



The  
Seafarers  
Happiness  
Index

# Seafarers Happiness Index

Quarter 1 2021

Special Covid-19 edition



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# Seafarers Happiness Index Quarter 1

The Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) is the shipping industry's ongoing barometer of the key issues facing those at sea today. Seafarers are asked 10 key questions every quarter, enabling them to share their views about specific issues affecting their life and work.

This first quarter of 2021 saw answers and data generated against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and at a time when global maritime issues have been brought to the fore. We heard from crews all over the world on their thoughts and feedback on their experiences.

We are grateful to every single seafarer who participated in the survey, not simply for sharing their views, but for their efforts in keeping trade flowing in these most difficult circumstances. That they do so with professionalism, care and resolve, and even the occasional smile, is testament to those dedicated enough to make seafaring their career.

## Special COVID-19 focus

This edition of the SHI will take a special focus, looking at some of the areas of seafarer life where the effects of the pandemic are being felt the most. It will examine the problems, the things that are worsening, the issues which should be monitored, and the areas where seafarers are feeling positive. It is hoped that this in-depth approach will enable a more detailed insight into the impact that COVID-19 is having on specific aspects of seafarers' lives, at what has arguably been the most challenging time for seafarers in a generation or more.

The average SHI results showed happiness levels of seafarers for the first quarter of 2021 at 6.46/10, a slight increase from 6.37 in Quarter 4 2020. While it was good to see this upward trajectory, the margins are very fine, and we are yet to see significant leaps in overall happiness.

Despite some positive results, the first quarter's responses revealed lingering fears, worries and doubts about the ongoing crew change situation. The issue of how seafarers will be vaccinated also came to the fore and is likely to be a long-running concern until the solutions and plans are made internationally clear.

When it came to general happiness, the spread of data returns was as wide as it is possible to be. There were some 10/10 responses, where seafarers were going home and felt elation at the prospect. These spoke of the "beauty" of the sea, and of how wonderful it was to be a seafarer.

Conversely, many respondents were recording 1/10 on the Index, the lowest possible score. These were seafarers who felt weighed down by concerns about various aspects of life on board, not least whether they would get home on time, or at all. The issue of crew changes is still a huge problem, and while there are some signs of improvement there are still many countries with rising infection rates who are not yet able to deal with the effective movement of crew.

Sadly, but perhaps unsurprisingly given the problems facing crews, **tensions on board** appear to be running high. Continuing a trend seen in recent reports, there was an increase in the number of seafarers speaking of bullying, harassment, and friction on their ships. We heard worrying concerns too about xenophobia, and even racism. There were also repeated mentions about seafarers from different nationalities, with a number saying they were being treated badly on board because of where they come from.

If COVID-19 has brought any single seafaring issue to the fore, it has been that of **connectivity**. Encouragingly, it seems that some progress is being made, with more seafarers being able to get online and connect with friends, family and loved ones back home.

As was also seen in the latter part of 2020, evidence is growing that more shipping companies are working to ensure their crews have access to Wi-Fi. The impact has been positive, with those who can now more easily and cheaply stay connected reporting that it has improved their life at sea.

The latest results again revealed **shore leave** to be

something of a contentious issue. Once a fundamental staple of what it was to be a seafarer, now even asking about it opens a range of negative responses. According to respondents, the costs, hassles and knock-on effects of time off the ship are not worth it, and this has been drastically exacerbated by COVID-19.

There was praise, however, for the efforts of port welfare teams. When it came to the question of **welfare facilities**, we heard many reports of ship visitors making it to the vessel gangway and providing small tokens of gratitude and support. These may seem small gestures, but they go a long way.

The issue of **food** onboard, the standard of catering, cooking and ingredients has often been a major sticking point for seafarers. Once again we heard of welcome improvements as it seems companies have been investing more in better food.

Similarly, when it came to mental **wellbeing**, there were signs more is being done to protect or improve crews' ability to keep fit and healthy on board. From gyms to table tennis, games consoles and video on demand, there are increasing signs of investment in the non-work environment on board.

While some were seeing improvements with life at sea, others were unfortunately left struggling. Sleep and good quality rest were repeatedly reported as problems. There were also issues with noise, bad weather, and poor-quality mattresses and bedding, problems which are apparently slipping through the MLC and port State control net.

The ramifications of seemingly small issues are magnified at sea, and only further exacerbated by the ongoing crew-change crisis and the stresses and strains of life at sea in a pandemic. Once again, a key issue was **workload**, particularly in

relation to paperwork and working hours. The message from a number of respondents was that rest hours are not being complied with, and they stated concerns about an endemic and systematic culture of fraud. They spoke of pressures to make things appear compliant, and of the impact on crew of doing so.

Crew repeatedly and consistently spoke of pressures to sign against working hours which do not reflect what they have worked. Seafarers are telling us that the systems do not reflect the realities of the tasks and that the times recorded as being spent working and resting are manipulated.

Towards the end of the reporting period, there was also a growing sentiment that seafarers are all too easily overlooked. The impact of the recent Suez Canal closure on global trade and the role of seafarers and shipping fired up respondents to question the levels of risk and reward. Why respondents asked, when shipping company earnings have surged, have seafarer **wages** remained stagnant?

# COVID-19 – the data

As seen in the average happiness score over recent past reports, COVID-19 has had a noticeable impact, with results sharply dipping away during what was perhaps the most troubling global first wave.

