



Crewsure committed to the welfare of your seafarers and their families.

Unhappiness Grows

The Mission to Seafarers has published the latest Seafarers Happiness Index report for Q1 2023, revealing a decline in overall happiness levels among seafarers during the first three months of the year. The survey, which captures seafarers' sentiments worldwide across a wide range of welfare issues, shows a fall from 7.69 to 7.1 out of 10, compared to Q4 2022.

Shore leave and a desire to access welfare services ashore once more came to the fore as key areas for concern. Seafarers also reported growing frustration with owners who attempt to make seafarers sign on for longer periods than desired, as well as with the delays experienced in sign-off procedures. In addition, the challenges of coping with extended periods onboard have reportedly been made harder due to inadequate food provisions, bureaucratic and unnecessary paperwork demands, ineffective shipboard leadership, and a sense of social isolation adding to the stress of life onboard.

The SHI report also identified several other challenges facing seafarers, including a growing wellness gap between companies that provide health and well-being programs and those that do not, access to dental care in some ports but not others, and limited access to mental health support, medical advisory services, and physical well-being consultations. Seafarers also expressed concerns about salaries, the cost of living, and potential obstacles to career advancement.

Thom Herbert, a senior marine surveyor and crew welfare advocate at survey sponsor Idwal, commented: "The dip in the Seafarers' Happiness Index in the first quarter of 2023 is a worrying sign after the steady increase last year and we will watch Q2's results with interest to see whether this is the start of a downward trend."

Herbet said it was "very frustrating" to hear about ongoing issues with lack of shore leave and sign-off procedures being delayed.

Where shipping is getting it right and wrong when it comes to attracting and retaining the best talent made for a lively [human resources session at last week's Maritime CEO Forum](#) held at the Fullerton Hotel in Singapore. Mark O'Neil, president of Columbia Shipmanagement, said shipping needed to adopt "proper" human resource management.

"We talk about crew and personnel departments but this is antiquated," the shipmanager said, urging the industry to better identify with crew, something that had improved with covid.

Better communication, and detailed, encouraging career planning were identified by O'Neill as vital. For crew, pay and packages need a relook, O'Neil said, pointing out how many seafarers do not have pension schemes or healthcare coverage in place.