



Island Community Impact Assessment (ICIA)

Revision to Block Booking Terms and Conditions

Date: 26 May 2025

This document sets out the steps CalMac followed during the completion of an Islands Community Impact Assessment (ICIA) regarding a revision to and proposed amendments of block booking terms and conditions. The document will provide an overview of the scope of the assessment and explain the process that was adopted as set out in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

The process followed is aligned to and references the following:

- Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, Section 7, Section 8 and Section 12 (see Appendix 1).
- [Island Community Impact Assessment: Guidance and Toolkit](#). The guidance is issued under Section 11 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and relates to the duty imposed by Section 7 of the Act.
- The guidance and principles specified in the [“Scottish Government Consultation Good Practice Guidance”](#). Any exceptions to this will be justified and recorded.

Conducting Authority CalMac Ferries Ltd (CalMac)

Island Scope Network Wide

Island Representative Body CalMac Block Booking Commercial Customers

The following island representative groups were informed of the consultation with block booking commercial customers but were not required to participate in the consultation:

- The Coll Ferry Committee
- The Tiree Transport Forum Lismore
- The Arran Ferry Committee
- The Mull & Iona Ferry Committee
- The Campbeltown Ferry Committee
- The Jura Ferry Committee
- The Colonsay Ferry Committee
- The Islay Community Council Ferry Committee (ICCF)
- Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (CNES)
- Harris Transport Group/Forum

- Barra Transport Committee
- South Uist Business Impact Group
- Ferry Community Board

As part of our commitment to improving fairness, accountability, operational efficiency and service delivery we are currently undertaking a review of the Block Booking Terms and Conditions for commercial customers ahead of the Winter 2025/26 timetable. These changes aim to address operational challenges, maximise deck space, and respond to ongoing disruption across the network.

Purpose:

An ICIA is required under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and as specified in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 the ICIA will:

- Describe the likely, significantly different effects of the proposed changes to the Terms and Conditions for block booking customers.
- Assess the extent to which CalMac considers the Block Booking Terms and Conditions to improve or mitigate capacity for the island communities and the outcomes resulting from it.

As specified in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, on completion of the ICIA, CalMac will have:

- Ensured that the commercial customers and communities are kept in mind throughout the changes to the Block Booking Terms and Conditions.
- Helped to support strong, resilient and vibrant island communities.
- Helped to meet the four principles of fairness, integration, environmental protection (green) and inclusiveness that underpin the work to support island communities.
- Promoted the voice of island communities.
- Recognised that every person in Scotland has a right to live with dignity and to enjoy high quality public services wherever they live.

(see Appendix 1 for further detail as regards to rationale and purpose)

Timelines:

The ICIA process commenced on 26 May 2025 with an expected completion date at the end of September. The customer consultations commenced on 13 June 2025 and completed on 23 July 2025.

During the 30-day consultation period 18 meetings were held from 19 June 2025 to 1 July 2025 with a combination of mixed group meetings and one-to-one meetings at customer's request. 39 companies attended the consultation sessions with 49 individual attendees.

Once the 30-day consultation period finished all commercial customer comments/feedback were captured and collated, findings determined, and recommendations finalised within 10 days. The island communities in scope were informed of expected timescales and justification provided for any changes to timescales as required.

Guidance: Scottish Government Islands Policy and Communities Team are available for guidance and support on the ICIA process.

Objective: The objective of this consultation is to gather feedback on the proposed changes to the Block Booking Terms and Conditions from our commercial customers. This process aims to ensure the Block Booking Terms and Conditions amendments are transparent, considers the full range of factors affecting commercial customers and is reflective of the diverse needs of our service users. Ultimately, our goal is to be as inclusive as possible and capture the diverse requirements of our commercial customers so they can be captured and where appropriate be considered for inclusion in the amended Block Booking Terms and Conditions. In so doing this should enhance the overall service by optimising deck space for the benefit of all customers.

Our goal is to prevent late cancellations and no shows and thus optimise deck space for all customers. The aim of this consultation is to collate feedback on the proposed changes to the Block Booking Terms and Conditions from our block booking commercial customers. This process seeks to ensure all customers are aware of the proposed changes, and accounts for the unique nature of island businesses.

Background: The combination of increased demand, increased disruption and a lack of adherence to and enforcement of Block Booking Terms and Conditions has resulted in our need to review our Block Booking Terms and Conditions and propose changes. Hence the need to consult with our block booking commercial customers.

