will be the development of 'soft skills.' These are non-technical skills which relate to how one works, for example how one interacts with colleagues, solves problems and manages one's time. These are critical skills that form the foundation of working to one's maximum capacity. Training in soft skills includes empathetic techniques which encourage regular, harmonious, two-way interaction with crew members. Training of this nature is designed to reduce stress hormones and boost oxytocin, a hormone which engenders trust and team bonding. This in turn enables personnel to take in information more effectively. Conversely, studies have shown that prolonged anxiety can cause crews to

stop listening and essentially shut down. The demonstrable link between emotions and performance is highlighted in research papers such as a 2015 IISTE (International Institute for Science, Technology & Education) analysis, which notes that

Conversely, studies have shown that prolonged anxiety can cause crews to stop listening and essentially shut down

'an employee's emotions and overall temperament have a significant impact on his job performance, decision-making skills, team spirit, leadership, turnover and job satisfaction (JM George and AP Brief, 2006).'





Culture of openness and empathetic leadership

Many industries use neuroscience in corporate training, and this has shown positive results. One such organisation, SELF BALANCE, claimed in a recent SAFETY4SEA Crew Welfare webinar that the way managers communicate with staff accounts for 90% of their messaging getting across. The benefits are self-evident, with nearly half of seafarers proving more productive if working with trustworthy and empathetic officers, accompanied by a massive 106% increase in crew energy levels. There is, however, a significant shortage at present of managers with the necessary skills and qualifications. According to a recent report issued by the BIMCO shipping association, the deficiency of certified STCW officers as of 2021 could amount to as much as 26,000.

It is to be hoped that this situation will be remedied over time – and, certainly, the general trend towards a convention of understanding and compassion augurs well for the industry.

This morale-boosting culture of openness and mutual respect should extend to supporting crew who have sustained trauma after witnessing a marine casualty. Qwest Care, for example, provides a new approach to taking essential statements from such

witnesses by putting them at ease in the presence of skilled psychologists and helping them manage the trauma they have suffered with suitable aftercare. It is to be hoped that adopting policies such as these will help in turn to attract new recruits to the industry. A wider awareness of the challenges seafarers face has been hard-won; it would be unfortunate if cannot continue as we move forward.

The benefits are self-evident, with nearly half of seafarers proving more productive if working with trustworthy officers, accompanied by a massive 106% increase in crew energy levels

Clearly, change costs money but so do crew illnesses and injuries which amount to millions of dollars in losses each year. The bottom line is that ultimately crew are shipowners biggest asset: without them trade simply cannot continue.

Monica Lambrou-Whiting

Senior Claims Manager, West P&I

E Monica.Whiting@Westpandi.com

A barrister by profession, Monica focuses on crew and cruise passenger claims, ticket terms, cruise ship contracts, crew contracts, collective bargaining agreements and working on loss prevention schemes.



A CULTURE OF COMPASSION

Kristin Schjødt Bitnes
General Counsel in Wallenius Wilhelmsen ASA and member of the advisory Board of West of England

West Member Wallenius Wilhelmsen has a strong reputation for supporting its crew members. Waypoints takes a closer look at the company's crew welfare policies



Wallenius Wilhelmsen controls 130 vessels which operate on 15 trade routes to six continents, and its workforce encompasses an estimated 2,700 seafarers. However, one of the most impressive statistics of all is that its crew retention rate is a massive 99.7%.

“When I talk to other companies which are in more or less the same business as us, they're happy if they have 70% retention,” says Capt. Filip Svensson, Senior Safety, Quality & Security Manager, Marine Operations, Wallenius Wilhelmsen. “This shows to me that we take good care of our crews, that they feel safe and know they will receive support.”

So what exactly does the company do in practical terms to achieve such results regarding crew welfare? A culture of compassion, starting at the top, has been

a core principle from the very beginning, says Kristin Schjødt Bitnes, SVP Legal & Compliance & General Counsel, Wallenius Wilhelmsen. “It's important to point out that Wallenius Wilhelmsen has a long history of taking care of seafarers and employees too,” she observes. “We're very different from other companies because we have such a strong, dynamic and deeply embedded support structure for our crews. It is our policy to ask how crew members in need are doing, to ask ourselves what we have done for their families, and to ascertain what we are doing as ongoing support.”

COVID-secure

The pandemic has understandably been a critical trigger regarding crew mental health. This topic quickly became a pivotal concern both within and beyond the maritime industry, when travel restrictions prevented many seafarers from either getting on or off vessels. The image of crew members stranded on ships for months on end proved potent and emotive, but Wallenius Wilhelmsen's staff confronted this harrowing state of affairs rapidly and proactively.

The company is a leading member of the Norwegian Shipowners Association (NSA), and at the start of the pandemic all major NSA members agreed to meet up virtually on a weekly basis to discuss what they had learned throughout the preceding days and share best practices on how to handle the situation.

