



**Tyne Port Health Authority
Service Plan 2016**

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Tyne Port Health Authority Service Plan 2016

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1. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The Tyne Port Health Authority is a joint board constituted by the Tyne Port Health Authority Order 2010 (the Order). The Order defines the district of the Authority, sets out its membership and details financial arrangements. The Order also assigns a range of statutory duties which are largely regulatory and cover public health, food safety and control of pollution.

The primary purpose of the Authority is to protect the health and wellbeing of the crew and passengers of ships visiting the Port of Tyne as well as protecting the health of the wider population who may be affected by activities at the port and food imports.

The Authority achieves this by carrying out inspection of shipping, responding to incidents and outbreaks of certain infectious diseases, the investigation of complaints, monitoring all imported food passing through the port, and sampling of water supplies and imported food.

The Authority is a food authority and as such is required to comply with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice produced by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The Code of Practice impacts on two main areas of the Authority's work – food hygiene visits to ships, and imported food control work.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Tyne Port Health Authority Constitution and Profile

The Tyne Port Health Authority is constituted of three elected members from each of the four riparian authorities of North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Newcastle & Gateshead. Each riparian authority contributes a fixed percentage annual precept, set out in the Order, which finances the activities of the Authority. North Tyneside Council has been elected as the host authority providing accommodation, staffing and administrative support for the Authority.

The district of the Authority includes the Port of Tyne and the remainder of the tidal part of the river (up to the tide stone at Newburn) including the waters and any docks, quays, wharfs or jetties. The district also includes the coastal waters for three nautical miles out to sea extending from North Tyneside Council northern boundary to South Tyneside Council southern boundary where each meets the sea.

As well as land and buildings, any ships entering the district come under the jurisdiction of the Authority for the purposes of Public Health (Ships) Regulations and a range of other legislation enforced by the Authority relating to public health, food and control of pollution.

The Port of Tyne is a medium sized port with 1381 ships visiting the port last year. Traffic consists of bulk and containerised cargo vessels, fishing vessels, ships undergoing refurbishment or repair and international ferries. There is also a steadily increasing number of cruise vessels visiting the port each year with 46 visits scheduled for 2016.

Approximately 7.5 million tonnes of cargo was handled at the port last year of which approximately 60% was exports and 40% imports. The main cargo handling point at the port is Riverside Quay on the south bank of the river where both the Port of Tyne container and bulk cargo handling terminals are located. No bulk food imports are currently handled at the port but food imports are handled at the container depot, the main third country food import being tea.

There is a bulk liquid storage facility on the north bank of the river but the containers at the site do not meet current food safety standards so therefore cannot receive bulk liquid food imports.

The international ferry terminal on the north bank of the river operates daily ferry sailings to and from Ijmuiden. The fish quay is also located on the north bank at North Shields and is home to 22 registered fishing vessels.

There are no land based food premises of any significance within the district of the Authority other than warehousing for imported food, predominantly tea, and two small food caterers.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The Tyne Port Health Authority is a joint board of 12 elected members nominated annually by each of the four riparian authorities. The board elects a chair and vice chair, and meets three times per year. Membership of the joint Board for the year 2015/16 is set out in Appendix 1.

The Authority appoints a Clerk and Chief Port Health Officer who are responsible for carrying out the functions of the Authority. Delivery of the Authority's statutory functions is carried out by a small team of specialist officers.

The Authority also makes the statutory appointments of public analyst, proper officer and port medical officer. There are service level agreements in place in relation to each of these appointments.

The organisational structure of the Authority and statutory appointments are set out in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

2.3 Liaison With Other Organisations

The Authority in carrying out its functions liaises and works in partnership with a number of different organisations.

Public Health England (North East) provides the Authority with advice relating to infectious disease control as well as having a number of statutory responsibilities in providing the Authority with a Port Medical Officer and Proper Officer. Regular contact with Public Health England (PHE) is maintained through existing arrangements between the host riparian authority and PHE as well as regular attendance of PHE at Joint Board meetings of the Authority.