Coping through COVID



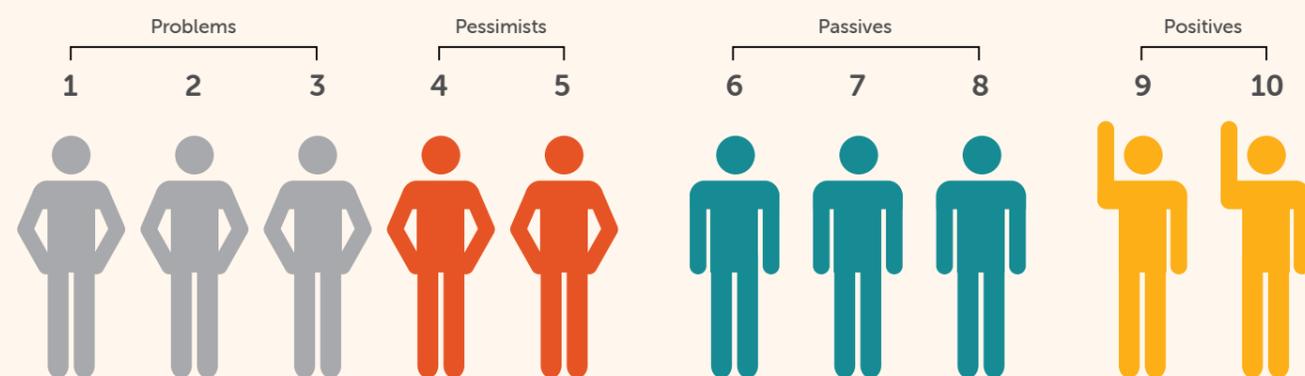
It was felt that the rise in happiness levels was driven by a significant positive upturn in the early part of Quarter 3 2020, which then dropped away in the latter months of the year. In July 2020, seafarers spoke of indications that the worst of the pandemic had passed, and of increasing optimism as national borders appeared to be opening once more.

However, as the year continued, there was a sense that the second wave of COVID-19 was dashing the hopes of many to get home, or indeed back to work. As might be expected, this was marked by a drop in the happiness levels expressed.

That said, there has been a slow recovery, but it is a fragile one. It shows that seafarers, despite the pressures, concerns, fears, stresses and hardships faced, are resilient in the face of problems. Again, as happened in 2020, there are indications that seafarers feel borders are opening again, but as some nations are edging into the third wave of infections, any progress could be swiftly lost.

# New Measurements Approach

The Seafarers Happiness Index is increasingly being used by companies seeking to drive positive change and improvements within their fleets. Using the Index as a tool to benchmark the happiness of their own crews against the global population, and as a new way of engaging, listening and responding.



In order to better support this process and to give a more usable and useful set of outputs, we have been working on a new approach to the data. As such, our 2021 figures will not simply produce figures and trends, but will also flag the areas which need some urgent attention, those which seem to be working, and those in which we are excelling.

This Seafarers Happiness Index scoring system is a measure of satisfaction, and is a key metric regarding how employees feel about vital aspects of their role and time at sea. It represents an organic, word of mouth, insight that tracks not only crew feelings but also predicts areas of concern or progress.

The foundation of the metric is the belief that seafarers fall into four categories - they are either facing problems, feeling pessimistic, they are passively engaged, or they are positively promoting.

The extremely positive, those scoring over 9, will serve as enthusiastic ambassadors for their company, for their roles and careers at sea in general. While conversely those who are in the lower reaches of the results will likely be detractors. Equally, we are able to track the trajectory and direction of sentiment, which allows us to see whether we are making seafarers more or less happy.

The aim of the report is to capture the data and the experiences of those at sea so that the positives can be shared and used elsewhere, and the negatives can be acted upon and improved.

One of the most challenging barriers to conducting seafarer data analysis is the vast differences between vessels, trades, crews and cultural expectations, making it very difficult to produce workable methods of measurement and mechanisms of improvement. In essence, this approach looks to give us a quantitative interpretation of qualitative data. We can use the feedback to shape reactions, while using the data to measure what the impacts are.

So, this is not about goals, but about constant engagement, responsiveness and empathy with what seafarers are experiencing. By listening, by caring and using a systematic approach of reacting, we can have a deeper understanding and a means of making life better for those who are struggling, while learning lessons from and spreading the good news of those who are thriving.

This edition of the Seafarers Happiness Index focusses on the impact of COVID-19 and particularly those areas of seafarer life, such as workload, social interaction and shore leave, where the effects of the pandemic are being felt the most. To read more analysis of this quarter's results, visit [www.happyatsea.org](http://www.happyatsea.org)

## Positive changes

Contact with family 6.91 ↑ from 6.90

There have been positives to report, and it has been very pleasing to again see that there are signs of investment in seafarer wellbeing and welfare. Such feedback surrounded better connectivity, while there appeared to also be continued improvements to food and facilities onboard.

Once again, the responses were about the gratitude when employers do the small things which make a difference. Any gesture or thought which can make life more enjoyable at sea has a great impact, and seafarers feel valued, appreciated and understood.

Companies can ease their employees' woes through new ideas, investment and encouragement, and it can do so much to alleviate the burdens in this challenging time. It is not always about being able to achieve the impossible or even the difficult.

Towards the end of 2020, it seemed that some shipping companies were doing more to ensure their crews could get online, and this appeared to intensify in the first quarter of 2021 with a slight rise in the data to 6.91/10.

The impact has been very positive, with those who can now more easily, cheaply stay connected with loved ones reporting the improvement to their life at sea. While there are issues around the challenges and problems of remaining closely linked to issues at home, it seems that seafarers crave the engagement and feeling closer to others.

It is considered a "lifeline" for many seafarers, and being able to look forward to speaking with home was a motivation through their working day. "Knowing I can go online after my shift makes such a difference". It was also seen as being a real "stress buster" as "talking with family makes me feel better, every time".

There are, however, still all too many seafarers who do not benefit from good, affordable and high-quality connectivity. As one respondent commented, "The international space station can have video calls with Earth, yet we get a crackly and intermittent voice call at best".

When it came to staying fit and healthy on board, we saw a rise in the figures this quarter to 6.73. From gyms to table tennis, games consoles and video on demand – there are increasing signs of investment in the non-work environment on board.

Responses towards the end of last year started to indicate a new trend of companies being rather more generous than usual when it came to food. With crews unable to get ashore, or not even certain when they would go home, there have seemingly been better meals to look forward to. This has made a big difference for those whose employers have dug a little deeper.

