



# *Annual Review*

*2022-23*





## Message from our Chief Executive

Writing an annual report is an important event for any Chief Executive as it makes you reflect on all that has happened in the previous year. I am pleased to say that it has been another successful year for ISWAN in which we have raised our profile, gained more members and provided consistent, quality services to seafarers and their families. A particular success was the setting up and administration of the Ukraine Crisis Support Fund in partnership with Stella Maris and the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine.

ISWAN's team members are distributed around the globe so it's sometimes a challenge to keep everything coordinated, even with the technology available, so we have been focused on improving the way we work with each other and taking whatever opportunities arise to get together in person. For me, it's been very rewarding to meet in person with my colleagues in India and the Philippines and experience their dedication and tenacity in dealing with seafarers' problems. We now have three former seafarers on the team and they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our work.

No matter how good a team is, charities cannot survive without funders to provide the resources and board members to give direction. ISWAN is fortunate to have both a strong board who understand the maritime world and some wonderful funders who provide consistent, proactive support.

As we move forward, we will continue to seek ways to reduce our reliance on grant funding and strengthen our relationships within the industry. We will also continue to collaborate and cooperate with our colleagues in the maritime welfare sector to ensure that seafarers get the services they need. Whatever we do, it is incumbent upon us to ensure we are at all times focused on the needs of seafarers. If we are successful, we will no longer be required but that day is some way off yet. I hope you enjoy the review and, as always, we are happy to receive feedback.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Simon Grainge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

**Simon Grainge,**  
**Chief Executive of ISWAN**



## Message from our Chair

This is my first annual review since becoming Chair of the ISWAN board in November 2022. I'm very proud of what ISWAN has achieved and delighted that our work has also been recognised by the industry through several awards being made during the reporting year, including the 2022 SAFETY4SEA Crew Welfare Organisation Award, the Welfare and Social Responsibility Award at the 2022 CrewConnect Global Industry Awards, 'Excellence in Seafarers' Welfare' at the 2023 ShipTek International Maritime Awards in Dubai, and the BIC Award (by Bureau International des Containers) during Naples Shipping Week 2022.

This report covers ISWAN activities from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, a period when we saw the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic recede only to be followed by the war in Ukraine and its ongoing impact on seafarers.

Our helplines SeafarerHelp and Yacht Crew Help continue to demonstrate their worth to seafarers and their families with solid practical and emotional support. The value of a dedicated helpline is also increasingly being recognised by employers; we now operate 19 helplines commissioned by companies to provide specific support to their crews.

The Social Interaction Matters (SIM) research project published its Phase 2 findings and we presented these at our annual seminar in Rotterdam and then CrewConnect 2022, where it was well received. None of this could have been achieved without the continuing support of our funders and sponsors who we are proud to recognise in this report. The Trustees are especially grateful to our long-term funders.

An organisation like ISWAN is only as good as the people in it and we are lucky to have good people in abundance. I must acknowledge my predecessor Andy Winbow, for his work in developing a strong board and for appointing Simon Grainge to the post of Chief Executive. Simon and his team have made huge strides in getting the charity recognised and geared up for the challenges ahead. As a shipowner, I know the contribution seafarers make to the world's supply chains so I'm really glad that ISWAN is there to support them 24/7 and grateful to all those who make it possible.

**Karin Orsel,**  
**Chair of ISWAN's Board of Trustees**

# Our work this year

Summary of all of ISWAN’s areas of work over the year:

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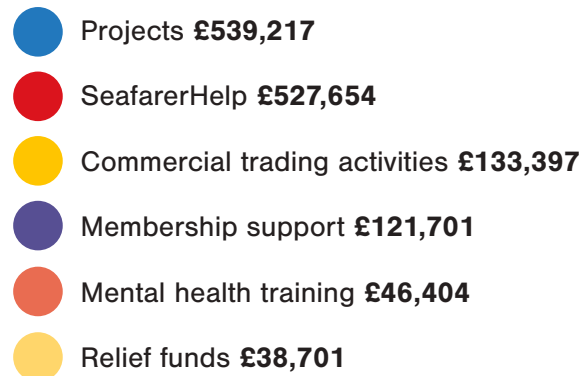
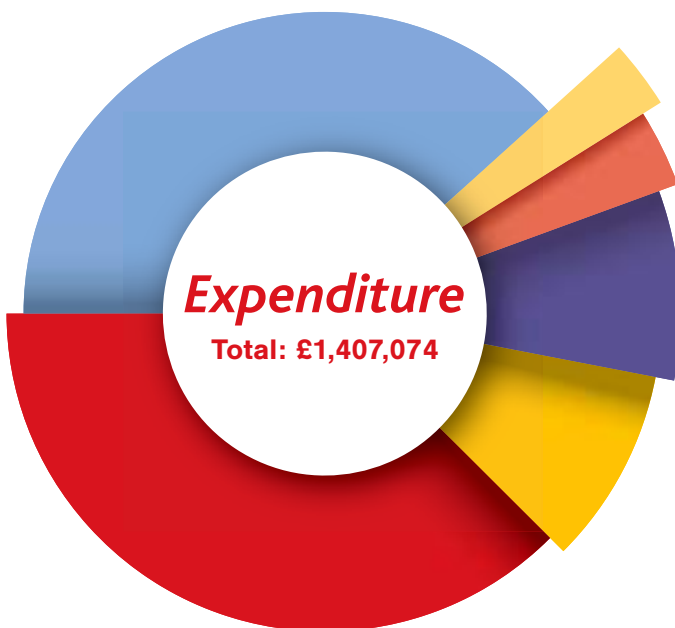
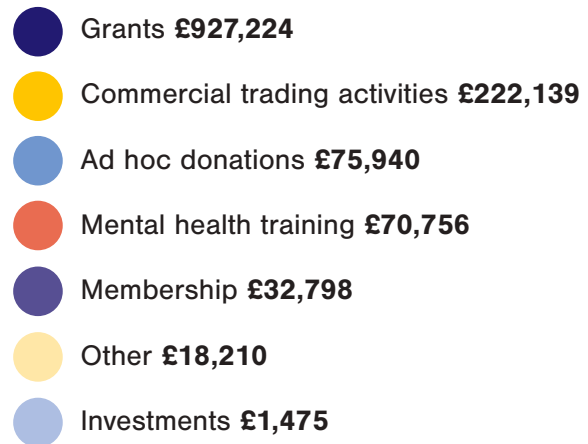
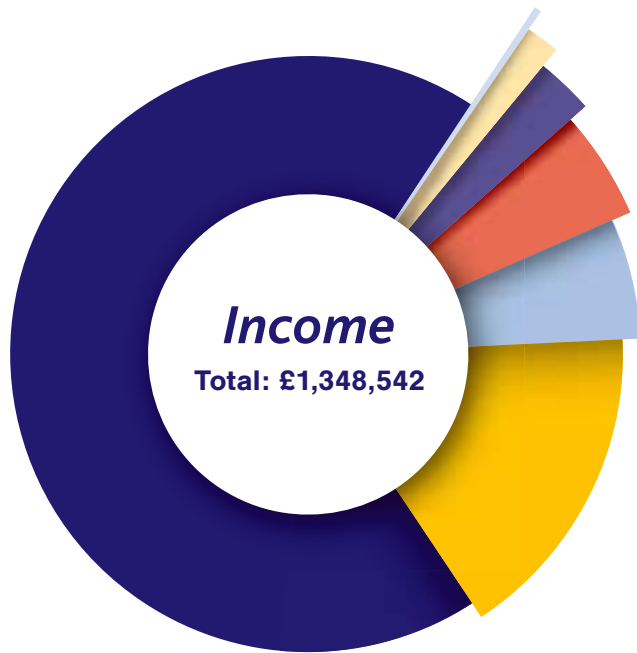
Our strategy, 2021-24 .....Page 16

Thank you to funders, partners and sponsors .....Page 17

## ‘ISWAN for Seafarers’ mobile app



## ISWAN in one year



**8,602**

seafarers and family members assisted



**US \$350,218**

granted via relief funds



**57**

Maritime Mental Health Awareness training sessions delivered



**> 9,966**

downloads of health resources for seafarers from our websites



**> 1,900**

downloads of the ISWAN for Seafarers app



# ISWAN Helplines



Stats gone up, or down from previous year.