As a means of making cargo transfer operations in port as COVID-secure as possible, a ship-shore safety checklist was drawn up for vessel and terminal operators. This constituted an extensive series of precautionary measures including restricting the number of essential shore personnel boarding vessels or crew visiting the terminal to a pre-arranged minimum.

For crew members prevented from leaving their vessels because of regional restrictions and company policies, Wallenius Wilhelmsen supplied extra bandwidth for satellite communications, enabling them to stay in touch with loved ones on land. Conversely, there was an issue with relief crews stuck at home: "The challenge is that many seafarers aren't permanent employees," says Capt. Svensson, "which means they don't get a rolling salary; if you're on board, you earn money. If you're at home, you don't.

"We quickly realised that those who had to stay home for a long time would soon run into financial problems," he continues. "As a result, we offered them free loans so they could receive a salary when they were at home, and when they were back at work this would be repaid in small amounts each month."

As a means of making cargo transfer operations in port as COVID-secure as possible, a ship-shore safety checklist was drawn up for vessel and terminal operators

Best practices

A key factor was the early realisation that certain aspects of the company's infrastructure had to be reorganised to reflect the all-pervading nature of the crisis. "This is the first situation of this magnitude that we've ever faced," muses Capt. Svensson. "We've had tsunamis, but they have only affected certain parts of the world. With COVID, everyone was and is affected. So we set up an online portal on our home page where our customers could see what we were doing to protect personnel, employees and customers. Instead of getting emails they'd be redirected to that page so they could see exactly what our pandemic actions and initiatives were."

The Wilhelmsen Task Force was also mobilised, taking best practices from ports all over the world and working proactively to streamline global processes and procedures. As part of this activity, an interactive online map of COVID-19 Global Port Restrictions was created (see COVID-19 Global Port Restrictions Map (www.wilhelmsen.com) which enables users to click on a port or country and find out at a glance what the legal requirements are within that area, whether the spread of COVID-19 is increasing or decreasing, whether it's possible to receive a vaccination, and so on. "This was shared with all companies, and that was really helpful for the industry," Capt. Svensson remarks.

Wallenius Wilhelmsen and several other members of the NSA (in tandem with the IMO) have been influencing authorities in different countries to align local rules, accommodating crew welfare elements such as limiting time on board and maximising the potential for changeovers, etc. Here again, the focus on mental health is paramount. "We have had a few cases where crew members have exhibited the onset of mental problems," reflects Capt. Svensson. "I think people have become better at detecting those small nuances: we've had a lot of training on this in officer and crew seminars. In the cases we've had, we'll have meetings with the relevant persons online, making sure they're being properly taken care of and not being left on their own. We'll also seek advice from local physicians and try to get those crew members ashore as soon as possible."

Health insurance

Wallenius Wilhelmsen also supports its crews by paying for a health insurance scheme which covers families with up to four children. "Since we buy the insurance in such large volume, we get very low premiums," Capt. Svensson explains. "As an example, let's say we pay \$500 a year: but if any individual took out that insurance, it would cost them \$5,000. It's reassuring, therefore, for them to know that if something happened to them on board, their family would be well looked after."

The company has even set up its own vaccination program for seafarers in Baltimore. "Some of our local employees had family members who worked at the hospital," Capt. Svensson adds, "so we set up an agreement with them to come on board and vaccinate all the crew. We've paid for between 800 and 900 crew to be vaccinated just in Baltimore alone, and that has been extremely appreciated by crew members from countries such as the Philippines, India and Myanmar, where the rate of vaccination is extremely slow. We have also lobbied the WHO very strongly to make seafarers among the first to get vaccinated in these countries."

The example set by the likes of Wallenius Wilhelmsen is driving a wider understanding of the vital role played by seafarers, who enable the international trading of food, medicines and countless other commodities to continue. Global trade and the lifestyle we all enjoy depends on them.

Kristin Schjødt Bitnes

General Counsel in Wallenius Wilhelmsen ASA and member of the advisory Board of West of England

Kristin is the General Counsel in the Norwegian Logistic Group Wallenius Wilhelmsen. Kristin joined Wallenius Wilhelmsen in 2015, before that she worked as a Senior Legal Counsel in Stolt-Nielsen in Rotterdam, The Netherlands after having started her legal career as lawyer in the Norwegian Law Firm Simonsen Vogt Wiig in Oslo, Norway. Kristin holds a Masters of Law from the University of Oslo, Faculty of Law. She joined the advisory board of West of England in 2017. Kristin also serve as a member of the Norwegian Shipowners Association Law Committee.



WHY WAIT TO IMPLEMENT DELAY INSURANCE?