We all know that it is proving incredibly challenging to get seafarers home, but there is a real sense of increased happiness when owners invest in better or cheaper connectivity for their fleet, when they increase budgets to allow for better food and more choice, or provide new gym or entertainment equipment.



**Knowing I can go online after my shift makes such a difference.**

## Working hours and rest

Workload 6.39 ↑ from 6.03

COVID-19 has had many implications for life on ship, and while the crew change crisis drew most headlines, the need to ensure better hygiene on board has meant significantly extra work for crews. Washing, scrubbing, relentless laundry demands, the list of manual labour requirements grew, and this was not universally matched by an increase in resources.

This had been a key message throughout 2020, and it was encouraging to see that with the rise in happiness score, there are indications that seafarers are now either getting the support they need or, at the very least, have been able to accommodate it within their work patterns. However, the written responses revealed that problems are getting worse on some vessels.

One of the key messages to emerge was that management systems and safe manning certification assessments tend to factor in "perfect conditions", or an ideal state with little or no focus on competing demands. While the Safety Management Systems have to consider safety and security, they do not necessarily anticipate or reflect other surrounding factors.

There were also reports that rest hours are not being complied with. A number of respondents spoke of an endemic and systematic culture of fraud, and that pressures to make things appear compliant are coming at the expense of seafarers' wellbeing.

"Companies are forcing the crew to fill fake rest hour sheet", said one. Others commented, "Rest hours? Doesn't matter about reality the company wants all to be perfect on paper. It's all about money", and "We work more than we ought to. We work 14 to 15 hours every day. And they force us to sign a monthly working slip which complies with working hours".

Crew repeatedly and consistently spoke of pressures to sign against working hours which do not reflect what they had actually worked. Indeed, there was criticism of shore managers as they are deemed to be "primarily concerned regarding paper trail for audit versus actual conditions of the work required".

It seems there is a massive hidden problem. While many companies manage working hours properly, effectively and well, there are others not applying the rules, and flouting conventions, and laws. These are damaging the system meant to keep our seafarers safe and our seas clean.

Others spoke of a constant pressure to reduce manning even more. "The number of crew members has reached such ridiculous level that there is time for sleep and work only", ran one comment. We also heard from a Master who was being forced to cover 8-12 watches as there was no longer a third mate onboard.

Aside from concern over hours, the jobs themselves and the tasks being completed also take a heavy toll. The impact of long working hours combined with intense concentration and responsibility were a toxic mix for many: "In bad weather or high traffic areas the demands of the job feel so tough".

When it came to sleep and rest, we heard from a number of seafarers who were extremely frustrated by the quality of bedding and claimed that this had a major effect on their health. "A port State inspector does not know how bad a pillow is, or how hard mattress is – so how can they say what is good or bad", said one respondent.

This is a potentially serious issue, as poor mattresses mean bad sleep, leading to tiredness, fatigue and even physical issues such as bad backs, which in turn can lead to stress and injuries.



**We work more than we ought to. We work 14 to 15 hours every day. And they force us to sign a monthly working slip which complies with working hours.**

## Social interaction

Interaction with crew 7.24 ↓ from 7.25

Relationships on board are usually the highest-rated aspect of life at sea and the written feedback a real beacon of positivity. They often highlight the good at sea, the wonderful friendships, working relationships and bonds which grow amongst crewmates.

Through the early part of the pandemic crisis, we heard repeatedly that crew felt a sense of camaraderie, as they struggle through extended contracts together. Those who spoke positively said shared activities and mealtimes were vital opportunities to see others on board.

Alas, this time around it appears too many seafarers need a break from not just work, but each other. While the data remained relatively high compared to other areas, there were some causes for concern creeping in as responses captured a rather tense environment on board many vessels.

It appears that the stresses of COVID-19, the uncertainty of crew changes and worries about the safety and wellbeing of families at home are starting to take their toll. There are definite indications of frayed nerves, which in turn are jeopardising usually positive relationships. Seafarers spoke of running out of patience with colleagues, or of feeling frustrated by perceived issues surrounding the conduct of others.

Oppression, bullying and intimidation were mentioned and are a real cause for concern. Resentment towards those of different nationalities was also raised, with seafarers feeling they were treated badly on board because of where they are from.

There were also criticisms of mixed nationality manning models, and this was particularly with regards to the impact of COVID-19. It was stated that some nationalities are not allowed ashore or allowed crew changes, while others are. This appeared to be a source of great tension and strain on vessels.

It was also troubling to read that some seafarers felt that management ashore "encouraged" such divisions onboard. It was not made immediately clear how this was evident, but some narratives suggested some companies showed more favourable treatment for certain nationalities when it came to workload, time off, overtime, and even food.

Where crews complained, they spoke of a worrying atmosphere of "if you don't like it, don't go to sea". It is concerning that such a culture could still be evident, despite the efforts of industry to develop a more accepting and supportive environment.

It was very sad to read the impact of the current situation on shipboard life, and this has been the case for over a year now. Things will likely get worse before they get better, which is a major concern.

To this backdrop of a tired, irritable, stressed and overworked group, it cannot seemingly be long until the pressure gets too much. There will likely be episodes of self-harm, there is talk in the industry of a rise in suicides and the feedback we receive does nothing to ease those concerns. Then there is the likely rise in accidents too, people are not performing to their best when under such stress and there are real concerns that seafarers are at breaking point.



**Without us, so many countries would struggle for food and fuel, how aren't we seen as key?**

## Shore leave

Shore leave 5.25 ↓ from 5.53

Shore leave was once a fundamental part of what it was to be a seafarer. The lure of signing up and seeing the world meant that going to sea and spending time ashore in far-flung lands was an integral part of a seafaring career. Now, the reality of getting ashore is as difficult as one might expect, and as such many seafarers have simply given up on the concept.

It seems we have reached a tipping point, where even asking seafarers their thoughts on shore leave opens up criticism and a range of negative responses. "Why do you even ask anymore?" ran one response, which echoed others: "Shore leave is not even part of my life anymore", "I can't get ashore and would not want to if I could", "Even before COVID shore leave just doesn't happen". While among the more hard-hitting responses there was cynicism too: "You are ignorant to think this is part of the lifestyle of seafaring...It's laughable really. It hasn't changed in me being at sea for 15 years and it won't."

