



North Sunderland Harbour

Safety Management System

Section 23

Berthing Application

Commercial Berth Allocation Policy – North Sunderland Harbour

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a fair, transparent, efficient, and safe framework for allocating commercial berth spaces within the Harbour. It aims to:

- Maximise efficient use of limited harbour infrastructure;
- Support commercial activity and local economic benefit;
- Ensure safe navigation and operations;
- Provide equitable treatment to harbour users;
- Balance operational, environmental, and community considerations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all commercial vessels seeking temporary, seasonal, or long-term use of harbour berths under the control of the Harbour Commission.

Commercial vessels may include:

- Fishing vessels;
- Passenger vessels and tour operators;
- Workboats;
- Other approved commercial operators.

Leisure, angling, RNLI and emergency vessel / safe haven arrangements are managed separately by the Harbour Master.

3. Definitions

Berth: A designated location within the harbour where a vessel may moor.

Commercial Operator: Any individual or business operating vessels for trade, service delivery, transport, fishing, tourism, or income generation.

Permanent Berth Allocation: Berth access granted for a defined long-term period.

Temporary Berth Allocation: Berth access granted for a limited period.

Waiting List: A managed list of applicants seeking berth allocation when no suitable berth is available.

4. Guiding Principles

Berth allocation decisions shall be guided by:

4.1 Safety

Harbour safety requirements take precedence over all allocation decisions.

4.2 Fairness and Transparency

Applications shall be assessed using published criteria.

4.3 Efficient Use of Harbour Assets

Berths should be occupied and used effectively, avoiding under-utilisation.

4.4 Support for Local Economic Activity

Priority may be given to operations contributing to local employment, supply chains, and economic development.

4.5 Flexibility

The Harbour Master may adjust allocations to respond to operational needs and changing demand.

5. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Submit a completed application and willing to sign a berthing agreement;
- Provide vessel registration details;
- Demonstrate valid insurance;
- Meet harbour safety requirements;
- Be compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations;
- Hold required operating licences;
- Have no outstanding harbour debts.

Failure to maintain eligibility may result in suspension or termination.

6. Berth Allocation Categories

The Harbour Commission may allocate:

a) Permanent Commercial Berths

Long-term allocations subject to agreement conditions.

b) Seasonal Berths

Allocations linked to seasonal activities.

c) Temporary Berths

Short-duration allocations for visiting or temporary commercial operations.

d) Operational Berths

Reserved spaces for harbour operational needs, emergency response, or maintenance activities.

7. Allocation Criteria

Applications shall be assessed against the following factors:

7.1 Vessel Suitability

Assessment of:

- Vessel dimensions;
- Draft;
- Manoeuvrability;
- Infrastructure compatibility;
- Safety considerations.

7.2 Operational Need

Consideration of:

- Frequency of harbour use;
- Nature of operations;
- Essential service requirements;
- Operational dependency on harbour access.

7.3 Economic Contribution

Consideration may include:

- Employment generation;

- Local supply chain activity;
- Contribution to fisheries, tourism, or commercial trade.

7.4 Historical Use

Existing occupancy and demonstrated regular use may be considered.

Historical use alone does not create an automatic right to continued allocation.

7.5 Harbour Efficiency

Preference may be given where allocation improves overall berth utilisation.

8. Priority Order

Where demand exceeds berth availability, priority may generally be:

1. Existing compliant commercial berth holders;
2. Local commercial operators;
3. New applicants.

9. Waiting List Management

Where no berth is available:

- Eligible applicants shall be placed on a waiting list;
- Applications shall be date-stamped;
- Position may be adjusted based on allocation criteria;
- Applicants must confirm continued interest annually;
- Inactive applications may be removed.

The Harbour Commission is not required to allocate berths strictly by waiting-list order.

10. Conditions of Berth Use

Berth holders shall:

- Use only the spaces allocated to them;
- Comply with harbour directions;
- Maintain vessel seaworthiness;
- Notify extended absence periods;
- Maintain insurance;
- Avoid obstruction of harbour operations;

- Ensure all invoices are paid on time;

Berths may not be swapped or transferred to new boats without written approval from the Harbour Master.

11. Temporary Reallocation

The Harbour Master may temporarily reassign berths for:

- Safety reasons;
- Maintenance works;
- Harbour operations;
- Emergencies;
- Weather events;
- Operational efficiency.

Users shall comply with relocation directions.

12. Under-Utilisation

The Harbour Commission may review allocations where:

- Berths remain unused for extended periods;
- Vessel activity significantly differs from application information;
- Occupancy does not represent efficient use.

The Harbour Commission may reallocate under-used spaces.

13. Fees and Charges

Fees shall be established separately by the Harbour Commission.

Failure to pay fees may result in:

- Suspension;
- Refusal of renewal;
- Withdrawal of allocation.

14. Compliance and Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Written warnings;

- Suspension;
- Removal from berth;
- Termination of allocation.

Immediate action may occur where safety risks exist.

15. Appeals

Applicants may submit written appeals within 14 days of an allocation decision.

Appeals should include:

- Grounds for appeal;
- Supporting information;
- Requested outcome.

Appeals shall be reviewed by the Harbour Commission or designated review panel.

16. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed every three years, or earlier where operational requirements, legislation, or harbour conditions change.

Appendix A – Commercial Berth Application Form

NORTH SUNDERLAND HARBOUR

Commercial Berth Allocation Application Form

Please complete all sections. Incomplete applications may delay consideration.

1. Applicant Details

Applicant / Business Name: _____

Trading Name (if different): _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

2. Application Type

Please tick:

☐ Permanent Commercial Berth

☐ Seasonal Berth

☐ Temporary Berth

Requested start date: _____

Requested duration (if applicable): _____

3. Vessel Information

Vessel Name: _____

Registration Number: _____

Type of Vessel:

☐ Fishing ☐ Passenger / Tour ☐ Workboat ☐ Other _____

Length Overall (LOA): _____

Beam: _____

Draft: _____

Gross Tonnage (if applicable): _____

Hull Material: _____

Engine Type: _____

4. Operational Information

Describe the vessel's commercial activity:

Estimated harbour use:

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Seasonal ☐ Other _____

Estimated number of harbour movements per month:

Does your operation depend on regular access to North Sunderland Harbour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain:

5. Local Economic Contribution

Please provide details of any local employment or economic contribution:

6. Existing Harbour Use

Have you previously held a berth within North Sunderland Harbour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes:

Dates: _____

Previous berth number/location: _____

7. Supporting Information

Please provide copies of:

- ☐ Vessel registration documents
- ☐ Insurance certificate
- ☐ Relevant licences / permits
- ☐ Safety certification (if applicable)
- ☐ Additional supporting information attached

8. Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is true and complete.

I understand berth allocation does not create any permanent right of occupation and that applications are assessed in accordance with the North Sunderland Harbour Commercial Berth Allocation Policy.

I agree to comply with harbour directions, harbour byelaws and berth conditions.

Applicant signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

For Harbour Use Only

Date received: _____

Application reference: _____

Eligibility check completed: ☐

Supporting documents received: ☐

Assessment notes:

Decision:

☐ Approved ☐ Waiting list ☒ Further information required ☐ Refused

Harbour Master signature: _____

Date: _____