



# Industry-first forensic psychology service launches

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Germany's Mental Health Support Solutions (MHSS) has launched a forensic psychology service that will aid investigators in getting to the truth of potential crimes at sea.

Headed up by clinical and forensic psychologist Julia Oppermann (pictured), the service will likely interest investigations teams at P&I clubs, shipowners and flags. Oppermann has spent time working on cold cases for the German police, and has the expertise to examine crime scene photos and identify where the image suggests that it may have been staged or that initial conclusions may not be entirely correct.

Charles Watkins, CEO of MHSS, said the new service is important if maritime is to offer victims the same level of investigative zeal as would be received on land.

“Currently we find that there is less likelihood of a prosecution if events happen onboard – not through the fault of any specific agency but because of the fragmented nature of responsibility which involves the owner, manager, flag, insurer and potentially other bodies too,” Watkins said.

Oppermann added, “Forensic psychologists are trained to spot where things don’t ring true and can apply their knowledge of human behaviour to evaluate what is likely to have taken place. We can not only help to identify wrong doing but also help ensure that lessons are learned for the future so that future occurrences are prevented.”