North Tyneside Councils Director of Public Health (DPH) has overall responsibility and acts as the authority lead on all matters relating to Public Protection in North Tyneside. Tyne Port Health Officers consult with the DPH on any significant public protection issues. The DPH is also consulted on any reviews of the authorities emergency planning arrangements.

The Authority reports its activity annually to the FSA and also receives regular guidance and updates from FSA on food law enforcement. Ad hoc contact is maintained as food issues at the port periodically occur

Regular contact with the appointed Public Analysts is maintained through attendance at the NE Sampling Group which meets quarterly.

The Authority is a member of The Association of Port Health Authorities and officers regularly attend the Northern Ports Liaison Network meetings, held twice per year.

There is close liaison with the riparian authorities and they are invited to all meetings of the Authority and to periodic river inspections. They are also routinely consulted on any matters relating to the constitution of the Authority.

Operationally, there is close ad hoc liaison and intelligence sharing between the Authority and the riparian authorities particularly in relation to matters concerning infectious disease control, food and feed imports, illegal live animal landings, and other animal health/welfare issues.

Officers of the Authority work closely with Port of Tyne through regular contact with the Harbourmaster and frequent visits to the Container and Bulk Cargo Handling Terminals and International Ferry Terminal. Regular meetings are held to discuss arrangements around official controls on imported food and plastics.

Contact and intelligence sharing with UK Borders Agency is maintained during periodic ferry disembarkation checks carried out at the International Ferry Terminal.

The Authority engages in periodic joint inspections of ships with the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) and also liaises from time to time with a number of other organisations including the Environment Agency and DEFRA.

2.4 Service Provision

The service is provided from the host riparian authority, North Tyneside Council's offices at Quadrant East, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside.

The business operates a 24/7 emergency on call system to meet its obligations as a Category 1 emergency responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Authority, in carrying out all of its statutory duties and when making decisions, has regard to the host riparian authority's published Enforcement Policy.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Introduction

Areas of work undertaken by the Authority fall under one of the following headings:

- Monitoring of ship arrivals and ship inspections (including ship sanitation inspection);
- Monitoring & sampling of ships water supplies;
- Imported food control;
- Infectious disease control;
- Responding to complaints/requests for service;
- Advice to business;
- Other (public health & pollution incidents); and
- Food safety incidents and food alerts.

3.2 Monitoring ship arrivals and inspections

Ships masters are required to give Port of Tyne at least 24 hours notice of intended arrival, and the Port of Tyne publish a table of expected shipping on the organisations website. All ship arrivals into the port are closely monitored by daily reference to the Port of Tyne table of expected shipping.

Vessels entering the river are categorised depending on the frequency of visits to the port:

- Very frequent visitors (3-4 times per week) - such as the DFDS ferries;
- Frequent visitors (several times a year);
- Occasional visitors (at least once a year) - most of the container feeder vessels from Rotterdam and Felixtowe, and car transporter vessels fall into this or the frequent visitor category; and
- Rare visitors (less than once per year) - such as cruise vessels and bulk carriers which bring coal, biomass fuel and a range of other bulk cargos into the Tyne.

The FSA Code of Practice sets out a system of risk rating food premises in the UK which is then used to set an 'intervention frequency', in other words, how often a food business should be visited.

Internationally registered vessels visiting UK ports are food premises by virtue of operating ships galleys (in addition to some handling food as cargo) and should fall within such a regime however it is not practical to fully use the scheme in relation to international shipping which receives regular food hygiene checks, often at many different foreign and UK ports. This is because ships are also regulated by port health authorities enforcing the requirements of International Health Regulations. The regulations require ships to hold a ship sanitation certificate issued by a relevant port health authority (WHO listed). Certificates are only issued if ships meet minimum specified standards as set out in the regulations and one key area of the standard is food hygiene. Certificates last for 6 months so ships are routinely inspected (including for food hygiene) at least every 6 months. This is a more onerous inspection regime than under the FSA Code of Practice.

Tyne Port Health Authority is a WHO listed port to carry out ship sanitation inspection. This service is chargeable and ship sanitation inspection fees are set annually in line with the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) scale of fees.

