



# FOREWORD FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



Welcome to the second edition of our *Maritime Health and Safety Newsletter*, which again focusses on Maritime Mental Health during this, Mental Health Awareness Week.

Having been on the front line throughout the pandemic, our members at P&O Ferries were unceremoniously made redundant without any notice or consultation. So much for all their efforts in providing a service for the public.

The mental health strains and stresses on those made redundant - let alone by the sudden nature of this outrage - are highlighted by my colleague Darren Procter below and in his latest video produced for Mental Health Awareness Week.

These pressures are upon not just our sacked

P&O Ferries, but upon RMT members throughout the UK ferry industry as uncertainty reigns over whether or not P&O's competitors decide to follow suit down this dangerous road.

The stopping of (so far) four P&O Ferries by the MCA are in the main on the grounds of safety due to lack of familiarisation.

RMT remains at the forefront in fighting for the health and safety of its members.

RMT continues to work with mental health organisations and we hope to produce an exclusive article for members in the next edition from Togetherall.

Yours sincerely,

**Mick Lynch**  
General Secretary

## A MESSAGE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK FROM NATIONAL SECRETARY DARREN PROCTER



Welcome to the latest edition of the *Maritime Health and Safety Newsletter*, which again focusses on maritime mental health, an issue that is an increasing concern in the workplace and in society in general. I have highlighted the impact of the

sackings without notice of our members at P&O Ferries and the fears and anxieties of our members throughout the industry in a recent video message which can be found on the QR code below.

At a time when we are facing a cost of living crisis, the impact upon members' mental health is immense. We hear stories of houses burning down as poverty-stricken people burn makeshift fuel as they find it impossible to buy both food and fuel.

I was alarmed to hear recently that we now have more food banks than McDonalds restaurants in the UK.

Quite often when I am visiting vessels or ports I speak with individuals regarding problematic issues

that are impacting on the mental health of our members and it is more important now than ever before that we ensure we are all supporting each other, looking out for your colleagues and discussing mental health both in the workplace and at home.

On 30th March, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced a 9-point package to 'fundamentally reverse' The actions of P&O which included tools to support seafarer mental health. This is an issue we have been highlighting for some time and whilst we have worked with some employers to promote mental health in the workplace with clear results, other employers still have much to do in this area and we will continue to pursue those improvements in every area of the maritime sector.

Whether you are a seafarer, an offshore worker, a port worker, a diver, an ROV technician or working within the inland waterways we want to hear from you and develop support mechanisms in conjunction with your employer / industry. Get in contact with us if you require more information regarding mental health materials and available courses etc or would like to become more involved in union activity around Mental Health.

*Regards,*  
*Darren Procter*

You can view Darren's video message at <https://vimeo.com/708218558> or by scanning the QR code



# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 2022

The relationship between mental health and unemployment is bi-directional. Good mental health is a key influence on employability, finding a job and remaining in that job. Unemployment causes stress, which ultimately has long-term physiological health effects and can have negative consequences for people's mental health, including depression, anxiety and lower self-esteem.

The health consequences of unemployment have been shown to increase with duration - for mental health and life satisfaction as well as for physical health.

The relationship between mental health and unemployment is bi-directional. Good mental health is a key influence on employability, finding a job and remaining in that job. Unemployment causes stress, which ultimately has long-term physiological health effects and can have negative consequences for people's mental health, including depression, anxiety and lower self-esteem.

70% of UK adults feel unemployment or job loss has a negative effect on mental health (UK Mental Health Foundation)

A report by the Mental Health Foundation found that the impact of increasing unemployment and job uncertainty on mental health is multi-fold. Increased job insecurity, for example, has been found to increase risk of depressive symptoms and unemployment has been found to negatively affect self-esteem and increase feelings of distress.

There are serious consequences for the mental health of the hundreds of people who have lost their jobs.

