



Performance Monitoring
Northern Isles Ferry Services
2020 – 2028 Contract Year 5



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Introduction

Under the terms of the operating contract for the Northern Isles Ferry Services, Serco Ltd publish details of its performance with respect to Reliability, Punctuality, Compliance and Customer Comments. This report covers the months from July 2024 through to the end of June 2025.

In addition to prescribed contractual performance obligations, we also populate the website with monthly statistics on timetable performance and carrying statistics. This provides accessible information to the public.

Reliability

Operated Sailings:	3,031
Number of Failures:	64
Failures after relief event:	16

Reliability Definitions

- “Operated Sailings” are all sailing carried out including additional sailings.
- “Additional Sailings” are those undertaken out with the published timetable.
- “Failures” are sailings which have been cancelled.
- “Relief Event” is an agreed event with the Scottish Government which revokes any performance deductions which may be applied to the operator. Examples include sailings cancelled due to bad weather in line with safety procedures; delays due to unavailability or operational restrictions of harbour facilities.

Punctuality

On Time including relief events:	2,921
Number of Failures:	538
Not covered by Relief Event:	110
Level A:	60
Level B:	50

Pentland Firth Services Level A:	58
Pentland Firth Services Level B:	48

Aberdeen Passenger Services Level A:	2
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Aberdeen Passenger Services Level B:	1
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Aberdeen Freight Services Level A:	0
Aberdeen Freight Services Level B:	1

Punctuality Definitions

Pentland Firth Services

Level A Lateness - 10 - 20 Minutes later than published Timetable

Level B Lateness - over 20 Minutes later than published Timetable

Aberdeen Passenger Services

Level A Lateness - 30 - 60 minutes later than published Timetable

Level B Lateness - over 60 Minutes later than published Timetable

Aberdeen Freight Services

Level A Lateness - 45 - 60 minutes later than published Timetable

Level B Lateness - over 60 Minutes later than published Timetable

All levels are applied taking into account any knock-on delay from the previous sailing. Serco NorthLink Ferries is subject to deductions on all cancellations, all service definitions as outlined above are after taking account of relief events. There are a variety of relief events agreed by Transport Scotland: for example, sailings which were cancelled due to bad weather, in accordance with safety procedures or delays due to unavailability or operational restrictions of harbour facilities.

Compliance

Notices served on Operator	0
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Compliance Definition

Compliance with all applicable law. A performance deduction shall only apply if a notice has been issued as direct result of a failure by the operator or its sub-contractors.

Stakeholder Engagement

Customer and Passenger Feedback

Positive Feedback	85	58.6%
Neutral/Observations	26	17.9%

Negative Feedback	34	23.4%
Total Positive/ Neutral Feedback	111	76.6%
Average Telephone Waiting Time (seconds)	128.4	

Serco NorthLink Ferries has set the Key Performance Indicator of average telephone call waiting time to be no more than 30 seconds until answered by operator. Feedback is captured through the use of an iPad survey taken on-board the passenger vessels daily. Although these do not contribute towards contractual performance reporting obligations, the results are recorded, analysed and actions taken as part of our Operational Excellence strategy.

Organisations

NorthLink Ferries participates in an expansive range of stakeholder activity capturing professional bodies, business chambers, industry bodies and partnerships. Engagement is critical to understand the needs of users and their expectations and NorthLink engage fully with a wide range of stakeholders. Below is a sample list of the forums that Serco NorthLink Ferries participate in.

Forum Name	Schedule
Northern Isles Consultative Forum	Variable
Orkney & Shetland Internal Transport Studies	Variable
Shetland External Transport Forum	Quarterly
Stewart Building Group	Quarterly
Orkney Travel & Transport Forum	Variable
Caithness Transport Forum	Quarterly

Passenger and Terminal Accommodation

Total number of sailings	2,351
Number of sailings with no availability failures	2,351
Number of sailings with 1 availability failure	0
Number of sailings with 2 availability failures	0
Number of sailings with 3 or more availability failures	0

Passenger and Terminal Accommodation Note

Reported out with contract requirements, information in relation to the total number of sailings where all cabin and terminal facilities are available. Any availability failure shall be

disregarded for the purposes of reporting, if it is remedied within 30 minutes of the operator becoming aware of the failure and/or suitable alternative accommodation is provided.

Services are deemed to be fully available where:

1. Passenger Performance requirement: the availability on each sailing of the following accommodation:
 - A required cabin that shall be clean and provided with clean bedding, towels, soap, toilet paper, paper towels or other hand drying equipment;
 - Public facilities on board the vessel that shall be clean and provided with soap, paper towels or other hand drying equipment; and,
 - Catering and dining areas shall be cleaned for each sailing in accordance with good industry practice.
2. Terminal Performance requirement:
 - Terminals shall be maintained on at least a daily basis in a clean and tidy condition, where this is the responsibility of the operator.

Freight and Livestock Accommodation

	MV Helliard & MV Hildasay combined
Total ALM*	601,120
Total number of sailings	680
Number of sailings with 2% or less of ALM unavailable	680
Number of sailings with more than 2% up to 25% of ALM unavailable	0
Number of sailings with more than 25% up to 50% of ALM unavailable	0
Number of sailings with more than 50% of ALM unavailable	0

Freight and Livestock Accommodation Performance Requirement

*The availability of freight and livestock accommodation on the freight vessels, which shall be measured by reference to the percentage of unavailable Advertised Lane Metres (ALM) on each sailing.

Catering, Food and Beverages

Total number of sailings	2,351
Number of sailings with all bars and restaurant areas open for 95% - 100% of the hours advertised and with all advertised food and beverages available at the beginning of the sailing.	2,351
Number of sailings with all bars and restaurant areas open for 75% - 94% of the hours advertised and with all advertised food and beverages available at the beginning of the sailing.	0
Number of sailings with all bars and restaurant areas open for 50% - 74% of the hours advertised and with all advertised food and beverages available at the beginning of the sailing.	0
Number of sailings with all bars and restaurant areas open for less than 50% of the hours advertised and with all advertised food and beverages available at the beginning of the sailing.	0

Catering, Food and Beverages Performance Requirement

Reported out with contractual requirements, the availability of catering, food, and beverages on each sailing during the advertised opening hours. A sailing will meet the requirement if the vessel's bars and restaurant areas are open for the hours advertised and are able to serve the full range of advertised food and drink during the opening hours.

A sailing which does not meet the performance measure because the vessel's master determines for operational or safety reasons that the bar, restaurant and lounge areas should be closed or the full range of food and drink should not be served and which does not arise through an act or omission of the operator or its sub-contractors, shall be deemed to have met the performance measure. If the vessel's master orders a closure for operational or safety reasons, a written report should be submitted to the Senior Manager Vessel Support Services outlining the reasons for the closure and the action taken to minimise the length of the closure.