



THE DOCKYARD PORT OF PORTSMOUTH



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Queen's Harbour Master Portsmouth

Introduction and Aim

1. For the Queen's Harbour Master's (QHM's) department, the year was again largely characterised by the impact of COVID on working practices and delivery of operations. Despite several team members being infected at various times and thus not available for work, the department maintained operational outputs throughout the year, facilitating a safe and effective port, available for the Royal Navy and the large number of non-military port users, both commercial and recreational. Key operational highlights were the support to the preparation for, and the deployment and return of the Carrier Strike Group, led by HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH, but also comprising other Portsmouth-based ships, HMS DEFENDER, HMS DIAMOND and HMS KENT. Around this, the department has been busy ensuring the waterway remained safe for use, maintaining and reviewing the Safety and Environmental Management System (SEMS), and participating in the development of the Solent Maritime Framework as a replacement for the SOLFIRE emergency plan.

2. The aim of this report is to demonstrate the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth's (DPP's) compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), Guide to Good practice (GtGP) and the Defence Maritime Regulations (DSA02 – DMR) while also meeting the Ministry of Defence's (MoD's) need to maintain core operational outputs.

2021 Headlines

3. The year featured a number of headlines as set out below:

- The Royal Navy completed the first operational deployment of a Carrier Strike Group based around the new Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers, with four ships from the group deploying from and returning to Portsmouth.
- The United Kingdom changed COVID-19 restrictions several times during the year. This was successfully managed to maintain resilient manning and operational delivery;
- There have been a number of personnel changes in the department in the year, including a new QHM, Deputy QHM, Port Safety Officer (PSO) and an Admiralty Pilot. Also recruited and due to join in 2022 are a new Chief Admiralty Pilot and a further Admiralty Pilot;
- QHM's Oil Spill Response Plan underwent a five yearly review and revalidation process in November 2021 prior to submission to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for approval;
- The department undertook an internal PMSC compliance check audit in October 2021 with an external audit due in May 2022; and
- 130 incidents were recorded in the department's safety management software MARNIS. This included 15 mainly minor pollution incidents, 4 diving incidents, 30 Close Quarter Situations (CQS), 1 capsizing, 4 contact with floating objects, 11 contacts with structures, 13 roundings and 6 persons over board incidents.

COVID Resilience

4. The department continued to support the operational output of the Royal Navy, allowing the ongoing delivery of defence critical tasks and operations. In line with Government guidance, the department developed new ways of working to continue to assure delivery of safety-critical services which are essential in order to maintain an open port. This has included elements of the management team partially working remotely, enforcement of social distancing and isolation protocols as well as temporary reductions in numbers of VTS staff in Harbour Control. In keeping with many areas of society, elements of remote working have heavily relied on IT-based communications between the department and stakeholders, with many meetings conducted via Skype, Microsoft Teams or other platforms.

Compliance and assurance

5. In line with the port's Marine Safety Management System, the following assurance activity took place in 2021:

Trinity House Navigation Aids inspection. Our Trinity House inspection of Aids to Navigation was carried out in September (Fishbourne and Wootton Creek) and November (remainder of Dockyard Port area). These were both successfully passed with only 13 defects 7 of which are owned and maintained by Portsmouth International Port (but sit on our register as the Local Lighthouse Authority).

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3.2 Internal PMSC audit.

An internal Port Marine Safety Code Audit was undertaken Between 18 and 22 October 2021 to the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code 2016 (PMSC) and Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations 2018 (GtGP, the Guide).

During this audit there were no non-conformities identified but 6 observations were noted; these have either been or are in the process of being addressed.

3.2.2 External PMSC audit

The last external Designated Person (DP) PMSC audit was undertaken in November of 2020 by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) DP.

During that audit there were no non-conformities identified but 15 observations reported. Of those 15 observations 11 have been addressed and appropriate action taken to update the port's policies and procedures. Of the four remaining:

- 1 was considered but not included within the observations on this internal PMSC audit as no reference in the PMSC could be found detailing it as a requirement;
- 2 have been identified and listed as observations within this internal PMSC audit; and
- 1 remains to be resolved.

Therefore, a total of 7 Observations and no non-conformities from a combination of both audits need to be addressed, however it is considered that overall QHM Portsmouth complies satisfactorily with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code.

