



The service will start on 1st June and will offer one daily sailing in each direction between the two ports.

It will be operated by the Gothia Seaways, which can carry up to 165 unaccompanied freight units (trailers or containers without drivers).

The port of Sheerness, part of Peel Ports' London Medway cluster, is located in northern Kent and operates 24 hours a day and is fully open/accessible seven days a week. This flexibility offers our customers congestion free access to drop and collect trailers, with no standage charges applied for the first 48 hours. The port benefits from close proximity to the M25 orbital ring (approx. 40km closer to the M25 than Dover), which is ideal for goods heading to the London area and the Midlands.

The new route expands our existing network of services between the UK and Europe and comes in response to growing demand for unaccompanied freight services.

It is the latest in a series of investments we are making to improve our services. A brand-new freight and passenger ship, the Cote d'Opale will join our Dover to Calais route in July this year, increasing capacity on the route and enhancing the passenger experience onboard its fleet.

Wayne Bullen, Freight Sales Director, said: "We're really pleased to be adding a new unaccompanied freight service to the extensive route network that DFDS already offers. Sheerness benefits from excellent road links with a close proximity to the M25 orbital ring,

which is ideal for goods heading to the London area and the Midlands”.

“Sheerness promises to be a superb ‘partner port’, with an ambitious plan to grow its services over the next decade. We also continue to cement our partnership with the port of Calais and are excited to be expanding our services to the port as it marks the fulfilment of its multi-million-pound expansion project”.

“Launching a new route at this time is a strong indication of our commitment to our customers, our confidence in the popularity of DFDS services and an investment that will help to boost both the UK and French economies. It aligns with our business strategy, helping us to expand our freight network and offer solutions that help our customers, communities and our own business to grow.”

Jean-Marc Puisseuseau, Chairman, Port of Calais, said: “We are very proud that DFDS, first RoRo operator in Europe, chose the port of Calais to propose its new unaccompanied route to the UK. It is a clear sign of confidence in the ability of the port to create value for our clients. This new service will perfectly fit with the rail motorways in operation in Calais coming from Italy, Spain and southern France”.

Richard Goffin, Port Director, London Medway said: “We’re delighted to welcome a new unaccompanied freight service from DFDS. This is the first ferry service since Olau Line ceased operating in 1994. Over the past year, we have Brexit-proofed a number of our ports, including London Medway, increasing resiliency to handle additional cargo to help reduce delays and maximise efficiencies for customers to provide a more attractive proposition and UK entry point over other southern ports. Our strategic location provides proximity to market benefits, and we are continuing to drive forward with planned investment in our people, processes and technology, creating further opportunities for our customers through diversification, as well as the creation of up to 100 direct and indirect local jobs.”

The combination of challenges posed by Brexit and Covid-19, has exposed drivers and haulage companies to vulnerabilities in supply chains worldwide. This has resulted in many cargo owners and carriers re-assessing their transport plans and choosing different ports, different shipping methods, and switching transport modes in order to preserve supply chains. Given current restrictions surrounding international travel, stricter border controls and COVID-19 threats, one of the most standout benefits is that by using driverless methods, the risk of delays associated to those particular challenges is reduced.

“Our dedicated RoRo facilities can accommodate unaccompanied freight, providing a huge opportunity for RoRo operators to gain uncongested access to London and the South East



DFDS launches new unaccompanied freight service from Sheerness to Calais

easily through London Medway, saving on steaming time. The announcement of this new service is indicative of this shift and the growing demand for unaccompanied freight services to support market changes and adapt to the changing demands of cargo owners, haulers and shipping lines alike.”

“This new service will exploit capacity partly enabled by resilience funding from the Department of Transport (DfT) in 2019.”

April 8, 2021