

the  
seafarers'  
charity



The Difference We Made  
Impact Report

2023



# Introduction from the Chief Executive

## Deborah Layde



Take a look at our Impact Report to see what we've achieved over the last year. Our 2023 Report highlights our progress on our path towards our Vision – a world where seafarers and their families are free of need and disadvantage – but our feet are also firmly on the ground.

Opportunities abound for seafarers during their maritime careers – it is a fantastic profession giving you incredible experiences. But like many professions, there are also times when you need help if your employer can't or won't provide that assistance. And it can be tough adjusting to life on shore during retirement. That, of course, is where charities or NGOs can assist.

At The Seafarers' Charity, we fund the essential cost of a strong network of maritime welfare services across the global seafaring sector, and – crucially – tackle

seafarer hardship in all its forms; at sea and on land. In 2023, we awarded funding of £2.4m to support a diverse range of partner organisations to deliver vital, targeted help where it's needed most. These services range from ship visiting, debt advice, hardship grants, relationship counselling, and support for victims of sexual violence and harassment at sea. Read on to find out more.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Layde'.







# Our vision, mission and values

## Who we are

The Seafarers' Charity has been improving the lives of those who work at sea, and their families, for over 100 years.

Established in 1917 as The King George's Fund for Sailors, to support the families of seafarers lost at sea during World War One, we support seafarers throughout their seafaring careers and beyond. We are the largest independent grant funder of maritime welfare charities – with at least £2m in funding injected into supporting the safety and welfare of seafarers each and every year.

Our **vision** is a world where seafarers and their families are free from need and disadvantage.

Our **mission** is to tackle the disadvantages of seafaring life by leading collaboration, funding and advocacy to improve seafarers' lives.

We're uniquely placed to deliver on our mission because of our scale, history, independence, insight, influence, strong connections within the sector, and convening power.

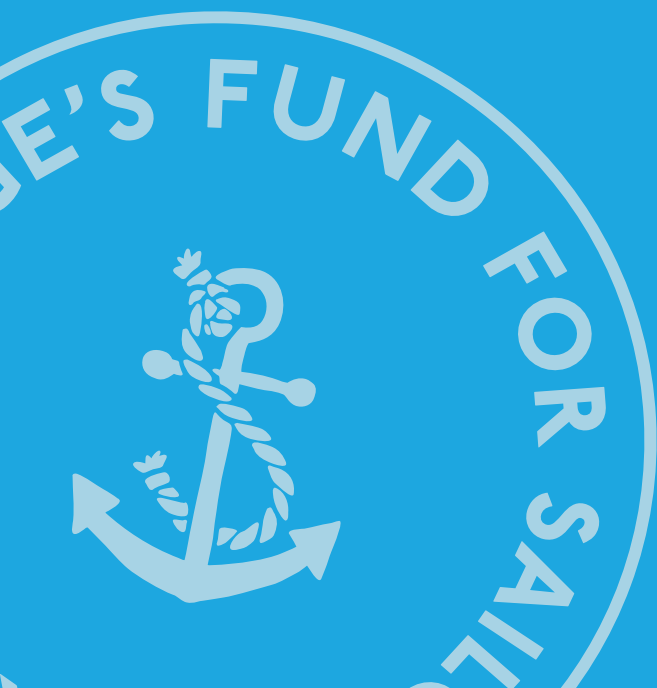
Crucially, we continue to be an organisation that is proud of not shying away from tackling difficult and complex systemic challenges – we fund research to understand the issues we work on, and then we use our voice, our convening power, and our willingness to collaborate, to bring positive change for seafaring communities. Through this approach, we work by – and exemplify – our **values**. We are:

**Driven by integrity**

**Innately collaborative**

**Proudly innovative**

**Bold in our decisions and actions**



## The 'ecosystem of support'

Our history, independence, scale, our networks and insights across the maritime sector, and our mission-driven team, mean we are uniquely placed to deliver impact for seafarers, globally.