The responses on shore leave have repeatedly fallen away over the past year, and each report reveals negative reactions. Like some tantalising glimpse of a past world, it seems there is a lingering memory of what it once was to get time off the ship, to go and explore, to see new sights and to buy things that no one else back home had. Sadly, it seems that shore leave is becoming something of an anachronism.

The desire to get ashore appears to have dropped over the past few years of SHI reports. Many crew say the costs, hassles and knock-on effects of time off the ship are not worth it. "There are simply not enough people to get the work done, and we cannot cope if people are off ashore," was the honest reflection of one senior officer. It had become the norm for seafarers to simply try to get through their trips and look forward to getting home rather than the benefits of shore calls. This has been drastically exacerbated by COVID-19.



**I can't get ashore and would not want to if I could.**

A year with no prospect of shore leave has seemingly hit the very expectation of getting ashore hard. Time and time again the responses were about many months on board without getting off, and of how the very idea of trying to get time off the vessel was increasingly a folly.

It seems obvious that in a pandemic shore leave will become virtually non-existent. The question then, is whether it can ever make a return and in what form?

However, there were positives when it came to reports of visitors making it to the vessel gangway and being able to communicate with the crew in a socially distanced manner, or leave gifts of gratitude and support, such as toiletries, confectionary and books.

These may seem small gestures, but those seafarers who had such experiences recorded far higher scores than those on ships unable to receive such "care packages".

Once again, there were many expressions of thanks to ship welfare visitors. One comment ran, "I have felt very overwhelmed to see seafarers centre at some ports help crews. I really appreciate it." This was a sentiment repeated by many. Another stated, "Thank you Mission to Seafarers, sending love and appreciation".

## Seafarer stresses

The issue which has in essence defined the COVID-19 era for seafarers is the problem of crew changes. Forced to serve beyond their contract period, crews have been stuck on board for extended periods with little idea of when they will be able to return home to their families.

The crew change problem waxed and waned through the latter months of 2020, and there have been signs of progress. However, just as one nation opens and crew can move it seems that there are spikes in infections, or new variants, and the route home is slammed shut. This is taking a very heavy toll on seafarers indeed.

Over the past year, we have heard from crew feeling increasingly trapped, isolated, and desperate to get home. Respondents have spoken of feeling physically exhausted, mentally disturbed, anxious and homesick. They are concerned about their families, their safety on board, and their access to medical treatment ashore if it is needed.

One area of positivity was the knowledge that seafarers are keeping world trade moving. However, as the reporting period went on some were reminded that they are all too easily overlooked. The events which saw the Suez Canal blocked brought both the role of seafarers and ships into sharp focus, and a number of respondents voiced regret that the public still seemed to ignore or overlook the sacrifices made by people at sea.

The incident also fired up respondents to question the levels of risk and reward. Why they asked, when shipping company earnings have surged, have seafarer wages remained stagnant? As one commented, "One would expect when prices for anything related to ships went to

the roof, but salaries for seafarers stayed the same as 20 years ago. Isn't that strange?"

There were also points made about the importance of seafarers, and how this is not adequately reflected. "And now we have a single giant container vessel disrupted the Suez and shipping for days. Ask yourself how much a helmsman on that container vessel earn per month? Less than USD1700. And on the navigation bridge, junior deck officer's salary has not changed in a long time".

In addition to the financial sense of worth, there is a growing call for seafarers to be designated and recognised as key workers globally, which could be a major factor in solving crew change problems. Indeed, the issue of status came up repeatedly, and there was a growing sense of frustration that the world does not seem to understand or fully appreciate seafarers. "Without us, so many countries would struggle for food and fuel, how aren't we seen as key?" asked one seafarer.

There was also frustration about vaccines. As more of the global population ashore were receiving vaccination, there were multiple questions about the logistics for a crew of getting one shot of a vaccine, and worries that it may not be possible to get two, especially of the same brand, and of what that means. Questions are being asked, and it seems there is a dearth of useful responses. This is an issue that is likely to grow in the coming quarter and the year ahead.



**And now we have a single giant container vessel disrupted the Suez and shipping for days. Ask yourself how much a helmsman on that container vessel earn per month?**

# Conclusions

The average SHI score showed happiness levels of seafarers for the first quarter of 2021 at 6.46, increasing from 6.37/10 in the final quarter of 2020.

While it was good to see a rise in the overall results, satisfaction levels have generally fallen since the onset of the pandemic and it would therefore be too early to view this as a recovery. The numbers still fell into the “passive zone”, with a sense of watching and waiting for the real sense of whether crew changes will be improved.

There were, however, some positives, particularly when it came to connectivity and there were again reports of some companies investing more in food and facilities on board. It was also seen that despite shore leave problems, and seafarers struggling to access welfare centres, there was praise and gratitude for the centre staff who are still managing to get support and care packages onto vessels. This was making a significant difference to morale.

Looking at some of the concerns raised, a central theme in the responses was that seafarers feel that they should, and indeed they must, be recognised and designated as key workers. A major and repeated issue was also whether vaccines will be provided for seafarers and how this will be done. Many respondents wondered about the mechanism for receiving vaccines, particularly if a second dose would be needed. There are questions being asked, and few answers being given.

We also heard from seafarers of their frustration that despite shipping being fundamental to society, crews so often seem to be the forgotten figures. This was seemingly brought to something of a head when the Suez Canal closure had the world’s press waking to the importance of shipping. Why then, asked many seafarers, aren’t they adequately recognised and rewarded?

There were repeated reports of xenophobia on board, and how the delicate social balances are at risk through the attitudes and actions of some seafarers and even shore management. There is a sense of a growing divide and a feeling of resentment. Pressures on board are rising, and there were many more seafarers than previously talking of bullying, harassment and frictions on their ships.