Food hygiene inspections of ships galleys, and occasionally other parts of a ship where food cargos are handled, are always carried out as part of general ship sanitation visits. Frequency and priority of these visits to vessels entering the port is determined broadly using the following information:

- Ship Sanitation Certificate status;
- Intelligence information from various sources but in particular, other Port Health Authorities, UK Borders Agency, and Port of Tyne; and
- Previous visit/inspection/sampling history.

Ship sanitation visits fall into four broad categories:

- Ship Sanitation Inspection – either at the request of the Master or when ship sanitation certification is found to have expired;
- Surveillance/verification visits - carried out periodically for all vessels classed as either very frequent or frequent visitors, and carried out on every visit for vessels classed as occasional or rare visitors;
- Intervention as a result of intelligence, poor sampling results, or following a complaint; and
- Investigation following notification of case or outbreak of food poisoning or infectious disease.

Ship arrivals and inspection totals over the last two years are set out on the following page.

Arrivals and Inspections at the Port

<u>Arrivals</u>		<u>Inspected</u>	
2015	2014	2015	2014
1381	1466	203	233

The number of vessel arrivals at the port in 2016 dropped slightly over the previous year however vessel gross tonnages remained stable due to the amount of larger vessel arrivals over recent years. Most recently published gross tonnage statistics at the port are reproduced in Appendix 4.

Ship inspections in 2015 were slightly down on 2014 levels reflecting the fall in numbers of arrivals over the year.

Inspections breakdown 2015 (2014 figures in brackets)

Number inspected	Number where serious defects found	Dirty and/or verminous	Structure	Hygiene	Safety	Provisions
203(233)	13(10)	0(0)	0(0)	7(8)	(0)	6(2)

Ship inspections revealed relatively low levels of serious defects found on board vessels entering the port and all were dealt with informally to a satisfactory conclusion whilst the vessels were still in port.

3.3 Ship Sanitation Inspection

Sanitation control certificates are only issued where vessels do not meet minimum standards. Sanitation control exemption certificates are issued where vessels meet International Health Regulations standards.

A summary of activity over the last three years is set out below.

	2015	2014	2013
Sanitation Control Certificates	0	0	0
Sanitation Control Exemption Certs	43	60	41
Income Generated	£12769	£15254	£12635

The number of ship sanitation certificates issued dipped from the record levels in 2014. Income from the issue of certificates consequently fell.

3.4 Monitoring & sampling of ships water supplies

Water samples are regularly taken from quayside hydrants and ships water supplies for bacteriological and chemical analysis. The breakdown of sampling activity below shows that a total of 236 water samples were taken from 89 vessels. These are usually taken as either part of routine inspections, or occasionally at the request of the ship owner or master where there are concerns about water quality.

Ship and other Water Sample Totals – 2015 (2014 figures in brackets)

Vessels sampled	Total samples from vessels	Hydrants sampled	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
89(44)	236(175)	47(50)	257(183)	26(42)

Where water sample results are unsatisfactory, appropriate follow up action is taken including investigation into the source of any potential contamination. Follow up samples will always be taken to check that remedial measures have worked although sometimes this is done at an onward port with relevant information being passed on. This happens because of the time lag between submitting samples to the laboratory and receiving sample results, by which time the ship may have left port.

3.5 Imported food control

Currently, food imports arrive at the port through either the International Ferry Terminal on road trailers (as part of vehicular ferry traffic), or in containers landed at the Container Handling Terminal. There are bulk cargo handling facilities at the port but these are not currently used for any food imports.

Imports through the International Ferry Terminal are exclusively EU imports and therefore not subject to any official controls. Imports at the Container Handling Terminal arrive from both EU and non-EU countries, also known as third countries. The port is a Designated Port of Entry (DPE) which allows the third country import of a range of foods, not of animal origin, such as tea from China, currently a major import through Port of Tyne. The port also holds First Point of Introduction (FPI) status enabling the import of plastic kitchenware from China containing melamine and polyamide, and which are also subject to official controls. The port is not currently a Border Inspection Post so third country imports of products of animal origin are not permitted through the port.