The next external PMSC audit is due in May 2022.

4. Processes and Risk Management

Procedure (PRO) and policy documents have been reviewed continuously throughout the year with each being reviewed once in 12 months by the document owner (authorised prior to republication by QHM).

4.1 Risk Assessment Reviews

The department holds 47 risk assessments on our risk register. The risk assessments are reviewed annually or every two years and also post incident. A total of 34 were reviewed during 2021. Reviews are generally carried out online using Microsoft Teams and more recently face to face. Participants include relevant QHM team members along with suitable internal and external stakeholders to ensure as broad a view as possible is taken.

4.2 Commercial Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC) Board involvement.

QHM staff sit on the Portsmouth International Port's (PIP) PEC board and in 2021 examined three successful candidates. The board (following a standard agreed approach to PEC examinations) continues to drive high standards of local knowledge from PEC holders operating in the DPP.

Part of the process of gaining a PEC involves refresher visits to Semaphore Tower. This allows QHM and the PIP to ensure that mariners exempted from taking a Portsmouth Pilot are safe to operate the vessels for which they hold exemptions while in the DPP. Due to COVID precautions, these visits remained in abeyance during 2021. As restrictions ease into 2022, it is planned to review this with the aim of restoring visits to Semaphore Tower as soon as the risks of infection have reduced to an acceptable level.

4.3 Personal Watercraft (PWC) Licences increase.

2021 was another year in which a higher than usual number of licences were issued compared to recent years. However, less were issued than in 2020 with 176 licences issued in 2021 as opposed to 186 in 2020.

It is believed that the increase in leisure traffic, particularly PWCs, has been a result of the extensive lockdown and restrictions on international travel over the past two years resulting in an increase in small craft purchase and use.

4.4 DPP Emergency Contingency Plan.

The Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Emergency Plan underwent review in Jan 2022 to take account of the change from SOLFIRE to the Solent Maritime Framework plan.

4.5 SOLFIRE

SOLFIRE was replaced on the 25 Feb 2022 by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum "Solent Maritime Framework" which is designed to better define the command and control of emergency situations in areas of bordering authorities and improve procedures for handover from local authority to national framework. It also has been updated to reflect an increased risk of terror attack by sea, and covers a broad range of potential incidents, including security and other marine incidents such as fires, collisions and groundings. QHM is in the process of updating all published and internal documentation to reflect these changes.

4.6 Oil Spill Response Plan review

The Oil Spill Response Plan (OSRP) was audited on 11 August 2021 by the MCA. There were no non conformities and 7 observations made. Four have already been closed out.

The OSRP underwent its annual review in November and the five yearly revalidation process started in November 2021 to ensure the plan is revalidated by the MCA by 28 March 2022 (the expiry date of the current plan).

There were 15 Oil Pollution incidents in 2021, with the majority being relatively minor. For 11 incident, the source was detected and action was taken to prevent reoccurrence. For four incidents, a source could not be found but in all cases the oil dispersed quickly and there was no reoccurrence.

A tier two exercise oil spill exercise is being planned for 2022.

5. Enforcement

Patrol duties were undertaken by the Port Safety Officer Assistant (PSOA) during 2021 using QHM's Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boat (RIB). Most interventions involved education and warning for minor breaches of the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order 2005 (DPPO).

QHM issued official warning letters on four occasions to both vessels masters and owners highlighting their dangerous behaviour and consideration of prosecution for further breaches of the DPPO or General Directions.

6. Berthing, Movements and Events

In 2021 there were 158,646 vessel movements within Portsmouth Harbour; a slight reduction from 160,283 in 2020. This figure is a combination of commercial, military, and ferry movements and also includes an estimate of 60,000 leisure moves.

During 2021 QHM's team recorded 1222 events, ranging from cross-Solent swims to powerboat races and major regattas. This was an increase of 345 events compared to 2020; attributed to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

With activity modified again by the need to take COVID precautions, the Volunteer Harbour Patrol (VHP) nevertheless continued to provide advice and assistance in the harbour entrance during peak times in the warmer months, and this was once again key to reducing risk in the most congested area of the DPP. Throughout the year, the VHP provided many hours on patrol, giving support to water users, including a number of tows and assisting Harbour Control with traffic management. As always, we are extremely grateful to all the volunteers for giving their time to this highly valued service.