The Seafarers' Charity is at the **centre of an ecosystem of support** for seafarers – committed to making the whole system stronger and more resilient through our fundraising and impactful grant-making.

To bolster this ecosystem and deliver wider benefit across the maritime sector, we convene, commission research, share knowledge, and use our voice to advocate for seafarers.

We help other organisations form partnerships, and we constantly horizon-scan for hidden or under-served issues to address, focused on preventing hardship before it arises.



“  
The Seafarers' Charity  
is at the heart of an  
ecosystem of support  
within the maritime  
sector.”



# Proud of who we support and how

We are an independent charity – without influence from governments, vessel owners or trade bodies – that is proud to support seafarers throughout their careers and beyond. This independence affords us a brave voice in speaking out on complex, hard-to-solve issues in the sector.

Our history, knowledge and security as a charity offers us a platform from which to offer long-term strategic support and insight. Our support is holistic – we know family and community is vital to a rich life, and a key component of protecting seafarer wellbeing is ensuring that the wider maritime ecosystem of support is flourishing.

**“ The word ‘thank you’ just doesn’t seem enough for all the appreciation I feel for the Charity for supporting me and my child. I dread to think of what would have happened without their support. ”**

**Caroline, an ex-RN seafarer and a single mum, with severe mental health issues, a beneficiary of Naval Children’s Charity**





# What we do

Our two central pillars are **fundraising** and impactful **grant-making**.

For over 100 years, we have been the central fundraiser for maritime welfare. As a truly independent charity, we always put seafarer welfare first.

We raise funds in order to make impactful grants, informed by our deep knowledge of the sector. We are the only global maritime grant-funder that supports anyone who works at sea, whatever their seafaring profession.

By celebrating and sharing the results of our grant-making, we aim to continuously increase our fundraising and continuously grow our impact.



# Our strategy

Our strategy looks ahead to 2030, setting a clear direction of travel for our work to ensure seafarers can thrive, wherever they are and whatever their maritime profession.

Put simply, we believe a career at sea should be fulfilling, rewarding, safe, and free from the unique hardships that can be part of a life onboard. Everything we do is about charting a course to make this a reality.

We want to drive improvements in the lives of seafarers globally – these are set out as our five strategic outcomes to support long-term impact, and achieve:



