**Issued on behalf of Stena Line**

**Date: 18th October 2016**

**Stena Line Adds Extra Pre-Christmas Freight Capacity**

Leading ferry company Stena Line is adding additional freight capacity to its busy Belfast-Liverpool service in support of the retail sector as it starts to ramp up for its key pre-Christmas trading period.

Stena Line is adding an extra two sailings per week, from Fri 21St October until 16th Dec, it will operate an additional Friday departure from Belfast (15.30hrs) and from Monday 24th October until 19th December it will operate an additional Monday departure (08.00hrs) from Birkenhead, Liverpool. The extra sailings will provide increased freight capacity for up to 2 000 more freight units across the Irish Sea at a crucial time for businesses seeking to maximise their Christmas trade.

Richard Horswill, Stena Line’s Head of Freight (UK and Ireland) said: “The extra sailings we have announced today represent an additional 25% capacity on our Belfast-Liverpool freight only service with departures times designed to optimise customer delivery schedules. Since we acquired the route in 2011, this service has gone from strength to strength, especially with our freight customers, so we are confident the additional capacity will be welcome news for the freight industry at this busy time of the year.”

“Putting extra capacity on now comes at a critical time for many businesses who rely on pre-Christmas sales to make a success of their trading year. As the largest operator on the Irish Sea, we have the flexibility to respond to the needs of the market and deploy additional freight capacity where and when it’s most needed.”

Stena Line is the largest ferry operator on the Irish Sea, offering the biggest fleet and the widest choice of routes from Britain to Ireland, including Liverpool and Heysham to Belfast, Cairnryan to Belfast, Holyhead to Dublin and Fishguard to Rosslare routes, a total of 224 weekly sailing options between Britain and Ireland.

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