As part of our commitment to improving fairness, accountability, operational efficiency and service delivery we have reviewed the Block Booking Terms and Conditions for commercial customers ahead of the Winter 2025/26 timetable. These changes aim to address operational challenges, maximise deck space, and respond to ongoing disruption across the network.

Block bookings play a key role in how we provide a service to our commercial customers; these have not been strictly implemented over the past few years, and commercial customers have had no financial implications for no shows. It has been recognised that customers are not fully utilising their block bookings, and we are continuing to see no shows having an impact on deck space utilisation across the network. We have received feedback from ferry committees and several commercial customers who have raised concerns about a lack of ability to make bookings only for space to transpire at time of boarding. This has caused a real sense of frustration among customers and stakeholders alike. While late cancellations and no shows are not the only cause for space becoming available at time of boarding, it is a significant contributing factor hence the need to address Block Booking Terms and Conditions, amend and enforce.

Existing Terms and Conditions for Block Booking Customers

The most salient clauses within the Block Booking Terms and Conditions are highlighted below. In summary, they relate to late cancellations, where less than 24 hours notice is given, customer no shows and utilisation of less than 80%.

- We require all block booking customers to achieve not less than an **80%** level of utilisation of block bookings made in any one timetable period.
- Customers may cancel any or all block bookings, provided that such cancellations are submitted by e-mail to CFL at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled departure time.
- The practice of confirming all block bookings prior to departure and then cancelling some or all these bookings at check in time will not be accepted.
- Check in times must be adhered to, late check in may lead to the vehicle being refused carriage and recorded as a no-show.
- Customers that block book may have their credit facility withdrawn in the event they fail to comply.
- For the avoidance of doubt, failure to advise CFL that a block booking is not required - resulting in a 'No Show' - will result in the cancellation of all future block bookings for the particular sailing involving the 'No Show'. It is the customers sole responsibility to inform CFL of any amendments to bookings including but not limited to changes to travel times or size of vehicles booked.

Cancellation Option	Fees
No Show	No Charge Applied
Amendments	Free of Charge

Proposal at Consultation Stage:

Beyond emphasising the importance of the Block Booking Terms and Conditions and the need to adhere to them to ensure the maximum space is freed up for all customers, the primary purpose of the proposal is to consult on three changes:

1. No Shows - 100% charge for customers that don't turn up for their sailing without any prior notification to CalMac.
2. Late Cancellations - Failure to notify CalMac of a booking cancellation 24 hours prior to travel will result in the booking being classified as a late cancellation.
3. No unauthorised transfer of block bookings to 3rd parties.



ICIA Process: The following process steps will be followed to conduct the ICIA. Further detail of the activities involved at each step is provided below.

Process Step Name	CalMac Activity	Island Representative Body / Parties to be Consulted	Status
1. Develop a Clear Understanding of Objectives	- The objective is clear as far as the commercial customers are concerned as this has been clearly conveyed to them via the explanatory email and communications pack which was sent out prior to the consultation meetings commencing (see Appendix 2). - The impact is limited to block booking commercial customers and is network wide. There is no direct impact to the island community and no scope for Ferry Committees/Island Community Councils to be involved. However, all island representative bodies have been communicated with as regards the block booking terms and conditions consultation meetings.	<i>None Required</i>	<i>Complete</i>
2. Gather Data and Identify Stakeholders	- Primary participants are block booking commercial customers. - National Accounts team identified and communicated with stakeholders which included the Ferries Community Board, Island Ferry Committees, Island Community Councils, MSP's, Transport Scotland and the Cabinet Secretary for Transport. - Stakeholders, who have been identified as being the Ferries Community Board, Island Ferry Committees and Island Community Councils, are not directly involved in the consultation process but have been informed as to what is taking place by way of commercial customer consultations	<i>None Required</i>	<i>Complete</i>
3. Consultation	The consultation followed a strict process, through which all feedback was received. Consultation was conducted with all block booking customers. The recognised CHFS community forums were made aware of the proposal but were not asked to provide feedback: The Arran Ferry Committee; The Mull/Iona Ferry Committee; CNES; The Campbeltown Ferry Committee;	<i>None Required</i>	<i>Complete</i>

The Coll Ferry Committee; The Islay Community Council Ferry Committee (ICCFC); The Tiree Transport Forum Meeting; The Sleat Transport Forum; The Ferries Community Board were all given information regarding the proposal but were not actively consulted. All block booking customers were invited to join a virtual consultation meeting regarding the proposal. Everyone was also encouraged to submit feedback via our designated feedback form.