If shipping delays like the *Ever Given* grounding in the Suez Canal can't be avoided, obtaining suitable cover for loss of earnings is a vital course of action for shipowners

Claudio Blancardi

Underwriting and Marketing Director,
Nordic Marine Insurance

Hindsight, it's said, is a wonderful thing. But the phrase is often used in reaction to what was in fact an event or a combination of adverse circumstances that were foreseeable even if their precise timing and incidence were unknowns. From a marine insurance standpoint this raises the question of why so many ship operators are only galvanised into action after the fact when some event has already happened, and the financial and reputational impacts have already started to accrue.

This is why building a tier of delay insurance cover into their operational structure is an essential prerequisite for everyone involved in shipping. The six-day blockage of the Suez Canal by the grounded container ship *Ever Given* in March 2021 was a recent high-profile example of the kind of major events that can occur, but it is by no means unprecedented. Several similar groundings took place in the Suez Canal in the previous year alone, albeit with a lower order of impact on traffic, and disruptions of this nature also routinely occur on other busy shipping routes such as the Mississippi, or the Paraná River in South America.

The value of *Ever Given's* cargo was estimated at \$1 billion, and the ship operators suffered tens of thousands of dollars in costs for every day the ship was delayed. There were then the effects upon other vessels, cargoes and operators. As the shortest sea route between Europe and Asia, the Suez Canal carries approximately 12% of global trade; 300 ships were directly affected in the immediate aftermath of the grounding, as well as wider indirect delays and consequences that built up while the backlog was cleared.

Our insurance system is a dynamic entity

Severe repercussions

The point is that while the magnitude of this event was exceptional, multiple precedents suggested that such an episode was not unexpected, in much the same way that the severe repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic – with heavy freight delays and space limitations on cargo vessels – were prefaced in part by the consequences of the earlier Ebola and SARS outbreaks. It may be that, regrettably, the occurrence of future epidemics may be a case of not if, but when. The same can be said about 'force majeure' events such as a sudden commencement of

hostilities or the destruction of port facilities by cyclones or hurricanes, necessitating vessels to divert to alternative ports. However unpredictable such developments may be in terms of timing, scale and significance, the fact that they will inevitably happen is nevertheless a certainty.

To these can be added other contributory factors, such as customs complications with inadequate or erroneous paperwork, port congestion or strike action. The benefits of implementing a delay insurance program to cover the losses shipowners and charterers can expect to incur from delays caused by specific named perils are therefore obvious.

Primary Layer Loss of Earnings cover – the first 14 days

A policy such as Nordic Marine Insurance's Primary Layer Loss of Earnings cover is one example. Broadly speaking, the majority of H&M and P&I insurances which respectively protect against physical damages and liabilities nevertheless exclude loss of earnings. It's possible to obtain 'loss of hire' cover as an add-on to H&M, but this is only applicable after the first 14 days – and in many cases, the most substantial losses are likely to be suffered during that initial 14-day period.

Nordic's Primary Layer solution is designed to furnish clients with a 'buy back' option for delays excluded under standard H&M and P&I cover within the first 14 days, until 'loss of hire' cover becomes applicable.

Claudio Blancardi

Underwriting and Marketing Director,
Nordic Marine Insurance

Nordic offers this as a standalone solution, not linked to any other policy but customisable according to customers' requirements, for example for H&M or P&I perils only. The concept behind this cover is to provide a policy with no hidden charges, a fixed premium and pre-agreed daily insured amounts.

Using the Suez Canal incident to demonstrate the principle of Primary Layer Loss of Earnings cover, it's a matter of record that the operators of vessels unable to transit the canal for six days would have had to bear sizeable costs during the delay. Owners operating on the spot market, trading commodities for immediate delivery, would have no doubt exceeded the estimated voyage duration without being able to alter the freight amount. Similarly, time charterers would have been unable to take their ships off-hire, forced to continue paying hire to shipowners while their vessels sat motionless. The owners of the grounded *Ever Given* themselves would have suffered a loss of earnings for the first 14 days, as outlined above.

However, with Primary Layer delay cover in place, the primary level of earnings for both the grounded ship and the waiting vessels would have been protected. Rather than retrospective handwringing and finger-pointing, a clear-eyed acknowledgement that shipping delays are inevitable is urgently needed. Shipowners and charterers everywhere need to invest in appropriate Loss of Earnings cover. Without delay.



Visit Nordic Marine Insurance

Claudio is the Underwriting and Marketing Director at Nordic Marine Insurance, specialising in fixed premium Primary Layer Loss of Earnings Insurance and Delay Insurance. Prior to that, he worked at the Strike Club for over 19 years.



