

Press release: Government sets out minimum wage rights for seafarers in UK water

- seafarers in UK internal waters must be paid at least the minimum wage, government warns
- UK Border Force will hand out information in over 50 languages promoting seafarers' workers' rights
- new Business Minister affirms workers playing a 'vital' role in UK waters should be paid fairly

All seafarers working in UK waters must be paid at least minimum wage rates, the government warned in new [guidance](#) published today (18 January 2018).

It comes after concerns about unfair competition, following reports that some ships registered abroad were underpaying their workers in UK waters, undercutting UK crews.

UK Border Force patrols will be handing out information to seafarers and employers in more than 50 languages promoting minimum wage law.

Employers failing to pay at least National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage can face fines of up to 200% of the underpayment, public naming and, for the worst offences, criminal prosecution.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Seafarers' work is vital to key UK industries such as fishing, oil and gas. We are determined to ensure they are paid fairly for the work they do, often in challenging conditions.

Today we are making it crystal clear that if you work in UK waters you are entitled to at least the minimum wage and all employers – no matter where they're from – must pay it.

Border Force's Modern Slavery Maritime lead Rob Meyer said:

Border Force takes its role of tackling exploitation and protecting vulnerable people very seriously. We have run a number of maritime operations targeting unscrupulous employers in the sector, and are working with government enforcement agencies to take action taken against the minority of employers who do not treat their workers in line with UK law.

Minimum wage law applies to seafarers:

- when they are working on ships within UK waters and ports regardless of where the ship is registered, or where the worker ordinarily works or lives
- on a foreign ship for work performed outside the UK if they ordinarily work in the UK
- on UK registered ships if some of their work is in the UK and they live in the UK

If anyone is concerned that they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can [check their pay online](#), or contact [Acas](#) in confidence, on 0300 123 1100.