There were other serious issues raised. These ranged from the relatively easy to remedy, with seafarers stating that they were not having good enough bedding,

through to the rather more challenging issues of certificate fraud and falsification of working hours.

Another major concern was workload. Over the past year, seafarers have reported incessant work with not enough time or manpower, and of being exhausted and at breaking point. There are real fears on the impact of safety as there is a heightened likelihood of accidents with tired, fatigued and stressed seafarers.

A number of respondents also told us that rest hours are not being complied with. Some also spoke of an endemic and systematic culture of fraud. Seafarers are telling us that the systems do not reflect the realities of their work, and they repeatedly and consistently spoke of pressures to sign against working hours which do not reflect what they had actually worked. It seems that the pressures to make things appear compliant on paper are coming at the expense of seafarers’ safety and wellbeing.

## COVID-19 – looking ahead

Over the past 15 months or more, there have been many indications of problems which have continued to grow. We are often surprised that the positive seafarer experiences outweigh the bad in the data, and we receive higher scores than the written feedback suggests.

The uptick in happiness from Quarter 2 2020 until Quarter 1 2021 was built on optimism that things would get better. Moving forward, any positives rest very much on seafarers regaining their freedom of movement, on receiving vaccinations, and gaining the respect and recognition that their work, sacrifices and commitment warrant.

Without improvements in these regards, the problems of deteriorating relationships on board, and the seeming rising tide of allegations of working hour manipulation will begin to impact seafarers even harder.

It is a testament to the nature of our global population of seafarers that they have coped with such a terrible year in the way they have. It would be very hard to see how a second year of such hardships could be tolerated and managed.



## Thank You

Thank you to all those seafarers who took the time to share their thoughts with us. We are extremely grateful. They told us the things which really frustrate and concern them, the things that make a positive difference, and offered some opportunities for improvement.

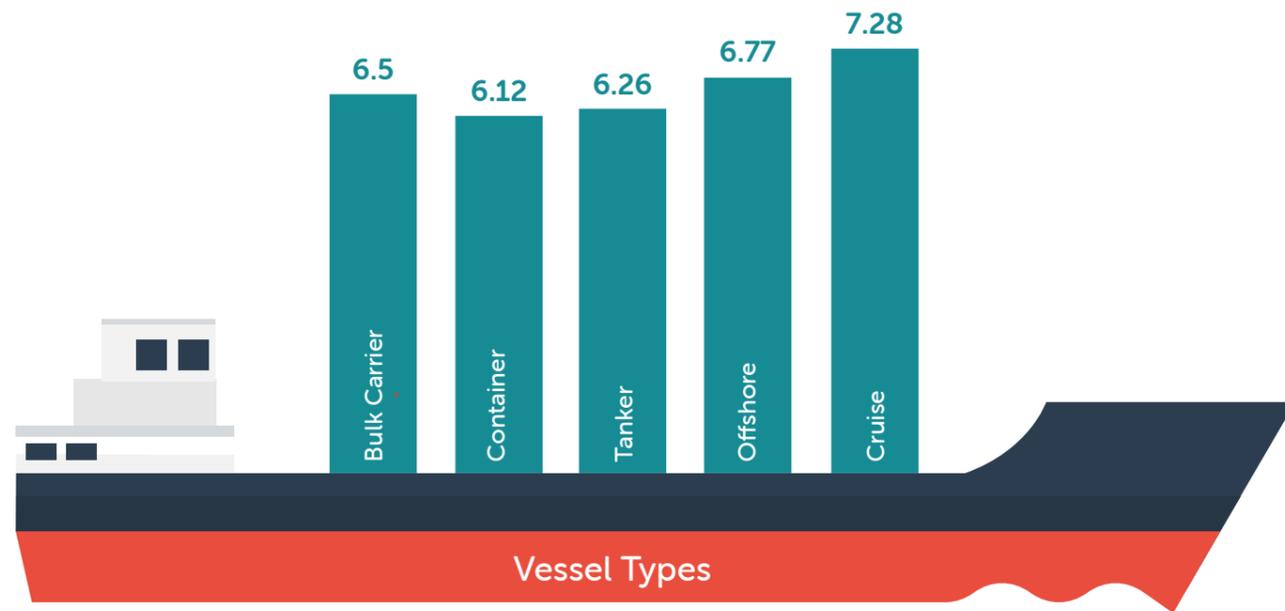
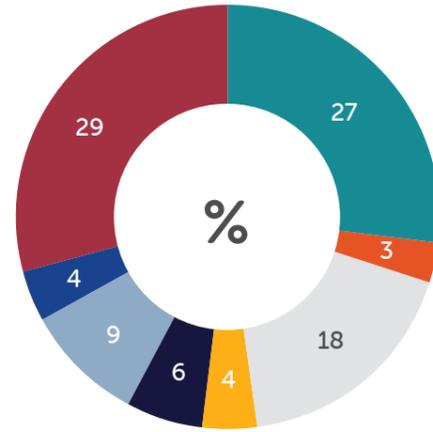
We always need more data, and to hear the stories of more seafarers...and for those who have already done so, to share again. So please visit [www.happyatsea.org](http://www.happyatsea.org) to find out more, and to complete the survey. We also want these reports to be spread as far and wide across shipping as possible, so please do share these findings.

We would like to thank our 2021 sponsors, maritime solutions company Wallem Group and specialist marine and energy insurer Standard Club. We must also thank the companies which have approached us about setting up bespoke happiness surveys for their own fleets so they can benchmark their own performance against the wider population of seafarers.

## Ship Type

Once again, the highest number of respondents served on tankers, but the returns from bulk carriers ran a very close second place this time. There was also a slow but steady increase from cruise ships and offshore vessels, which will hopefully continue to grow as the respective sectors reawaken from the pandemic.