CREW WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS

Dirk Siebels
Senior Analyst,
Risk Intelligence



Gulf of Guinea

Razor wire along the railing, constant vigilance on the bridge and an armed escort vessel off the stern – operations in the Gulf of Guinea are unusual and often highly stressful for crews on merchant ships

The Gulf of Guinea is widely known as a hotspot for piracy and – as the International Maritime Bureau recently pointed out – continues to be ‘particularly dangerous for seafarers’.

Frequent reports about attacks against merchant vessels and about seafarers being taken as hostages are an understandable cause for anxiety. For ship operators, it is vital to address these issues. They should provide a realistic assessment of the situation to assist in dispelling myth and rumor, implement mitigation measures and ensure vigilance as well as regular drills. Physical measures – in line with the guidelines set out in BMP West Africa – are important, but they provide much more protection in combination with a well-trained, briefed and prepared crew.

The importance of regular drills has been highlighted by various incidents in recent years. One particularly striking example was an attack against a tanker vessel off Nigeria in 2019. The ship was targeted at dawn and the crew immediately sounded the alarm when they observed an incoming speedboat.

Well-protected vessels are less likely to be targeted

This level of vigilance allowed most crew members to assemble in the citadel, from where they were later rescued by Nigerian naval forces. However, one young cadet – who was at sea for one of his first voyages – was not familiar with the ship and unable to find the citadel. The young man was kidnapped by the attackers, who kept him in a hostage camp for several weeks before releasing him after a ransom had been paid. Had this young man been drilled correctly, it is highly likely he would have made it to the citadel and avoided being taken – obviously a far better

outcome for him but also for the vessel operator and insurer.

Ship operators should also pay attention to seemingly basic security measures; a topic which has also been highlighted frequently in recent years. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that many ships which have been attacked in the Gulf of Guinea had failed to employ effective countermeasures.

Several months ago, this problem was illustrated by an attack against an anchored tanker. Several crew members were kidnapped when the ship was boarded by armed men in the middle of the night. While it is very likely that the vessel was randomly selected, it should be noted that similar vessels at the same anchorage were fitted with razor wire and other protection measures, making it much harder to board them without being detected. The outward demonstration of preparedness is a key element of security – deterring would-be attackers from even trying to board. While these measures can take time out of an already busy crew schedule, it is critical that they understand why they are doing it and therefore that it needs to be done to a high standard rather than just a token effort.

Overall, past experiences show that well-protected vessels are less likely to be targeted and successfully boarded by opportunistic attackers. In some areas, notably off Nigeria, protection may include the use of security escort vessels, which are provided by a broad range of companies and partly manned by Nigerian Navy personnel. In addition, shipping companies must ensure an appropriate level of situational awareness, enabling them to provide regular updates about recommended routes or areas to avoid to their masters.

When physical measures are not enough and attackers are able to overcome them, it is essential that every crew member knows precisely what to do and how to find the citadel.



While such a situation is a traumatic experience – and should be treated as such in the aftermath – it is possible to avoid an even worse outcome, namely seafarers being kidnapped and held hostage for several weeks.

At the same time, ensuring a high level of crew welfare means that shipping companies must be prepared for the worst-case scenario. That includes contingency plans on the company level, ensuring a swift reaction after an incident. It is hard to predict the necessary measures, which could range from contact with the respective insurer to arranging repairs or a replacement crew on short notice. Furthermore, emergency contact details must be easily accessible to keep families informed about a hostage situation, this a be particularly difficult when crews are recruited from areas of the world which don't have the best communication networks.

By and large, it is understandable that many seafarers are anxious when their ships are operating in the Gulf of Guinea. However, the threat level is not the same everywhere, and voyages to ports in Ghana or Gabon are very different from calls at Nigerian ports or terminals. Moreover, it is possible to mitigate the risks associated with operations even in those parts of the Gulf of Guinea where the threat of attacks is severe, underlined by the large number of vessels transiting those areas every day. Finally, the relatively low number of attacks in recent months should not lead to the assumption that the threat of kidnap-for-ransom attacks has disappeared. There has been much talk of this recently, with the application to remove the Nigerian EEZ from the JWC listed areas. However, the rainy season has always been a quiet period historically, and it is only now, after the sea state dropped towards the end of September, that we will see if the local and international efforts are having an impact.

 [Click here to visit Risk Intelligence](#)

Dirk Siebels

Senior Analyst,
Risk Intelligence

Dirk is a Senior Analyst at Risk Intelligence, a Denmark-based security intelligence company where he is responsible for analysis on countries in sub-Saharan Africa. He holds a PhD from the University of Greenwich, London. His research concentrates on maritime security issues in sub-Saharan Africa, including the role of ports and maritime trade, IUU fishing, offshore energy production and the evolution of private maritime security providers.



Qwest

A Maritime Risk Management Consultancy

Qwest meets ship owners' and operators' existing and emerging needs through a range of innovative marine claims, legal, and investigative solutions.

