**Issued on behalf of Stena Line**

**Date: 23rd October 2018**

**SARAH TAKES CHARITY CHALLENGE IN HER STRIDE**

What started as a charity walk for Mercy Ships around the Scottish Lakes has now turned into a Guinean adventure for Stena Line’s Sarah Scowcroft, Cabin Assistant on Superfast X. On 15 October, she visited the hospital ship Africa Mercy to see how the £7 414.96 she helped raised is being used.

During last year’s donation campaign for Stena Line’s designated charity Mercy Ships, Sarah Scowcroft based in Holyhead literally walked the extra mile. She managed to engage a large number of her colleagues in a 34-mile charity walk, raising a total of £7,414.96 – a figure then doubled by Dan Sten Olsson, Chairman of Stena Line when he visited the region.

“We support Mercy Ships because we care about people and the world around us. The engagement from Sarah and her colleagues is an example of our colleagues living our company values.  We are delighted that we and Mercy Ships together are able to offer Sarah this opportunity to visit Africa Mercy and see how the money raised is being used to make a difference on board the hospital ship", says Ian Hampton, Chief People & Communications Officer.

Sarah Scowcroft said: “When I was asked I just felt like it wasn’t for real, and I couldn’t believe it! It is exciting, but I also believe it will be quite emotional. I’m looking forward to meeting the crew and speaking to both them and the patients. It will also be interesting to follow one of the many patients’ journey, to meet them before and after their treatment on board.”

Last year’s charity walk wasn’t actually Sarah’s first initiative for raising money for Mercy Ships. In 2017 a small group of Stena Line employees participated in a 25-mile charity hike.

Sarah added: “Afterwards a lot of people said they would have liked to join as well, so this year we decided to go big and asked everyone on board and ashore. We got loads of interest from our colleagues who all wanted to challenge themselves for a good cause.”

The 34-mile (55 km) hike, ‘The Three Loch Way’, usually takes three to four days to complete, but the group decided to do it in one – with a goal of raising £2,000.

“In the end it took us 12.5 hours and it was the toughest thing anyone of us have ever done, but the feeling when we finished was amazing! It was made even more fantastic to know that we more than tripled our original goal, just makes it all worth it, despite all of the blisters”, said Sarah.

***-ctd***

However, it did come close to having to cancel the whole charity walk. We had arranged with an external company, who were supposed to arrange transport, guides, food and water stations along the trail but days before the event they went into liquidation.

“It was really bad news for us but then and there we quickly decided to complete the walk anyway and it was fantastic to see our colleagues rally behind us. People who weren’t walking decided to come along and help out with transport and ran between makeshift water stations to keep us hydrated. It was truly a team effort”, said Sarah.

*-ends*

**NOTE TO EDITOR: For further information please contact Ciara Kincaid of Duffy Rafferty Communications on Belfast (028) 9073 0880.**