



Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP  
Chair, Business and Trade Committee  
House of Commons  
SW1A 0AA

7 May, 2024

Dear Mr Byrne,

**Follow-up to Business and Trade Committee oral evidence session on labour markets reform: Workers' rights and protections**

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to your Committee this morning.

I hope you found my answers to your questions helpful. I thought it was important to write today to avoid any misunderstandings about what I said regarding paid leave for international agency seafarers, as on reflection some of my comments might not have been as clear as I would have liked.

I am grateful for the opportunity to clarify these matters and apologise for any potential misunderstanding.

As I reiterated to the Committee, P&O Ferries is unwavering in its commitment to fully complying with all applicable international and national standards, including the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC).

The MLC requires that seafarers receive two and a half days of paid leave per month.

When the Committee asked me a question about this, I responded that we “contract” for seven days off every month on Dover-Calais and nine days off every month on the North Sea.

What I should have added is as follows:

- Our agency partner exceeds the MLC requirements by offering seven days of paid leave per month on our Dover-Calais vessels and nine days per month on our North Sea vessels.
- The seafarers work for a continuous number of days during their rotation (noting that the length of a “rotation” varies significantly depending on factors, including route and job type). This is consistent with standard practice across a range of industries that work on a rotation basis, including the maritime and offshore sectors.



- Payment in lieu of leave (i.e. payment in lieu of time taken off on-board) is factored into agency crew remuneration.
- In addition to MLC requirements, P&O Ferries stipulates that all agency seafarers employed on our vessels must take at least one paid day off per month. The only exception to this is for those on very short contracts who work straight through.

The MLC also requires a minimum number of hours of rest of no fewer than 10 hours in any 24-hour period and 77 hours in any seven-day period. We fully comply with this requirement, and it is subject to inspection by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

P&O Ferries, via its agency partner, pays a competitive wage in a competitive sector, and we always pay at least the minimum wage required by national and international law. We provide an industry-leading support package to seafarers and work hard to ensure their welfare, wellbeing and mental health are properly cared for.

During the evidence session, I undertook to write to the Committee about various other items, which I will be sending to you shortly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hebblethwaite'.

Peter Hebblethwaite  
CEO, P&O Ferries