Qwest Investigation Forensics | Care

Qwest Claims and Legal Claims | Legal | Shipmanagers | Demurrage

 Qwestmaritime.com  [Qwest Maritime](#)  [@QwestMaritime](#)

Qwest Care: CREW MENTAL HEALTH



Maintaining
a professional
momentum

Awareness of mental health issues in the maritime industry is increasing, though careful consideration of next steps is vital, writes Dr Rachel Glynn-Williams, Clinical Psychologist, Clinical Director of Recall Recover Ltd, Consultants to Qwest Care

Dr. Rachel Glynn-Williams
Clinical Psychologist
Clinical Director of Recall Recover Ltd

It is really encouraging to see that issues concerning mental health in the maritime sector are finally achieving the wider prominence they have long needed. Inevitably, Covid has had something to do with this. The plight of seafarers stranded on vessels for months on end triggered an increase of empathy and concern among many people ashore, as they encountered lockdowns and similar confinements of their own on land.

Until recent times, the issue of mariners' mental health was still overshadowed by a common but outdated perception of seafarers as a breed apart. Unhelpful views of mental health would hold anything other than hardy resilience as a sign of weakness and lack of fitness for the job. For those from certain backgrounds and cultures, it could also be a source of shame or fear. Modern views recognise that seafarers make up one of the most resilient workforces in the world, but are still human, with all that entails: nevertheless, stigma can still make it difficult to speak out.

The pandemic has given those who are land-based a sobering insight into the anguish and apprehension caused

by separation from loved ones for an undefined length of time, with restricted freedoms and limited access to recreation; conditions which come as standard for the seafarer. Maritime workers ashore have been subject to extreme restrictions, both personal and professional, which have made their welfare an important area of concern. However, for the sea-going workforce the vastly extended periods of isolation at sea, lack of shore leave, breakdown in crew changes and continued uncertainties have brought unprecedented challenges.

According to an estimate from the International Chamber of Shipping, approximately 400,000 seafarers were to all intents and purposes imprisoned on board vessels at the highest point of the pandemic, well beyond the terms of their contract. Worried about their own and their families' wellbeing, uncertain about when (or even if) they and relief personnel would be permitted to travel, and to access and leave vessels, the problem for seafarers has been exacerbated by the slow and patchy recognition from governments of seafarers as key workers, as recommended by the IMO and many maritime organisations.



Lacking therefore in even the most fundamental rights and entitlements, it's hardly surprising that crews reported an increase in depression, anxiety and even incidence of suicide. (Slišković, 2020).

Pre-existing causes for concern

However, the fact is that the pandemic merely highlighted and underscored issues that numerous maritime research bodies, charities and support organisations had already identified as causes for urgent concern. In November 2019, only a few short months before the pandemic hit, a benchmark study commissioned by the ITF Seafarers' Trust and carried out by Yale University warned of a worryingly high incidence of depression and suicidal ideation among the 1,572 serving seafarers of differing ranks and nationalities who participated in the survey. In the two-week period before taking part in the Seafarer Mental Health Study, 25% reported symptoms of depression, 20% had had thoughts of suicide or self-harm, and 17% suffered from recent anxiety.

These findings are echoed in the SIRC/IOSH Seafarers' Mental Health and Wellbeing report which noted vessel crews' predisposition to poor mental health, and the ways in which safety and efficiency can be dangerously compromised by stress and trauma. Working in a high-risk profession, miles away from family and friends, worried about a lack of job security, fearful of being criminalised for inadvertent

contravention of environmental regulations... these are all just some of the basic difficulties which unfortunately go with these sea-going occupations. The adversities quickly mount up when we receive reports of bullying, intimidation or sexual harassment, and learn of some seafarers' experiences of insufficient training, low or non-existent job satisfaction and issues with fatigue.

Maritime workers ashore have been subject to extreme restrictions, both personal and professional

Such findings unquestionably make for grim reading; but there are meaningful efforts being made to destigmatise mental health in the maritime community and turn towards areas of previous neglect. These initiatives include, for example, providing guidance to seafarers to improve and protect their mental wellbeing through self-care, and increasing social and physical recreation on board. More broadly, steps are being taken to highlight the role of companies, flags and legislative enforcement in enhancing working and living conditions. There is some momentum now towards boosting and safeguarding the mental health of seafarers, with some highly encouraging signs.

Making positive steps

Clearly, a continuum of engagements regarding mental health can now be seen across the maritime industry. Some companies may only have just begun their journey. But others' initiatives are showing traction through active engagement and a palpable enthusiasm to take things forward.

Several firms have started to make mental wellbeing conversations standard for new recruits and cadets, and repeat these on a regular basis. Some are introducing mental health champions on board each vessel, with training for all on how to have helpful conversations around mental health.