**8,602**

seafarers and family members assisted



**6,611**

new cases

↑ 6% on 2021-22



**14,857**

calls and messages handled

↓ 12% on 2021-22



**98**

nationalities assisted

↑ 8 since 2021-22

## Top 5 seafarer nationalities:



**22%**  
Filipino



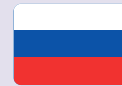
**17%**  
Indian



**15%**  
Ukrainian



**3%**  
British



**3%**  
Russian

## Top 5 flag states of vessels involved:



**1.**  
Panama



**2.**  
Bahamas



**3.**  
Marshall Islands



**4.**  
Liberia



**5.**  
Malta

## Top 5 contact methods:



**38%**  
E-mail



**32%**  
Live Chat



**17%**  
WhatsApp



**5%**  
Telephone



**3%**  
Facebook



**83%**

of cases dealt with in house



**17%**

of cases referred

## MEET: Katie Earnshaw, ISWAN's Policy & Research Advisor

I began working as a consultant in July 2022 to support ISWAN to make better use of information from its helplines to identify trends in seafarer welfare. This year, ISWAN began making key helpline insights available to the maritime sector through quarterly infographics and annual helpline reports. Over the coming year, I will continue to work with ISWAN to develop new ways to use helpline data to strengthen the evidence base around seafarer welfare, including through new live data dashboards.





## SeafarerHelp






*The lifeline for seafarers*

- SeafarerHelp is the **no. 1** free, confidential, multilingual helpline for seafarers and their families, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023:
  - 📊 **5,524** new cases ( ⬆️ 7% on 2021-22)
  - 👥 **12,128** calls and messages handled in total ( ⬇️ 15% on 2021-22)
- The main concerns raised by seafarers contacting SeafarerHelp in 2022-23 were:
  - Financial difficulties (contacts more than doubled compared to 2021-22, primarily due to grant programmes that ISWAN administered during the financial year)
  - Physical and psychological health problems including stress and anxiety
  - Information requests about seafarer centres
  - The impact of working in areas affected by war or piracy attacks (contacts relating to working in a warzone increased thirty-fold on 2021-22 as ISWAN supported seafarers impacted by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia)
- Other key trends:
  - ⬆️ Contacts relating to abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence (ABHDV) increased by 13% year-on-year, accounting for 2% of all issues raised (but 5% of issues raised by women)
  - ⬆️ Contacts relating to family and relationship issues increased by 24% year-on-year
  - ⬇️ Contacts relating to issues with repatriation fell by 17% year-on-year, but ISWAN continues to support a growing number of seafarers who are affected by other contractual difficulties (contacts relating to unpaid wages increased by 12% year-on-year while contacts relating to unfair dismissal grew by 21% year-on-year)
- In 2022, SeafarerHelp regained its Helplines Standard accreditation from the Helplines Partnership for the next three years



# Yacht Crew Help

*the lifeline for crew*

- Yacht Crew Help is a free, confidential, multilingual helpline for crew working in the superyacht industry, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Demand for the service is growing steadily, leading to a greater understanding of the specific challenges faced by crew in this industry. Awareness of the service is also growing, with new contacts increasing by 54% year-on-year
- From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023:
  -  **292** new cases
  -  **369** seafarers assisted
  -  **764** calls and messages handled in total
- The main concerns raised by seafarers contacting Yacht Crew Help in 2022-23 were:
  - Psychological health difficulties (the top issue raised by crew, with mental health-related contacts increasing by 20% compared to 2021-22)
  - Seeking employment
  - Unpaid wages/salary
  - Abuse, bullying, harassment and discrimination (contacts increased by 63% year-on-year, accounting for 8% of all issues raised but 13% of issues raised by women)
- Other key trends:
  -  Contacts relating to contract issues increased by 22% year-on-year
  -  Contacts relating to unpaid wages increased by 41% year-on-year