Food imports are detected by interrogation of the Destin8 container tracking system and consignments requiring both official controls and background checks are identified.

The Authority carries out background checks of approximately 10% of all food imported from both within and outside the EU, selected randomly, and in accordance with FSA guidelines. These checks involve mostly documentary and identity checks. Occasional examination and/or sampling is also necessary.

The Authority carries out official controls which involves documentary and identity checks on all relevant imported food and plastic kitchenware consignments together with the completion of Common Entry Documentation. 10% of consignments also undergo formal sampling for submission to the public analyst.

Action to deal with illegal food imports is conducted by close liaison and intelligence sharing with UK Borders Agency, who share some enforcement responsibility in this area.

Imports subject to official controls – 2016 (2015 figures in brackets)

	Total number of consignments	Documentary checks	Samples taken
Food imports (exc organic)	41(46)	41(46)	4(4)
Organic food imports	6(5)	6 (5)	1(0)
Plastics imports	0(4)	0(4)	0(0)
Total	47(55)	47(55)	5(4)

This is the fourth full year of reporting on food imports subject to official controls as Port of Tyne only received DPE and FPI status towards the end of 2011. The level of activity remains relatively constant with imported tea from China accounting for most of the activity.

All documentary checks and sampling results were found to be satisfactory over the year with the exception of one minor issue with imported organic tea. Income from carrying out official controls for the year was £6,902 (including chargeable water sampling).

3.6 Infectious disease control

The Port Health Authority maintains an up to date list of ports and other areas which are infected or believed to be infected with a disease which is subject to the International Health Regulations or which may serve other places or areas so infected or believed to be infected. The list is compiled from the weekly record issued by the World Health Organisation. Copies are issued to HM Customs and the Tyne Port Health Authority as necessary.

Inbound ships are required to notify the Authority of any death or illness on board where infectious disease is suspected before arrival. Occasionally reports will be received directly from Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) at short notice. The Authority investigates all such notifications before either quarantining or granting health clearance on advice from the proper officer/port medical officer.

In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease, the Authority follows formally agreed Infection Control Procedures which require liaison between the authority, PHE (through the proper officer/port medical officer) and the Director of Public Health.

In some circumstances, PHE will set up an Outbreak Control Team including officers from the Authority, to control and oversee the investigation into major outbreaks, and following the procedures in the Joint Outbreak Control Plan.

Whilst notifications of illness are common, there were no reports of illness in the year where notifiable infectious disease was suspected.

3.7 Medical Advice and Support

The statutory role of the appointed Port Medical Officer/Proper Officer includes co-ordinating the management and investigation of infectious disease incidents at the port. This includes, when necessary, arranging for medical examination of infected passengers or crew, as well as quarantining and disinfection of vessels.

3.8 Responding to complaints/requests for service

The Authority responds to all complaints and requests for service. Response times are set out in performance targets for the service and these appear later in this plan.

Most requests for service relate to ship sanitation or water sampling and are reported elsewhere. Any imported food or food hygiene related complaints/requests for service are investigated in accordance with LACORS advice and guidance.

3.9 Other (incl. public health & pollution incidents)

Pollution and public health incidents at the port are relatively rare however the Authority responds to all incidents.

There were no significant air pollution or statutory nuisance incidents to report during the year. Recent improvements to biomass handling facilities at Tyne Dock have largely resolved dust nuisance problems from the site.

The Authority is not a feed authority nor does it have responsibility for enforcement of animal health and welfare legislation. These responsibilities fall to the four individual riparian authorities whose boundaries extend to the Port of Tyne. The Authority assists by providing intelligence to the relevant local authority on animal feed imports and animal health/welfare matters at the port.

3.10 Food Safety Incidents and Food Alerts Procedure

Incidents are notified to the Authority via the Food Standards Agency Food Alerts System. The alerts are received via EHC net (e-mail), which is accessed every weekday and via text messaging directly from the FSA.

Food alerts can be issued for a range of reasons but usually as a result of contamination of food or other food safety concerns. Most alerts are not relevant for the Authority but occasionally alerts, relating to imported foods in particular, may require a response.

