



Department
for Transport

From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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Captain Derek Chadburn
Master, The Honourable Company of Master
Mariners

Captain Ian McNaught CVO MNM FNI
Master, Trinity House

Captain John Lloyd CMMar FNI
Chief Executive, The Nautical Institute

14 April 2021

Dear Captain Chadburn, Captain McNaught and Captain Lloyd,

Thank you for your letter of 6 April to me and the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office about the plight of seafarers across the world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Let me begin by reiterating the UK Government's commitment to resolving the crew change crisis. Given the vital role that seafarers will continue to play in the recovery and revival of the global economy I am deeply concerned that many are still facing obstacles to getting home or onboard vessels. It is essential that we do all we can to ensure their safety and wellbeing and the Minister for Maritime, Robert Courts MP, and officials in the Department are focussed on this as a matter of high priority.

As the first state to declare seafarers as keyworkers, this Government welcomes the Neptune Declaration. We especially recognise the importance of finding workable solutions to ease the transit and transfer of crew across all countries while the pandemic persists. In March the UK introduced exemptions relating to quarantine for seafarers across the UK, albeit with some variations in respect of individual countries. These measures were introduced with the specific intention of ensuring that there were as few obstacles as possible in the way of seafarers needing to transit the UK, to make crew change and relief possible while also keeping the general population safe.

We also acknowledge the concerns raised in the circular letter of 25 March from the International Maritime Organization regarding the vaccination of seafarers. The Department for Transport and Department for Health and Social Care are actively engaged in resolving this very issue. The UK will also look to continue its leadership in international forums and working with organisations including your own to find a way forward that respects the public health protection measures in place in individual states while ensuring that the mental and physical health of our seafarers is prioritised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT