



Empowering Work Working Group

The Food Network for Ethical Trade – 5th October 2023, 10.00 – 15.30 hrs



Competition Law Statement

“Today we are meeting to discuss Food Network for Ethical Trade agenda on Empowering work.

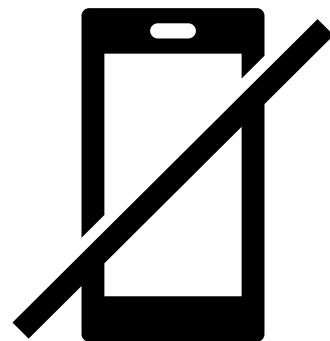
We take competition compliance seriously. Whilst discussions can cover matters of interest to our industry, we cannot discuss or exchange sensitive commercial information.

If at any time during this meeting, you think our discussions may be in breach of competition rules, please inform the Chair. The Chair may close the meeting at any time if she believes that discussions are in breach of competition law”

Agenda

Timing	Item
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome and introduction of attendees
10.15 – 11.00	Setting the scene – importance of GMs
11.00 - 11.20	Lydia Stirling – Welsh Rugby Union
11.20 - 11.35	ETI –baseline research on Grievance Mechanisms in Agricultural Sector
11.35 - 11.50	Table discussion / to reflect on what people have heard
11.50 - 12.00	Present Feedback of discussions
12.00 - 12.10	Hilton Foods HR Manager on ‘Speak up Hilton’ Hilton’ case study
12.10 - 12.25	Retailer Summary of requirements & aligning with UN Guiding Principles of Effective Criteria GM
12.25 - 12.40	Q & A Discussions
12.40 - 13.40	Lunch
13.40 - 14.10	Oxfam on the GM work – Implementing effective GMs, the toolkit
14.10 - 14.20	Update from SWS workstream 1 and the Nottingham University - David Camp
14.20 - 14.50	Group work & reporting –what constitutes effective GMs??
14.50 - 15.10	Present Feedback from group work
15.10 - 15.20	Individual sharing of two actions points from workshop to improve business GM
15.20 - 15.30	AOB & Close

Housekeeping



Introductions

- Name
- Company
- Role in the organisation
- Icebreaker –

Favourite food moment – “where were you, what were you eating, why was it so memorable”

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Reminder of business benefits of effective grievance mechanisms

As well as providing support to the victim, effective complaints and grievance handling arrangements provide important benefits for companies too:

Business Benefits



Early warning

- Effective grievance procedures can help you identify and mitigate emerging human rights-related issues before they become a risk to your business



Early dispute resolution

- Resolving grievances and complaints at company level can help you avoid more formal, lengthy and potentially costly procedures



Corporate responsibility

- An effective grievance and complaints procedure can strengthen your overall human rights performance and due diligence and boost your corporate responsibility



Improved compliance

- Your industry may be covered by regulations pertaining to the handling of grievances and complaints, or there may be voluntary codes demanding effective grievance handling.



Corporate reputation

- Showing that you're serious about remediating your human rights impacts can enhance your reputation with internal and external stakeholders

What makes a grievance mechanism effective?



Certainly not this

What makes a grievance mechanism effective?

“Fundamental to effective remedy is that workers have an **effective voice in the workplace so that two-way dialogue and two-way respect can be established**, and a mechanism established **to resolve problems before they become irresolvable**... each [business and trades unions] bring vital and distinctive competences to the process.”

TUC

“Companies tend to overestimate users’ understanding and trust of grievance mechanisms. Processes that look good on paper, such as a suggestion box or whistleblowing hotline, often do not work in practice, mostly because of a **lack of access or trust. People don’t know where to report things, how the system works, or are unclear about the types of issue they can raise**. They may believe their grievances will not be addressed or fear that there will be negative repercussions if they speak up.” Oxfam

Requirements for an operational grievance mechanism?



Grievance mechanisms...

External dimension

Map **users**, potential **grievances** and available **remedies**

Understand and address **barriers to access**

Enable **trust** in the mechanism

... provide access to (various forms of) remedy to those affected

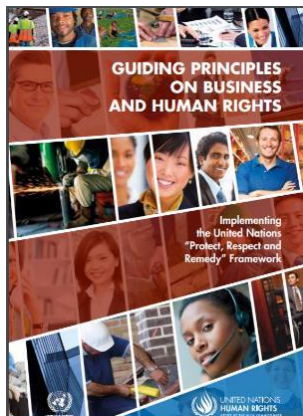
Internal dimension

Assess and build on **existing structures**

Ensure staff is **adequately trained** (incl. routes for escalation)

Integrate findings into overall due diligence process

... act as early warning systems and support overall due diligence



Requirements for an operational grievance mechanism?

Legitimate

- Mechanism is fair and trustworthy

Accessible

- Known to all the stakeholders it is meant for, provides adequate assistance to those who may face barriers to accessing the complaints procedure and process

Predictable

- In terms of process and available outcomes

Equitable

- In terms of fair access to information, advice and expertise

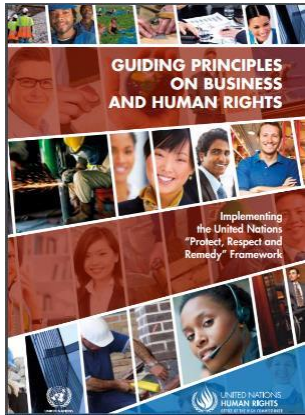
Transparent

- Keeps those involved in a complaint informed about its progress, and by providing sufficient information about the process to build confidence in its effectiveness

Rights-Compatible

- Such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO's core conventions

Source of continuous learning ➤ Drawing lessons to improve the mechanism, and prevent future harm



Welsh Rugby Union – Case Study





Ethical Trading Initiative

Grievance Mechanisms in Agriculture

FNET Empowering Work 5 October 2023

Project overview

Grievance Mechanisms in Agriculture

The purpose of the project is to prevent and remedy the cyclical slavery of North and West African migrant workers in agricultural supply chains of UK businesses in selected regions of Spain and Italy.



Timeframe: Jan 1 2023 to March 31 2025

Donor: UK Govt's Modern Slavery Innovation Fund – Phase III

Locations:

Italy: Puglia and Sicily

Spain: Almeria, Murcia and Huelva

North Africa: Morocco and Tunisia

West Africa: TBD (e.g. Senegal, Ivory Coast, Guinea)

Three project stages



1. Situational analysis:

Increased understanding of the problems and needs of North and West African migrant workers, ensuring the projects scope, design and delivery is needs-based and migrant-worker-centred.

2. Grievance mechanisms pilot:

Grievance mechanisms are implemented, with increased accessibility and use by North and West African workers

