

7 February 2025

Prynhawn da Nicole,

RE: Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure

Thank you for the request to provide evidence for the committee on Holyhead port closure. Here is our response to the letter and good luck with the inquiry, as it will be important to understand the event in more detail and your findings will be of great interest to us.

As noted in previous correspondence we feel that we do not have the evidence to provide a very useful granular analysis of the effects, nor have a significant number of concerns been raised with us by members. This may be because SMEs have responded through engagement with the Local Council, in particular via the Holyhead Port closure impact survey, and for those affected otherwise through bodies dealing more specifically with logistics and direct impact (e.g. Logistics UK).

However, we would note more broadly the clear importance of Holyhead as a secure entry and exit point in the transport and logistics infrastructure. The port provides essential access for trade with Ireland, facilitating the import and export of key goods, and provides a key travel route between both countries, bringing benefits for local tourism businesses.

Maintaining confidence in Holyhead's infrastructure is therefore crucial for ensuring the stability and predictability of trade flows, especially given the uncertainties surrounding post-Brexit arrangements. If there is a general perception that this is not a one-off event, this may impact on views on the security of using the port for logistics. This could also include future access through Holyhead from Ireland and through to Europe. Alternatives may be sought, which could eventually impact on the port viability. In the context of wider proposed developments in Ynys Môn (infrastructure projects, freeport) this could be problematic. As such it is important that there is reassurance, action taken, and clear communication about how the port's resilience to disruption has been enhanced.

We would note that the closure of the port has disrupted supply chains, and so had a knock-on impact on small firms lower down those chains. Concerns have been

expressed that these disruptions may be difficult to measure and track, including for insurance purposes.^[1]

We hope the Committee finds this information useful and please do approach us again for any future matters of relevance on which you feel FSB Wales could support the committee.

Diolch yn fawr,

Dr Llyr ap Gareth

Head of Policy / Pennaeth Polisi

FSB Wales

1 - <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/23116>

^[1] <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/23116>