



FNET's Empowering Work Working Group

Minutes of the meeting

6th February 2024, 10.00 – 11.30 – Virtual / Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

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| 1. Claire Donovan - Worldwide Fruit | 9. Lydia Tunnard - Keelings |
| 2. Harriet Cole- Berry World | 10. Jessica Garratt – Co-op |
| 3. Jim Swan - Ethical Food Company | 11. Helen Chan – AM Fresh |
| 4. Julia Black - Hilton Foods | 12. Susan Sellar – DPS Ltd |
| 5. Anna Pike – Worldwide Fruit | 13. Linda Beresford - FNET |
| 6. Hannah Greatorex – Berry Gardens | |
| 7. Lucy Oldershaw – Oldershaw Group | |
| 8. Nicola Thomas = Keelings | |

Apologies: Kealey Burbidge

External presenters

Bethan Hunt – Stronger2gether
Evan Cupido – Stronger2gether

Meeting Recording link [HERE](#) & Slide deck [HERE](#)

Discussion

1. Stronger2gether presentation Q&A

Q – What have you had to do to make sure people access the GM?

ANS – Integration of staff within the process is key. Our guidance focusses on the following elements to make sure it is effective

- Trust
- Legitimacy
- Address the Fear factor – ensure non- retaliation in the workplace.
- We recommend engagement with Trade Unions

Q – What about remedy?

ANS – Remedy will be covered in the next version

Q – How can businesses know if GM process is successful?

ANS – Good point for us all to cover.

FNET members suggested we can share the KPI's from FNET members of this working group

2. Member Feedback on Progress

Member 1– We moved away from using the word “Grievance”, which makes the tool more approachable for staff. We are still coming across members not raising issues and there is confusion as to what is good or bad behaviour, which we are tackling.

Member 2 – We have examples where a formal grievance procedure was enacted, and both parties regretted starting it in the first place.



Member 3 – We have an informal system in place, staff are encouraged to talk on Teams, and we use n-gage. We are encouraging all staff to be open and transparent and speak to their manager. Manager is key to getting close to the issues.

Member 4 – Since the last meeting in October we have updated all our policies and given them QR codes. People can access from mobile phones anywhere. Our recruitment agency has also been briefed; we are encouraging lots of communication.

Our next step is to train our managers to be able to handle Grievances better. Any training tools would be useful. We are looking from a group lens and will look at business units KPI's compared to each other and track them to share best practice.

Q – Does FNET have training materials we can use for managers?

ANS – LB to confirm what is available and reach out to members through the minutes to share resources.

Member 5 – Stated that building trust is key and how you do this can be different. We found that being authentic as managers was key during awareness training. Don't be afraid to talk about previous cases that have been through the system to show that the system works.

Member 1 – Raised the concern that if issues are being reported during the worker interviews at the SMETA audit, then clearly there is an opportunity to get this information earlier than any audit,

Q - How do we create a window of communication earlier?

ANS – We have found smaller informal group discussions of 5 people were more successful than formal GM's

ANS – Just talking and having a chat opens the conversation, so if this is possible in this format, we need to replicate this to get trust in the system.

Member 6 – In terms of communication, GM procedure is brought up at induction for our staff, we think this is the worst time to inform when people are most vulnerable and not able to take all the information in. Lots of content is covered at this induction. We need to repeat or delay to later in the start period when they are more able to take it in.

Member 7 – Highlighted the link between Grievance and having active mental health champions on site. Grievance is not the right word for some employees as this has negative feelings and prevents staff accessing it.

Q – Has anyone else found this?

ANS Member 1 – We call it "Speak Up" for that very reason. We also encourage not only complaints, but ask staff to share innovations, comments as well as complaints.

Member 3 – Shared that their business is following the idea from Health & Safety into GM; s by developing an APP to help accessibility and encourage more input in prevention before its too late and becomes an issue.

Member 4 – Suggested that a reporting style of "Your Said" "we Did" was implemented to show staff the issues that had been raised through the GM process but also how the company had responded. This has led to a good system for health and wellbeing.

