

## FNET's Empowering Work Working Group

### Minutes of the meeting

11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 10.00 – 16.00 – In Person at Hilton Foods, Huntingdon

#### Attendees:

Name - Business	Name - Business
1. Angela Posey – AM Fresh	11. Julia Black – Hilton Foods ( <b>Board Sp</b> )
2. Helen Chan – AMT Fresh	12. Clare Donovan – World Wise Fruits ( <b>L</b> )
3. Megan Bailey – AM Fresh	13. Rachel Dickens – Asda
4. Jim Swan – Ethical Food Company	14. Hannah Greatorex – Berry Gardens
5. Kathy Fung – World Wise Foods	15. Linda Beresford - FNET
6. Jon Tugwell – Fyffes	<b>Online Attendees</b>
7. Lydia Tunnard - Keelings	16. Victoria Browne – Westbridge Foods
8. Nicola Thomas – Keelings	17. SGil Bishop – Berry Garden
9. Peter Rogers – MM Flowers	18. Fiona McKerrow – Dole
10. Kealey Burbridge – Hilton Foods ( <b>L</b> )	19. Sarah Cole – Avara
Apologies	
Andrew Nicholson – 2sfg	Gillian Haythornthwaite – Bakkavor
Karen Hughes – AMK Fresh	Carl Cooper – Westbridge Foods
Oonagh Johnston – Vestey Foods	
External Speakers	
<b>Alphonso Herias – Ulula</b>	<b>Philip Clayton – Just Good Work</b>
<b>Gillian Haythornthwaite – nGage (video)</b>	<b>Lea Esterhuizen - &amp; Wilder</b>
<b>Jonathan Reed – MD Hilton Foods (site intro)</b>	

Meeting Recording is here (waiting for the link)

The Slide deck is [HERE](#)

**Agenda for the day:** A brief overview of the Hilton business and the site was shared by Jonathan Reed before the workshop started.

Agenda	
Estimated time	Item
09.30 – 10.00	<b>Coffee and Networking</b>
10.00 – 10.20	Welcome & attendees introduction to New Co-Lead Welcome address from Jonathan Reed – MD Hilton Food Group
10.20 – 10.30	Setting The Scene – Worker Voice - What is it? and Why are we interested in Alignment – Claire Donovan
10.30 -11.30	Tools to support Worker Surveys – How do they work, who is using, where and to what results? -Just Good Work – Phillip Clayton -Ulula – Thomas Radal -& Wilder – Lea Esterhuizen - nGage – Gillian Haythornthwaite
11.30 - 11.40	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11.40 - 11.50	Summary of the Retail Survey on Alignment – Linda Beresford
11.50 - 12.20	Breakout Group 1– <b>Alignment Review – Worker Voice the Supplier Perspective – Kealey Burbidge to lead</b>
12.20 – 12.50	Breakout Groups 2- <b>Identify the Barriers For business and for workers - Julia Black to Lead</b>
12.50 – 13.50	<b>Lunch</b>
13.50 - 14.30	Group Work - <b>Discussion on Alignment of Hotline - All</b>
14.30 – 15.00	Action and Next Steps – Assign Accountability
15.00 – 15.10	Discuss the Plan to develop the FNET <b>Human Rights Skills Map – Outreach for support from HR</b>
15.10 -15.30	Agree Next Meeting date, Agenda and Depart

## Discussion

### A - Setting the Scene – Claire Donovan

Worker voice is a critical part of equitable and inclusive worker success strategies.

Authentic worker voice is more than employee satisfaction surveys – or the posting of helplines on toilet doors.

Core elements of **Worker Voice** include

#### 1. Representation

- a. The freedom and ability to represent their own interests or have those interested fairly represented by a larger collective

#### 2. Empowerment

- a. Workers feel empowered to raise concerns or shine light on problems to address any adverse conditions or terms surrounding their employment

#### 3. Agency

- a. Workers are stakeholders and engaged in two-way transparent communication where their input is valued and yields policy and equitable opportunities for all workers to survive

The scope for today's session is **Worker Voice, Grievance Mechanism** but not Worker Representation.