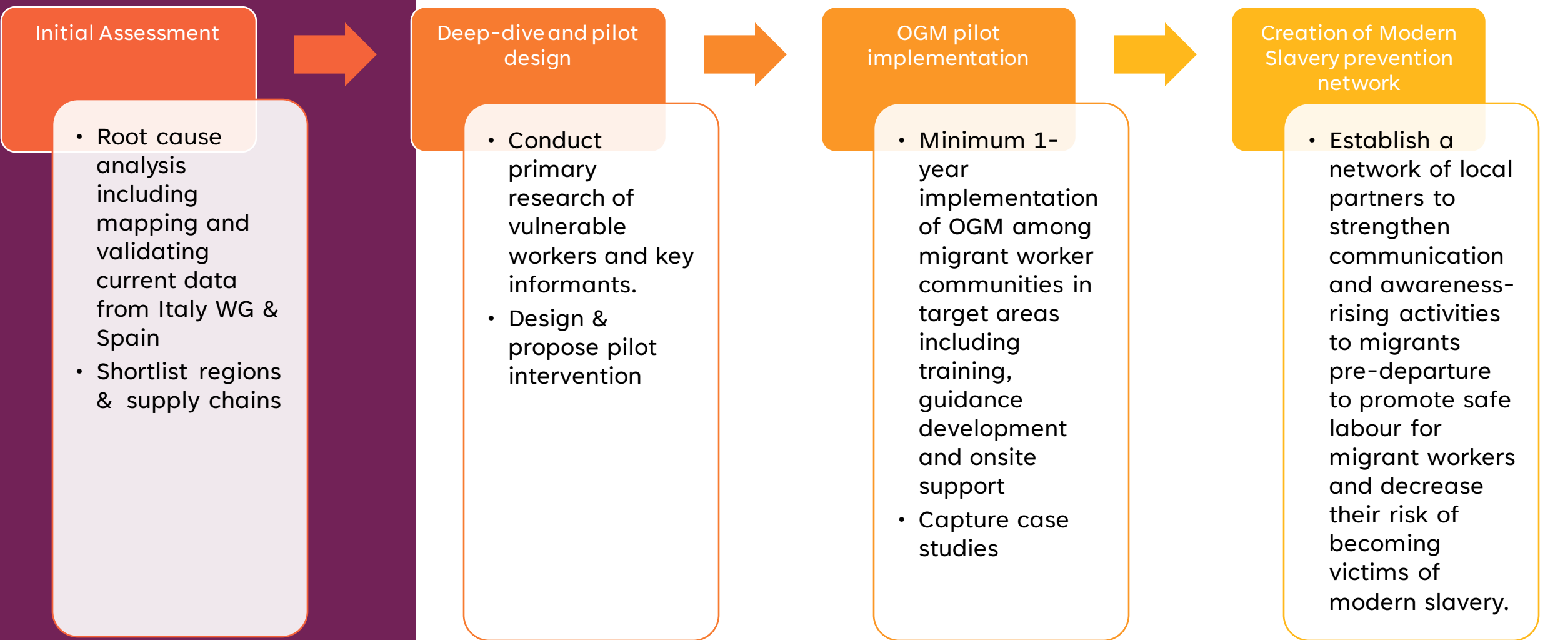
3. Modern slavery prevention networks:

Awareness of and capacity to communicate access to remedy, ethical recruitment practices, and emerging risks to migrant workers is increased

GMA Work Group Membership



High-level workplan



Monitoring, evaluation & sharing of learning



Primary research in Italy and Spain

Primary research in Italy and Spain

- Oxfam Advisory Business Service selected as research lead for both Italy and Spain.
- However, due to complementary expertise, Spanish consultancy firm Business & Human Rights contracted to take on interviews, analysis and recommendations for Almeria and Murcia while Oxfam Intermon carrying out research in Huelva and Oxfam Italy in Puglia and Sicily.



Primary research in Italy and Spain



1. Characteristics of vulnerable workers

From interviewing workers, understand what type of human rights impacts they are experiencing and what type of grievances they have to inform and assess suitability of grievance mechanisms structures and processes

2. Knowledge, access and use of existing grievance mechanisms, including barriers

Assess availability, type and usage of existing grievance mechanisms among vulnerable workers and identify information and service gaps for supporting workers.

Examine which communication channels and sources of information are trusted among vulnerable workers that can be connected and used as part of a transparent and trustworthy grievance reporting tool

3. Local stakeholders

Map local authorities, civil society organisations / NGOs, trade unions and other relevant stakeholders operating in the area relevant to the pilot intervention with a specific focus on possibilities for support provision.

