



Replacing ageing quay wall fenders under tight downtime constraints, our team delivered a resilient solution ensuring decades of safe ferry berthing

Location: Gunwharf, Portsmouth

Client: Wightlink Ferries

Value: £1.2m

Contractor: M-Tec Southern Solutions

Marine / Fast track / Durability / Resilience

Scope & Challenge

Wightlink's Gunwharf ferry terminal in Portsmouth, serving the vital Portsmouth–Fishbourne route, required replacement of seven fenders as their existing units, installed in the 1970s, were inadequate for modern craft and rising sea levels. With the port operating continuously and only a one-week closure window permitted, the project demanded meticulous planning, marine inspection, and responsive engineering.

Engineering Approach

Our marine team led a pre-contract inspection to assess corrosion levels above the waterline and flag potential risks (e.g. degraded bolts). We performed berthing energy calculations based on vessel size, speed, and approach angles, specifying appropriate elastomeric units to absorb impact forces. We anticipated complications and devised contingency details. The new steel piles were fabricated by M-Tec Southern Solutions, a trusted contractor in marine settings, and installed by specialist marine teams. Despite the tight schedule, the works were completed in just five days—two days ahead of the allowed closure window.

Outcome & Legacy

The new fender system restores full berthing capacity with design life of 50 years for piles; elastomeric units will be replaced periodically. The successful fast-track delivery underscored AWA's strength in marine inspection, design, and coordination under operational constraints. The project demonstrates our ability to safeguard core infrastructure in demanding marine environments while respecting tight operational windows.