- Bulk Carrier
- Cable
- Container
- Cruise
- General Cargo
- Offshore
- Ro-Ro
- Tanker



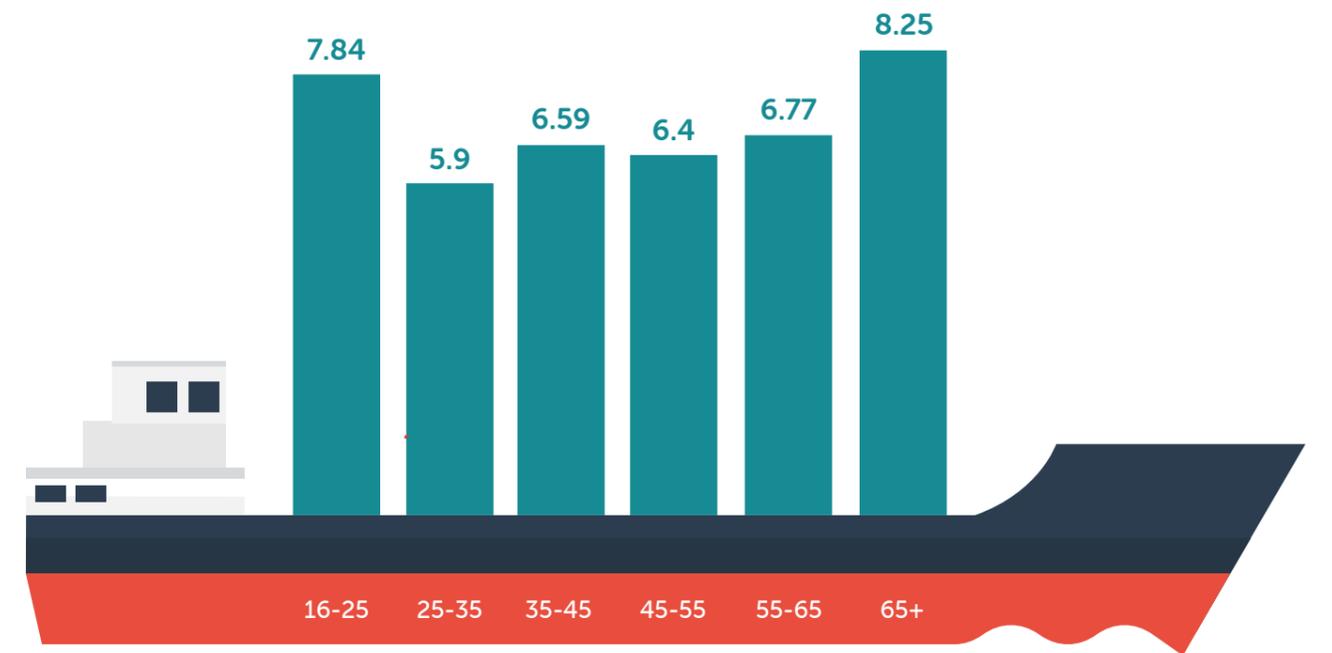
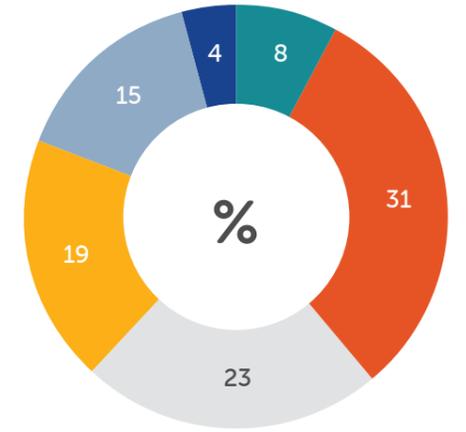
### Ship types and happiness

Of those with the highest response rates, bulk carriers moderately took the lead, but the responses from offshore and cruise vessels contained doubly good news. Not only was the number of respondents up, but so too the happiness levels recorded.

## Age Range

Once again, the 25-35 age range was the best represented, making up 31% of all responses. However, we saw a large growth in the number of seafarers in the 35-45- and 45-55 age groups engaging with us. This is good news as it reflects a better spread of views and feedback.

- 16-25
- 25-35
- 35-45
- 45-55
- 55-65
- 65+



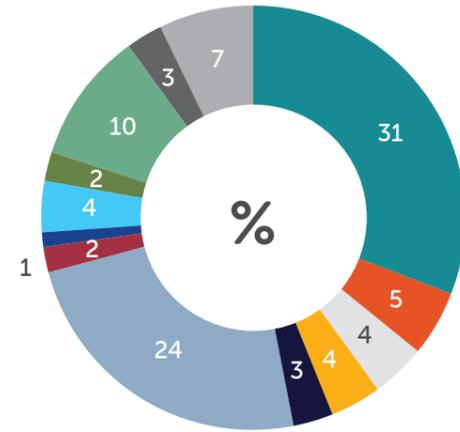
### Age range and happiness

The youngest and oldest groups returned the highest happiness levels, while the figures waxed and waned across those in the middle of the working age population.

## Rank

There was a wide spread of seafarers across all ranks, but it was disappointing to note a negative departmental skew with many more returns from deck crew and officers. More engagement with maritime engineering groups and professional bodies will be needed to remedy this.

- Captain
- Catering
- Chief Engineer
- Chief Officer
- Deck Cadet
- Deck Crew
- Electrical
- Engine Cadet
- Engine Crew
- Second Engineer
- Second Officer
- Third Engineer
- Third Officer



