

**Press release**  
**30TH JULY 2019**

The Sandbanks Ferry was withdrawn from service on Friday 12th July following an unexpected fracture of one of the main drive shafts and is currently at a repair facility in Southampton. We are working very closely with the MCA (Marine & Coastguard Agency) and Lloyds Register of Shipping (our Class Surveyors for Insurers) to ensure all repairs are conducted to Class standards and specification.

The broken shaft and drive wheel have been removed. The shaft and drive wheel are joined by a hydraulic coupling. As the coupling is a specialist part, we are waiting for the removal kit, which is being flown from Sweden in order to try and separate the coupling. As a precaution we have had the other drive shaft tested and, although no cracks have been detected, the condition is such that we have taken the decision to replace it as well and work has commenced to do this.

As already mentioned, the coupling is a specialist component, which is manufactured to order and, unfortunately, this is on a very long lead time. We are in constant communication with the manufacturers to speed this process up, as well as researching alternatives. The lead time on the coupling means that we do not anticipate being able to resume service until sometime in October. We hope to have a much clearer picture of the return to service date next week.

We sincerely apologise to all our valued customers for this inconvenience and would like to thank all our Contractors, Surveyors (from both Lloyds and MCA) and our Naval Architects BCTQ, who are all working incredibly hard to return us to service as quickly as possible. We also wish to thank the public for the positive words of support received, which certainly helps our hard-working staff who have been demoralised by other uninformed, and in some cases libellous, comments.

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