



Marine Management Organisation

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Royston Smith GM MP
House of Commons
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Dear Mr Smith,

I write further to my letter of 2 May 2022 in response to the concerns raised by your constituent, Mr James Glover, director of Maritime Systems Ltd. With apologies for the delay, I am now able provide you with a fuller update, including the actions being taken by MMO following independent testing of Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (I-VMS) devices.

I-VMS will, for the first time, provide the full picture of fishing vessel activity in English waters. This will require all under 12 metre vessels (around 2,400 English vessels) to transmit their locations via I-VMS device when the Statutory Instrument (SI) is laid. All non-UK under-12m vessels will also be required to transmit locations when the SI is laid.

MMO's I-VMS project is supporting fishers to purchase and install IVMS devices on their vessels, with grant funding provided to cover costs (up to £650 per device).

Four I-VMS devices were "Type Approved" by MMO for fishers to choose and claim grant support. This process required all suppliers, including Maritime System Ltd, to provide evidence and assurances that their devices met certain technical specifications, for the reporting of location, heading and speed by under 12 metre fishing vessels.

Following this process, rollout of devices began in early 2022. In late 2022, issues were raised that IVMS devices being installed by some suppliers did not meet specifications required by Type Approval.

MMO acted by undertaking independent testing of all four devices. This testing was undertaken by GMV NSL, who are technical experts in this field. As such, we do not agree that the testing process, which was applied to all suppliers was flawed.

Contrary to the evidence and assurances Mr Glover provided as part of the Type Approval process, the testing results confirm that the MS44 device being sold to fishers by Maritime Systems Ltd does not meet specifications and has very significant failures. On our decision to initially suspend the MS44 Maritime Systems Ltd device, this supplier has continued to sell failed I-VMS devices to fishers, despite our formal requests not to do so. As such, suspension was considered necessary as our clear instructions had been ignored.

In response to Mr Glover's comments on if data transmission was still required. We have been clear throughout that data transmission is not a mandatory requirement until the SI is laid and that although fishers could choose to transmit data voluntary, this was not legally required.

As you would expect, we engaged Mr Glover, shared the results of the independent testing, and provided an opportunity for him to respond to the results of the testing, including his proposals to address the significant failures identified on the MS44 device. This engagement also included a discussion with MMO representatives, as well as representatives of GMV NSL – the testing organisation.

The review of Mr Glover's proposals concluded that the proposed actions do not address the failures. As a result, MMO has now contacted Mr Glover and formally confirmed that the MS44 device provided by Maritime System's Ltd has had its Type Approval revoked and will no longer be supported by MMO grants payments. I can absolutely assure you that this decision was not taken lightly.

Our priority is to support affected fishers who have bought this device in good faith which has subsequently been shown not to meet the required specifications. Whilst we might sympathise with Mr Glover's current situation, we absolutely need to take swift action in response to a supplier who has been selling I-VMS devices to fishers that have significant failures against the agreed device specifications. Failing to act now, by revoking Type Approval, would have left fishers with devices which are not fit for purpose and do not meet the required technical specifications needed.

MMO is contacting all fishers directly with information. Fishers are also being supported via our local MMO coastal teams and through a dedicated national helpline.

I appreciate that you may have additional questions in this matter. You may also be contacted by affected fishers in your constituency who may have purchased the MS-44 device from Maritime Systems and are seeking reassurance and support. I therefore repeat my previous commitment and I would be happy to arrange a call with senior leads within MMO. Please let me know and we will arrange a convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

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