

UK Government package to protect ferry freight routes

News story

The £17 million scheme includes services in and out of Cairnryan



UK Government package will protect ferry routes

Vital ferry routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland have been safeguarded, thanks to a multi-million-pound UK Government scheme to help ensure critical freight can continue to move into and across the Union.

The package, worth up to £17m, is being funded by the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. It will be made available to operators so that they can continue running freight services on five sea routes between Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Essential supplies are continuing to flow well, but operators are facing challenges as fewer people travelling means less capacity to move goods.

Today's action will help ensure we have the freight capacity we need across the UK. This funding will help ferry operators protect our supply chain and maintain the flow of critical goods across the Irish Sea and throughout the Union.

The funding package includes support for the ferry services running between Cairnryan and Larne and Cairnryan and Belfast. Welcoming the announcement, Secretary of State for Scotland Alister Jack, said:

We have been clear that the UK Government will do what is necessary

to protect our economy during the current Coronavirus pandemic. That includes safeguarding the essential ferry routes between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

I know just how vital the busy services in and out of Cairnryan are. It is essential we keep them going for the economies of both Northern Ireland and the South West of Scotland.

The UK Government's Department for Transport has also announced that thousands of volunteers, vehicles, aircraft and ships from the transport sector have been placed on standby in a new "Transport Support Unit" to assist frontline responders during the crisis across the whole of the UK.

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