Leading the field in raising awareness and providing mental health support and guidance are organisations such as ISWAN, with their SeafarerHelp – a free, multilingual, 24-hour helpline for sailors and their families which is also available in app form. ISWAN's Mentally Healthy Ships, authored by Dr Pennie Blackburn, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, is a very welcome, professionally grounded asset for the industry, assisting shipping companies and operators to develop and deploy effective mental health policies as well as identify warning signs and respond appropriately. Increasing numbers of maritime companies, agencies and associations are reflecting on their policies and procedures, promoting mental wellbeing amongst crews and making available helplines, app-based mental health solutions and professionally devised and staffed psychological therapy services. The energy behind mental health initiatives within the maritime industry has been reflected in the encouraging increase in relevant webinars and conferences, such as the First Global Conference for Seafarer Mental Health and Wellbeing, staged in May 2021 by IMarEST (Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology). It has been a privilege for my associates and myself at Seaways Psychology Services to continue supporting seafarers throughout the Covid pandemic, remotely providing professional clinical assessment, psychological therapies and also mental health and resilience training to crews aboard vessels and shoreside staff. In addition, it has been hugely rewarding to work in creative collaboration with marine casualty investigator Capt. Terry Ogg to establish Recall Recover Ltd this year, and to include our integrated, trauma-informed

interviewing and wellbeing approaches as part of the Qwest Care product provided by Qwest Maritime.

Recall Recover Ltd – supporting seafarers at the most difficult times

At Recall Recover Ltd, we have developed a new, trauma-informed approach to marine casualty investigation interviews, which places a key emphasis on the wellbeing of seafarer witnesses and the wider crew. We know that when we experience a shocking and frightening event, the human response to stress response brings emotional, behavioural and cognitive changes, which can impact the ease with which someone can recall events for a period of time. The model of interviewing that Capt Ogg and I have developed, called TIMS® (Trauma-informed Interviewing in a Marine Setting), is designed to manage the human stress response, with the twin aims of supporting the seafarer witness whilst providing the best conditions for them to offer a more dependable and detailed account of events.

Tremendous progress has been made in raising awareness of mental health in seafarers, and maintaining that momentum is a crucial focus

Alongside TIMS®, we offer easy access to a Crew Wellbeing Continuum (CWC), providing for all crew the opportunity for psychological first aid and, where post-trauma reactions remain, ongoing and structured psychological support. Our key value at Recall Recover is that **we do what matters, as well as what works**, and we have been delighted with the industry response to our work, seeing our enthusiasm reflected back to us by our customers and colleagues. These values make Recall Recover a natural fit with Qwest Maritime's Qwest Care. Their endorsement of Recall Recover is a clear demonstration of the company's commitment to crew welfare and to innovative and effective casualty management planning.



A call for an industry-wide commitment to professional mental health in maritime

Tremendous progress has been made in raising awareness of mental health in seafarers, and maintaining that momentum is a crucial focus. It is important that as an industry we continue to support seafarers directly in the roles that they occupy, but also that this support works at every level – from task, role, crew and vessel through to company, flag and international regulation – in order to identify, remove or minimise those factors that impact upon mental wellbeing. Physical health, climate and safety on board have quite rightly become standing items across many maritime agendas, and it would be very encouraging to see mental health, with its broad, central relevance to all human factors on vessels, move towards parity with these issues which are already firmly embedded in the sector.

Mental health at sea is everyone's business, and everyone can play a part in its improvement. But this does not mean that it is easy to achieve. It can be quite a task to try navigating through the field of mental health promotion, prevention and recovery when there are so many different approaches, levels of training and types of practitioner available, with varying philosophies and traditions. It is important that organisations don't feel they have to be experts themselves in mental health, but it is also vital to know when to reach out for appropriately qualified, accredited clinical practitioners when deciding upon

and devising ways of supporting seafarers and shoreside staff.

Learning can be taken here from the aviation industry. As a result of the Germanwings murder-suicide incident in 2015, where the co-pilot responsible was found to have had unreported severe mental health difficulties, the regulatory body in aviation now requires that individuals providing mental health services must demonstrate appropriate qualifications and accreditations. Harm can be done where interventions and approaches are not informed by best available clinical practice, particularly when incidences relate to clinical issues of depression, suicide and trauma.

It is encouraging to see such interest, enthusiasm and progress being made in maritime mental health. Naturally, not all companies are at the same stage of development in their mental health considerations and offers, but more are now turning towards a positive direction. There remains unequal access for seafarers to onboard cultures and provision that make space for the ordinary human responses to what life and work present. However, by taking steps to raise awareness, understand and manage where possible the risks and facilitators to mental health for seafarers at various levels of industry – and drawing upon professional input where necessary – the benefits across the industry will be apparent.

