

Improving every journey



Delivery plan
Continuous improvement plan

Updated April 2026





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Executive Summary

This plan sets out how we at Caledonian MacBrayne will deliver ongoing enhancements to service quality, efficiency and customer experience under the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS3) contract. It reflects our commitment to making services better every day through small, practical changes driven by operational insight and frontline experience.

Continuous improvement is embedded in our day-to-day operations. It is not a standalone initiative—it is part of how we work. Staff across the organisation are encouraged to identify and implement improvements through routine service delivery, supported by clear processes, line-level decision-making and structured governance.

The plan outlines our methodology for identifying and delivering improvements, including how we gather insight from staff, customers and communities. It defines roles and responsibilities across the organisation, with operational managers leading delivery and the Continuous Improvement Team providing assurance and coordination.

Our approach supports national priorities, including the **Islands Connectivity Plan**, which sets out a vision for reliable, accessible, integrated and low-carbon transport services. It also contributes to the **Scottish Government's Public Sector Reform programme**, helping to build a more agile, transparent and outcomes-focused public service.

This plan is reviewed annually and monitored throughout the year to ensure that improvement activity remains relevant, responsive and aligned with the needs of the communities we serve.

1. Introduction

At Caledonian MacBrayne, continuous improvement is part of how we work every day. It is embedded in our operational processes, driven by frontline experience, and supported by a culture that encourages learning and adaptation. This plan sets out how we identify, deliver and sustain improvements that enhance service delivery across our network.

Continuous improvement is not limited to large-scale transformation or strategic initiatives. Most improvements are operational in nature—focused on refining processes, resolving issues, and making services more efficient, accessible and reliable. These changes are often small in scale but collectively have a significant impact on the quality of our services and the experience of our customers.

Our approach is supported by our Quality Management System and aligned with the principles of ISO 9001, ensuring that improvement activity is structured, consistent and accountable. It also reflects our commitment to the Scottish Government's Public Sector Reform programme, which calls for public services to be more agile, transparent and outcomes-focused.

This plan outlines how continuous improvement is delivered across Caledonian MacBrayne—from how we gather insight and feedback, to how we implement and review changes. It defines our methodology, governance arrangements and review cycles, and sets out the roles and responsibilities that ensure improvement is embedded in daily operations.



2. Our commitment to continuous improvement

At Caledonian MacBrayne, continuous improvement is part of how we deliver services—not as a separate initiative, but as a core part of everyday operations. It's how we refine processes, resolve issues, and respond to the needs of our customers and communities.

We recognise that the most effective improvements often come from those closest to the work. That's why we encourage staff at all levels to identify and act on opportunities for change—whether it's simplifying a procedure, improving turnaround times, or enhancing communication with passengers. These operational improvements are typically small in scale but have a cumulative impact on service quality, safety, and efficiency.

Our commitment also reflects our alignment with two key national frameworks:

Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP)

The ICP sets out a long-term vision for transport services that are:

- Reliable and resilient – ensuring communities and businesses can depend on ferry services
- Accessible – providing safe, inclusive and affordable access for all users
- Integrated – enabling smooth connections between ferry services and other modes of transport
- Low-carbon and environmentally responsible – supporting Scotland's net-zero targets

Through continuous improvement, we contribute to these priorities by making operational changes that improve punctuality, simplify access, enhance coordination with other transport providers, and reduce environmental impact.

Scottish Government's Public Sector Reform Programme

This programme calls for public bodies to be:

- Agile – able to adapt quickly to changing needs
- Transparent – open about performance and decision-making
- Outcomes-focused – delivering measurable public value
- Inclusive – engaging meaningfully with staff, customers and communities

Our approach to continuous improvement supports these agendas by:

- Delivering better value for public investment
- Enhancing service quality and accessibility
- Strengthening accountability through performance reporting
- Supporting inclusive engagement with customers, communities and staff

By embedding continuous improvement into everyday operations, we ensure that Caledonian MacBrayne remains responsive, resilient and aligned with the expectations of the communities we serve and the wider public sector.



3. Methodology and sources of insight

Continuous improvement at Caledonian MacBrayne is driven by operational insight and delivered through structured processes. Most improvements are identified through day-to-day service delivery—where staff encounter inefficiencies, recurring issues, or opportunities to do things better. These are not abstract or strategic—they are practical, process-based changes that make a real difference to how services are delivered.

We use a consistent methodology to ensure that improvements are well-considered, effectively implemented, and sustained over time. This is based on the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, which supports a repeatable and scalable approach to change.

How we identify improvements

Improvement opportunities are identified through a range of operational and feedback channels, including:

- Staff input and frontline experience – suggestions, observations and informal feedback from those closest to the work
- Customer feedback – surveys, complaints, compliments and direct engagement
- Community engagement – including input from the Ferries Community Board and local teams
- Operational performance data – reliability, punctuality, and service delivery metrics
- Incident reporting and investigations – including near misses and lessons learned
- Audit findings and service benchmarking – identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement
- Process reviews and management oversight – identifying inefficiencies or risks in routine operations

These sources provide the insight needed to understand what needs to change and why. They are used by operational teams to inform local improvements and by the Standards & Performance Teams to support wider learning and coordination.