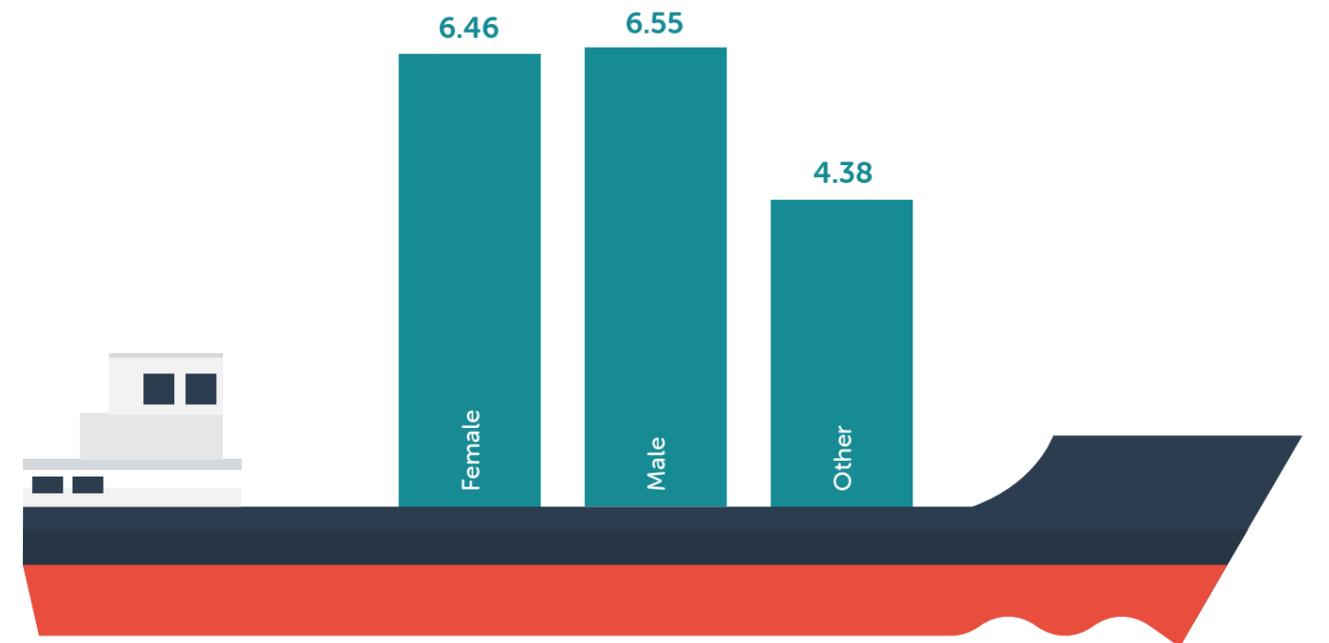
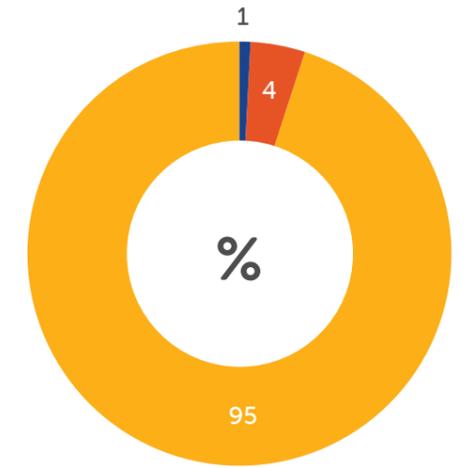
### Rank and happiness

The data trends across ranks were similar to those at the end of 2020, save for the electrical department – though they only represented a small number of respondents. Looking at the other ranks, the Chief Engineers appear to have been the best performing and far happier than their deck department colleagues.

## Gender

The number of female seafarers completing the Seafarers Happiness Index remains low, though it holds steady at around 4%. Though small, it does at least keep pace with the female seafaring population. We hope that we can represent the voice of more women at sea, and that we can be a positive outlet for them once they start their careers.