7. Incidents and Near Misses

A standard port metric to measure safety performance is to look at a ratio of recorded incidents to total vessel moves. For 2021 there were 130 incidents and near misses recorded. 107 of those incidents were related to safety of navigation which equates to 0.67 incidents per 1000 moves.

The majority of incidents were near misses or resulted in minor outcomes, while the following incidents are worthy of note:

- Engine failure on spoil barge Nab;
- Accidental release of anchor by MV Mont St Michel while underway;
- Ansac Pride blown towards FLJ1.

The investigation reports may be requested and are available on a case by case basis from QHM.

8. Conservancy and Environmental Compliance

Provision of Aids to Navigation.

During 2021 there were 31 failures of AtoN with two failures of category 1 equipment. Category 1 availability was 99.85% which is slightly higher than Trinity House target availability requirement of 99.80%.

Hydrographic Survey Activity.

There were three hydrographic surveys undertaken during 2021, which focussed on the maintained channels within Portsmouth Harbour, berths within the Naval Base and the main Portsmouth approach channel from Saddle Buoy inwards.

UKHO Consultation and Chart Publication.

No new editions of UKHO charts covering DPP waters were published during 2021.

Environmental Monitoring.

QHM staff have again contributed to the Solent European Marine Site annual monitoring of activities and their impact on the environment and attended the subsequent working group meeting.

9. Human Resources

Durring 2021 the department underwent a number of personnel changes. The current QHM, a former pilot and Chief Admiralty Pilot, rejoined the department in March, with the previous QHM moving into an Admiralty Pilot role; subsequently qualifying as a pilot in February 2022. DQHM started in August 2021 and PSO started in April 2021. A new Chief Admiralty Pilot is due to start April 2022 and a trainee Admiralty Pilot will join later in 2022.

10. Top 10 Risks held by QHM

In terms of Risk assessment, and ensuring an activity is as safe as it can be to complete, the generated risk scores should be in the ALARP (As Low As Reasonably Practicable) score range or below.

Risk score ranges and deffinitions are detailed in **Table 1.**

Table 1 : Risk Score Definition

Risk Score Range	Risk Definition	Required Action
0 – 1.99	Negligible Risk	An acceptable level of risk.
2 - 3.99	Low risk	An acceptable level of risk.
4 – 5.99	As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP)	An acceptable level of risk. However additional control measures may be considered to reduce the score further providing they are cost effective.
6 – 7.99	Significant Risk	Significant risk to persons. Additional risk controls should be considered to reduce the score.
8 -10	High Risk	Unacceptable risk level requiring immediate mitigation.

At the end of 2021, the top 10 risks held by QHM Portsmouth on its safety management software MarNIS, were as shown in **Table 2.** All were assessed to be Low Risks.

Table 2 : Top Ten Higest Risks

Number	Hazard Theme	Hazard Category	Title	Current Risk
1	Environmental Protection	Pollution – Water	Oil/Fuel Spill	3.75
2	Environmental Protection	Pollution – Water	Sullage/Bilge Spill	3.75
3	Nautical Safety	Other	Gosport Ferry and Unauthorised Swimmers	3.69
4	Nautical Safety	Other	Cross Solent Swim - Swimmer/Kayak Emergency	3.63
5	Nautical Safety	Collision	Large Vessel vs Large Vessel - Wider Solent	3.6
6	Nautical Safety	Collision	Large Vessel vs Small Vessel - Wider Solent	3.44
7	Nautical Safety	Contact with structure	Heavy Landing During Berthing	3.38
8	Nautical Safety	Capsizing/Listing	Large Vessel	3.31
9	Nautical Safety	Collision	Vessels Collide in Fog	3.29
10	Nautical Safety	Contact with floating object	Vessel Collides with Floating Debris	3.19

11.0 Stakeholder Meetings

QHM's team chair or attended seven stakeholder engagement meetings throughout the year:

The Dockyard Port Forum	Nov 2021
The Solent Navigation and Pilotage Coordination Committee	Jan, May and Nov 2021
The Solent Operational Group	Jul 2021
The Port Authority Working Group	Monthly
Nab Vessel Traffic Service User Group	March and Oct 2021
Solent Forum	Sep 2021
Southern Area Harbour Masters Association	Nov 2021

End