How we deliver improvements

Once identified, improvements follow a structured process:

- Plan – Define the issue, scope, expected benefits and success measures
- Do – Implement the change through the appropriate operational or change management process
- Check – Monitor the impact, gather feedback and assess outcomes
- Act – Embed successful changes into routine practice and share learning across teams

This approach ensures that improvements are practical, measurable and sustainable. It also supports a culture where staff are empowered to make changes, managers are accountable for delivery, and the organisation learns from experience.



4. Governance and responsibilities

Continuous improvement at Caledonian MacBrayne is delivered through operational ownership, supported by clear governance and defined responsibilities. It is not a centralised or strategic-only function—it is embedded in the way teams work, make decisions, and improve processes every day.

Operational ownership

Outwith our structured business planning processes, the majority of improvement activity is initiated and delivered within the operational line. Staff and managers are encouraged to identify opportunities for change through their day-to-day work, and to implement improvements that enhance safety, efficiency, and customer experience. These changes may be small in scale, but they are essential to maintaining high-quality service delivery.

Operational managers are responsible for:

- Supporting staff-led improvements
- Ensuring changes are implemented safely and effectively
- Escalating improvements with wider organisational relevance
- Sharing learning across teams and locations

Quality management oversight

The Director of Standards and Performance holds overall accountability for the governance and delivery of continuous improvement across the organisation. This includes ensuring that improvement activity is embedded within operational processes, aligned with service delivery objectives, and reported transparently to internal and external stakeholders.

The Continuous Improvement Team maintains the Continuous Improvement Plan and provides assurance that improvement activity is coordinated, documented, and aligned with contractual and organisational priorities. The team supports operational leads, through training and coaching, by:

- Providing guidance on improvement methodology
- Ensuring consistency in how improvements are recorded and evaluated
- Coordinating reporting and review cycles
- Facilitating learning across the organisation

Shared responsibility across the organisation

Continuous improvement is a shared responsibility. Everyone at Caledonian MacBrayne—from frontline staff to senior leaders—has a role to play in identifying, delivering and sustaining improvements.

- Frontline Staff: Spot issues, suggest solutions, and implement small-scale changes
- Operational Managers: Approve and oversee improvements, ensure safe delivery, and escalate where needed
- Continuous Improvement Team: Support, assure and report on improvement activity



- Executive Leadership: Provide strategic direction and ensure resources are in place to support improvement

This governance model ensures that continuous improvement is practical, inclusive and embedded in daily operations—supporting better outcomes for customers, communities and the organisation.

5. Review and update cycle

To ensure that continuous improvement remains relevant to day-to-day operations, Caledonian MacBrayne maintains a structured review and update cycle for this plan. The process is designed to reflect the reality of service delivery—capturing learning from operational teams, evaluating the impact of changes, and ensuring that improvement activity continues to support better outcomes for customers and communities.

Annual review

The Continuous Improvement Plan is reviewed annually by the Continuous Improvement Team, in collaboration with operational leads. This review ensures that:

- Improvement activity reflects current operational priorities and challenges
- Lessons learned from previous initiatives are incorporated into future planning
- Feedback from staff, customers and communities informs the direction of improvement
- The plan remains aligned with the Islands Connectivity Plan and contractual expectations

Where required, updates to the plan will be agreed with Scottish Ministers to ensure continued alignment with national transport and public service objectives.

Ongoing monitoring and reporting

In addition to the annual review, improvement activity is monitored throughout the year via:

- Routine engagement with operational teams to track delivery and share learning
- Inclusion of improvement highlights in the Annual Performance Report

This review and reporting cycle ensures that continuous improvement remains dynamic, transparent and grounded in operational reality—supporting a culture of learning and accountability across the organisation.

6. Conclusion

Continuous improvement is how we make services better every day. It is embedded in our operational processes, shaped by frontline experience, and supported by a culture that values learning, accountability and practical change.

This plan sets out how we identify, deliver and sustain improvements that enhance service delivery across our network. It reflects our commitment to empowering staff, responding to feedback, and refining the way we work—through small, process-driven changes that collectively make a big difference.

By embedding continuous improvement into daily operations, we contribute directly to the priorities of the Islands Connectivity Plan—delivering services that are reliable, accessible, integrated and



low-carbon. We also support the Scottish Government's Public Sector Reform programme, helping to build a more agile, transparent and outcomes-focused public service.

Through structured governance, clear responsibilities and regular review, we will ensure that continuous improvement remains practical, inclusive and sustainable—driven by those who deliver our services and accountable to the communities we serve.