**If we are to prevent a mental health crisis, we need to do much more to offer practical and emotional support to people experiencing unemployment.**

45% of UK adults associated unemployment or job loss with 'loss' and 25% with 'trauma'

**More than 1 in 4 adults who had experienced job loss or unemployment felt unsupported at the time**

## What is the connection between mental health and unemployment?

- Unemployment has consistently been found to have a negative impact on a range of health outcomes. There are several mechanisms by which unemployment could harm health:

- o through stress and reduced self-esteem arising from the loss of the day-to-day structure of work or the stigma associated with unemployment

- o as a result of financial hardship, insecurity and reduced future earnings potential, leaving people with stress (which damages health)

- o from the social security system, which can have a negative impact on mental health through the claims process, work capability testing and job search conditions.

The loss of a job can have a significant impact on our mental wellbeing and our ability to recover from setbacks. If we want to rebuild a thriving economy, we must make mental health a priority - in our welfare system, our local government, our schools and workplaces.

## SEAFARERS HOSPITAL SOCIETY

The Seafarers Hospital Society continues to work with RMT to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of our maritime members.

The Society has is currently holding monthly health webinars on the last Wednesday of every month at noon for thirty minutes. Topics to be covered include cancer awareness, mental health, combatting fatigue, men's health, financial health and webinars offering health lifestyle advice.

**The next one is: 29th May: Advice for Peace of Mind**

For further information about the Society, see Mental health and wellbeing - Seafarers Hospital Society at [www.seahospital.org.uk](http://www.seahospital.org.uk)

## RMT'S MARITIME MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

This forum meets regularly and reports back directly to RMT's National Executive Committee. It is attended by the National Secretary, Darren Procter and Health and Safety Officer. Should anyone be interested in finding out more about this forum, please contact Jonathan Havard at [j.havard@rmt.org.uk](mailto:j.havard@rmt.org.uk)



# GET ACTIVE GET INVOLVED...

HEALTH & SAFETY • MENTAL HEALTH • YOUNG MEMBERS • WOMEN • EQUALITIES • PENSIONS

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

From our research and engagement with members during workplaces visits we have identified that not all employees are comfortable in talking to employer assigned occupational health services. Below are the contact details of the organisations who are sources for further information and support:

### MIND

The charity Mind provides advice and support on mental health issues. It campaigns to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding about mental health.

Email: [contact@mind.org.uk](mailto:contact@mind.org.uk) Tel: 020 8519 2122  
<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

### SAMARITANS

Offering emotional support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Tel: 08457 909090

### MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

A charity that engages in research, campaigning and training programmes on mental health and learning disabilities.

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/)

### TOGETHERALL

Togetherall is a 24/7, safe online community for people who are stressed, anxious or feeling low, with self-guided courses and resources.

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

### TIME TO CHANGE

An anti-stigma campaign run by mental health charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness.

Email: [info@time-to-change.org.uk](mailto:info@time-to-change.org.uk)

Tel: 020 8215 2356

[www.time-to-change.org.uk/](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/)

### FOR SCOTLAND:

### SAMH - (the Scottish Association for Mental Health)

Operating in communities to provide a range of mental health support and services.

Tel: 0344 800 0550, available 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except on Bank Holidays.

[www.samh.org.uk/](http://www.samh.org.uk/)

### SEE ME SCOTLAND

See Me is Scotland's programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination.

Tel: 0141 530 1111

[www.seemescotland.org/](http://www.seemescotland.org/)

## CONTACT DETAILS

All RMT members need to ensure that if you change employer, change jobs, change mobile numbers, change your email address etc., you inform head office. If we don't have your correct details on file then we will be ineffective in our communication to you.

If you do not receive texts from RMT - we don't have your correct mobile number.  
If you do not receive RMT news at home - we do not have your correct home address.  
If you do not receive emails from RMT - we do not have your correct emails address.

Contact RMT Head office on 0800 376 3706 or log in to the website to update your details.

Scan the QR Code to join RMT  
or visit

[www.rmt.org.uk/join](http://www.rmt.org.uk/join)



Scan the QR Code for further  
publications at RMT's Mental Health  
page or visit <https://bit.ly/3MOSP6s>



[www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)