There are approximately 70 food alerts issued by the FSA each year. The Authority was not required to take any action in response to any alerts issued in 2015.

3.11 Business Continuity & Emergency Planning

The Authority is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The 2004 Act places a range of duties on the Authority under the broad headings of emergency preparedness and business continuity.

The Authority has a Joint Port Health Plan in place with PHE for responding to major incidents including outbreaks of infectious diseases and food poisonings. The Authority is also a member of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and there is close liaison and regular meetings with the host authority emergency planning team. Officers periodically attend emergency planning exercises organised by the LRF. The Authority last held its own port health specific emergency planning exercise in 2013 which was attended by officers and key partners. In 2014 officers attended a PHE led exercise to test Ebola preparedness.

There is in place a 24/7 port health out of hours service.

The Authority has produced a Business Continuity Impact Assessment and this is reviewed annually.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Staff Allocations

The functions of the Authority are discharged by two full time officers (equivalent) with operational and management support on a part time basis from the Environmental Health Group Leader and the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Food) of the host authority (in their capacities of Chief and Deputy Chief Port Health Officer). Administrative support is provided by one part time officer.

Financial management and constitutional matters are dealt by the Clerk to the Authority which is on a part time basis. The host riparian authority also provides a range of back office support including HR, ICT support and financial management.

4.2 Staff Development

All staff are subject to the host riparian authority's corporate Individual Performance Review (IPR) process during which training needs are identified and assessed in line with the officer's current abilities and responsibilities.

Professional and Technical competence is supported through staff development needs identified through the IPR process. Officers are actively encouraged to attend relevant training events and courses. In addition, officers regularly attend regional food safety liaison meetings and regional APHA sub group meetings.

Staff development needs are also discussed at regularly held port health team meetings.

The Authority is a member of APHA and as such, all staff have access to the 'technical guidance and information' area of the APHA website. The Chief/Deputy Port Health Officer also attends the APHA annual conference and cascades relevant information to the port health team.

5. PERFORMANCE

5.1 Performance Measurement

The Authority uses an internally developed software system for officers to record, monitor and report on all relevant port health activities.

The Chief and Deputy Chief Port Health Officer are responsible for monitoring port health activity and reporting to the Joint Board on a four monthly cycle.

The Authority is required to submit an annual return to the FSA under the requirements of the FSA Framework Agreement setting out activity undertaken by the Authority specifically in its capacity as a Food Authority.

Certain areas of performance are monitored against the following specific performance targets:

ACTIVITY	TARGET
Response to requests for Ship Sanitation Inspection.	Within 2 working days of ships arrival or request (whichever is later).
Response to request for Common Entry Document (CED).	Within 2 working days of date of import.
Response to notification of notifiable disease.	Within 2 hours, 24/7.
Response to complaints/enquiries.	Within 2 working days of receipt.
Response to major incident (as defined in host authority Major Incident Plan).	Within 2 hours, 24/7.

In 2015, all activity responses were within target.

6. REVIEW

6.1 This plan will be reviewed annually and reported to the Joint Board at the first meeting of each calendar year for endorsement.

7. KEY SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Port of Tyne recently reported that a combination of Government energy policy and other external factors created uncertainty for power generation using wood pellet, coal and offshore wind. During 2015 this led to delays in renewable energy investment and significant reductions in the level of coal imports handled by the port. This has partly accounted for the downturn in shipping arrivals at the port in 2015 with the outlook for 2016 described by Port of Tyne as challenging. Despite this, work is still on track to complete the Riverside Quay extension in early 2016.

The reduced activity at the port is expected to have a marginal impact on the authority in that income from Ship Sanitation Inspections may fall. Tea and other food imports are expected to be largely unaffected so imported food activity should remain stable. Overall numbers of ship inspections in 2016 may also fall slightly.

In 2015, the authority dealt with two Norovirus incidents on cruise ships. In 2016, a record number of cruise ships are scheduled to visit the port and it has also been announced that Fred Olsens 'Balmoral' will use Port of Tyne as it's home port for the 2016 season. This potentially may lead to increased activity dealing with cruise ships.