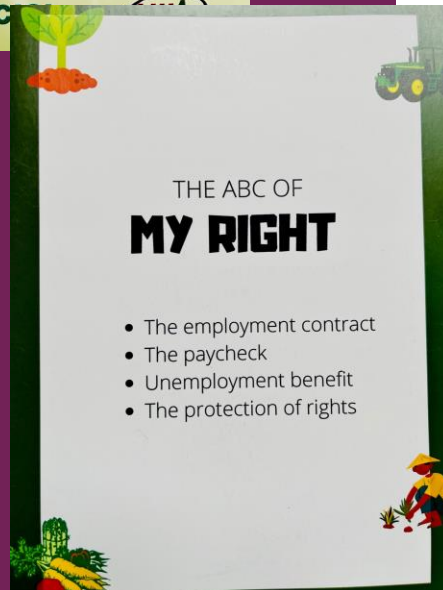
4. Root causes for low use / effectiveness of grievance mechanisms.

Explore the types of contracts and recruitment channels used on the grower sites and its interface / impact on access to grievance mechanisms, and the level and type of worker representation.



Preliminary key findings from research

- Workers interviewed have a diverse background from West and North Africa
- Both workers with legal documents to remain in the country and undocumented migrants have been interviewed.
- A number of cases of caporalato detected.
- Many workers speak very poor Italian / Spanish even though some of them have been in the countries for more than 15 years.
- Other workers had just arrived to Italy on boats 2 weeks earlier and, to quote Caritas, “the fact that they are already out working on the fields show that we are in a bad shape”





Key findings continued

- Workers demonstrated a lack of understanding of their contracts, even when they have received information booklets (translated into English, French, Spanish, Arabic).
- In both countries, workers interviewed had weak understanding of GMs and were in most cases not aware of their existence.
- The preferred ways to handle issues are speaking directly to managers or supervisors, or reaching out to TUs and CSOs / NGOs (e.g. Caritas) – most workers are aware of these services through word of mouth.
- In Spain, interviews showed that team supervisors (los/as manijeros/as) are crucial for the welfare / challenges faced by workers. For most workers, the team supervisor is the only point of contact with the company.

Key findings continued

Issues in the workplace mentioned by the workers ranged from:

- “grey contracts” (Italy)
- Lack of transportation or reimbursement for transportation costs
- Verbal abuse
- Incorrect application of daily wages and calculation of hours worked
- Poor accommodation
- Work without pay in exchange for help to legalize residence (Spain),
- Payment systems linked to boxes collected rather than hours worked (Spain)



Key findings continued

- Lack of grower engagement in GMs in both countries, in turn a result of:
 - Fearing GMs in that greater transparency of challenges will lead to penalties and other adverse reactions from clients.
 - A “fatigue” of clients’ “endless requirements”
 - Other business priorities including adverse weather conditions and response to price pressures.
- In Italy, growers turn to the caporalato system as it solves the problem with the need for a flexible workforce. The formal system is too bureaucratic and expensive.
- Many of the growers interviewed in Italy were of the view that workers don’t want to integrate, and they don’t want to participate in the training programmes that are being organized. The growers for example mentioned that there is a lack of expertise to carry out technical tasks, but workers are not interested to upgrade their skills.



Project next steps

- Roundtable discussions with migrant-focused CSOs in Tunis and Rabat to provide concrete recommendations for how collaboration between CSOs can be further supported to facilitate and enhance provision of information to transit migrants on ethical recruitment practices, and rights and risks at work in destination countries
- In-person workshop with GMA work group members in London on 17 October to initiate design conversations for pilot OMG in Italy and Spain
- Dissemination of research findings to GMA work group members and other key stakeholders
- Early 2024 – roll out pilot in collaboration with ETF in Spain and key stakeholders in Italy

**For human rights,
for better business**

Key contacts:

Sara Petersson
ETI GMA Project Manager
sara.petersson@eti.org.uk

Table Discussion – Work in Small Groups

1. What are the key takeouts from the discussion?
2. How will these impact your business?
3. Any business experiences on GM's you can share among the group your own organisations
 1. What has worked?
 2. What didn't work?
 3. Why?
 4. How /what did you change?
 5. Outcome?
4. Speaker from each group to share the highlights of the table discussion



Grab a Coffee



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Hilton Foods – Case Study

The logo consists of a dark blue square with a light blue triangle pointing upwards from the bottom center. The words "HILTON" and "FOODS" are written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, stacked vertically.

