



Statement by Natalie Elphicke MP Member of Parliament for Dover and Deal

Mass redundancies by DP World, owners of P&O Ferries

DP World, owners of P&O Ferries today announced the mass sacking of ferry workers and their replacement by agency workers.

I have warned that DP World's mishandling and mistreatment of their employees threatens to cause chaos on Kent roads and harm to the UK economy as a whole.

This is devastating news for the P&O workers who are affected on the Dover route – as well as their families. This is shabby corporate behaviour by Dubai's DP World and an insult to the decades of loyalty and hard work by Dover's workforce.

Today's announcement is also a U-turn on assurances given to me and the RMT Union over the last two years. DP World should rethink their behaviour and reverse this decision.

Not only is this disgraceful and irresponsible corporate behaviour by DP World, their appalling mishandling and mistreatment of their workers now threatens to cause chaos on Kent roads and wider harm to the UK economy as a whole – DP World should be held to account for any disruption.

Statement by Sir Roger Gale MP Member of Parliament for North Thanet

P&O/ DP World seafarers have been treated disgracefully. Many of our constituents have given years of loyal service to this company and have worked throughout the pandemic to keep goods flowing throughout the Channel. The sacking of 800 employees without notice is not just 'a commercial decision' it is an act of corporate vandalism and the Government must intervene to hold those responsible for this action to account - whether in the UK or in Dubai

Statement by Craig Mackinlay MP Member of Parliament for South Thanet

This is a bitter blow for the East Kent economy and represents contemptible and callous behaviour towards long-serving local staff. Whilst I appreciate the extent of recent losses by P&O and the doubtless pressures because of fuel prices, I cannot see that this approach to staffing will offer the savings to improve their position. The damage to their corporate reputation is likely to be permanent and I've recommended a boycott of P&O as the best way to show our disgust at what they have done.

Statement by Dover District Council

We are deeply concerned about today's news from P&O Ferries and its impact on the company's employees and the wider community.

Ferry services from Dover have long sustained local jobs and are vital to both the local and national economy. As well as its sea-going staff, P&O Ferries has its HQ in Dover.

We were not consulted in advance of today's announcement but would welcome the opportunity to meet with P&O Ferries management.

We will be working with the Department for Work & Pensions and other local agencies to see what support can be offered to employees affected by today's announcement

Cllr Trevor Bartlett, Leader of Dover District Council, said: "This is a bitter blow for Dover and the wider district. Our first thoughts are with those employees affected and their families who've been plunged into uncertainty. We'll do everything that we can to support them at this difficult time."

In the short-term, well-versed traffic management plans are in place to cope with any potential disruption on the county's roads. Other ferry operators continue to operate from Dover as normal.

We hope to see a resumption of P&O Ferries services from Dover as soon as possible.

17 May 2022

Statement from David Foley Chief Executive, Dover District Chamber of Commerce

Our Chamber Presidents, Natalie Elphicke MP, Sir Roger Gale MP and Craig Mackinlay MP have all quite rightly drawn attention to the unseemly dismissal of 800 seafarers in the employment of P&O Ferries.

Many of our chamber members will have friends and neighbours whose households have been severely impacted, not only by the blow to their finances and well-being but by the manner and insensitive nature in which the redundancy notices were delivered.

Since gaining independence more than fifty years ago, the Emirates have been staunch allies of the UK. The rapid development of the UAE has been in harmony with countless British companies. UAE interests have sponsored a wide range of our traditional sports, particularly horse-racing, football and golf.

We can only conclude that P&O Ferries' parent company DP World was poorly advised in behaving in such an unsportsmanlike fashion to threaten those established links so blatantly and we trust that wiser counsel will prevail.

If Dubai is to remain a holiday destination of choice, DP World will have to work hard to restore its reputation in our corner of the Garden of England.

18 March 2022

Information

Thanet & East Kent and Dover District Chambers of Commerce provide professional business support to the East Kent coastal business community.

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