

Ferry travel

Information on your consumer rights when sailing including compensation, special assistance and what to do if things go wrong.

The rights of ferry passengers are legally protected. If your sailing is delayed or cancelled you are entitled to assistance and in certain cases compensation

Passenger rights

The rights explained below apply to passengers travelling on passenger ferry services operating to, from or within the United Kingdom and European Union countries.

However, the rights do not apply to passengers travelling on ships:

- certified to carry up to and including 12 passengers
- with a crew responsible for operating the ship of no more than three people;
- where the distance of the service is less than 500 metres, one way; or
- on excursion and sightseeing tours.

These exceptions mean that the passenger rights outlined in this publication do not apply to some smaller ferry services.

Cancelled or delayed ferries

If a service is expected to be cancelled or delayed for more than 90 minutes beyond its scheduled departure time, the ferry operator is required to provide you with free snacks, meals and refreshments where they are available or can reasonably be supplied. This assistance can be a voucher for refreshments / snacks from the facilities available

- 90 minutes or more and every 90 minutes after that, light refreshments such as a bottle of water or a cup of tea should be provided
- 4 hours or more, a snack or light meal should be provided
- 8 hours or more, a hot meal should be provided

You should also be offered a choice between an alternative sailing at the earliest opportunity or a full refund which must be paid within seven days.

Information

If your sailing is cancelled or delayed the ferry company is required to inform you as soon as possible, and no later than 30 minutes after the scheduled departure time. It is required to provide you with information about the new departure and arrival times as soon as it is available.

If you miss a connecting transport service due to a cancellation or delay, the ferry company is required to make reasonable efforts to inform you of alternative travel connections.

Financially protecting your holiday

The vast majority of journeys will take place without incident. However, when travel plans are disrupted it can have significant financial and emotional impact on consumers, which is why so many consumers take out travel insurance. Insurance provides vital protection against the impact of something going wrong.

Read more about travel insurance below.

Accommodation

If your sailing is cancelled or delayed and an overnight stay becomes necessary, the ferry company must provide accommodation free of charge where this is possible. Accommodation can be either on board the ferry or ashore, and transport between the port terminal and place of accommodation must also be provided.

The ferry company is allowed to limit the total cost of accommodation ashore to £70 per passenger per night and accommodation is limited to three nights.

The £70 limit does not include the cost of transport to and from the place of accommodation.

The ferry company is not required to provide accommodation if it proves the cancellation or delay is caused by weather conditions which endanger the safe operation of the ferry.

Compensation

You are entitled to compensation equal to 25% of the ticket price if you are delayed for at least:

- 1 hour for a journey scheduled to last up to four hours
- 2 hours for a journey scheduled to last between four and eight hours;
- 3 hours for a journey scheduled to last between eight and 24 hours; or
- 6 hours for a journey scheduled to last more than 24 hours.

If the delay exceeds double the times set out above, the compensation will be 50% of the ticket price.

If you are travelling on a return ticket the compensation will be calculated based on the price of the disrupted leg. If the price of the ticket is not broken down for the outbound and return legs, the compensation will be calculated based on half of the total ticket price.

The ferry company must pay the compensation within one month of your application. It must be paid in money if you request this, otherwise it may be paid in vouchers for future travel provided the conditions are flexible regarding the period of validity and the destination.

If the amount of compensation due is less than £5, the ferry company is not required to pay.

The ferry company is not required to provide compensation if it proves the delay is caused by weather conditions which endanger the safe operation of the vessel or by extraordinary circumstances.

Extraordinary circumstances could include, for example, natural disasters, strikes, search and rescue operations and decisions taken by traffic management bodies or port authorities.

Certain technical problems could also be considered extraordinary circumstances.

Exemptions

You are not entitled to rerouting or reimbursement, assistance, accommodation or compensation if you are travelling on an open ticket on which the time of departure is not specified, except for instances where you hold a travel pass or season ticket.

You are not entitled to assistance or compensation if you are informed of the cancellation or delay before the purchase of the ticket, or if the cancellation or delay is caused as a result of your own actions.

Special assistance

What you are entitled to

You are entitled to assistance at all stages of your journey, from booking your ticket, arriving at the terminal, boarding the ship right through to disembarking the ship and leaving the arrival terminal.

- The special assistance must be provided free of charge.
- You should request assistance at least 48 hours before the sailing to ensure all assistance needed, including any relevant equipment, is available.
- The ferry company can only be refused where the design of the ship or port terminal makes it impossible to board the passenger or if carriage of the passenger contravenes safety requirements.

Types of assistance

When travelling by ferry you are entitled to:

- A designated point at the terminal for you to announce your arrival and request assistance;
- Help with checking-in, going through security and getting around the airport;
- Help boarding the ferry, on-board the ferry and disembarking.
- Some ferry companies offer a shuttle bus service to take passengers requiring assistance from the terminal building to board the ferry and also when disembarking. Ask your ferry operator if this available if you would like to use this;
- At your destination port – help to retrieve your baggage and to the terminal exit.

Further information is available in our Access to Ferry Travel guide below.

- Document
[Access to Ferry Travel Guide Web 0.pdf](#)

Complaints

We handle complaints about ferry services operating to, from and within Northern Ireland. If you have a complaint about any other ferry service, contact us and we will direct you to the organisation responsible for handling

your complaint.

If you wish to make a complaint about a delay or cancellation you must submit the complaint to the ferry company within two months of the date you experienced the disruption.

The ferry company must respond to you within one month of receiving your complaint to explain whether your complaint has been accepted, rejected or is still being considered. You should receive a final reply no later than two months from the date the ferry company received your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, [contact us using our complaints tool](#).

We have the power to investigate the complaint on your behalf.

Useful contacts

If you are travelling with either Stena Line or the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, you should contact the ferry company directly if you wish to make a complaint about the Port of Belfast.

Isle of Man Steam Packet Company

Telephone:

01624 661661

Email:

iom.reservations@steam-packet.com

Address:

Passenger Services
Isle of Man Steam Packet Company
Imperial Buildings Douglas
Isle of Man, IM1 2BY

Stena Line

Telephone:

03447 707 070

Email:

feedback@stenaline.com

Assistance Email:

assistance@stenaline.com

Email needs to be sent at least 7 days before departure.

Address:

Customer Services
Stena Line, Stena House
Station Approach
Holyhead, LL65 1DQ

P&O Ferries

Telephone:

08716 64 21 21

Email:

customer.services@poferries.com

Address:

P&O Ferries Channel House
Channel View Road
Dover, CT17 9TJ

Port of Larne

Telephone:

028 2887 2100

Email:

info@portoflarne.co.uk

Address:

Port of Larne
9 Olderfleet Road
Larne, BT40 1AS