- Block booking commercial customers are those primarily impacted and are the only group who participated in the consultation meeting process and who also provided feedback.
- The island communities as represented by the Ferry Committees and Island Community Councils will not be directly impacted by the planned changes to Block Booking Terms and Conditions. Therefore, for the purpose of this exercise it is merely for information and awareness only.
- The combination of having consultation meeting sessions and an ability to access a link used for uploading feedback were deemed the most efficient and effective means of consulting with our customers.
- The scope of the consultation is very specific and only involves commercial customers and the impact on them of the revision to CalMac Block Booking Terms and Conditions. It is detailed in the table below:

Conducting Business Area	Primary - National Accounts Team Secondary – Commercial, Communications & Operations Team
Island Scope	Network Wide – All block booking routes excluding those which are turn up and go routes.
Designated Island Representative Body Parties to be consulted:	Primary – All block booking commercial customers Secondary – Ferry Committees, network wide island stakeholder representative bodies & the Ferries Community Board.
Purpose:	The purpose of this consultation is to engage with all block booking customers

	to obtain their comments and feedback on the proposed changes to our Block Booking Terms and Conditions, specifically relating to the implementation of late cancellation, no-show fee and third-party block booking transfers. The feedback received will then inform the decision as to whether the proposed amendments will go ahead.		
Timelines:	The ICIA process commenced on 26 May 2025 with an expected completion date at the end of September. The customer consultations aspect commenced on 13 June 2025 and was completed on 13 July 2025. Each block booking customer had 30 days to feedback from the initial date the consultation comms pack was sent out and received via email. The pack contained all details of the proposal and invited them to a consultation session. The 30-day consultation period went from 13 June 2025 – 13 July 2025.		
Type of Consultation	Written correspondence prior to, during and after (feedback provided email and dedicated feedback form generated). In addition, all were invited to virtual Microsoft teams meeting to consult on the proposal.		

- The consultation process was to be primarily facilitated by means of virtual Teams meetings and for those not able to attend via a feedback form link. Given the nature of the subject matter and consistency of applying the Block Booking Terms and Conditions, the consultations were conducted in the same way. No change at all to format or structure.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual consultation meetings took place between Thursday June 19 and Tuesday July 1st following which all data was captured, collated and incorporated into a presentation format to highlight graphically the consultation feedback received.• A communication plan was created and executed.• Individual feedback from commercial customers remains private and confidential. While key themes have been shared to support transparency and broader understanding, no individuals have been identified, and personal responses have not been disclosed. Full feedback will not be shared beyond those who need to know: CalMac directors and senior management.• Limited stakeholder involvement other than the stakeholders mentioned previously such as Transport Scotland, Island Ferry Committees, Island Community Councils & Ferries Community Board.• A commercial customer information pack was sent out to all 113 block booking customers which included the presentation and proposed amendments and a link to the feedback form. This was sent out on June 13 (see Appendix 2).• Internal presentations and briefings have taken place to inform directors, senior management and port staff of the impending changes. This includes the comms team who have also been fully informed of the complete consultation process including the consultation meetings (see Appendix 3).• All the responses will be collected, stored, shared and managed by the National Accounts team initially. Other teams/departments will need to get involved once there is a requirement to share the feedback and responses and how we intend to proceed with any proposed amendments.• Stakeholders received comms on June 16 confirming that the consultation process was underway.• The consultation meetings started on Thursday June 19 and concluded on July 1st.• An overall response to our customers giving feedback post consultation on the proposed amendments has not taken place yet but will be included in the 2nd comms pack. | | |
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4. Assessment	• Having concluded the consultation meeting process, we received feedback from 39 (47%) companies via direct consultation meetings and a further 21 (19%) companies via the feedback form email or phone. That left 53 companies (47%) which gave no feedback at all (see Appendix 4). • Of the three amendments it was clear both via virtual meetings and via feedback forms that the No Show fee (100% charge) was seen as appropriate, fair and reasonable as was the need to add a clause explicitly stating no unauthorised block bookings should be transferred to 3rd parties. However, it was a different matter when receiving feedback on the 24-hour period for cancelling bookings which proved far more divisive (see Appendix 5). • Following feedback from the consultation meetings it was clear that the 24-hour notice period for late cancellations was contentious and proved problematic for our customers. Their customer's demands, the complicated delivery requirements, the complexity of customers booking requirements and the nature of the goods being transported (lifeline or dangerous goods) not to mention increased demand, limited capacity and increased disruption all played a significant part in the decision to review the 24-hour period and go with 2pm the day before travel. This would still allow a certain amount of flexibility for customers while giving advance notification of cancellation confirmation to CalMac thus allowing for additional space to be freed up. This limited change should not result in a materially negative impact on our customers. Indeed, given the lack of adherence to block booking terms and conditions from our customers and a lack of enforcement by CalMac. It should prove mutually beneficial for CalMac and our customers and result in a rapid improvement in cancellations (see Appendix 6). • The transfer of customers block bookings to unauthorised 3rd parties while strictly forbidden is not explicitly stated in the Block Booking Terms and Conditions. There is no clause currently in place. Therefore, given this practice has been taking place it has been decided to add a new clause forbidding the unauthorised transfer of block bookings to 3rd parties. While this new amendment was included in the comms pack only one customer	<i>None Required</i>	<i>Complete</i>
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raised a minor concern. Therefore overall, it was deemed to be a fair and reasonable inclusion as a new clause.