Claire facilitated a discussion on the challenges faced by getting suitable engagement from the business (A) and the worker (B)

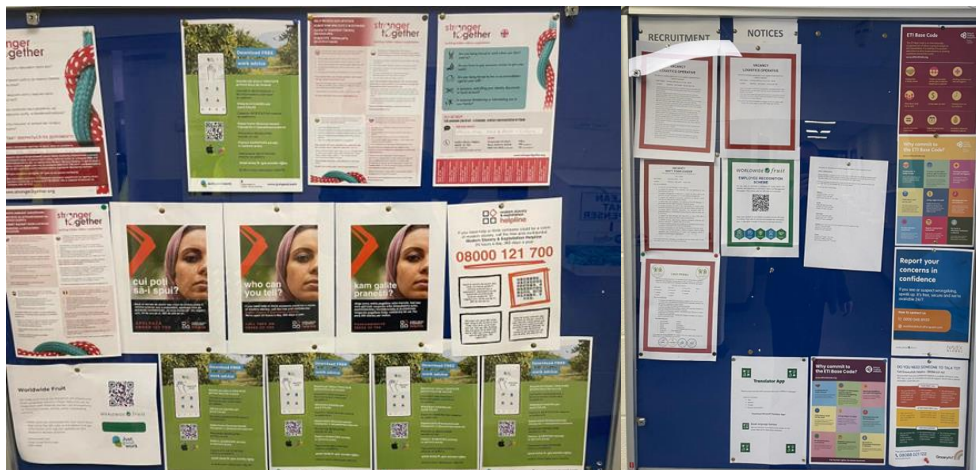
Fig A

**YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY FOUND THAT ITS NOT AS EASY TO GET WORKER VOICE AS WE MAY LIKE**

**MANY REASONS – INCLUDING**

- ❖ LACK OF AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM FOR A WORKER AT THE TIME OF THE CALL
- ❖ PERCEIVED LACK OF RELEVANCE- 'ITS NOT FOR ME'
- ❖ CULTURAL – LACK OF TRUST
- ❖ AS WELL AS THE SPECIFIC LABOUR RIGHTS ABUSES THAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT

Fig B



**Challenges for Staff are highlighted in the picture above. The notice boards with WB lines and Hotlines are too confusing and there are too many options. Do employees know which one to call?**

- Do workers know how to communicate a problem?
- Are they clear about who they should speak to and over what?
- Is the language we use blocking?
- Or is it the range of options?

**Summary** – we need to simplify the process for employees reduce the options or the various hotlines and whistleblowing lines to make it easier for them to engage. Having multiple options, we agreed does not allow for effective tracking as responses could be split over several different hotlines preventing an early indication of systemic issues. We agreed to cover this later in the workshop in our group work

**B- Introduction to Different Tools, where and how they are used, accessibility. Case study example for each.**

- **Just Good Work – Philip Clayton**
- **Ulula – Thomas Radal**
- **& Wider – Lea Esterhuizen**
- **NGage – Gillian Haythornthwaite**

**See slide deck for presentations for each tool**

**C – Retailer Survey Results on Worker Voice and Hotlines**

All 10 FNET retailer members were asked to complete a survey asking for information on the various tools for hearing worker voice, with a view to see the opportunities for alignment for member companies to shape the workshop. The responses are summarised in the excel document.

**Summary**

- 9/10 Members completed the survey
- Results shared in detail in Excel, [here is the link for full review](#)
- Some retailers have own policies in place which have been shared to help alignment
- Others are currently in development and are keen to learn from today's session with suppliers
- A good response on willingness to collaborate and reduce duplication as long as the worker is not disadvantaged
- Only one with an International Team believed alignment would be a challenge
- The detailed responses are printed in A3 on the tables for you to refer to during the day