**Enhanced financial resilience**



**Better working lives at sea**



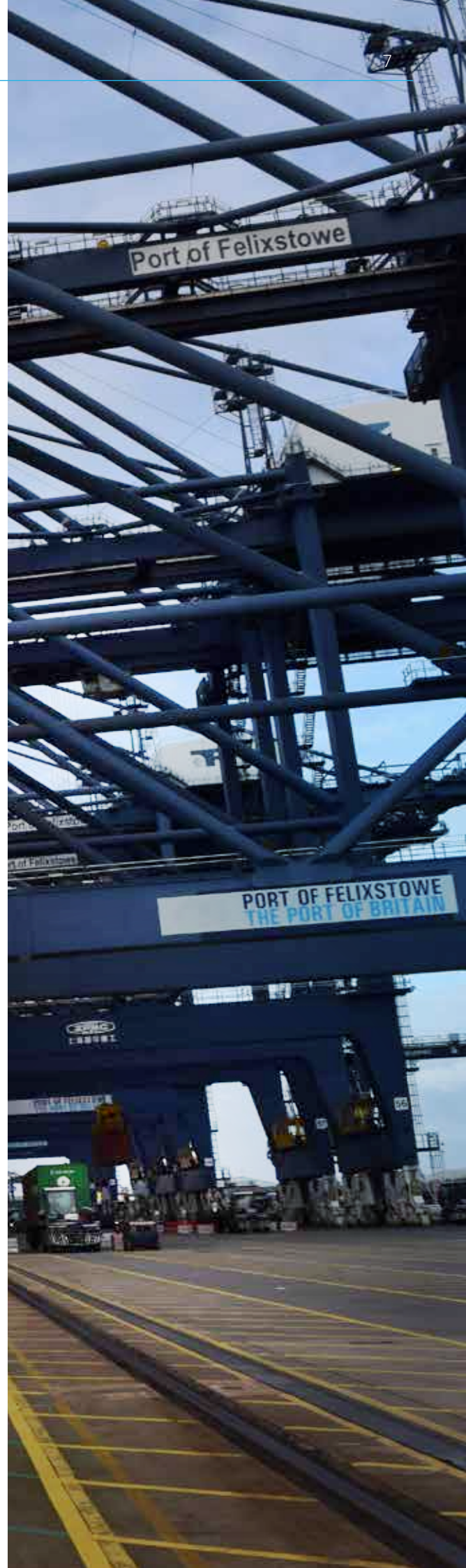
**Improved health & wellbeing**



**Increased social justice**



**Safer working lives at sea**





# The impact of your donations in 2023

**67**  
grants

awarded to

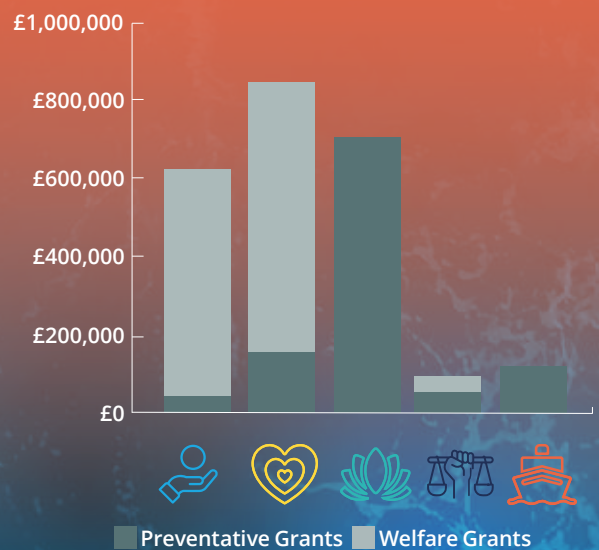
**50**  
organisations  
totalling more  
than

**£2.4m**

to support the safety and welfare of seafarers, whether working or retired, in many different ways and with a wide range of welfare and support services, from ship visiting, debt advice, hardship grants, to relationship counselling and support for victims of sexual violence and harassment at sea.

- **£2.3m** of the funds were awarded to UK registered charities

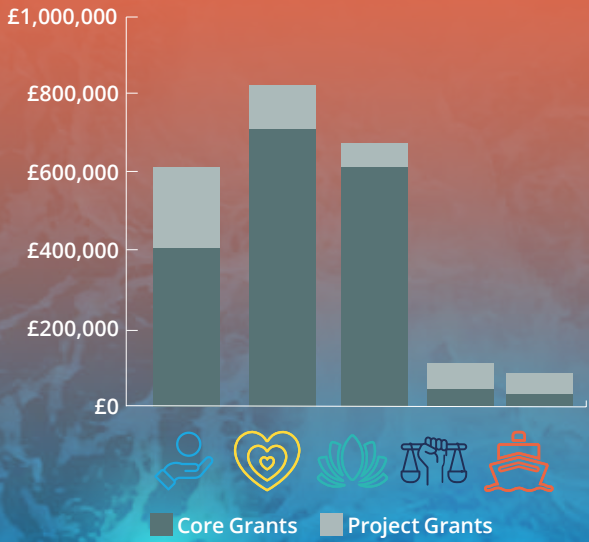
## Preventative vs Welfare Grants



- **£2m** paid for welfare services such as ship visiting and hardship grants to UK registered charities
- **£0.4m** paid for preventative services which aim to address systemic problems at the root cause such as bullying, sexual harassment and safety improvements

