

# SAFE BOARDING WEEK

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27.02.23 - 05.03.23

# Results Breakdown

**Safe Boarding Week 2023** was a European-first safety initiative conducted by the Port of London Authority, from 27th February to 5th March 2023.

The purpose of this campaign was to promote safe vessel access on the Thames through carrying out inspections of vessel access arrangements, with a focus on education and rectification when a non-compliance was identified. It was hoped that future deficiencies can be prevented by addressing the issue directly, increasing awareness among PLA staff and stakeholders.

This report provides a summary of our findings.

**“The UK has world-class standards when it comes to maritime safety. However, any injury or tragedy on our waters and riverways is one too many, and we will keep working to ensure they’re safer still. I’m therefore grateful to the Port of London Authority for raising awareness of this important issue and helping to ensure everyone has safe access on and off vessels.”**

- **Baroness Vere**, *Maritime Minister*

# 265 Inspections Made

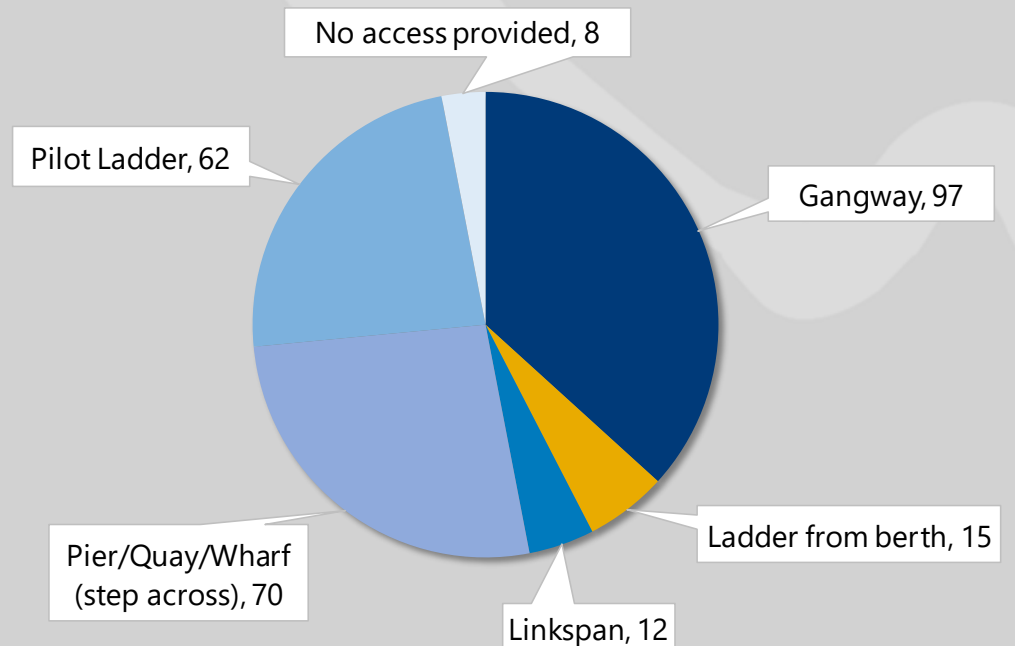


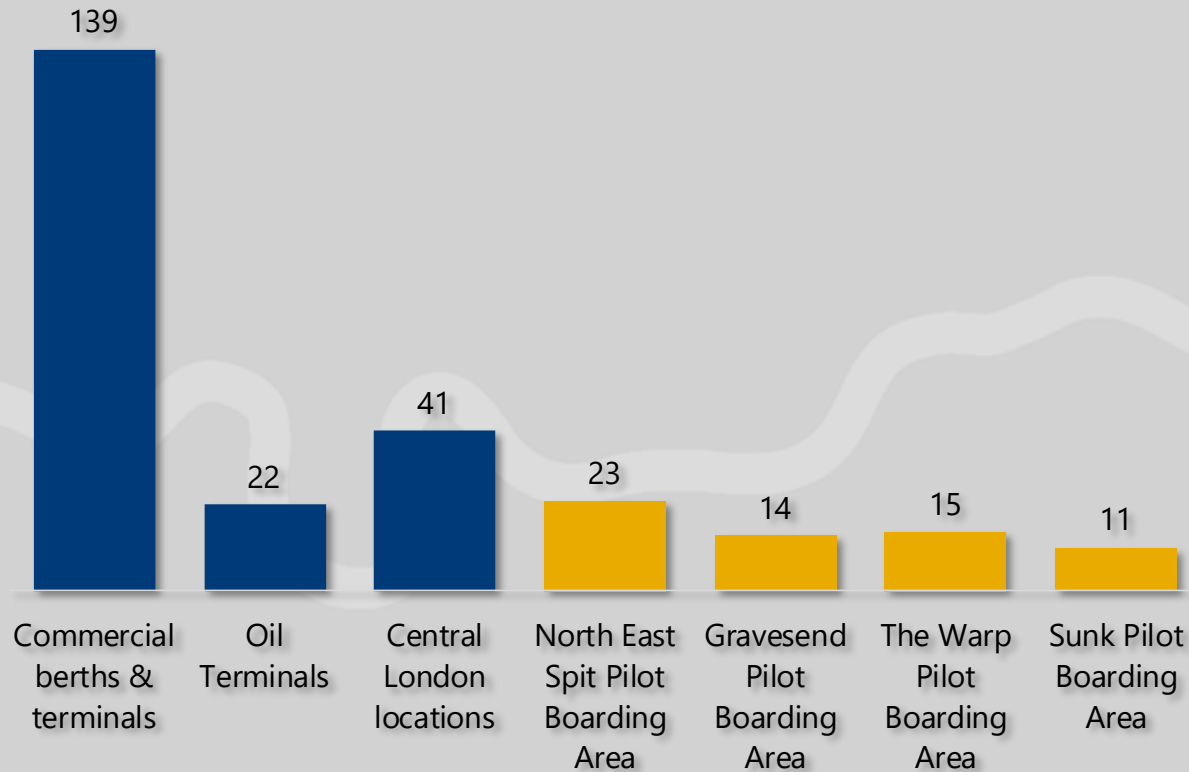
This chart shows a breakdown of the types of access arrangements that were inspected. The **three** main types in use were:

- Gangways: **37%**
- Piers (step across access): **26%**
- Pilot Ladders: **24%**

**3%** of inspections identified that no access had been provided between the vessel and the berth.

The remaining **10%** were either linkspans or vertical ladders from the berth.





On the left you can see a breakdown of our inspections by general location.

The **blue** bars show the number of inspections carried out by colleagues in the Chief Harbour Master's management team and afloat staff (**202**) visiting commercial berths, piers, wharves and jetties.

