

Cruise leader Sonia Limbrick announces retirement from the Port of Dover from the end of July 2026

Sonia Limbrick, current Head of Business Development, and previous Head of Cruise at the Port of Dover, has today announced that she will be retiring after an outstanding 30-year tenure in the travel industry. The news follows Sonia's decision in July 2023 to gradually step back and spend quality time with her family. Peter Wright, who joined the Port as Head of Cruise in October 2023, will continue to lead the cruise business.

Prior to running the Port of Dover's cruise business in 2015, Sonia's career included roles with some of the biggest names in the industry including Azamara, when part of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (RCCL), and Eurotunnel. Her reputation as a highly respected industry professional, most notably her expertise, relationship-building, and high standards for excellence, has been a huge asset to the Port and wider travel industry.

Sonia has been key to the transformation and growth of Dover Cruise, with 2026 showcasing its 30th anniversary. Her leadership has helped establish Dover as one of the UK's premier cruise ports, which today attracts over 20 leading global cruise lines and around 200,000 guests per year. Dover Cruise also contributes significantly to the local tourism economy, bringing thousands of people from across the world into the region on the busiest weekends.

Reflecting on her career, Sonia said:

"It has been an incredible privilege to work in the travel and cruise industry for the past 30 years, and especially to be part of the Port of Dover team. Cruising and travel will always be my passion, and I am immensely proud of what we have achieved as a team to develop Dover as a world-class cruise destination.

"The relationships I have built over the years have been the most rewarding aspect of my career. From turning the White Cliffs red for the incredible Virgin Voyages' launch, to becoming Carnival's and Holland America Line's first UK home port in ten years, there are so many wonderful memories. Whilst I am retiring from my role at Dover, I very much intend to remain connected with the wider cruise industry, which has been such an important and fulfilling part of my life."

Doug Bannister, CEO of the Port of Dover, said:

"Sonia's contribution to the Port of Dover has been exceptional. Her passion, experience, dedication, and relationship management has led Dover Cruise on an incredible journey - we are proud to be celebrating our 30th anniversary with Sonia this summer before she leaves us.

"Sonia will leave behind a strong legacy; it's also been brilliant to see her work alongside Peter Wright, our current Head of Cruise over the past couple of years to further establish a solid platform for even more growth in the years to come. Sonia will be greatly missed, and we thank her for her remarkable service at the Port."

As she steps back from her formal role, Sonia is looking forward to spending even more time with family, pursuing personal interests, and embracing new opportunities, while still maintaining strong connections within the cruise community.