## SWAN

Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network Ltd

- Under our trading subsidiary SWAN Ltd, we operate a number of independent, commissioned helplines for companies and organisations in the maritime industry. These helplines offer free, confidential, multilingual support and assistance to crew, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Three further helplines for shipping companies were established this year, indicating that the industry recognises the importance of mental health amongst seafarers and is seeking solutions.



## International activities

The ISWAN Regional Programme concluded in 2021 after three years of successfully building our presence internationally but primarily in India and the Philippines. Thanks to continued support from the Trafigura Foundation, we have been able to further these activities. We have recruited a number of ambassadors and volunteers in countries where we do not have a presence – including the Netherlands, Iran, Bangladesh and Pakistan – to provide a point of contact, promote our services and provide expertise on the local context.

During this period, our network of support – which includes partnerships with welfare organisations, shipping companies, crewing agencies, unions, hospitals, and government departments – has been developed and strengthened. The international team now provides practical humanitarian support to seafarers and their families facing a range of traumatic events, working with partners on advocacy and building various welfare initiatives.

**7,097**

seafarers and their families provided with practical support by our teams in India and the Philippines in 2022-23, including financial, counselling and humanitarian support

### India & South Asia

- **10** presentations at various maritime training colleges in India and Bangladesh to deliver ISWAN's Seafarers Education and Awareness Session (SEAS), reaching over **1,200** young cadets and ratings aspiring to join the shipping sector. We received good feedback on the contents of the presentation.
- The team in India also handled extremely difficult and sensitive cases concerning nearly **600** seafarers who reported that they have not been paid wages or were abandoned at sea.
- Unfortunately, the team also had to deal with **23** cases where seafarers were missing or died at sea. We extended emotional support and practical guidance to their families during this difficult period.
- Nearly **180** Indian seafarers affected by fraudulent crewing agent issues were guided on the best practices to follow.
- ISWAN in India signed an MOU with Gujarat Maritime University (GMU) on a joint research project on the issue of fraudulent crewing agents in India and the impact they have on aspiring seafarers.



A seafarer supported by ISWAN's team in India when his vessel was abandoned and the crew were not paid their wages

