

Update on Seasonal Workers' Scheme Taskforce and Workstream activities

The Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce



- Following roundtables in autumn 2022, industry trade bodies, retailers, growers, recruiters and nonprofits formally established the Taskforce in March 2023
- Objective: To work collaboratively to develop and implement tangible actions to help safeguard and ensure access to workers' rights in the UK Seasonal Workers Scheme
 - Implementing practical actions to improve the responsible recruitment and employment of migrant workers into UK farms within current Scheme Design
 - Working with Government departments and enforcement agencies on potential changes to Scheme rules, regulation, oversight and enforcement



Multistakeholder Governance Committee

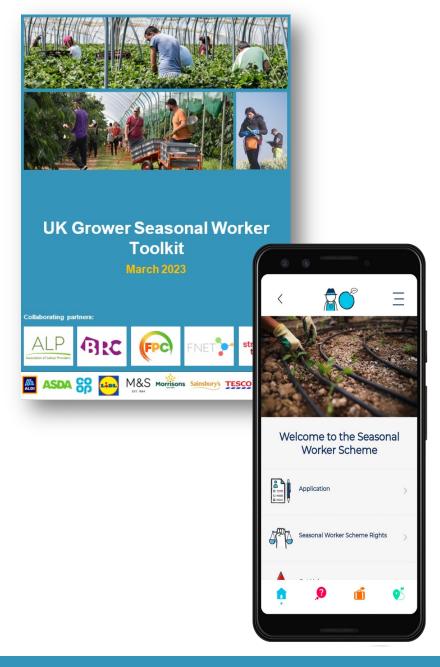
Secretariat

WS 1: Education, information and communication

WS2: Due diligence and good practice during recruitment WS3: Due diligence and good practice on farm WS4: Scheme costs, recruitment fees, retained earnings and remediation WS5: Policy, enforcement and stakeholder communication

Members are made up of: retailers, growers, suppliers, Scheme Operators, industry and membership associations, migrant worker community organisations, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations

Observers are made up of: government departments, public bodies and devolved administrations



Progress of post roundtable projects

Projects funded by UK Supermarkets (and others) with industry input which came out of the autumn 2022 roundtables; included:

- 7 regional/3 online grower good practice roadshows and a supporting toolkit which reached over 380 delegates from 150 different growers – with 82% of growers feeling very/confident about managing seasonal workers after the workshop compared to 59% before.
- Development of a common assessment of Scheme Operators, which is now being rolled out with an initial cohort and will include interviews with workers during recruitment in-country and once on-farm, and,
- Further development and roll out of the multilanguage Just Good Work worker information app -which now includes updated seasonal worker scheme specific content and further translations and worker outreach

SWS Taskforce Workstreams

Workstream	Objective
1. Education, information and grievance mechanisms	To support and enable provision of appropriate, comprehensible information to workers pre-decision, pre-departure, on-arrival and on-farm to inform decision making, manage expectations and drive a positive Scheme experience; To review access to and effectiveness of existing grievance mechanisms and recommend future actions.
2. Due diligence and good practice during recruitment	To increase understanding of country-specific risks, improve the quality and integrity of Scheme Operator assessment, and increase supply chain transparency to enable more effective due diligence
3. Due diligence and good practice on-farm	To support growers to reduce risks and enhance the recruitment and on-farm experience of seasonal workers
4. Improving worker finances	To make tangible progress on improving the overall finances of workers recruited to work in the Seasonal Workers Scheme including through eliminating worker-paid recruitment fees and related costs, maximising overall retained earnings and having a rights-compatible clear process and defined responsibilities for recruitment fee remediation including root cause analysis to avoid reoccurrence and abuse.
5. Policy, enforcement and stakeholder communication	To refine the policy asks from each workstream and emerging areas, to be approved and authorised by the Taskforce Governance Committee.

