

THE PORT LEVY – SUPPORTING SEAFARERS VISITING THE TEES & HARTLEPOOL PORTS

Why is a Port Levy needed?

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 was adopted by the UK on 20 August 2013. It imposes a duty on those countries who sign up to it to ensure that shore-based welfare facilities are easily accessible and to promote the development of appropriate welfare facilities in designated ports. The Port Levy enables us all to do this.

What is the Port Levy?

The Tees Port Levy system has been in place for over 35 years. It is an integral part of the PD Ports tariff, agreed and published annually. The tariff includes a levy contribution for “seafarers’ charities” and “lifeboat and community related charities”. For the Tees and Hartlepool ports, as is the case in most ports, these levies are voluntary.

How is the Port Levy collected?

The Port Levy is collected by shipping agents on behalf of the Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) as part of the port charges summarised on the disbursement account. Within the costs of bringing a vessel into port - pilotage, port dues, tugs etc a levy is charged. This is typically set at £20- £50 per visit, and while relatively insignificant in the costs of bringing a vessel onto the river, it makes a huge difference to the services that can be provided to your seafarers.

How is the Port Levy distributed?

The SHA manages the distribution of Port Levy funds which are designated for the lifeboat and community related charities. The remaining third, which is designated for “seafarers’ charities” is paid into the bank account of the local North East Branch of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (ICS). The ICS and the Tees and Hartlepool Port Users’ Association (THPUA) have absolute discretion over which seafarers’ charities are supported and the amount and regularity of payments. The ICS and THPUA have a meeting each year to review this.

How is the Port Levy used?

Port levies are an extremely important funding stream because port welfare services are delivered by non-governmental organisations. Defined by the MLC 2006 as ‘voluntary organisations’, these organisations are generally dependent on fundraising and donations to deliver seafarers’ welfare services. Furthermore, the services provided by the voluntary organisations are not available from any other sources.

What organisations provide port welfare services for seafarers visiting Tees and Hartlepool ports?

- The Mission to Seafarers – through two constitutionally separate Branch Committees with their own Centre:
 - North Tees and Hartlepool
 - South Tees
- Stella Maris

How much of the Port Levy funds designated for Seafarers actually reach the Missions?

PD Ports, the ICS and the THPUA do not charge any administration or management charges for administering the Port Levy funds. Therefore 100% of the funds generated are used for their intended need, ie. the support and welfare of seafarers.