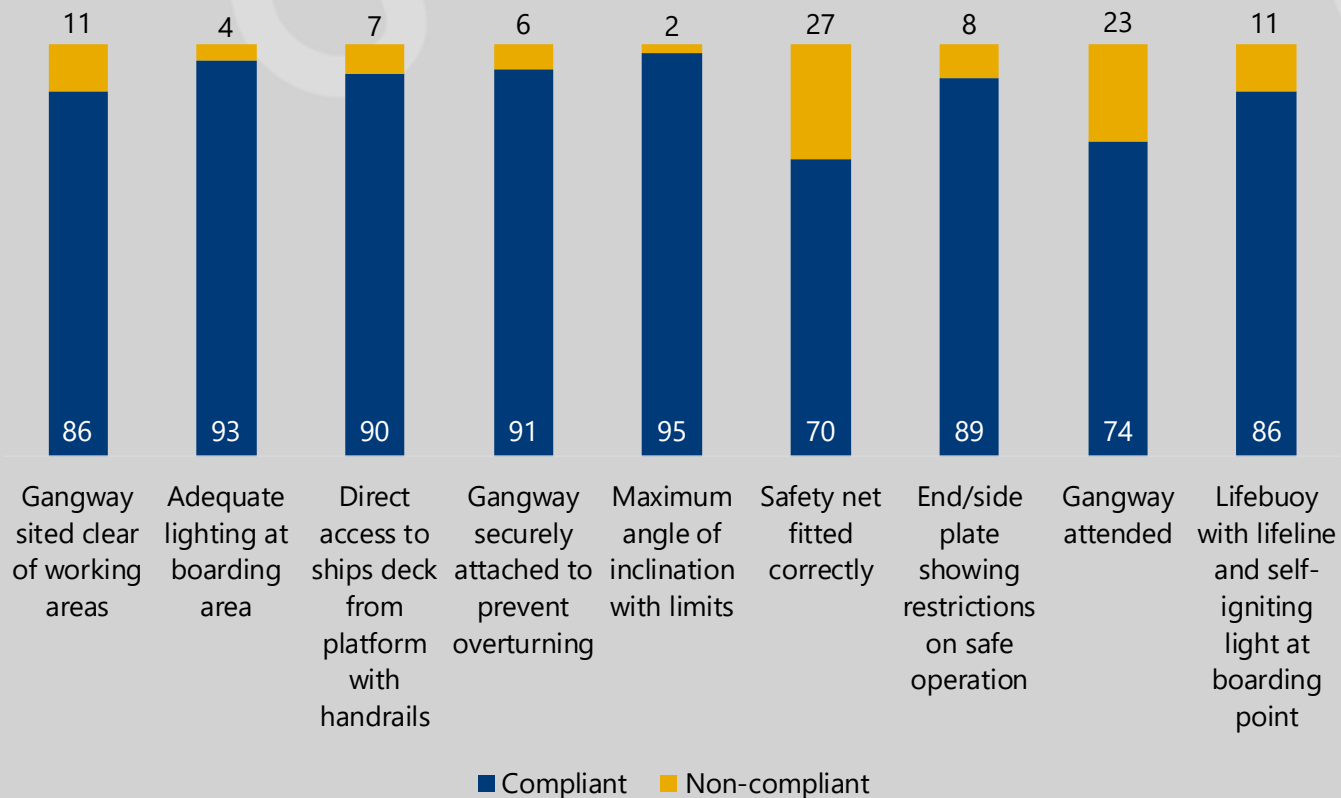
**Yellow** depicts inspections conducted by our Pilots when boarding commercial vessels at Pilot Boarding areas in the Estuary and lower Thames (**63**).

