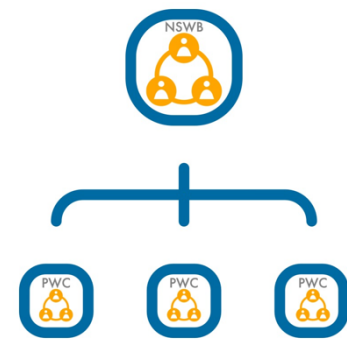


## BACKGROUND

The Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) structure is recognised as the most advanced, coordinated welfare board system in the world. The MNWB and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) pledged to boost the welfare of seafarers and fishermen after signing a formal agreement in May 2021.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formally designates the MNWB as the UK's National Seafarers' Welfare Board in accordance with the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. It also sets out ways both will work together to coordinate their approach to the provision of welfare for seafarers and fishermen. In recognition of an already strong relationship, this formal agreement demonstrates the UK Government's ongoing commitment to seafarers' and fishermen's welfare and has most recently included support to get crews home during the pandemic.

As National Seafarers' Welfare Board (NSWB), MNWB maintains 16 Port Welfare Committees (PWCs) covering all UK ports and Gibraltar. It also provides remote support to Overseas Territories within the Red Ensign Group. With a combined membership of 360 people and each meeting three times a year, the committees continue to serve as an important platform for regional maritime partnerships to monitor and improve the quality of welfare services for seafarers. Membership consists of representatives of ship owners, seafarers' unions and maritime charities along with port authorities, port health, police, pilots, local authorities and other organisations involved directly, or indirectly, with the welfare of seafarers.



## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Ensure an integrated approach to the provision of welfare to seafarers and the most effective use of MCA and MNWB resources and expertise in order to comply with seafarer welfare provisions of MLC, 2006 and C188 Work in Fishing Convention.
- Help promote collaboration at national, regional and local levels to ensure that effective procedures are in place and implemented with regard to promoting seafarers' welfare within the UK.
- Keep under review the adequacy of existing welfare facilities in appropriate ports, monitor the need for the provision of additional facilities and withdrawal of the use of under-utilised facilities.
- Promote awareness of each organisation's role in the provision of welfare to seafarers and fishers to improve collaboration and communication where necessary.

- Help to ensure that no seafarer or fisher is left without welfare support in the context of the responsibilities of the UK Government as set out in ILO MLC, 2006 and C188
- Promote co-operation with other Member States of the ILO to promote the welfare of seafarers and fishers at sea and in port.

Working with our constituent members, the MCA and the Department for Transport, our aim is support and equip those organisations that provide front line welfare services to all seafarers and fishers visiting UK ports.

Although we were appointed the UK's National Seafarers' Welfare Board last year, in practice we have been fulfilling this role since we were founded in 1948. The recognition by the UK Government and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) places an even greater emphasis on improving the welfare of seafarers and fishers as required by MLC, 2006 and the C188 Work in Fishing Convention.

## GLOBAL WELFARE BOARD NETWORK

In 2015 ISWAN established the International Port Welfare Partnership programme, which aimed to establish welfare boards/port welfare committees in other countries. The programme was hugely successful, with new welfare boards being established in 11 countries and over 140 expressions of interest being received from countries and ports wanting support in establishing welfare boards. Since then, over a hundred new initiatives have been started in ports around the world.

To date, 101 countries have signed up to the MLC, which has been described as the seafarers' Bill of Rights. The convention makes provision for a range of entitlements for seafarers, including issues of work, life onboard, payment of wages, shore leave, repatriation and medical care. Those States that have ratified the Convention must comply with the provisions of the document.

One such provision relates to welfare boards. Standard A4.4 states that:



