



Sent on behalf of GMB and Coastguard Rescue Officers of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency

11th August 2026

Open letter to:

Lord Simon Stevens
Chair, Maritime and Coastguard Agency Board
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Subject: Escalation of Formal No Confidence Concerns Regarding MCA Leadership

Dear Lord Stevens,

I am writing on behalf of GMB and Coastguard Rescue Officers to formally escalate the concerns previously raised regarding the leadership of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency under Chief Executive Virginia McVea.

As outlined in our letter of 24 July 2026, members expressed a loss of confidence in the current leadership and requested independent Board intervention. These concerns have not diminished. On the contrary, they have been reinforced by the significant level of support received from Coastguard Rescue Officers across the United Kingdom. More than 580 Coastguard Rescue Officers have now signed in support of the expression of no confidence, demonstrating the depth and breadth of concern amongst frontline Coastguard Rescue Officers.

This level of support cannot reasonably be viewed as isolated dissatisfaction. It represents a widespread and sustained loss of confidence in the Chief Executive's leadership and the direction of the Agency. The issues identified by members, including a lack of meaningful engagement, insufficient transparency, concerns regarding accountability, and decisions that have adversely impacted morale, recruitment, retention, and operational confidence, continue to be raised repeatedly by Coastguard Rescue Officers throughout the network.

The dedication and professionalism of Coastguard Rescue Officers remains unwavering. Despite these concerns, they continue to provide an exceptional service to the public and support HM Coastguard's lifesaving mission. However, their commitment should not be mistaken for confidence in the Agency's leadership.

GMB General Secretary: Gary Smith

Euston Office: Mary Turner House, 22 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD

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Given the unprecedented level of concern now evidenced by the support of more than 580 Coastguard Rescue Officers, GMB believes the matter requires urgent consideration by the MCA Board.

Accordingly, we request that the Board:

1. Formally consider the expression of no confidence at the earliest opportunity.
2. Commission an independent review into senior leadership culture, engagement, and decision-making affecting Coastguard Rescue Officers.
3. Provide Coastguard Rescue Officers with an opportunity to submit evidence directly to such a review.
4. Publish a clear timetable for responding to the concerns raised.
5. Consider whether the current leadership retains the confidence necessary to lead the Agency effectively and rebuild trust with frontline personnel.

The scale of support for this action demonstrates that confidence has been severely eroded. The Board now has an opportunity to address these concerns constructively and restore trust between frontline Coastguard Rescue Officers and the Agency's senior leadership.

Please note that to date, the Coastguard Rescue Officers have received no communications from the MCA since early July 2026 and no back payments of owed salary has been forthcoming.

We would welcome a substantive written response within 14 days setting out the actions the Board intends to take.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'N. Savage'.

Nicola Savage
National Officer
GMB Union



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