Further progress was made during the year to improve IT systems, and the use of technology to support officers. Portable devices were purchased to enable officers to electronically record and instantly issue Ship Sanitation certification on board vessels.

The intention is to introduce further improvements in 2016 to allow real time electronic recording of all activities on site. Progress will be dependant on software development by two third party companies, but the process has been slow to date reportedly due to a combination of technical hurdles, and the projects being given low priority. Despite these setbacks, the authority is believed to be one of the first port health authorities in the UK to introduce the use of mobile devices albeit on a limited basis at present.

Re-organisation within the host authority at the beginning of 2016 has resulted in a number of staffing changes. The impact of these changes on the authority has been minimal due to a sufficient period of transition allowing effective handover of responsibilities. New structures to be introduced in the host authority will build on recent work to improve the resilience of the authority by involving more officers in the carrying out of port health duties.

Membership of the Tyne Port Health Authority (Joint Board)

Councillor B Burdis (North Tyneside Council) (Chair)

Councillor T Mulvenna (North Tyneside Council)

Councillor M Hall (North Tyneside Council)

Councillor I Graham (Newcastle City Council)

Councillor D Wood (Newcastle City Council)

Councillor G Bell (Newcastle City Council)

Councillor K Dodds (Gateshead Council)

Councillor P Ronan (Gateshead Council)

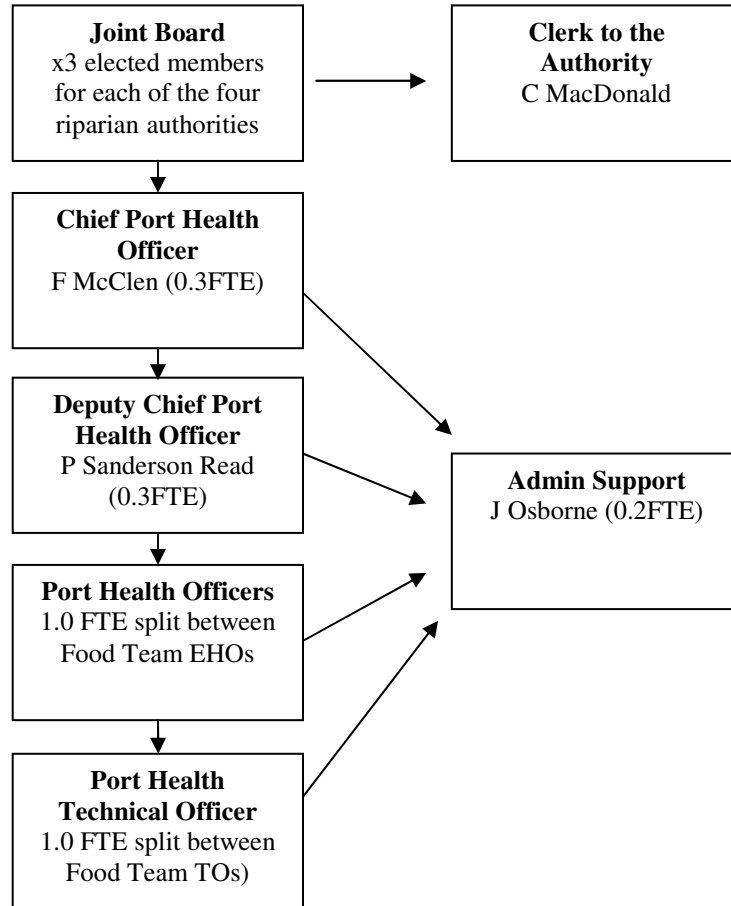
Councillor W Dick (Gateshead Council) (Vice Chair)

Councillor F Cunningham (South Tyneside Council)

Councillor A Walsh (South Tyneside Council)

Councillor K Stephenson (South Tyneside Council)

Tyne Port Health Authority – Organisational Chart



Statutory Appointments

Proper Officer/Port Medical Officer:

Consultant in Health Protection
Public Health England (North East)
Citygate
Newcastle upon Tyne