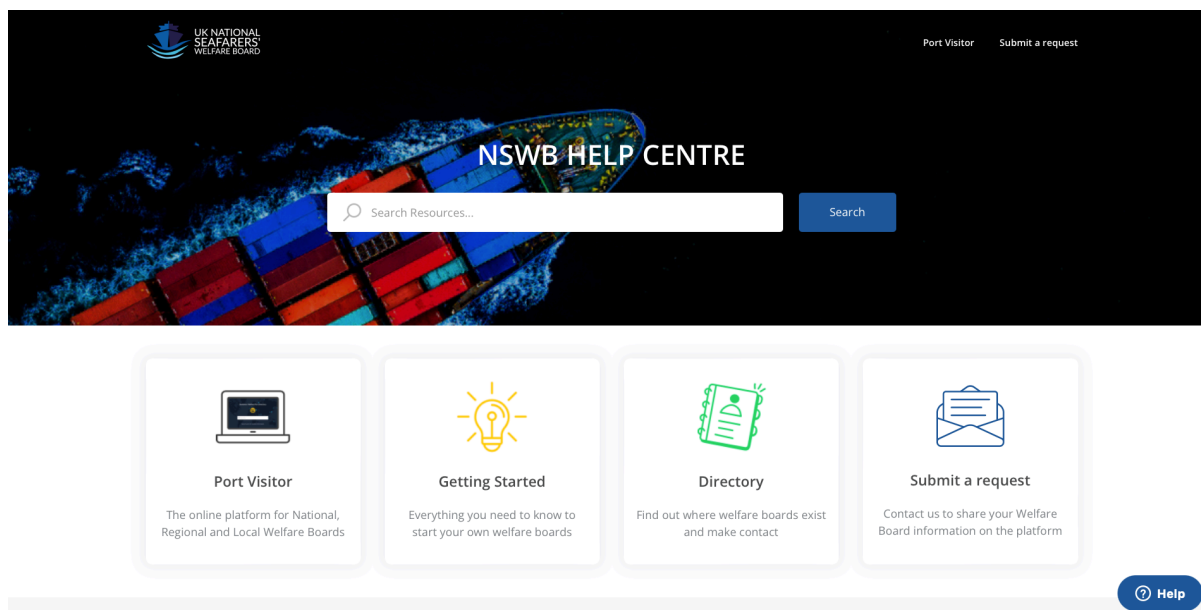
Each Member shall encourage the establishment of welfare boards which shall regularly review welfare facilities and services to ensure that they are appropriate in the light of changes in the needs of seafarers resulting from technical, operational and other developments in the shipping industry.



We recognise the importance of national seafarers' welfare boards in building the network of local welfare boards. It is through raising awareness of the needs of seafarers at national level that the establishment of local initiatives will be encouraged. To that end, Merchant Navy Welfare Board is collaborating with other Member States of the ILO to promote the welfare of seafarers and fishers at sea and in port and establish national seafarers' welfare boards.

## NSWB SUPPORT

MNWB has responsibility for sixteen port welfare committees providing oversight of welfare provision in 57 category 1 ports, 68 category 2 ports, and almost 100 minor ports. Our agreement with the UK Government states that we should promote the welfare of seafarers and fishers to other Member States, which we do through the NSWB Help Centre, telephone & email support and, where appropriate, through direct support in countries that require consultancy services.



If you are interested in talking to MNWB please use the Help button on the NSWB Help Centre or by calling +44 (0)2380 337799.



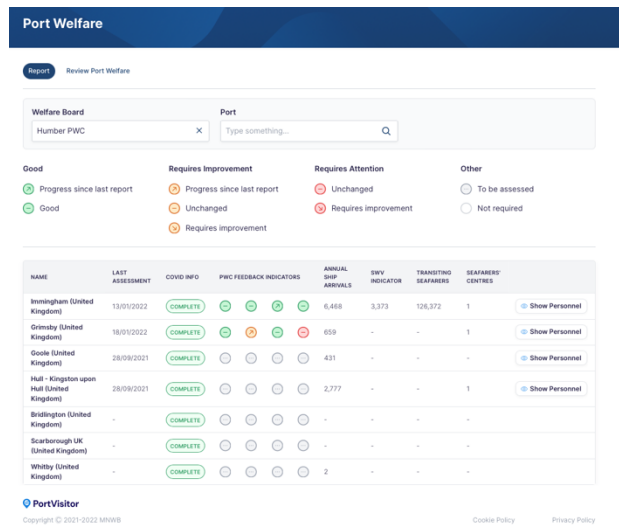
## NSWB TRAINING

In 2023, MNWB will be developing a training programme specifically for Member States that want to establish a National Seafarers' Welfare Board and local/regional Port Welfare Committees. The training will be of particular interest to countries where no existing welfare board structure exists but will also provide support to those already engaged in establishing either national or local welfare boards.

It is anticipated that the development work will be completed by the middle of 2023, with the first training course available in Quarter 3. Once available, further information will be posted on the NSWB Help Centre.

## PORT VISITOR

The Port Visitor platform brings the whole sector together by providing a set of tools for national seafarers' welfare boards, port welfare committees and front line welfare providers. It has been developed by MNWB to make it easier to track progress of welfare provision, identify gaps in services and assist with Article 22 reporting into the ILO. The platform provides intelligence about ports, welfare provision and ship movements that enables multiple stakeholders to be better informed about the needs of seafarers.



It is the only data resource providing combined information to multiple stakeholders about the availability, range and quality of welfare services in the world's 5000 major sea ports and has the potential to change the way that seafarers access support and how welfare is provision is prioritised.

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Bronze Accredited Port

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