[Click here for more information about Qwest Care](#)

References

Slišković, A. (2020) Seafarers' well-being in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study. *Work* 67 (2020) 799–809

Dr. Rachel Glynn-Williams

Consultant Clinical Psychologist,
Clinical Director of Recall Recover Ltd
and Seaways Psychology Services

Rachel qualified as a Clinical Psychologist from Liverpool University in 2000. Working in the UK's National Health Service, she became the clinical manager of a psychological therapies service, also specialising in psychological trauma after industrial and civil personal injury in her own independent practice.

Married to a seafarer, Rachel has experienced life on board different vessels. Inspired by the resilience of the seagoing community, she established a practice in maritime psychology which provides professional psychological assessment, therapies, training and critical incident stress services to seafarers and shore-based staff. In collaboration with Captain Terry Ogg and QWEST, Rachel has developed an innovative, trauma-informed approach to marine casualty work.



Qwest brings together the insurance expertise of the West of England and the innovative legal and consultancy skills of C Solutions to offer the maritime industry a suite of tailored products to cover any legal and financial needs not covered by traditional P&I cover.

WELLNESS AT SEA

Sara Baade
CEO,
Sailors' Society

There's no vaccine against
poor mental health

Since the pandemic hit, more than half of rotational workers, including seafarers, are suffering increased stress and anxiety, according to the SOS Foundation and Affinity Health at Work study 'Mental Health and the Remote Rotational Workforce' (2021).

Seafaring was already one of the most challenging jobs in the world, and now the pandemic has imposed huge levels of stress onto the maritime industry and the seafarers who keep it going.

The crew change crisis and extended contracts have led to many seafarers feeling exhausted and worried about their families back home. The daily challenges of a career at sea, such as accessing health care, vaccines or a visit to pick up essentials, have been exacerbated.

With human error accounting for more than 80 per cent of all accidents at sea in pre-pandemic times, fatigue, stress and depression on board don't just pose a threat to seafarer mental health, but also to the effective running of a ship and the safety of its crew.

As a maritime charity that has supported seafarers, their families and communities for more than 200 years, Sailors' Society understands the importance of investing in crew welfare alongside the more traditional skills and knowledge necessary for a career at sea.

With more than 10 years of experience in wellness training and industry-leading work on mental health, we saw the need for a dedicated programme and launched Wellness at Sea in 2015. Combining both proactive and reactive mental health support for seafarers, Wellness at Sea aims to empower seafarers of all ranks to look after their own and others' wellbeing across every area of their lives, giving them the best opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling career at sea.

Since its launch, Wellness at Sea has been making waves, providing wellness training to more than 34,000 seafarers to date.

The programme has developed to offer a wide range of welfare solutions beyond the original training to include e-learning, coaching, dedicated helplines, and peer-to-peer support.

Working closely with company partners, Sailors' Society develops a bespoke package to fit individual needs and budgets with a view to empowering seafarers to keep physically and mentally fit for a long and productive career.

Seaspan Ship Management has been using Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea programme to support their staff since its launch six years ago. In that time, they've seen huge progress which they've attributed to the programme, with retention rates increasing from 88 per cent to 96 per cent.

Since its launch, Wellness at Sea has been making waves, providing wellness training to more than 34,000 seafarers to date

Crew motivation has improved and there's been a positive impact on the operational performance of their fleet. They've also reported that their crew has really appreciated having a confidential helpline to use to talk to someone about how they're feeling.

So, looking after crew wellbeing is not only the right thing to do morally – it also makes good business sense.

And the stats back it up.





Earlier this year, the preliminary findings of a psychology PhD research project investigating the mental health of seafarers found that Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea programme reduced anxiety and sadness.

Researcher Lauren Brown conducted the analysis with two groups of crew, from different nationalities. The seafarers had all been at sea for less than two years, serving on a number of vessels.

One of the groups had attended a Wellness at Sea workshop and were part of a Wellness at Sea peer support programme, while the other had not attended any kind of training on wellness or mental health.

Nearly 10 per cent fewer seafarers who had taken part in Wellness at Sea reported feeling anxious or worried at work on a regular basis than those who had not attended any wellness training, while 14 per cent fewer of the wellness-trained crew reported regularly feeling sad at work.

The seafarers who had been through Wellness at Sea also showed a better understanding of mental health and were less likely to stigmatise mental illness.

Breaking down these barriers is crucially important – it means individuals who are struggling are more likely to seek help if they need it.

These findings reflect what we have seen across thousands of seafarers who have completed Wellness at Sea training: even a small amount of training and support can make a big difference to a seafarer's mental health.

Breaking down these barriers is crucially important – it means individuals who are struggling are more likely to seek help if they need it

At Sailors' Society, we're really heartened that more and more companies are seeing the value of investing in good crew welfare.