- Once customers feedback was collated it became clear there were key, recurring themes which had been brought up on numerous meetings and direct via the feedback form. These were pulled together and formed part of the overall feedback which was incorporated into a presentation. Many of the themes had no direct impact on block booking terms and conditions but may have impacted customers indirectly. Although not part of this specific remit the feedback was relayed back to those departments whose role and responsibility it would be to consider and act on (see Appendix 7).
- The amended Block Booking Terms and Conditions would apply exactly as those currently in place. So, it would apply to all block booking commercial customers network wide.
- Following implementation of the amended terms and conditions a review can be conducted to determine the impact on the company and customer alike. A further review maybe necessary and dependent upon the extent of that review will determine whether there is another customer engagement or customer consultation exercise.
- There would be absolutely no impact on external stakeholders.

Consultation Feedback Summary (see Appendices 5 & 6):

- No Show Fee – the consensus from customer feedback is they agreed with the no show fee and the 100% charge. This would be applicable from the start of the winter timetable.
- Late Cancellations – those less than 24hrs prior to sailing time. It was raised and clearly stated by many customers that the introduction of a strict 24-hour cancellation deadline is not suitable for our customers, especially with the unique nature of their businesses.
- Transfer of block bookings to 3rd parties – only one customer raised this as an issue therefore this would be applicable from the start of the winter timetable.

5. Preparing the ICIA	• The primary purpose of the consultation was to gather feedback from commercial customers based on a review of the Block Booking Terms and Conditions. • Subject to the revisions and proposed amendments they would apply to all customers network wide. • Given the aforementioned points and based on the consultation feedback, it was concluded that there was no change which would significantly impact one island more than another.	<i>None Required</i>	<i>Complete</i>
6. Adjusting Your Work	• Having concluded the consultation meeting process, we received feedback from 39 (47%) companies via direct consultation meetings and a further 21 (19%) companies via the feedback form email or phone. That left 53 companies (47%) which gave no feedback at all. We used this vital feedback to make an adjustment to the late cancellation notice period which, on our current terms and conditions is 24 hours but has now been amended to 2pm the day before travel. • Customer feedback clearly raised concerns with the 24-hour notification beyond which a customer would be deemed to be cancelling late. Therefore, due consideration was given and the 24-hour advance notification has been amended to state “no later than 2pm the day before travel”. Therefore, the final amendments to include the new clauses will be as follows: 1. No Shows - 100% charge for customers that don't turn up for their sailing without any prior notification to CalMac. 2. Late Cancellations - Failure to notify CalMac of a booking cancellation by 2pm on the day prior to travel will result in the booking being classified as a late cancellation. 3. No unauthorised transfer of block bookings to 3rd parties. We have looked at all bookable ports opening times and the average closure time is 17:36. Therefore having a 14:00 cut off still gives ports adequate time to process any requests and allows sufficient time for the space to be reallocated. It also allows us to work alongside our commercial customers more collaboratively.	<i>None Required</i>	<i>Complete</i>

