**Issued on behalf of Stena Line**

**Date: 10th January 2019**

**STENA LINE INVESTS £5M IN FLEET UPGRADE**

***Harland and Wolff Shipyard Chosen for Ferry Refits***

Leading ferry company Stena Line has started work on a £5m refit programme of its local ferry fleet at Belfast’s Harland and Wolff shipyard. The 10-week upgrade schedule will see five Stena Line vessels dry docked consecutively to facilitate refurbishment and maintenance works.

Paul Grant, Stena Line Trade Director (Irish Sea North) said: “Regular ship refits are an important element in our ship management operation which helps to maintain our excellent reliability and keeps our Irish Sea fleet to the forefront of the ferry sector. We’re pleased that we are continuing to work with Harland and Wolff in Belfast to carry out these important upgrades, helping to secure the local maritime skills base in Northern Ireland.”

Paul Grant added: “Whilst Stena Line has already committed a significant investment to introducing three new ships to the Irish Sea starting in early 2020, it’s also important that we continue to improve, develop and invest in our existing fleet of vessels, which is exactly what this contract will do.”

Jonathan Guest, Harland and Wolff's Chief Executive Officer, said: "Harland and Wolff is delighted to welcome back five of Stena Line’s Irish Sea vessels. Our working partnership with Stena Line is very important not only to our company but to the local economy through its associated supply chain."

Stena Line is the largest ferry operator on the Irish Sea, offering the biggest fleet and the widest choice of routes including Belfast to Liverpool and Heysham, Belfast to Cairnryan, Dublin to Holyhead and Rosslare to Fishguard routes, a total of 238 weekly sailing options between Britain and Ireland. Stena Line also offers a direct service from Rosslare to Cherbourg with three return crossings a week.

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