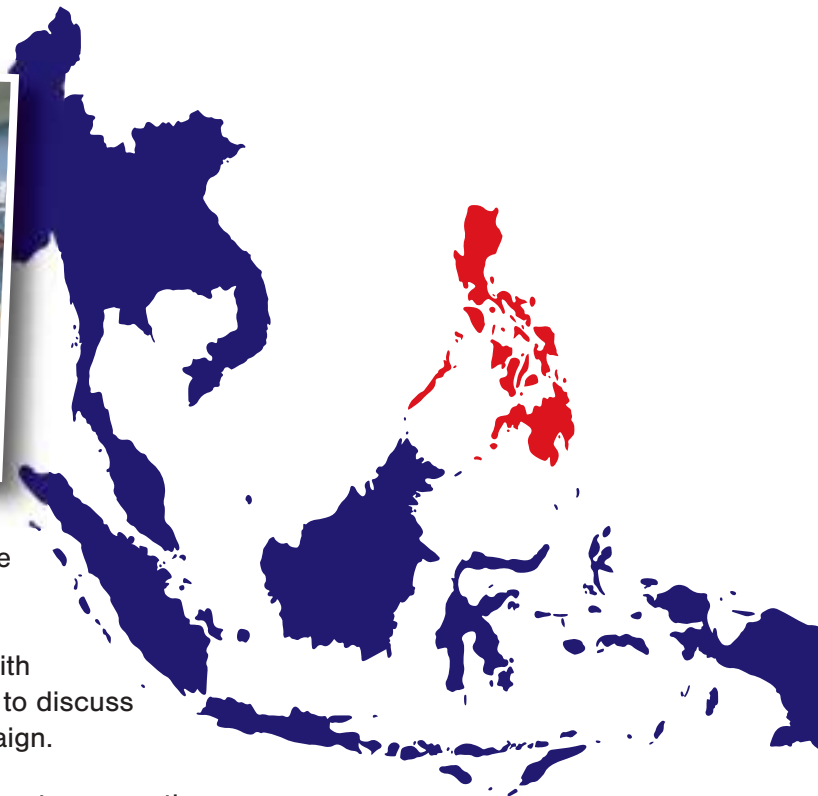


- ISWAN in India has also signed an MOU with the Maritime Association of Nationwide Shipping Agencies (MANSA) to promote the welfare of seafarers in Indian ports.
- The team participated in more than **100** meeting and events across the year, including exploring with various partners how to expand the network of ISWAN in additional countries.



## Philippines & South East Asia

- Our Philippines team moved into their new office in Mania in 2022, which was made possible by the generosity of AMOSUP.
- Nearly **100** presentations as part of ISWAN's SEAS programme were delivered in the Philippines, reaching nearly **6,500** seafarers both in person and online as part of their pre-departure preparation organised by shipping companies.



- To further the '*Karapatan; Sama-samang Ingatan*', an information campaign warning seafarers of the activities of ambulance-chasing lawyers, the Philippines team together with the campaign's conveners conducted a roundtable discussion with licensed manning agencies and maritime unions to discuss the way forward and work together on the campaign.
- The team in the Philippines participated in **56** events across the year including Day of the Seafarer celebrations in June 2022 and the CrewConnect Global conference in November 2022.





## Seafarers' stories

On 25 December 2022, the crews of two vessels – FV Sudes and FV Meheran – were freed after spending eight and four years respectively in the captivity of the Al-Shabaab militant group.

The seafarers had been held prisoner and subjected to inhumane conditions, being shackled and blindfolded and cut off from the outside world for years on end.

Tragically, four crew members did not survive the ordeal, but for the six Pakistani and 14 Iranian crew who returned home, their journey to recovery was just beginning. They had suffered an extreme physical and emotional toll from their time in captivity, and their families had spent years without their loved ones.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), who secured the crews' rescue, referred these cases to ISWAN and we made contact with the seafarers and their families through our volunteers in Iran and Pakistan – Mr. Shahriar Aliabadi and Vice Admiral (Retd.) Mr. Asaf Humayun. They visited as many of the families as possible to offer support and assess their needs for further assistance.

Using the information gathered during these visits, ISWAN arranged grants for the seafarers and their families in Iran and Pakistan through the Piracy Survivor Family Fund (a fund administered by ISWAN on behalf of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, or CGPCS) and the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Fund. These grants provided the crew members and their families with financial assistance for essential livelihood costs, medical treatment, house repairs, and rebuilding their lives for a more secure future.

One of the seafarers said: 'I am very thankful to ISWAN, thank you very much for helping us'.

This would not have been possible without support from the Iranian Merchant Navy Mariners Syndicate (IMMS) and the Bahria Foundation of the Bahria University in Pakistan.

ISWAN's volunteer in Iran, Mr. Shahriar Aliabadi, with one of the freed crew members



ISWAN's volunteer in Iran, Mr. Shahriar Aliabadi, with the family of one of the seafarers who died in captivity

## Seafarers' stories

One night, ISWAN's Yacht Crew Help received a WhatsApp message from a distressed stewardess on a yacht at a European port. She said she had been verbally and physically abused by the captain and wanted to leave the vessel but it was late and she was in a foreign country.

Our helpline officer checked that the stewardess was currently safe – she was locked in her cabin but the captain had previously forced his way in – and took her location. While a colleague searched for the nearest seafarers' centre, our helpline officer asked the stewardess for more information about her situation and made sure she was OK as she packed her items.

