

## UK pressure group set to rate Qatari giants for noise disturbances

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Qatar's giant LNG carriers are continuing to cause noise issues for locals living near the South Hook receiving terminal in the UK with something of a pattern starting to emerge.

Members of the South Hook LNG Ship Noise (SHLSN) pressure group say they have been so frustrated by the disturbance caused by low frequency noise from visiting Q-flexes and Q-maxes that they will be issuing a rating to all the vessels that have called at the facility since 1 July.

Vessels will be given a rating

from zero to nine on each visit, with nine being the most disturbance caused by a ship.

The ratings are due to be posted shortly on the group's website but a spokesman detailed that of the 10 arrivals monitored since 1 July, five caused noise issues, of which two were seriously disruptive. He names these as the 210,100-cbm newbuilding *Al Bahiya* and the 263,249-cbm *Al Ghuwairiya* (built 2008).

Noise from the other five ships, which appeared on a list of 14 given by terminal operator South Hook LNG as having undergone silencer upgrading work, were

said to be much improved. These five are the 217,000-cbm *Tembek* (built 2007), 267,335-cbm *Mozah* (built 2008), 267,335-cbm *Al Mayeda* (built 2009), 216,224-cbm *Al Gattara* (built 2007) and 267,335-cbm *Al Mafyar* (built 2009).

Part of the group's frustration lies in the repeated calls made by ships, which have had statutory nuisance orders placed on them during previous visits by the Port Health team at local authority Pembrokeshire County Council. The *Al Ghuwairiya* had such a notice served on it during January but the pressure group says it has

returned four times since.

They report that they have received no response from the ship's charterer, Qatargas, despite sending numerous emails.

SHLSN has also identified a pattern to the worst offenders. The group says vessels that have been retrofitted under the 14-ship programme seem to cause the least problems, while those that have had work done to upgrade their silencers prior to delivery — such as the *Al Bahiya* — still appear to have noise issues.

A spokesman for Pembrokeshire County Council's Port Health team says this is the first long-running

case of this type that it has had to deal with.

He says that because weather conditions can mask the problem, his team needs to see vessels return to the terminal to establish if the noise problems are operational or more fundamental design and construction issues.

He says that since the South Hook terminal began operations around 18 months ago, ship-noise complaints had risen dramatically with around 250 to 300 being received, as compared with what had commonly amounted to about 10 to 20 in a 12-month period previously.

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