

# Staff spotlight



**David Williams**  
**Underwriting Director**  
+44 20 3320 2344  
david.williams@ctplc.com

## What was your first job in the industry?

My first job in the industry was as a Claims Executive in the Mediterranean Syndicate of The Standard Club. I joined following the completion of my LLM in maritime law at Swansea University and an internship at Charles Taylor PLC.

## What was it that interested you in P&I?

Growing up with a shipping background, I was aware of the importance of the relationship between the club and a member, as well as the variety of the covers provided. I liked the idea of protecting and supporting our members in a tangible way, day to day, rather than the normal insurer/assured relationship. I was certain that a career in P&I would provide valuable claims-handling experience in an international market context and this has certainly been the case.

## What is your current job and how does it differ from your first job in the industry?

I am currently an Underwriting Director within the European Syndicate, working solely with the Standard London class members, the club's small craft facility.

Underwriting is obviously very different to my first job as a Claims Executive. At the same time, the fundamentals are the same: we create solutions for members' problems. The key difference between these jobs is when the solution is sought.

In the underwriting role, we are tasked with developing a package of covers based on the club's experiences in any given market and tailored to a member's specific business.

A claims executive will rely on previous experience and also the experience of colleagues to develop a strategy adapted to a particular set of circumstances, to defend and assist members when claims arise.

## What is the most important thing a club can do for its members?

Without question it is maintaining the standards of service expected and required by our members.

The club exists to serve its members and we, as managers, must always remember we are a service provider to members, in both claims and in underwriting.

There are many other important things a club must do for its members, but in my opinion, these are all underpinned by the service we deliver. The Standard Club prides itself on the service it provides, and in particular the flexibility and inclusiveness of its approach to claims.

## What is the highlight of your career?

Completing my first renewal as an underwriter. From early on in my career, I was interested in joining the underwriting team and in December 2012, I was given the opportunity to move into an underwriting position within the Standard London class. It was only eight weeks before the renewal on 20 February 2013.

It was a difficult time to join the team. After many late nights in the office and sustained guidance and support from colleagues on both the technical and practical sides to underwriting, we achieved a positive result and I had begun to understand the underwriting role. Although challenging, in hindsight, it was probably the best time to join the team and I'm still proud of the result we achieved.

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**How do you think the industry has changed since you started working in it?**

There have been a number of significant changes over the past five years for both shipping and the P&I clubs.

For P&I clubs, there is more pressure to maintain financial stability, ensuring consistently low general increases for members. Owners remain under severe financial pressure in the current economic climate and certainty in their insurance costs is a must. Linked to this, The Standard Club is expanding its cover offerings, not only to provide wider coverage to members, but also to strengthen the financial position of the club. The Standard Syndicate is an important development in this area.

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Separately, I think the rise in commercial fixed premium P&I insurance has been an important shift in the past few years. Whilst it is not the first time in the history of the market that these facilities have appeared, it is the first time many of the P&I clubs are developing their own fixed premium products in response.

For some owners, a fixed premium cover can be the right solution. I would say the difference between a club-backed facility and a commercial one remains vast, in terms of service, underwriting approach and long-term financial stability.