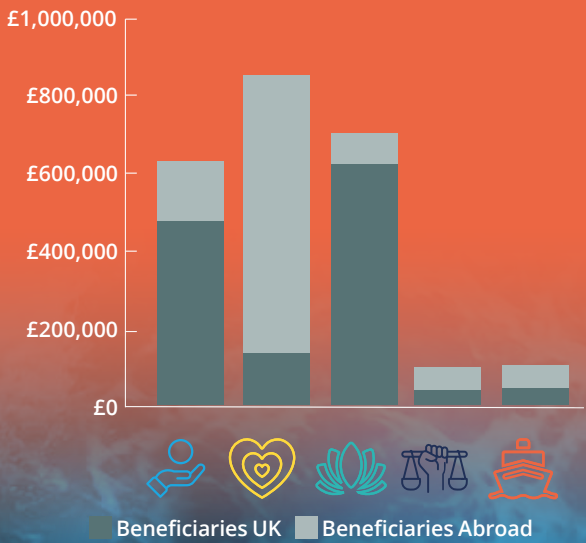


### Core vs Project Grants



- **£1.9m** contributed to core costs
- **£0.5m** supported bespoke projects

### Beneficiaries Supported in the UK vs Abroad



- **£1.3m** of grants supported services to UK seafarers only



**602,475**  
total number of  
people supported

# Highlights of our impact



## Enhanced financial resilience

Seafarers and their families, at work and in retirement, have access to confidential and independent advice, information and financial help during challenging times, which can support their economic resilience and build independence.

We deliver this through information and advice lines, hardship and welfare grants, as well as access to business support for fishers.

# £629,586

total awarded

# 12

grants

awarded to

# 12

organisations

# 2,935

beneficiaries supported



## Examples of grants awarded:

- **South Western Fish Producer Organisation - £25,000 (co-funded by the Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust - £10,000).**

Funding to establish a means-tested Fisher Apprentice Discretionary Fund that can be accessed by apprentices experiencing financial difficulty which would otherwise prevent them from completing an 18-month fisher apprenticeship programme.
- **Naval Children's Charity - £100,000**

Funding for bespoke services that respond to the unique needs of the children or young people of those serving in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Reserves.
- **Mortrans Welfare Fund - £20,000**

Assistance for displaced seafarers who continue to suffer after the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam and subsequent flooding caused loss of homes and livelihoods in Ukraine in July 2023.



## Empowering lives: a story of strength and compassion



Michael\*, a Royal Fleet Auxiliary veteran, was medically discharged in 2011.

Since then, his wife and three daughters faced a series of challenges, including poor mental health, the COVID-19 pandemic, bereavement, as well as concerns about home safety and debt. Despite receiving some state benefits, their fixed income fell short of meeting their household's diverse needs.

Naval Children's Charity, our delivery partner, stepped in to significantly impact their lives. They offered emotional support and practical advice, ensuring no aspect of their struggles went unaddressed. Michael's caseworker formed a robust bond with him, providing dedicated, person-centred support.

Recognising the unique challenges of each family member, the Charity extended its financial aid, allocating a grant to address one of the daughter's needs. She received help ranging from clothing to educational support. A winter utility grant also helped relieve the burden of heightened energy costs, while a grocery grant ensured the family could stock up on essentials.

These monthly grants have proven to be a lifeline for Michael's family grappling with a tight budget. In the face of rising costs and limited financial flexibility, the funding we provided to Naval Children's Charity has become their beacon of hope.

*\*Name changed for privacy reasons*



**“ The charity provided tailored financial aid to each family member, addressing their specific needs. One of Michael's daughters was awarded a grant for clothing. A winter utility grant was given to help with rising energy costs. He and his family are grateful for the support. ”**

Naval Children's Charity



## Better working lives at sea

People working at sea are valued as key workers. They work within sustainable and ethical supply chains and are the backbone of the global economy.

We will deliver this through virtual and port-based welfare services via an international chain of seafarer centres, and ship visitors.