**Fig C** – A snapshot of the survey results, see full report for complete dataset.

		ALDI	ASDA_IPL	CO-OP	LIDL	M&S	MORRISONS	OWN BRAND	SAINSBURYS	TESCO	WAITROSE
	From	Ed Smith	Rachel Dickens	Jessica Garratt	Imogen Wight	Prepared by Julla Black on behalf of Deborah Johnson	Beth Leeman	response due to	Sarah Picasso	Courtenay Forbes	Barney Smith Deepa Pawha
Overall Overview	Comments	All suppliers are required to comply via contracts in place where policy is mentioned.	Conversation quite timely as we are in the process of creating new human rights policies, one of which covers worker representation	Policy in place for all suppliers and their supply chains covering Scope & Responsibility Definitions and Principles Co-ops Role in grievance Co-ops role in remedy Monitoring and Evaluating	Lidl do not have any specific policy or requirements for worker voice or whistleblowing lines	Strong policy and Guidance Documents in place for suppliers to M&S . . <a href="#">human-rights-due-diligence-and-remedy-guidance-1-jan-2021.pdf</a> . .	Improving access to Grievance Mechanisms is an important area of work for us. Some of our collaborative projects are aiming to address this, such as ETI GMA project.		Keen to work collaboratively with other retailers on this subject	This sounds like a valuable piece of work.	Our Human Rights Report (2021) states that All workers in our supply chains are encouraged to raise any workplace issues they have via site-based grievance mechanisms, or externally to use external resources such as hotlines hosted by Stronger Together, Issara and the Modern Slavery Helpline.
	Reason for above					<a href="#">m&amp;s-grievance-procedure-for-getting-home-and-food-0-11.pdf</a>	We do not have a specific requirement currently		Individual specific worker voice initiatives can create complexity for the worker and the supplier and could undermine other channels for worker engagement		

### D- Group Work 1 – The Suppliers Comments

In two small groups, the members were asked to discuss and consider the following then feedback to the group following the learnings from the worker voice tools and the Alignment survey data

- What methods or tools have you tried
- What successes or failures have you had
- How easy is it to get workers to get feedback
- How are you using the output to support the worker

	Group Small Meeting Room	Group Large Meeting Room	
<b>What tools have you used and how are you using them</b>	<p>Various platforms to access will increase response rate.</p> <p><b>2 Platforms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding what is happening, what is right/wrong</li> <li>• Survey based on understanding</li> </ul>	<p>Many tools available to workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WB lines own and retailer versions</li> <li>- QR codes for easy access has been useful</li> <li>- Forums and committees if run well can be effective (see work on FNET Effective GM’s)</li> <li>- MS Helpline</li> <li>- Suggestion Boxes</li> <li>- Worker Focus Groups</li> <li>- Staff Surveys</li> <li>- ongoing wellbeing and engagement systems through Apps</li> </ul> <p>All channels used in various capacity by FNET members</p>	
		<b>Pro’s</b>	<b>Con’s</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Route into the survey is key and how to engage people	Options for people to access using different methods	Different comms channels make it difficult to trend data. May miss systemic issues
			Psychological safety
<b>Successes</b>	<p>Feedback from survey is important – Business must act on results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear action plan</li> <li>- Listen to feedback</li> <li>- Involve workers in solving the issues</li> <li>- “You said, we did” format</li> </ul>	<p>Key to Success is enhances when managers are main communicators and understand the expectation, they can encourage participation and increase engagement.</p> <p>Encourage participation by allowing people to leave the shop floor in small groups to</p>	

	Feedback utilised in collective bargaining was interesting insight from the tools	attend survey room set up with technology (1 member case study)
	Ensure a CULTURE approach to employee engagement (Leadership team). Understand the feedback may not be “Right first time” but work on a CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT mindset	Having easy access for surveys improves results e.g. use of ‘what’s app’ and ‘messenger’ which are more widely familiar in some regions & cultures
	Communication platforms for engagement must be adaptable and flexible. If one format doesn’t work, be prepared to try another method	Feedback is key and demonstrating the business has listened
Retailer – our ask	<p>We are unsure of the data being sent to the WB lines to the retailers from own operations. Can you support us and ensure this is shared? How many calls are ethics v fraud v corruption v quality v other? Is ethics being reported on these hotlines? Does it work?</p> <p>Retailer to share the best practice across the industry on WB.</p> <p>Who has used what? Email Linda with case studies to share among wider FNET members.</p>	<p>Would prefer to have 1 line only for staff to access Preference would be to have the in-house line if it can be demonstrated that it covers all the needs of the customer.</p> <p>Group committees /Reporting HWDB - retailer</p>