- Other
- Female
- Male



### Gender and happiness

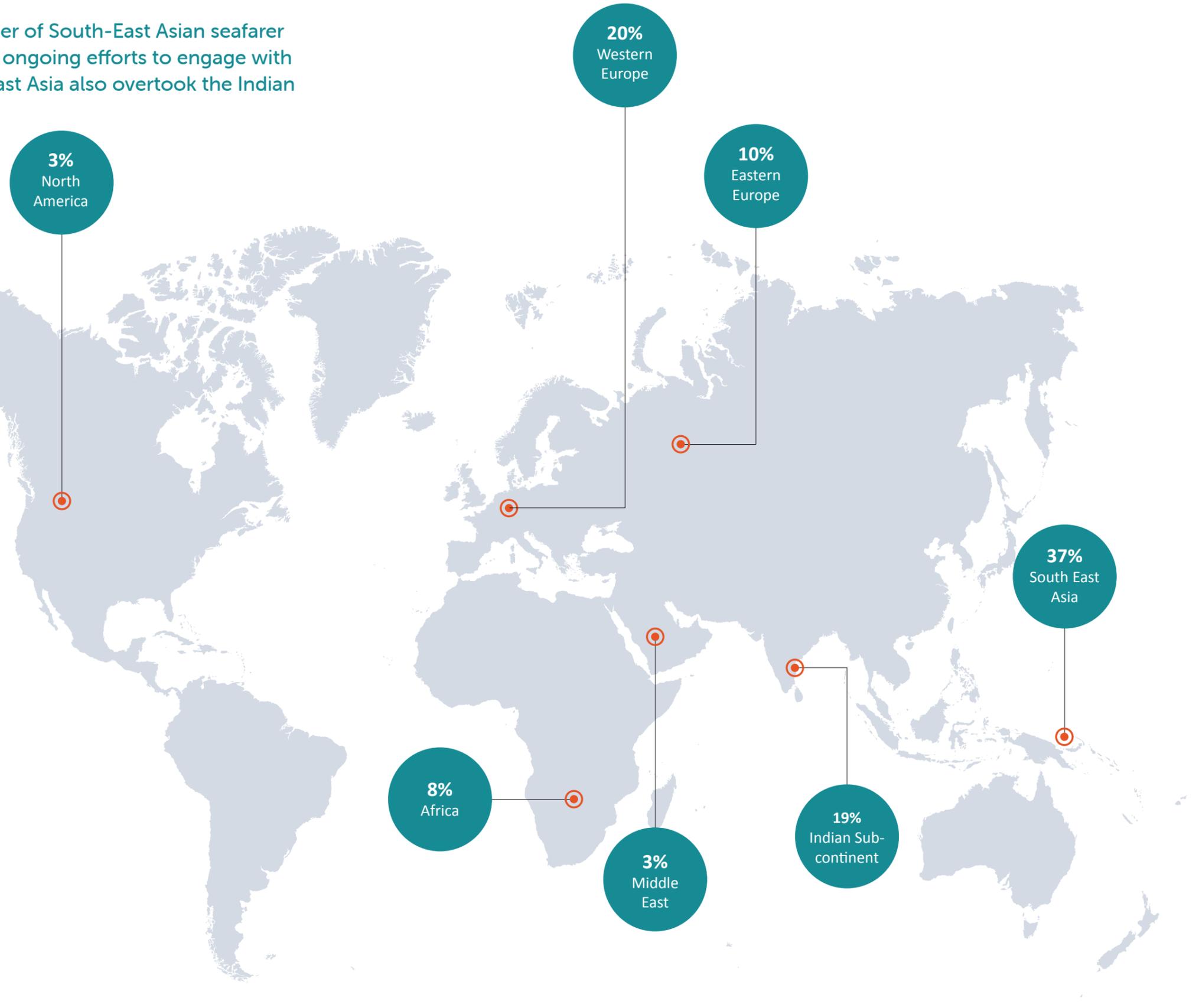
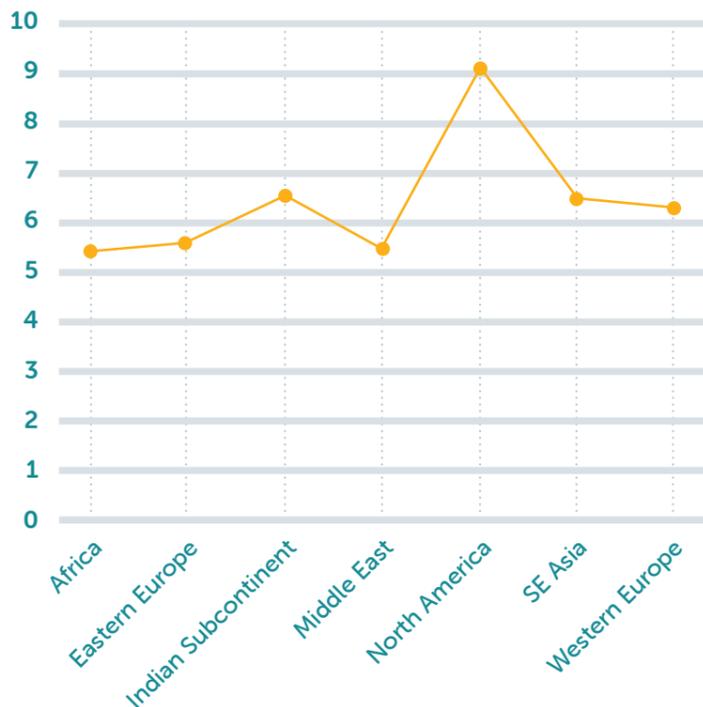
There was a drop in female seafarer happiness this time around, falling slightly below male colleagues. Looking at the data, there was a very diverse split. There were those who recorded high levels, and they spoke of the great team atmosphere onboard. Conversely, those who recorded very low figures spoke of intimidation and feeling uncomfortable in their interactions onboard.

# Where

This time around we saw a large rise in the number of South-East Asian seafarer respondents, which is a positive reflection of our ongoing efforts to engage with seafarer centres such as the Philippines. South-East Asia also overtook the Indian Subcontinent as the best represented region.

## Regions and happiness

The happiest seafarers by far were from North America, recording the highest score we have seen, of over 9.14. As seen in previous reports with similar positive outliers, it must be stressed that there was only a relatively small number of responses from this region, and once more it seemed that the short sea nature of their trades saw them less affected by crew change concerns. Elsewhere the largest groups, of Indian Subcontinent and South-East Asian crews, scored average happiness levels of 6.67 and 6.45 respectively.



## The Mission to Seafarers launches WeCare E-learning

The maritime sector offers huge opportunities to seafarers and is an exciting and rewarding career. However, life at sea can be challenging, and there are times when situations on board and on shore can prove physically and emotionally demanding.

This is where the Mission to Seafarers' WeCare programme comes in – a diverse, inclusive and accessible range of learning resources, promoting wellbeing across the maritime community.

Miscommunication with loved ones, homesickness, and financial concerns are amongst the most common challenges seafarers face. The WeCare courses aim to address the issues at the very heart of poor seafarer mental health by focussing on two key areas:

**Financial Wellbeing** explores the links between money and mental health. It addresses the challenges seafarers face managing their money and provides four practical steps to achieve financial wellbeing.

**Social Wellbeing** identifies the links between social media and mental health, how it affects our emotions and influences our relationships, and provides techniques to manage wellbeing on board.

These courses help seafarers address the root causes of poor mental health, explore practical methods to achieve wellbeing, and promote coping strategies to empower action.

We are excited to announce that in 2021, the WeCare mental health and wellbeing programmes are now available online. Thanks to the support of the UK P&I Club, the TK Foundation, and Prime Tanker & Gas Management, the new WeCare E-Learning programme can be accessed by seafarers on board and on shore.

Both flagship courses, Financial Wellbeing and Social Wellbeing, are available in a format that blends multimedia content with reflective learning exercises to engage seafarers. Our courses are complemented by a 'safe space' zone providing wellbeing videos, weblinks and downloads to use on board.

Whether at sea or at home, WeCare provides seafarers support when they need it most.

WeCare E-learning is available through The Mission to Seafarers. The programme is presented by Oceans Technology Group and may be hosted through an organisation's private training provider. To find out more please visit [www.mtsweicare.org](http://www.mtsweicare.org). Because together, WeCare.



# What makes your crew happy at sea?

The Mission to Seafarers is now able to run bespoke Happiness Surveys for your crew, so you can benchmark your quality of care against the international survey.

If you're interested in finding out more, contact [ben.bailey@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:ben.bailey@missiontoseafarers.org)

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



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