**£852,993**  
total awarded

**19**  
grants

awarded to

**12**  
organisations

**215,176**

beneficiaries supported

## Examples of grants awarded:



- **Stella Maris – £120,000**  
Grant to support and expand Stella Maris' welfare provision and ship visiting programme for seafarers and fishers across UK ports.
- **International Seafarers' Welfare & Assistance Network (ISWAN) – £127,355 (in partnership with ITF Seafarers Trust and TK Foundation for a three-year period)**  
Funding for SeafarerHelp, a free, confidential, multilingual 24/7, 365 days per year helpline available to the estimated 1.6m international seafarers and their families.
- **Sailors' Society – £65,000**  
Funding to support Sailors' Society's plans to build its capacity for a virtual 24/7 approach to support seafarers and their families.



## The MT Heroic Idun



On Stephania's fourth birthday, her father, Xavier, and his crewmates had already been detained in Nigeria for three months, accused of oil theft and faking a piracy attack.

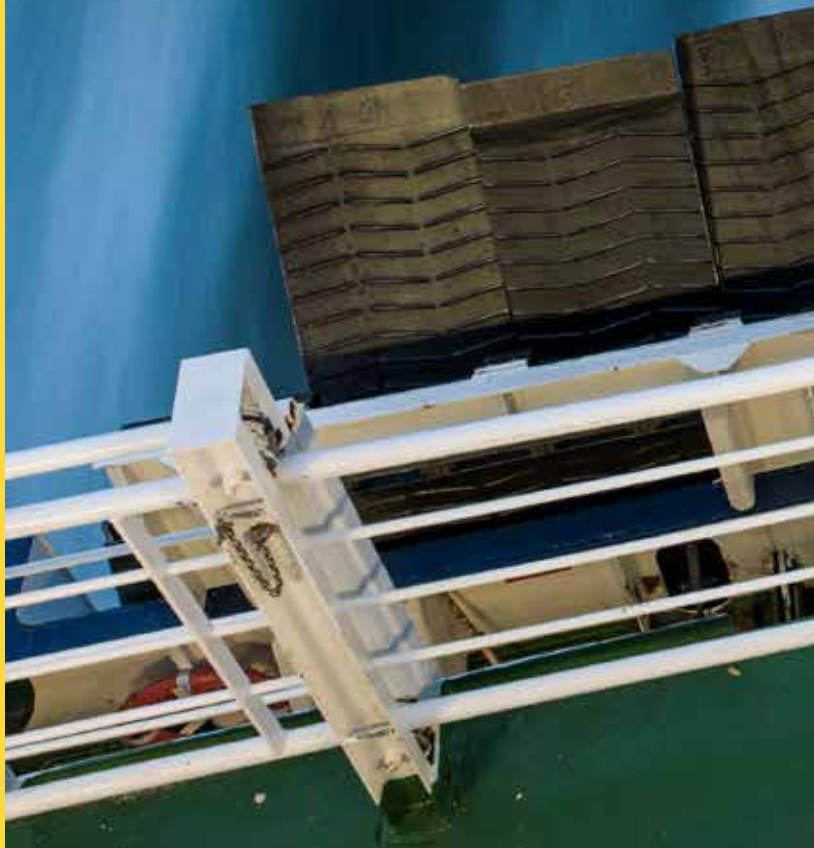
It would take seven more months before Stephania could have her birthday celebrations with her father by her side. All 26 crew members on the MT Heroic Idun were separated from their families due to a political dispute far from home, leaving their loved ones confused, lonely, and frightened.

The crew came from Poland, the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka. They'd all had their phones confiscated and couldn't disembark from their vessel. They were isolated and traumatised. The Sailors' Society's Crisis Response Team, co-funded by The Seafarers' Charity, were able to establish and maintain contact with the crew over their 10-month ordeal, until the dispute was settled. They were able to return home.

The dedicated Crisis Team have provided unwavering and invaluable support to both crew members and families during this time.