Lead Officer – Dr Kirsty Forster, Consultant in Health Protection

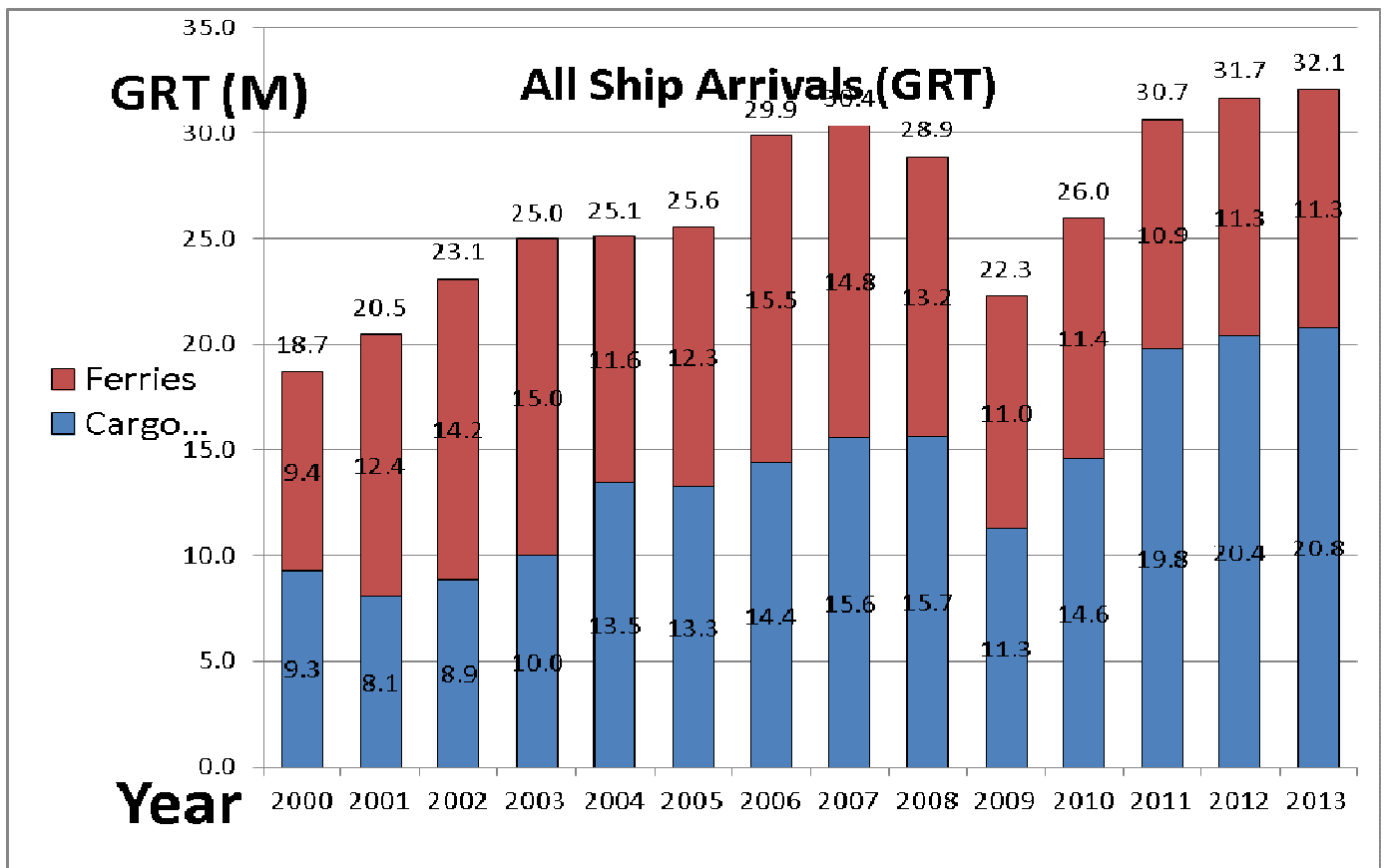
Public Analyst:

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Nigel K Payne

Public Analyst
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figures courtesy of Port of Tyne