# 72 Locations along the tidal Thames



# 97 Gangways

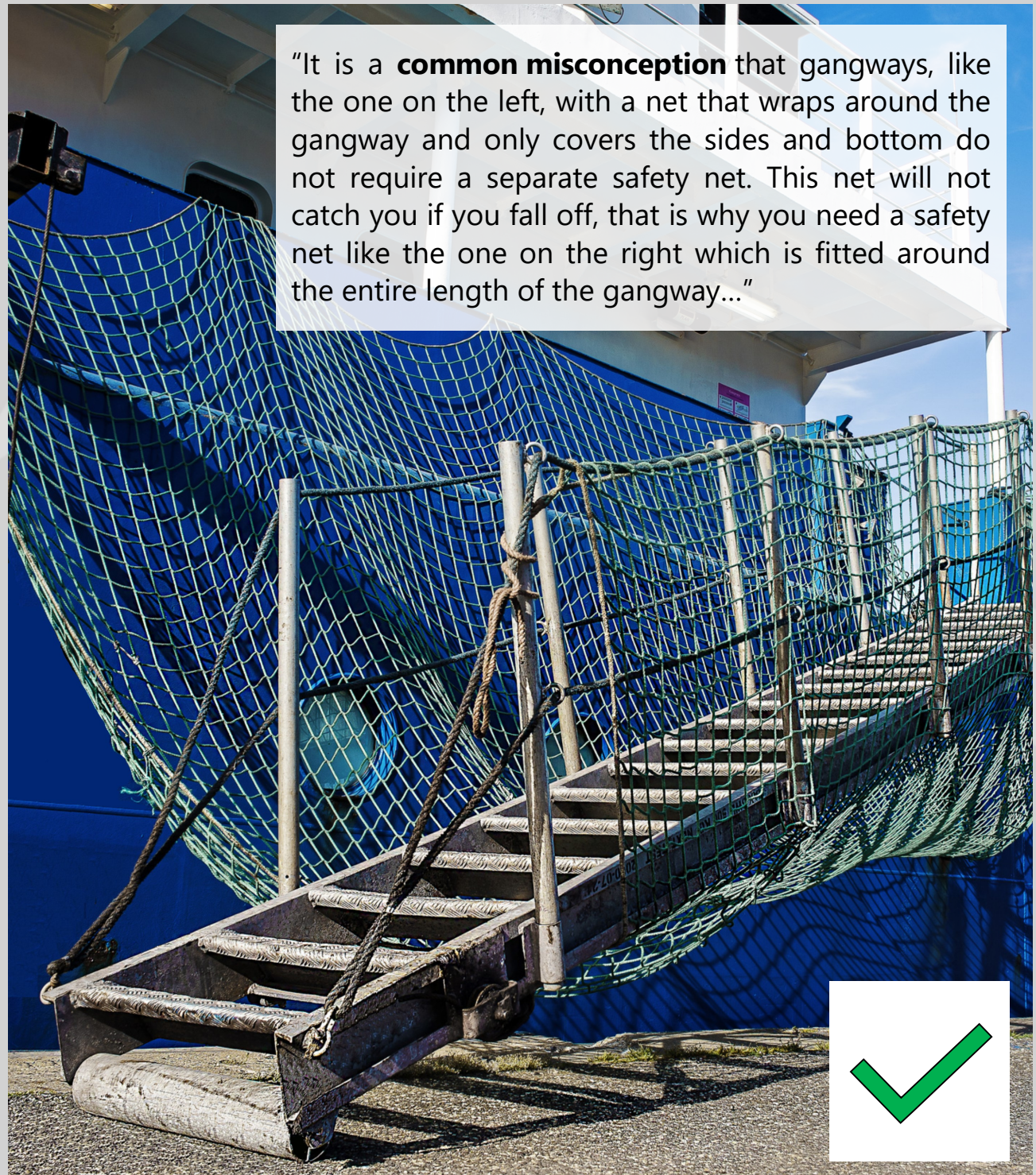
**89%** of all gangways inspected were found to be compliant, whilst **11%** were found to have a deficiency of some nature. **38%** of all gangways inspected were in **Good** condition, **60%** were considered **Satisfactory**, whilst **2%** were considered to be in **Poor** condition.



The condition of gangways was considered **Satisfactory** in the following areas:

- Overall cleanliness: **31%**
- Wires: **40%**
- Stanchions: **37%**
- Hand ropes/rails: **35%**
- Turntable: **45%**
- Lifting points: **42%**

The main failing of **1%** of gangways, were due to issues with stanchions, hand ropes/rails and turntables.