**// Stephania insisted she wouldn't celebrate her birthday until her dad returned home. At four years old, she couldn't understand why he wasn't home sooner to be with her. //**

**Sailors' Society**





## Improved health & wellbeing

Seafarers and their families can obtain health and welfare services that support their mental and physical health and wellbeing at the appropriate time and location; onboard and ashore, while at sea, and during retirement. This includes suitable retirement accommodation in the community of their choice.

We deliver this through mental and physical health and wellbeing support, as well as accommodation and care homes, and initiatives to tackle loneliness and support relationships.

**£699,355**  
total awarded

**21**  
grants

awarded to

**18**  
organisations

**22,565**

beneficiaries  
supported

## Examples of grants awarded:



- **Safer Waves – £24,000 (in partnership with UK P&I Club and TK Foundation)**  
Grant to employ the charity's first ever member of staff to provide services to merchant seafarers who have experienced sexual harassment, gender discrimination or sexual assault while working at sea.
- **Hounds for Heroes – £12,500**  
Funding to support advanced specialist training journey for eight puppies to become assistance dogs to support ex-armed forces veterans.
- **Cobhair Bharraigh SCIO – £15,000**  
Funding to support the delivery of services at Cobhair Bharraigh to improve the quality of life for elderly seafarers living with mental, physical or sensory impairment who are isolated, lonely or frail in the Western Isles, Scotland.
- **Scottish Nautical Welfare Society (SNWS) – £53,000**  
Funding to support SNWS's quarterly grants to the charity's beneficiaries, offering financial assistance and allowing the Society to maintain regular personal contact with social interaction through their Home Visitors and support with hospital admissions, visits and discharge.



## Reclaiming hope after homelessness



Douglas\*, a retired Merchant Navy mariner, found himself at the challenging crossroads of homelessness and despair.

After a relationship breakdown and poor financial management, Douglas's life transitioned from a life at sea to sofa-surfing.


Upon retirement, he and his wife struggled with the constant togetherness. Since she had always handled family finances, he felt lost after their marriage ended. Douglas, who had devoted his prime years to the vast and unpredictable oceans, now found himself sleeping on a friend's sofa.

In the depths of his despair, Douglas found a lifeline extended by the SNWS. With unwavering compassion, they helped him reclaim his life and dignity. Through a combination of grants and their holistic, community-driven approach, the charity not only secured a roof over Douglas's head but also furnished his new home. They went the extra mile, ensuring he had access to essential items like clothing, toiletries, and food.

They were able to do this with funding from The Seafarers' Charity.

Douglas, having reclaimed his independence, remains connected with the SNWS. Their continued support ensures he receives access to the vital service.

*\*Name changed for privacy reasons*

A large cargo ship is shown at sea, with several blue shipping containers stacked on its deck. The ship's superstructure, including a white tower with a searchlight, is visible against a clear sky. The water is dark blue with some whitecaps.

**// The funding received from The Seafarers' Charity provides hope and aid to those navigating the challenging waters of homelessness. //**



## Increased social justice

Seafarers and their families have access to welfare services and programmes that are responsive to the unique needs of working at sea and provide support during retirement. This includes respect for diversity and cultural differences, reducing the fear of bullying or harassment, and supporting human rights.

We deliver this through access to services and outreach programmes, as well as diversity and inclusivity. We will encourage understanding of the concept of human rights at sea.

# £96,700

total awarded

## 7

grants

awarded to

## 5

organisations

## 250

beneficiaries supported

## Examples of grants awarded:



- Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC) – £36,000**  
 Funding for the Sea Cadets' national hardship bursary programme for young people from hard-to-reach communities and economically challenged families to access programmes otherwise beyond their means.
- The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust – £1,500**  
 Installation of a plaque in the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel memorial garden to commemorate those in the Royal and Merchant Navies who perished in the Falkland's War.
- Merchant Navy Welfare Board – £3,000**  
 Funding for an Equity, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Pilot Project co-created and co-funded by a cohort of maritime charities, including The Seafarers' Charity.