**E – Group Work 2 – Barriers and Solutions**

- Consider the barriers FNET businesses face
- What are the barriers for the worker?
- Brainstorm solutions
- How can the customer help
- Think about the tools you have seen today, how might they help

Barriers/issues	Solutions
The current hotlines cover more than human rights risks. If we align on one tool, we need to consider the other reasons such as fraud, corruption etc	If the hotline isn't being used for ethical related issues may need a business issues hotline and a MS hotline, but only 1. This will allow trending of data
Customers insisting on own hotline results in multiple posters and causes confusion for staff	For multiple retailer sites, we develop a site-specific hotline that can demonstrate it covers the requirements needed Must have x Must have y If members don't have their own, then they can use X (need to agree which single hotline is acceptable to all e.g. MS hotline?)
Sharing of information is not done across the various hotlines.	One retailer suggested sharing all data to FNET team on a regular basis, would be a way to record systemic issues

No data is analysed or summarised for FNET members	The reported data could be aggregated and trended to allow for action and focus for FNET member working group activity and would feed into annual KPI's
Landscape Mapping – This could be a useful tool in geographies and commodities.	Tools are available to cover this allowing better monitoring or results
Weighting of Issues	Suggest either a direct report or informal
Concern that WB line is used by employees	WB line should be a last resort when all other forms or worker communication and Grievance mechanisms have been tried.  BALL members agreed that other forms must be the priority for proactive and positive action for staff.

**Summary**

Energetic discussions across the topics and good recommendations to improve engagement of employees, reducing duplication for business without risking the negative impact for staff. Some successes across the FNET members and remaining challenges include lack of participation, survey fatigue, lack of trust that it will make a difference.

Team identified a lack of information about the number of ethical/HR related issues being generated from retailer WB lines was a gap in everyone's understanding. No one present was able to confirm if the hotlines for retailer are working as no results are currently shared. No understanding if they are being used for human rights issues.

**F - Actions & Next Steps Agreed**

1. Determine how we can monitor data with multiple channels
2. Develop management training - what is the current journey v the gap
3. Look at how much the hotlines are working, what is reported, how they are closed out how are the issues reported back to the sites HR or leadership teams
4. Research if retailers share whistleblowing complaints
5. FNET to check what is going through the hotlines and the numbers for each category – Linda
6. Insight into categories reported via the hotline to check if being used correctly. This may lead to a rethink of the hotline and its campaign and communication
7. Check what data is coming through each country to be able to check insights (where there are country specific retailer hotlines)
8. Lanscape assessment from the retailer
9. Work on the best opportunity to get the best quality data
  - a. Create documents to outline
  - b. Methodology
10. Gather and share “GOOD PRACTICE examples of case studies on Worker Voice methodologies for members to access.

-End -

Additional sources of reference you may find useful in your journey to effective worker voice.

[Grievance Mechanisms in Supply Chains Leaflet provided by Jon Tugwell \(scanned\)](#)

[https://www.proforest.net/fileadmin/uploads/proforest/Documents/Publications/InfoNote\\_Worker\\_Voice\\_Technologies.pdf](https://www.proforest.net/fileadmin/uploads/proforest/Documents/Publications/InfoNote_Worker_Voice_Technologies.pdf)

[https://shiftproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Shift\\_Methodology\\_Worker-Voice\\_5.17-1.pdf](https://shiftproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Shift_Methodology_Worker-Voice_5.17-1.pdf)

<https://respect.international/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/What-is-Worker-Voice-in-the-context-of-global-supply-chains.pdf>

[Guide to using group voice channels | CIPD](#)