+	age do we have mitigate negative impact?	Severity of Impact on Wefare (1-5)	Perceived Prevalence (1-5)	Current Risk Score (Severity x Prevalence)	What activities are ongoing by Taskforce menalized been approved by the Taskforce to mitigate	
afe and legal cause significant	Low	4	4	16	Scheme operators close collaboration with in-country LPs, RRPA, Scheme Operator self assessment tool, , Just Good Work app development for SWS and translations	inspector.
work required to repay these ers from returning for future	Medium	5	4	20	Scheme operators close collaboration with in-country LPs, RRPA, Scheme Operator self assessment tool, Just Good Work app development for SWS and translations	TOM/FCDU Fundeo Tajikistan), GLAA agr. inspectorates in-countr. TOM/FCDU Funded Projects
Jume of work required to repay these er workers from returning for future seasons	High	4	4	16	Regional Grower Good Practice Roadshows, country comparisons mapping of recruitment fees	Tajikistan), GLAA agreement inspectorates in-country (Kyrg)
of exploitation - deception about working commodation significantly increases risk of exploitation.	High	3	3	9	PDO schemes, Just Good Work app development for SWS and translations, worker outreach, growers toolkit	IUM/FCDU Funded Projects (kyrgy. Tajikistan), GLAA agreement with I. inspectorates in-country (Kyrgyzstan Lishakistan)
of their contractual rights, Scheme operators and dired to spend considerable time with workers to understand their contracts	High	2	3	6	PDO schemes, RRPA, Scheme Operator self assessment tool	GLAA in-country relationships (Kyrgyzstan . Uzbekistan)
onal and psychological stress caused to workers, Poor by workers of productivity expectations, heightened ess, worker penalties through lack of meeting targets,	High	4	4	16	Regional Grower Good Practice Roadshows, RRPA, Scheme Operator self assessment tool, Just Good Work Worker Outreach, Serious Incident Escalation Protocol, growers toolkit	Home Office Farm Visits / Inspections
pact on workers nealth and wellbeing, costs to workers g medical insurance to pay for healthcare, lack of clarity vice providers who should serve as point of contact and workers significantly reducing the chance of identifying	Medium	3	3	9	Regional Grower Good Practice Roadshows, growers toolkit, Just Good Work App	Home Office Farm Visits / Inspections
impact on workers' health and wellbeing, risk of sexual ouse, harassment etc forced labour indicator.	High	4	4	16	Regional Grower Good Practice Roadshows, GLAA Farm Visits / Inspections, Serious Incident Escalation Protocol, Just good Work App, growers toolkit	FPC Guidance on Temporary Accomodation, GLAA Farm Visits / Inspections
orkers' financial wellbeing and risk of exacerbating any existing debt	High	4	2	8	Regional Grower Good Practice Roadshows, Serious Incident Escalation Protocol, Just good Work App, growers toolkit	Home Office Farm Visits / Inspections
ures placed on workers and the knock on psychological impact this will cause them	Medium	4	4	16	RRPA	Scheme rules on transfers
res placed on workers and the knock on psychological impact this will cause them	Medium	3	3	9	Growers toolkit	Gov guidance on minimum 32 hour allocation
UK and not being given any work or being given short e high likelibond of having taken out debt to come to at significant risk. If workers have no work and yet ation costs they are placed at even greater risk as alternative employment and are at increased	Medium	4	5	20	Workstream 5 letter to Home Office, Common Policy Asks, engagement with HO, UKVI, DEFRA	ICIBI recommendations
upervisors leaves the scheme open to abusive t allocation, bribery and corruption	Medium	3	3	9	Regional Grower Good Practice Roadshows, Serious Incident Escalation Protocol	Home office Farm Visits / Inspecti
tasses or abuse or to seek nep as either their employment/wellbeing in doing so unished if they seek support through is if scheme operators lose licence	Medium	4	4	16	Work on scoping existing mechanisms of support, Just Good Work App signposting	Work Rights Centre, MS&E Helplir Support Centre
to LME authorities and remit ity to engage in pro-active mpliance in UKVI poses overlap therefore orker welfare on	Low	4	4	16	Serious Incident Escalation Protocol	GLAA Far
tion, this	Low	4	5			