**HILTON
FOODS**

SPEAK UP HILTON FOODS

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide, consisting of two overlapping diagonal bands of blue. The top band is a medium blue, and the bottom band is a darker blue, creating a wave-like effect.

Kealey Burbidge

Overview

Why:

We want to work collaboratively with workers at HFUK to gather their opinions & thoughts they have about this process

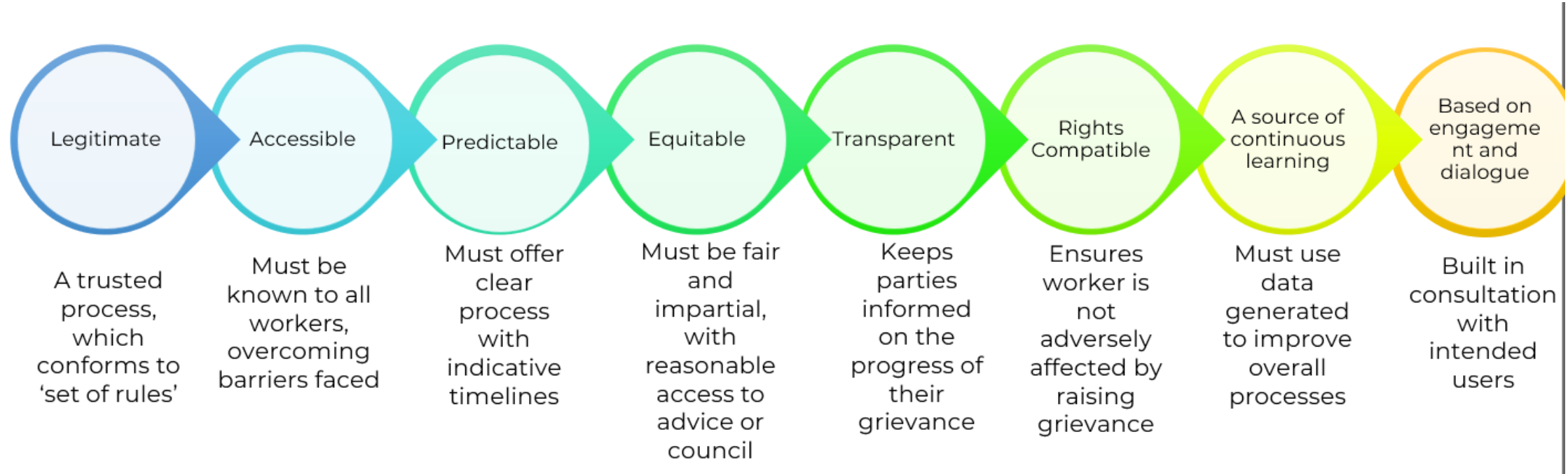
Who: HFUK worked collaboratively with Oxfam and Tesco

What: A pilot looking to improve their grievance mechanisms so workers at sites can raise grievances in a safe, trusted, transparent manner