## Safer working lives at sea

Seafarers are kept safe and return from their seafaring voyages without experiencing accidents or harm.

We deliver this through supporting better safety practices, risk reduction and enhanced safety culture.



**£122,934**

total awarded

**8**

grants

awarded to

**7**

organisations

**361,549**

beneficiaries supported

## Examples of grants awarded:

- **The Workboat Association – £500**  
Funding for the production of a range of flash cards to be used to train and test seafarers on emergency response vessels.
- **University of Southampton (Wolfson Unit MTIA) – £20,000**  
Funding to build a typical model scale catamaran (under 10 metres), assess its survivability by physical testing and conduct stability tests with fishermen in attendance to develop evidence to influence safety standards.
- **CHIRP Charitable Trust – £55,000**  
To fund the core costs of the CHIRP Maritime programme and its share of central activities which enable, facilitate and support the maritime programme, e.g. administrative, HR and IT support costs.

# Spotlight on:

## Influence and Research

### Empowering women seafarers: addressing welfare needs and promoting safety



In March, we unveiled our new funded research from the Seafarers International Research Centre at Cardiff University, shedding light on the challenges faced by women working on cargo ships, including isolation and fear of sexual violence.

As a result, initiatives are underway to recruit more female ship visitors, provide essential feminine products at seafarer centres, and proactively check in on women known to be part of a vessel's crew.

Also, we proudly funded the Sailors Society's peer support for women seafarers and Salute Her UK's trauma counselling programme.

### Elevating superyacht crew welfare: collaborative solutions for industry enhancement

Another increasing area of concern and newly identified need is the welfare of crew working on superyachts.

We, in partnership with UK Sailing Academy (UKSA), convened two Supersyacht Crew Welfare Roundtables and formed the Changing Tack on Crew Welfare working group, which brings together the combined strengths of UKSA, ISWAN, and Nautilus International, who have over 4,000 superyacht crew in trade union membership.

Several projects are underway to enhance and raise awareness of the support available for superyacht crew.





## Advancing fishing safety worldwide: strengthening partnerships and initiatives

Renewing our commitment to safety at sea, we've partnered with the National Federation of Fisherman's Organisations (NFFO) to support improvements in fishing safety in the UK, and the Lloyd's Register Foundation to manage a new International Fund for Fishing Safety (IFFS) to improve fishing safety throughout the globe. The Fund is specifically targeted on the Global South, which is home to 80% of the world's fishers.

## Promoting positive work cultures: ensuring seafarer wellbeing by addressing bullying and harassment



To address mental health concerns among seafarers, we joined forces with other similar maritime welfare charities with a global reach and shared values, to promote safe, positive working cultures and combat bullying and harassment.

One newly funded initiative is the development of a Leadership and Management training course by The Nautical Institute that aims to enhance leadership and management skills and promote a shift in cultural expectations about acceptable workplace behaviours, consequently improving the mental health and welfare of seafarers.

**// As we continue our journey, we remain dedicated to championing the welfare of all seafarers, ensuring safer and more inclusive maritime environments for everyone. //**

## Thank you to our donors

The Seafarers' Charity is fortunate to be supported by dedicated individuals, corporates, trusts and foundations, who enable us to assist seafarers and their families.

Their commitment and generosity allow us to provide essential funding, year after year.

We are immensely grateful for their ongoing support.

# the seafarers' charity



**The Seafarers' Charity**  
8 Hatherley Street,  
London SW1P 2QT

**020 7932 0000**

**[contact@theseafarerscharity.org](mailto:contact@theseafarerscharity.org)**



To donate to The Seafarers' Charity,  
please scan the QR code or visit:  
**[theseafarerscharity.enthuse.com/donate](https://theseafarerscharity.enthuse.com/donate)**

[theseafarerscharity.org](https://theseafarerscharity.org)