	In addition to the above we will also take the following into account: ○ We will ensure that data from the consultation remains intact. ○ Subject to customer feedback, we can consider a review of the Block Booking Terms and Conditions in 6-12 months.		
7. Publish the ICIA	• Documented the findings • Obtain internal sign off of ICIA • Publish on the CalMac Website	<i>Review Output</i>	<i>Complete</i>

Conclusion

CalMac fulfilled their commitment to review the Commercial Customer Block Booking Terms and Conditions and aligned this review with the ICIA process. The full process has been participative and has enabled an in-depth understanding to be gathered of the specific challenges faced by Commercial Customers directly and island communities indirectly. With over 50 responses to the consultation, CalMac are extremely grateful to everyone who participated and welcomed all feedback. This helped provide reassurance that the final amended Block Booking Terms and Conditions were reviewed considering customer feedback with amendments benefiting all customers and with welcomed improvements for commercial customers and island communities alike. The feedback received allowed the Block Booking Terms and Conditions amendments to be adjusted to reflect the realities and concerns of those affected.

Appendix 1: Block Booking Terms and Conditions Rationale and Purpose

Why are we doing this?



The goal is to optimise deck space utilisation, reduce 'no-shows' and late cancellations while improving operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

The aim is to cancel unnecessary block bookings from the system as early as possible, to ensure all customer groups have access to guaranteed bookings, and in so doing, reduce the need for customers to go 'standby' on the day of travel.

- The misuse of block bookings can impact deck space utilisation and capacity across the network.
- Some block booking customers are not adhering to the current Terms and Conditions, and we are continuing to see no shows and late cancellations within 24 hours of departure.
- We want to effectively manage bookings and maximise deck space utilisation and to achieve this we must work with our customers to imbed good working practices.

Internal & External Feedback

Port teams, ferry committees, and the local community are regularly reporting concerns. Customers are aware of unused space being held under block bookings but cannot access it opting instead to travel standby. On arrival, they often see empty deck space, leading to frustration. Some have taken photos and shared them on social media, increasing public scrutiny and dissatisfaction.

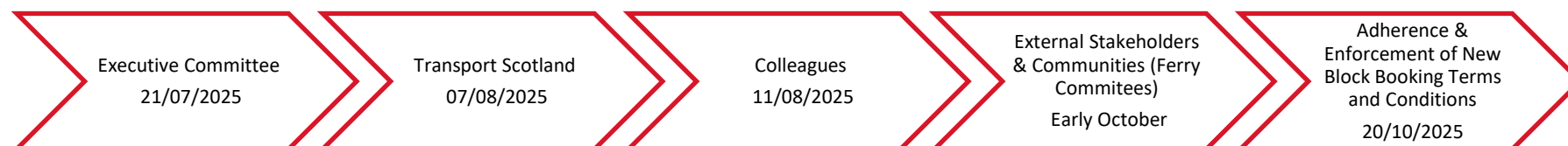
However, it must be recognised that the above is not always down to the commercial customer.

Appendix 2: Block Booking Terms and Conditions Customer Communications Pack

- [Customer Terms and Conditions Presentation](#)
- [Proposed Block Booking Terms](#)
- [Customer FAQ's](#)

Appendix 3: Proposed Timelines

The sequence of steps required leading up to the winter timetable release resulting in the adherence to and enforcement of Block Booking Terms and Conditions.