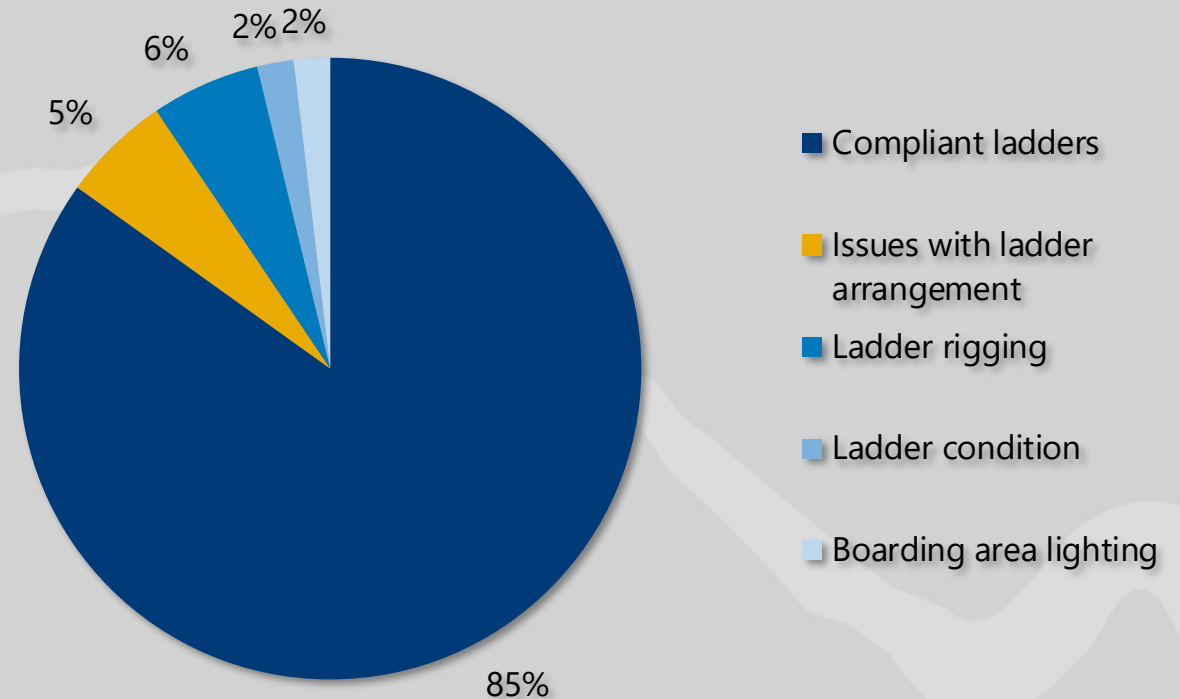


"It is a **common misconception** that gangways, like the one on the left, with a net that wraps around the gangway and only covers the sides and bottom do not require a separate safety net. This net will not catch you if you fall off, that is why you need a safety net like the one on the right which is fitted around the entire length of the gangway..."

**85%** of all pilot ladders inspected were found to be compliant with **SOLAS** (*International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea regulations*) standards, whilst **15%** were deemed non-compliant.

Out of these, only **two** of our Pilots were able to identify the deficiency **prior** to boarding, while **nine** stated that they only became aware of a deficiency **once onboard**.

Any non-compliance was reported in our Incident Management System and to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.



# 62 Pilot Ladders

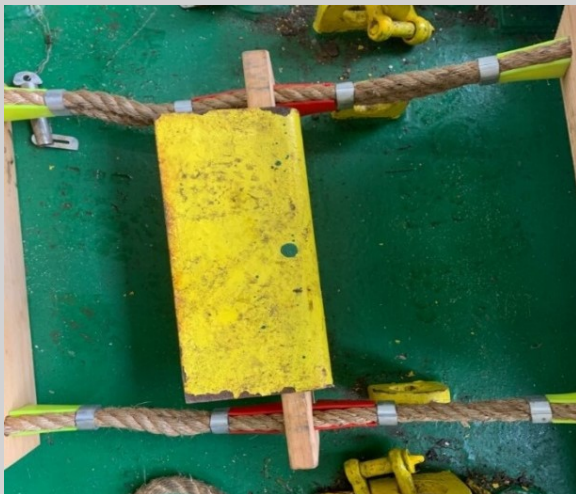
# X Common deficiencies

## Pilot Ladders secured by shackles

Pilot Ladders secured by **shackles** are a common deficiency.

This is because although the International Maritime Organisation allows it: **IMO A.1045(27):** 2.1.1 *"the securing strong points, shackles, and securing ropes should be at least as strong as the side ropes"* it must be noted the UK Authorities have declared the use of shackles as non-compliant, because this puts weight on the steps rather than the side ropes.

Pilot ladders should be secured using **rope lashings** to a deck strong point using a rolling hitch or appropriate hitch to secure the side ropes.