The Yacht Crew Help team made contact with the local seafarers' centre in port and connected the stewardess with a female staff member there. The staff member met the stewardess at the yacht within 20 minutes and accompanied her to safety.

Yacht Crew Help received a message from the stewardess later that night to say she was relieved and grateful for the help she had received. She later messaged again to acknowledge the support she had received from the seafarers' centre and wrote: 'Thank you, I'm glad I came across this help line at the right moment'.

'One of the most satisfying things for me working on the helpline is to be able to provide a listening ear for the seafarers globally and support them through challenging times. It feels good to know from a seafarer that they feel better after talking to us and to assure them that their mental health matters, they matter.'

Counsellor/Helpline Officer, ISWAN





## Relief Funds

### US \$350,218

Total amount granted via relief funds administered by ISWAN

#### US \$35,128

Seafarers Emergency Fund (SEF) = 15 grants

#### US \$307,000

Ukraine Crisis Support Fund = More than 600 seafarers and their families received grants

#### US \$8,090

Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Fund (MPHRF)

## Ukraine Crisis Support Fund:

At the end of March 2022, we launched the Ukraine Crisis Support Fund to provide immediate and urgent financial support to those affected. We managed the fund on behalf of the Seafarers International Relief Fund and worked with our partners Stella Maris and the Maritime Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine to provide grants to over 600 seafarers and their families.



Many Ukrainian seafarers and their families lost their homes due to the war in Ukraine

"I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for the remarkable work you have done in providing invaluable financial assistance to me, my family and thousands of Ukrainian seafarers during this exceedingly challenging military period in Ukraine... In these trying times, your organization, ISWAN, has been a beacon of hope, offering aid and relief to seafarers who find themselves caught in the midst of restrictive measures."

"I want to thank all those who were involved in this assistance for the assistance received... Because of the war, I remained blocked in Ukraine. Any help is now like gold."

"My gratitude to you is immeasurably small compared to your legend, this grant will help me and my family a lot in this very difficult time."

"Thank you very much everyone for your work. Your help for seafarers is more than just money. Everyone you helped felt that he was not alone, you were doing good to people."