Output

The team are asked to use the FNET template to develop a case study for effective GM's and sent them though to Claire Donovan. Can the case studies should cover: -

- How we raise access to GM's
- How we give the affected worker's a voice
- How we can check the procedures are effective
- How we report findings
- Tips you have found to make them more effective

3. Taking Grievance Mechanisms into Supply Chains

Challenges/Problems

Members shared the remoteness of supply chains accentuates the access issues. The further into the tier layers we go, the harder it is to manage. How so we turn the language round for these supply chains?

Members shared the challenge in remote areas such as Zimbabwe where internet is poor and data is precious. In Europe with good data available and Wi-Fi, having an app and a QR code to access is not a challenge, but in Zimbabwe we have found lack of data is a barrier to engaging with the process.

Solution – A solution shared was to look at providing tablets/I-pads in community areas with Wi-Fi access to address the data restriction issues and to allow workers to access the GM process.

Solution – One member shared they are exploring the JUST GOOD WORK piece in remote supply chains.

4. Measuring Success of GM's

Members discussed how we should measure success of GM's, as not the obvious number of issues raised is accurate since, we want to encourage issues to be raised through the system. A member asked of the checklist from stronger2gether could be shared.

ANS – Bethan stated the checklist is being piloted and if members wanted to participate in its development, then free training could be provided for FNET members.

Action - All enquiries to FNET technical team for discussion with S2G team.

5. The 2024-25 Empowering Work Plan

Empowering Work Working Group

Group Objectives : Improve skills and knowledge of best practice related to workers in Gender Equality, Worker Voice and Grievance Mechanisms in own operations and supply chains through enhanced learning and implementing Due Diligence practices.

Planned Activity and Outputs

<p>Q1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective GM's progress sharing. Review own op's commitments from Workshop. Develop case study for sharing. • Cascade to supply chains. • Identify and develop FNET Human Rights Skills Map 	<p>Q2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep Dive into Worker Voice Collaboration– Explore resources available, Align and Adapt to reduce duplication. • Identify training or other tools to upskill member FNET practitioners Skills& Training Matrix 	<p>Q3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Worker voice in test region, suggest S America (Chile/ Colombia). • Share the case study and learnings. 	<p>Q4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep Dive into... Develop enhanced Due Diligence approaches to Gender, Share case studies. Invite speakers Develop own case studies • Agree measures for monitoring
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Expected member actions ?? /Impact measures : Members actively participate through HR colleagues in the workshops and implement pilots and share case study examples for the wider membership. Impact measures - #of businesses that have implemented GM/Gender/Worker Voice and agreed metrics to assessed baseline to start to measure in 2025

Budget required - £5,000 for development of Skills Map and Providing Training

FNET WORKING GROUP ETHICAL BRAND – Confidential

6. Concluding points

Great discussion on members progress and blockers with suggestions from the group to resolve issues. To make progress on effective grievance mechanisms, members shared the key learnings

- Accessibility – Ensure many contact points, apps, meetings, formal and informal
- Trust – share the results You said, we did
- Communication – at the right time for staff to understand, don't wait for the SMETA
- Managers are key to success
- Think about what it is called, even using the word "Grievance" can be alienating
- Adapt for supply chains knowing the remoteness adds complexities, is there access to data, phone use, language

7. Next steps

- i. Case studies to be sent to Claire Donovan – ALL
- ii. Human Rights Skills Matrix template to be developed for consultation of members - KB
- iii. We are proposing the next meeting will be in person on **11th April at Hilton Foods** - LB
- iv. Meetings for rest of the FNET year proposed as follows. Thursdays preferred - LB
 - a. Q2 25th July – On Line
 - b. Q3 10th October – In person
 - c. Q4 5th December – On Line
- v. Next meeting deep dive into Worker Voice, explore resources available, align and adapt to reduce duplication.
- vi. Collate Worker Voice Requirements from retailers– LB

- End -