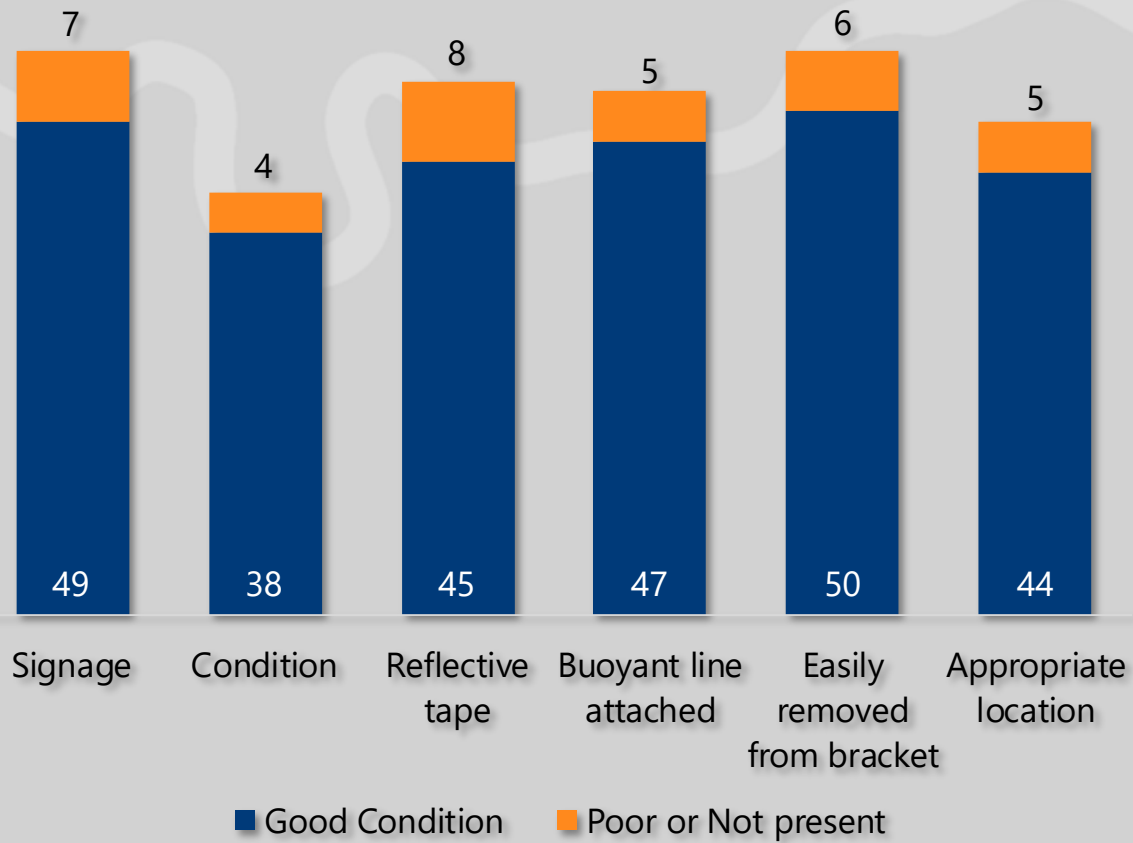


## Pilot Ladders secured by deck tongue

Although a common securing arrangement which may appear a simple solution to install and adjust a pilot ladder, this method is deemed non-compliant and dangerous for anyone who might have to use it.



One of the aspects of the inspection was to check the location and condition of **lifebuoys** at the boarding points onboard vessels. Here is a summary of what we found.



Throughout the year and into 2024, our aim is to produce safety campaigns highlighting best practice for the safe rigging of gangways and pilot ladders. We also aim to conduct another Safe Boarding Week next year where we will hopefully see a significant improvement.

**“Our thanks go out to all participating vessels, terminals, and berth operators, for making Safe Boarding Week possible. Going forward, we will deliver safety campaigns and liaison visits to highlight the lessons learned. This will make working on the Thames a safer place for everyone”.**

- **Bob Baker**, *Chief Harbour Master*