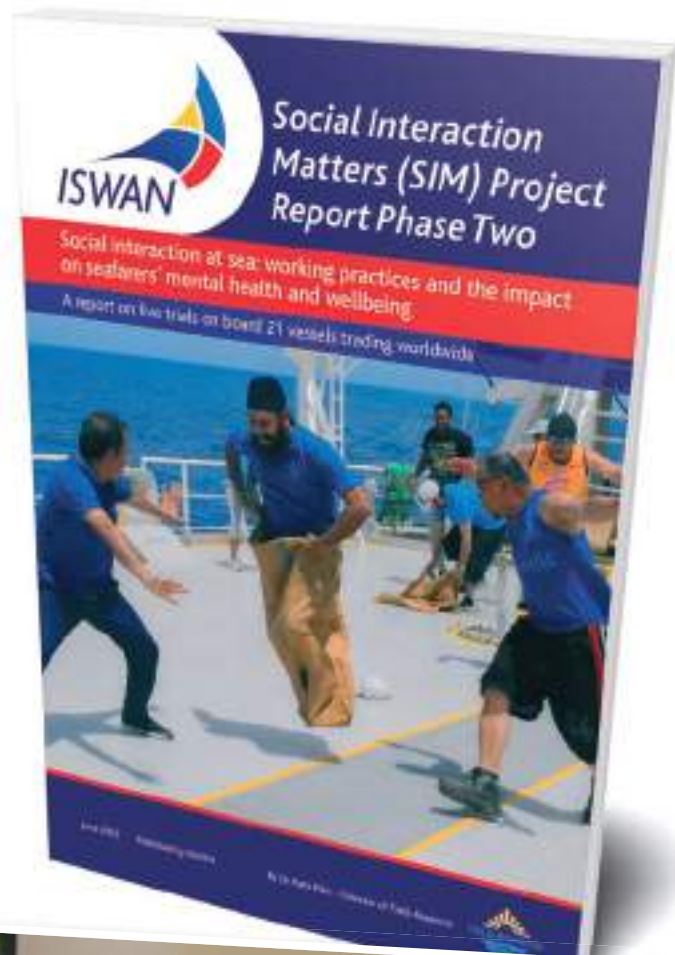
## Mental wellbeing

### Social Interaction Matters (SIM) Project

The initial three phases of the Social Interaction Matters (SIM) Project completed in November 2022 with the ISWAN 2022 Seminar titled: 'The importance of social interaction for seafarers' wellbeing', held in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Prior to this, the final report, guidance, and recommendations were published in June 2022 and supported with an ongoing marketing and dissemination campaign.

During the period from December 2022 to March 2023, the team was engaged with the development of the next stage of the project including the establishment of new technology-led partnerships. At the time of writing, this next stage, which will involve evaluating and developing the project's guidance and recommendations to establish as a long-term, inclusive educational resource for the maritime sector, has received new funding from the Trinity House Maritime DFT Fund and is being planned for launch late 2023/early 2024.



ISWAN staff at the ISWAN 2022 Seminar in Rotterdam

### Maritime Mental Health Awareness training

This interactive, online training is now established as a significant ISWAN service with a network of seven Associate Trainers, speaking three key seafaring languages, delivering multiple trainings per month. The training consists of three modules, designed by Dr Pennie Blackburn a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and is consistently well received, gaining excellent feedback from attendees. Shipping and ship management companies continue to approach ISWAN to deliver to both their shoreside and seagoing staff, and ISWAN is always open to the development of bespoke trainings which meet the unique needs of individual clients.

From **1st April 2022** to **31st March 2023**, trainers located in the UK, the Philippines and China delivered **57** online Maritime Mental Health Awareness training courses.



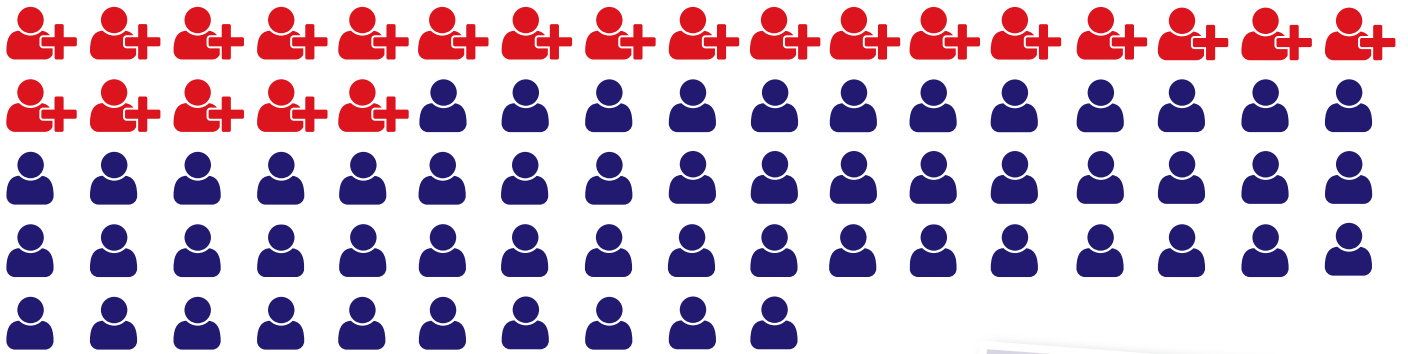
# Membership

ISWAN is a network of international organisations committed to improving the welfare of seafarers. Our members reflect the diversity present in the maritime sector today, from shipping companies to unions, and insurance groups to welfare organisations. Our members possess a wealth of different experience and include key influencers in the field of seafarers' welfare.

We welcomed **22** new members this year, bringing the total to **78**.

Thanks to Trafigura Foundation, we were able to recruit a Business Development Manager, which has enabled us to carry out a thorough review of membership to better understand the needs and expectations of members.