Risk-based approach to prioritising activities

- Workstream activities to be prioritised by risk assessment
- Common pro forma for project concept notes

Statement to Government on remit of SWS Taskforce – 27 July 2023

Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce Governance Committee
E: swstaskforce@stronger2gether.org
W: www.stronger2gether.org/swstaskforce

27 July 2023

Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP Minister of State for Immigration

Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London

SWIP 4DF

Dear Minister

Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce remit and Government engagemen

We are writing as members of the Governance Committee of the Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce, which is working towards a common objective of safeguarding and ensuring access to workers' rights in the UK Seasonal Workers Scheme. Further details at www.stconger2qether.org/swstaskforce.

In recent weeks, there have been several communications from Government ministers to members and non-members of the SWS Taskforce, in which the Government has cited the Taskforce as the Government's engagement route on issues relating to the Seasonal Workers Cohema.

In response, we would like to communicate several important points:

- Whilst we welcome the attendance of DEFRA and some devolved administration
 collegues in some Taskforce meetings, this has been in an observer capacity
 only. There is currently no formal process for direct engagement between the
 Taskforce and Government. We see the need for regular engagement with relevant
 Government departments and encourage the Government to establish a formal
 engagement mechanism with the Taskforce agina forward.
- The Taskforce has not been established to replace or attempt to replace the role or responsibilities of Government or statutory bodies on the scheme.
- The Taskforce does not act as a conduit between stakeholders within or outside of the Taskforce and the Government.

Yours sincerely,

Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce Governance Committee

cc. The Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP, Minister of State for Food, Farming and Fisheries

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Response from Home Office – 31st August 2023



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DECS Reference: TRO/0975968/23

31st August 2023

Dear Seasonal Workers Taskforce Governance Committee

Thank you for your letter of 27th July 2023 concerning the work of the Taskforce and engagement with the government on matters concerning the Seasonal Worker scheme. This has been passed to a Home Office official for a response.

The Government welcomes the establishment of the Seasonal Workers' Scheme Taskforce. We are unclear as to why you believe there is no formal process for direct engagement with the Government. Representatives from the Department of Environment. Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) attend the taskforce as representatives of Government. These representatives have been consistently clear that, as and when the Taskforce puts forward proposals for Government consideration, they will liaise with the relevant departments and convene meetings as appropriate.

Upon its establishment the Seasonal Workers Taskforce stated its intended role as:

Industry trade bodies, retailers, growers, recruiters and non-profits have come together to establish the Seasonal Workers Scheme (SWS) Taskforce to safeguard workers rights within the UK Seasonal Workers Scheme. The Taskforce will focus on implementing practical actions to improve the responsible recruitment and employment of migrant workers into UK farms, and to work with Government departments on the operation of the

The Home Office is aware of its responsibilities for regulating the UK's immigration system, it has not been suggested that the Taskforce was established to replace the role or responsibilities of Government

- Representatives from DEFRA attend the Taskforce as representatives of Government
- Believe that there is a far stronger prospect for effective engagement where that engagement draws in views from a broad base of relevant stakeholders.
- The existence of the Taskforce in no way precludes its constituent and non-constituent members from representing their views to Government, nor is it the only mechanism through which the Home Office engages with customers.
- UK Visas and Immigration will shortly be launching a new program of engagement. As well as monthly engagement with the sponsors, UKVI will launch quarterly engagement with a number of sector stakeholders.

November

- Multi-stakeholder event to reflect on progress made in 2023 and plans for 2024
- Date to be confirmed

Joining the SWS Taskforce

- Contact <u>swstaskforce@stronger2gether.org</u>
- Agree to Terms of Reference
- Join a workstream
- Access weekly updates
- Shape progress