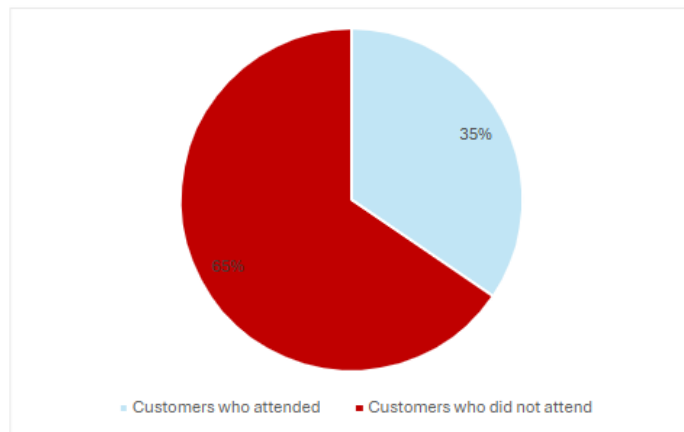


Appendix 4: Attendance and Feedback Summary from Consultation

Feedback Results – Attendance

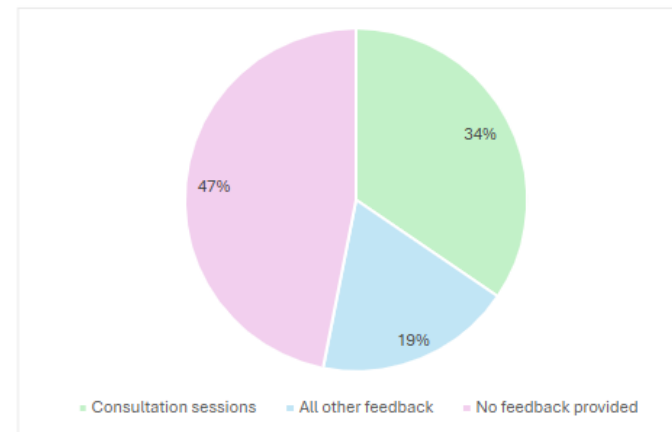


In total 113 companies were invited to the consultation sessions, out of which 39 customers accepted and 74 declined.



The chart shows that 35% of companies attended the consultation sessions and 65% declined.

In total 39 companies provided feedback via our consultation sessions, 21 provided feedback via our feedback form, by email or phone call and 53 provided no feedback.



The chart shows 34% of companies provided feedback via consultation sessions, 19% provided feedback via other methods and 47% provided no feedback. Overall, we received feedback from 53% companies.

Appendix 5: Customer Feedback Results – 100% No-Show Fee for Block Bookings

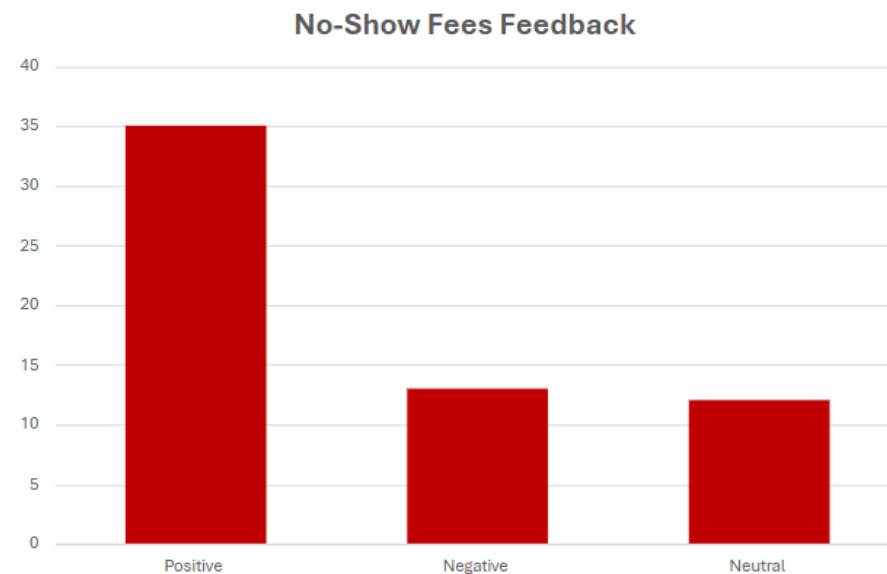
Feedback Results – Implementation of 100% no show fee



As you can see from the chart shown and the information below, customers were generally supportive of the introduction of no-show fees.

- Total Number of Customers who were positive regarding the introduction of no-show fees – 35.
- Total Number of Customers who were negative regarding the introduction of no-show fees – 13.
- Total Number of Customers who were neutral regarding the introduction of no-show fees – 12.

*neutral – the customer did not provide any positive or negative feedback towards the proposal, and the points made did not reference no show fees.



