Public Consultation for the next Clyde & Hebrides Ferry Services Contract

13 October 2025

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, supporting, shaping and standing up for safe and efficient logistics. We are the only organisation representing the entire logistics sector.

We represent a sector delivering an increasingly innovative, productive and sustainable system of essential national infrastructure. This system ensures the availability of the products that households, businesses and public services rely on every day, and is supporting the UK's transformation for the future. Our membership of over 21,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning the road, rail, sea and air industries as well as the buyers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers.

Response to consultation

13. How could the NIFS contract operator improve how it works with hauliers and businesses to more effectively plan commercial traffic volumes?

Experience of using the service is varied across the sector depending on a number of factors. These include: what freight commodity is being moved (dangerous goods or not), how often the individual business uses the service, and how long the vehicle and driver will need to remain on the island destination.

In regard to commodity, members moving dangerous goods reported they book their slots via phone, whereas other members use an online system. There are also restrictions on volume of dangerous goods that can be moved on each ferry.

Some members report good relationships with the ferry operator, particularly where there are service level agreements (SLAs) in place. Other members report that getting a response, particularly via email, from the operator can be slow.

One suggestion to remedy the disparity in service and also to support greater collaboration would be to have a member of staff dedicated specifically to dealing with freight issues. This could include a dedicated email address and contact number. This would allow for better knowledge of the system and speedier resolutions to the sector's attempts to contact the operator.

14. Do you have any suggestions to better manage or reduce the demand on routes which experience high freight volumes in the interim or longer term?

Logistics UK welcomes the announcement of the replacement freight flex vessels. We would also suggest the following:

Engagement: Work closely with the logistics sector, freight companies, industry associations, and other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies for managing demand on ferry routes. Collaboration can lead to more effective solutions that address the needs of all parties involved.

Forecasting: Use data analysis and forecasting techniques to predict peak demand periods and adjust ferry schedules accordingly.

Availability: Consider whether additional services need to be added to the schedule.

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