It is a strategic goal to increase the number of members (and thereby subscriptions) so there is now a major push to recruit suitable members in the coming years that will not only expand ISWAN's network, but also contribute to furthering awareness of its important services, helping to build on its reputation to elevate its profile.



## MEET: Alan Croft, ISWAN's Business Development Manager

### What is your role at ISWAN?

As the Business Development Manager at ISWAN, my role is to identify and engage potential organisations to join our network as ISWAN members, ultimately advocating for seafarer welfare. Through collaborations with industry stakeholders – such as ship owners, management, and service providers – we can expand support and awareness of our vital services. This collective effort positively impacts seafarers across merchant, yachting, and cruise sectors and ensures we can offer enhanced and comprehensive support for their wellbeing.

### What have you been working on this year?

I have focused on building ISWAN's membership, engaging with existing members and strengthening key partnerships. I have attended a number of prominent events, which has enabled me to enrich relationships and expand our influence within the maritime community. Our collaborations have significantly raised awareness of our cause.

### Why are ISWAN's members so important?

ISWAN's members play a crucial role in advancing seafarer welfare. They bolster our cause through engagement, sponsorships, and partnerships and enhance our ability to support seafarers globally. Their involvement amplifies our impact and promotes a unified voice for seafarer wellbeing.

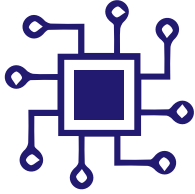
### What are your goals for the year ahead?

Our vision for the next year involves strengthening our engagement with the maritime community to bolster our impact on seafarer wellbeing. We want to increase ISWAN's visibility, champion stronger advocacy, and both support and empower seafarers and their families.



# Our Strategy, 2021-24

1



*Improve our processes and make better use of technology to meet the changing needs of seafarers*

2



*Develop timely responses to the most prevalent issues identified through helplines, regions and membership to educate the sector and influence change*

3



*Raise profile and position of ISWAN as a catalyst for delivering change to improve the lives of seafarers and their families*

4



*Develop a truly international organisation that is financially and operationally sustainable*



# Thank you to our funders, partners and sponsors

## International activities



## SeafarerHelp



## Yacht Crew Help

Primary Partner



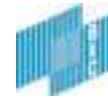
Official Yachting Partner



WILSON HALLIWELL



## Additional support



Foreland Shipping Limited



We could not do the work we do without our partners. We rely on partnerships with others in the maritime welfare sector to deliver our services for seafarers – a big thank you to all our friends.







# SeafarerHelp

*The lifeline for seafarers*

Do you have a problem with unpaid wages, repatriation, a welfare issue, or do you just want to talk to someone? If so we are here to organise help for you.

SeafarerHelp is the only worldwide helpline for seafarers and their families that is:

- Free
- Confidential
- Multilingual
- Available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year

## Contact us:



Email us:

[help@seafarerhelp.org](mailto:help@seafarerhelp.org)



Find us online at:

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



Request call back:

+44 (0)207 323 2737



WhatsApp:

+44 (0)7909 470 732



Service provided by:



Find us on:





# Yacht Crew Help

the *lifeline* for crew

## Feeling low?

## We are here to listen.

Our helpline is:

- Free
- Confidential
- Multilingual
- Available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year

Yacht Crew Help is operated by ISWAN



### Contact us:



Email us:

[help@yachtcrewhelp.org](mailto:help@yachtcrewhelp.org)



Live Chat at:

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



Request call back:

**+44 (0) 20 3713 7273**



WhatsApp:

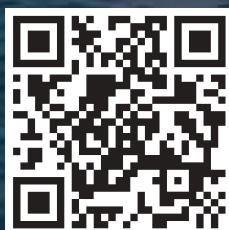
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Find us online at:

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

Find us here:



## *Would you like to partner with us or become a member of ISWAN?*

Please contact Alan Croft, Business  
Development Manager:

***alan.croft@iswan.org.uk***  
***+44 (0)20 3876 8585***



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