Appendix 6: Customer Feedback Results – 24-Hour Cancellation Policy for Block Bookings

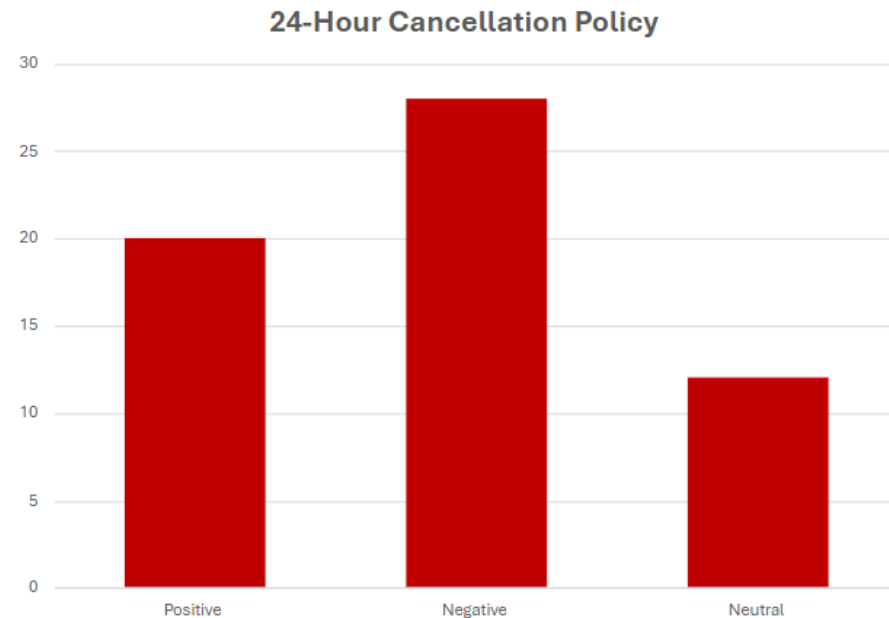
Feedback Results – 24-Hour Cancellation Policy



As you can see from the chart, there were a significant number of customers who were negative towards the 24-hour cancellation policy.

- Total Number of Customers who were positive regarding the 24-hour cancellation policy - 20.
- Total Number of Customers who were negative regarding the 24-hour cancellation policy – 28.
- Total Number of Customers who were neutral regarding the 24-hour cancellation policy – 12.

*neutral – the customer did not provide any positive or negative feedback towards the proposal, and the points made did not reference the cancellation policy.



Appendix 7: Commercial Customer Consultation Feedback – Key Themes and Responses

Theme Raised	Answers
Several customers have raised concerns over the 24-hour cancellation period, stating that this is unworkable for their business. Due to the nature of each business, some require greater flexibility and are weather dependent.	Due to feedback received we have amended the current cancellation time from 24 hours prior to sailing time to 2:00PM the day prior to travel.
If customers are penalised for no-shows, they expect compensation or accountability when sailings are cancelled at short notice by CFL.	Unfortunately, at this time CalMac does not have a commercial compensation scheme.
Ongoing vessel disruption resulting in cancellations make it difficult to plan, and customers are hesitant to cancel due to fear of last-minute disruption.	While we appreciate the current challenges due to unprecedented disruption across the network, we can't have bookings retained by customers as a contingency to cover for last-minute disruptions. This results in substantial space being taken up unnecessarily only for it to be released at the last minute. This negates businesses ability to plan ahead if spaces only become available at the last minute.
Larger commercial customers are monopolising freight capacity due to excessive block bookings.	Block booking requests will be reviewed considering actual utilisation; this will result in more accurate allocation of bookings and a greater amount of space made available to all customers.
Some customers believe the changes are premature given the current instability of the network and no further changes should be made until the fleet and e-booking systems are more reliable.	The Block Booking Terms and Conditions have been without adherence or enforcement. The increase in no shows / late cancellations and poor utilisation has resulted in the review of the current terms & conditions, and implementation of amended terms & conditions.
Customers are willing to collaborate but request ongoing consultation and a delay in implementation.	The majority of customers agreed with the no show fee. Due to the feedback given regarding the 24-hour cancellation policy, we changed this to 2pm the day prior to travel. As a result of the feedback received, there was not a need to have further consultations with customers.
There is a perception that the current approach penalises haulers who are not responsible for the underlying issues, and that the role of CalMac as a lifeline service is being overlooked in favor of cost-saving and revenue generation.	While we recognise that many commercial customers do adhere to our Block Booking Terms and Conditions there is still a requirement to address inappropriate booking behaviour, allowing for space to be freed up and used by all customers across the network.
There should be limits on block bookings based on actual usage and prevent allocations to third parties. Concerns were raised regarding unfair trading practices.	Block booking requests will be reviewed considering actual utilisation, the terms and conditions have also been amended to prevent block booking customers transferring their requests to third parties.