As part of our Wellness work, we developed our free 27-week Wellness at Sea Awareness Campaign in response to the pandemic last year. It was so successful, that we extended it to offer support and information not just to seafarers, but to their families and shore staff. More than 50 organisations have signed up to the campaign this time around, including

Swire Pacific Offshore, Fleet Management Ltd, Carnival Cruise Line, V. Ships and Wah Kwong.

We're also updating the Wellness at Sea e-learning platform and making it free for all seafarers when it launches next year so that it's easier for companies to get on board and protect their crews' mental health.

As reported in Waypoints, Issue 1, West of England P&I has generously committed to a 10-year partnership with Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea programme, enabling our charity to continue to care for the mental wellbeing, and thereby safety, of the world's seafarers.

There may be no vaccine against poor mental health; but if we work together to give seafarers, their families and shore staff advice and support, we can help turn the tide on this mental health crisis, protecting the future of our industry and the people it relies upon.

Sara Baade

CEO,
Sailors' Society

Sara joined Sailors' Society as CEO in September 2020, bringing with her a strong background in management and strategic policy, as well as extensive experience in leading an international welfare charity from her previous role as CEO of The Army Families Federation. Her career includes working as a senior civil servant for the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, a directorship at the charity UK Skills and substantial experience in investment banking. Sara lives in Berkshire in the UK with her 11-year-old twins.



Click here to view Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea video, funded by West

- Sailors' Society's emergency helpline can be reached on +1 938 222 8181 or sailors-society.org/helpline
- To find out more about partnering with Sailors' Society on its Wellness at Sea Awareness Campaign or the wider Wellness at Sea programme, visit: www.sailors-society.org/wellness-at-sea-home or contact Johan Smith on wellness@sailors-society.org



OFFICE PROFILE

In this issue of Waypoints, it's the turn of West of England's New York office to share the spotlight

West of England's New York office, situated on Avenue of the Americas in the commercial heart of Manhattan, represents a comparatively new expansion of West's global office network.

Established in 2017 to service the Club's US and Canadian members and headed by CEO Paul Barnes, the office was expanded in 2019 when professional claims staff were brought in to provide same or near time-zone assistance to West's Members across North and South America.

Emily McCulloch (Head of Claims, Americas) is in charge of the Claims department, having relocated from London at the beginning of 2020. Emily combines her background as a Syndicate Manager for another IG Club with the experience and insights she gained as a lawyer working for a law firm in the City of London.

While the London office continues to provide support as and when necessary, specialist US flag claims servicing is

handled by Claims Manager Alton Peralta. With his two-decade career as a claims adjuster in the US market, Alton brings detailed knowledge of marine liabilities in the USA and particularly regarding crew claims related to the Jones Act.

Our New York office also liaises closely with the brokerage community throughout the North American market in support of the dedicated US/Canada underwriting team in London led by Underwriting Director Simon Parrott.

We're pleased to say that the office is continuing to grow apace, reflecting the steady growth in the Club's North and South American mutual and fixed premium tonnage.

But this growth is just the continuation of a long-standing relationship which West has enjoyed for many years with owners, operators and charterers in the Americas, some of whom have been entered with the Club for more than half a century. Our Americas membership now represents about 20% of the Club's

entered vessels and includes leading players across many shipping sectors.

Our Americas membership now represents about 20% of the Club's entered vessels and includes leading players across many shipping sectors

As well as providing claims service and risk management advice to our Members in the Americas, West's New York office also offers a variety of value-add services such as webinars and additional claims training facilities, in-depth contract review and negotiation guidance, as well as comprehensive loss prevention advice jointly handled by the New York office and our London-based Loss Prevention team.

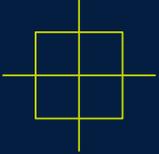


RIGHT: Paul Barnes, left, CEO of West of England's New York office, with Claims Manager Alton Peralta

BOTTOM RIGHT: West of England's New York office is situated in the commercial heart of Manhattan

BELOW: Emily McCulloch (Head of Claims, Americas) is in charge of the Claims department





WEST

Luxembourg

31 Grand-Rue
L-1661 Luxembourg
G.D. Luxembourg
T +352 4700671

UK (London)

One Creechurch Place
Creechurch Lane
London EC3A 5AF
T +44 20 7716 6000

Greece (Piraeus)

Akti Miaouli 95
1st Floor
185 38 Piraeus
T +30 210 4531969

Hong Kong

1302 China Evergrande Centre
38 Gloucester Road
Wanchai, Hong Kong
T +852 2529 5724

Singapore

77 Robinson Road
Level 15-01, Robinson 77
Singapore 068896
T +65 6416 4890

USA (New York)

1350 Avenue of the Americas
3rd Floor
New York
NY 10019
T +1 917 733 2584

Follow us on   