



NEWS RELEASE

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## **Fishing crews urged to turn the tide on industry's safety record**

**Latest figures show fishing fatality rate still one of the highest in the UK compared to other industries**

**A compelling new campaign, 'Home and Dry', shines a light on the fishing heroes in the UK keeping seafood on plates throughout the COVID-19 crisis and urges them to get back to port safely.**

The campaign, led by The Fishing Industry Safety Group (FISG), highlights a day at sea and the simple steps a skipper and his crew take every day to ensure they return home safely to their loved ones. The campaign comes as many fishing crews across the UK are returning to sea following weeks of lockdown and challenging market conditions to sell their catch.

Created with support from the fishing industry, it focuses on the importance of community and home for those who make a living from catching fish. It shines a light on the pride and professionalism of the industry as a way to get vital out messages about good safety at sea.

Dave Driver, a Brixham skipper featured in the campaign, says: "I've been a fisherman for most of my life, and as a vessel owner I am constantly thinking about my safety and the safety of my crew. For me, wearing a lifejacket everyday was hard, but as time went on I got used to it and now it's the same as putting my seatbelt on before starting the car."

In the UK, commercial fishing supports around 12,000 workers on board vessels, with an estimated 6,147 fishing vessels fishing out of ports up and down the country. As critical key workers, many of the nation's fishing crews have also left their families and communities to continue to fish during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in order to supply food for homes across the country.

Fishing as a career also comes with risks. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) published its 2019 data last week (30<sup>th</sup> June) which showed six fishermen died last year. While this number appears low, given the small numbers of professional fishermen it represents, it is a very high fatality rate compared to other UK industries. Although, there have been no deaths in 2020 so far, a trend the industry wants to maintain.

Conveying the reality of these risks, and encouraging fishing crews to think of reasons to get 'Home and Dry' is a new cinematic-style film. The film, which has a [soundtrack recorded](#) (released today 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020) specifically for the campaign by English musician, songwriter, and actor, Johnny Flynn, encourages skippers and crew to do everything they can to reduce risks and stay safe.

[View the film on Vimeo.](#)

It also asks families, friends, coastal communities, and anyone who likes to enjoy fish for their dinner, to take a moment to consider the safety of the nation's fishing crews and say thank you by sharing the campaign to encourage more safety at sea.



“I lost a very good friend at sea once, they never found his body,” adds Dave. “Watching his Mum go through that was really hard. I never want my family or the family of my crew to ever experience pain like that. I wanted to be involved in the Home and Dry campaign because I want to show other fishermen that there are simple steps they can take to be safe at sea. It’s important we do everything we can to get back home to our loved ones.”

The Fishing Industry Safety Group (FISG) is a group of fishing industry organisations, charities, public bodies and regulators set up to improve the safety of commercial fishing at sea. Brian Johnson, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Chair of FISG, says: “Family and loved ones are important to us all. Many of our fishing crews have continued to go to work throughout the pandemic to provide delicious seafood to our plates. No one wants to see people lose their lives to do this. We are feeling positive by the fact that we haven’t lost any fishermen this year and we hope this campaign will encourage them to stay safe.”

“We go to sea to earn money to provide for our families,” says Luke, a skipper from Cornwall whose insights helped to shape the campaign. “You find yourself thinking, ‘what will happen if I go overboard?’ It’s the family who will suffer if I’m lost at sea. That’s why it’s so important to take all the precautions you can – and get back, home and dry.”

The Home and Dry campaign also aims to raise awareness of a recent new law for commercial fishing safety (ILO 188). This includes the requirement for anyone working on a fishing vessel to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) whilst on deck unless a risk assessment excludes the need to wear one. There is a [dedicated campaign website](#) providing easy access to information on sea safety. The campaign also encourages those who are not able to go fishing right now due to the impact of COVID-19 to take the time to make simple safety checks so they are ready to go to sea when things return to normal.

The film has been released today (July 7<sup>th</sup> 2020) to coincide with the Department for Transport’s Maritime Safety Week and Seafarers Awareness Week from Seafarers UK. It is available on [Vimeo](#) and shared via the FISG’s networks and social media. Radio, print and digital advertising will also run throughout the campaign over the summer.

“As a fisherman, I admit that sometimes I try not to think about the risks but I know that’s not the answer,” says Nathan, another fisherman interviewed during research for the campaign. “We have to take every precaution possible. There will always be risks, stuff can still happen but it’s still important to do your bit.”

The campaign website is [www.homeanddry.uk](http://www.homeanddry.uk).

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### **Notes to Editors**

Statistics on deaths at sea come from the [Marine Accident Investigation Branch Annual Report 2019](#)

For interviews and photo opportunities contact:  
[Harriet Yates-Smith](#), MindfullyWired Communications, 07950462532

### **Links**

[Home and Dry film](#)



## Images

The [Fishing Industry Safety Group \(FISG\)](#) is a stakeholder group, whose aim is to improve the safety of commercial fishing at sea. Its ultimate goal is zero preventable deaths at sea

and to reduce the number of serious accidents and vessels lost at sea due to health and safety issues. The FISG is made up of the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA), Seafish, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF), Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation (NIFF), Welsh Fishermen's Association – Cymdeithas Pysgotwyr Cymru (WFA-CPC), the RNLI and the Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers Association.

[Seafish](#) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) set up by the Fisheries Act 1981. Funded by a levy on the first sale of seafood in the UK, our work makes a huge difference. It keeps fishermen safe, supports sustainable sourcing, helps businesses work efficiently, and boosts the nation's health. We tackle everything from research to campaigns, insights to training – whatever we can do to give our industry the support it needs.

[The Maritime and Coastguard Agency](#) (UK Government) is working to prevent the loss of lives at sea and is responsible for implementing British and international safety policy and maritime law. It is also responsible for all UK search and rescue (HM Coastguard).