

SAILORS' SOCIETY

PIONEERING SEAFARER WELLBEING IN A CHANGING MARITIME INDUSTRY

THE MARITIME INDUSTRY IS TRANSFORMING, WITH A GROWING EMPHASIS ON THE WELLBEING OF SEAFARERS. AT THE FOREFRONT OF THIS SHIFT IS SAILORS' SOCIETY, AN INTERNATIONAL MARITIME WELFARE CHARITY SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN NEED DAY AND NIGHT, 365 DAYS A YEAR. IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, **JOHAN SMITH**, HEAD OF WELLNESS AT SAILORS' SOCIETY, SHARED INSIGHTS INTO THE ORGANISATION'S INITIATIVES, COLLABORATIONS AND THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF SEAFARER WELLBEING.

A LEGACY OF SUPPORT AND INNOVATION

Founded in 1818, Sailors' Society has a long history serving seafarers and their families. The organisation provides a wide range of services, from crisis response to wellness programmes, aiming to empower seafarers to look after their wellbeing. By addressing both immediate needs and long-term challenges, Sailors' Society plays a crucial role in supporting the maritime community and ensuring that the vital work of seafarers is recognised.

The charity also plays a significant role in supporting shipping companies to support their crew via their Wellness at Sea programme. The programme gives seafarers the tools to manage issues such as loneliness, money worries, stress and relationship breakdown before they become a crisis. Using its unique circle of care approach, Sailors' Society supports seafarer wellbeing across every area of their lives and careers, giving them the best opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling and productive career at sea.

The organisation's Crisis Response Network has provided 24/7 care and support to seafarers, their families and shipping companies following critical incidents. The crisis response team have handled anything from assisting seafarers who were wrongfully jailed to helping seafarers

who were left abandoned on vessels. These success stories highlight Sailors' Society's impact on individuals and their families.

DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

The society's data-driven approach has been pivotal in shaping its new services. By collecting data from the e-learning platform, peer support groups and conferences, the organisation can identify emerging trends and tailor its programmes to meet the actual needs of seafarers. The focus is not just on gathering data for its own sake, but on ensuring that seafarers' voices guide the organisation, aligning its services with industry needs. The society understands the importance of engaging with seafarers and cadets to truly grasp their needs. This approach was particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling Sailors' Society to adapt its support systems and continue reaching seafarers worldwide, despite restrictions on traditional engagement methods.

The pandemic also led to virtual cadet conferences for maritime professionals and current students. These conferences address wellbeing and mental health, preparing cadets for long and fulfilling careers at sea. Not only do these events equip new cadets with essential knowledge, but they also provide the organisation with invaluable insights into the future employers and educators of these cadets. The data and analysis gathered from these global events contribute to their cadet reports.

Sailors' Society's 23/24 Cadet Report sheds light on what motivates and concerns Gen Z seafarers and what the industry needs to do to retain and support them. It includes sections on diversity, retention, and mental health, revealing that while there are shared values around family, ethical treatment, social justice, and inclusivity, distinct regional identities are also influenced by social and cultural differences. Notably, 80% of cadets surveyed stated that how companies treat seafarers is the most crucial factor when choosing an employer, and 78% had not yet been to sea.

Additionally, Sailors' Society plans to publish a Snapshot Report later this year on the relationship between wellbeing and internet connectivity among seafarers.

PARTNERSHIPS

Sailors Society and Britannia P&I have maintained a strong relationship since 2017. Britannia has supported Sailors' Society's e-learning platform, providing comprehensive training programmes to over 15,000 seafarers. During the pandemic, the Club helped to mobilise resources to assist stranded seafarers on vessels. Britannia P&I is also sponsoring the upcoming South East Asia virtual cadet conference, building on the success of the previous three years.

In addition to Britannia, Sailors' Society has established relationships with maritime schools and government bodies in India. These partnerships include almost all naval schools in the country and have led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian government to provide extensive welfare support to seafarers.

As the maritime industry continues to evolve, Sailors' Society remains a committed advocate for the wellbeing of seafarers. With a strong legacy, innovative programmes and strong partnerships, the organisation is well equipped to navigate the challenges of the future. Seafarers worldwide can look to Sailors' Society for support, knowing their welfare is the priority.

24/7 HELPLINE

Sailors' Society offers help around the clock for seafarers and their families. It can provide support for everything from financial worries to mental health crises, and its trained responders speak several languages. It can be a support system wherever and whenever seafarers need it. Call +1 938 222 8181 or visit sailors-society.org/helpline and use the instant online chat.