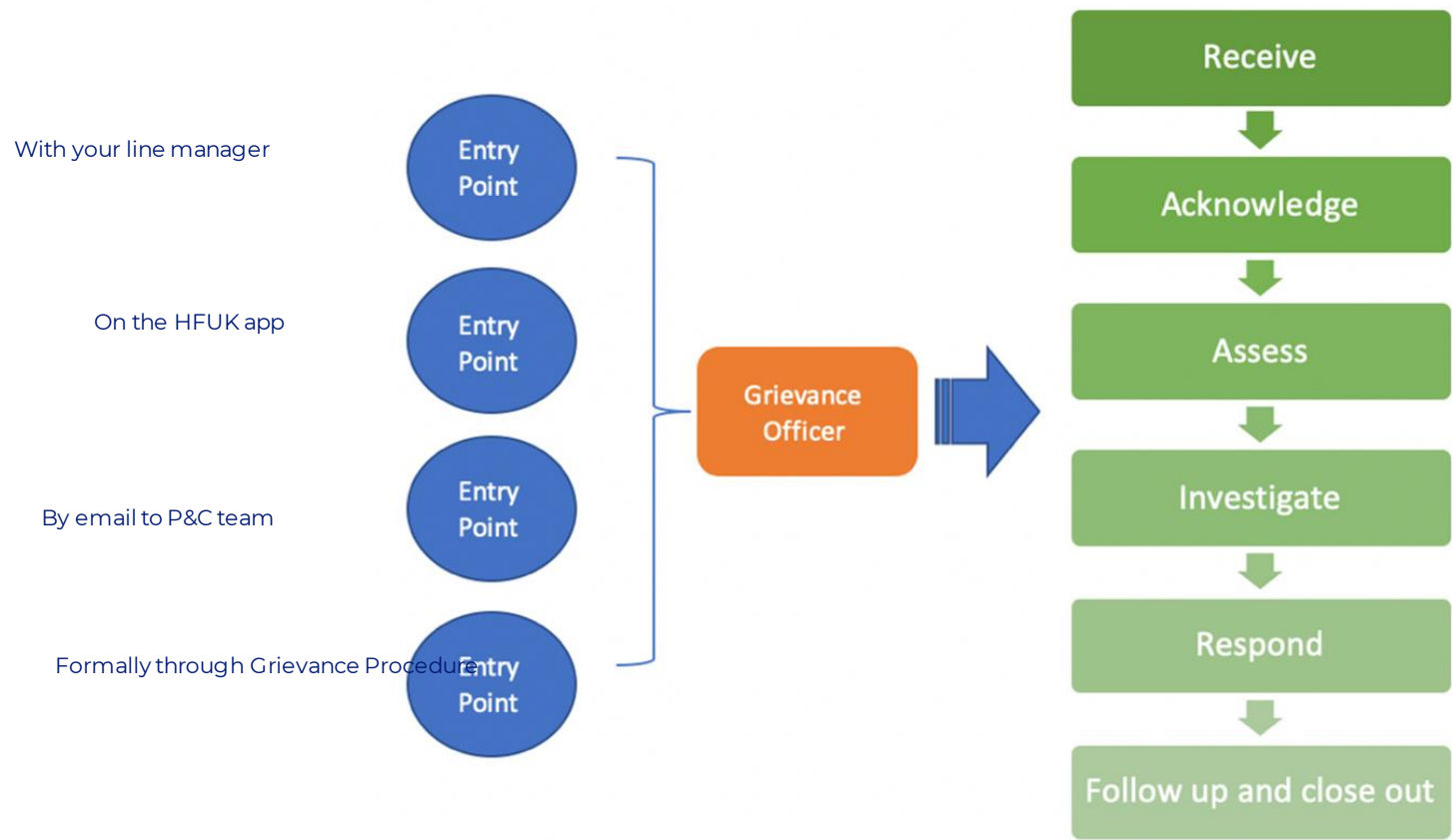
What is an effective grievance mechanism?

The UNGPs have eight principles that outline the characteristics of an effective grievance mechanism



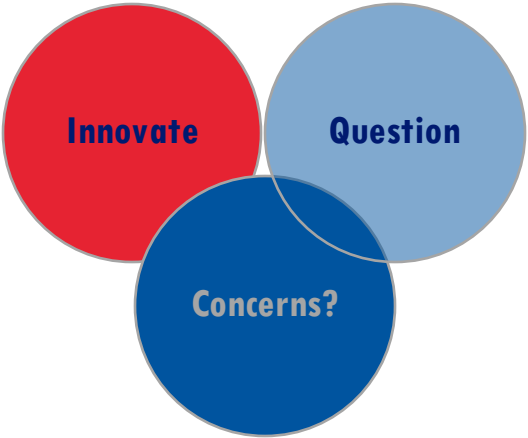
Starting the Project

Figure 1. Typical flow of a grievance mechanism

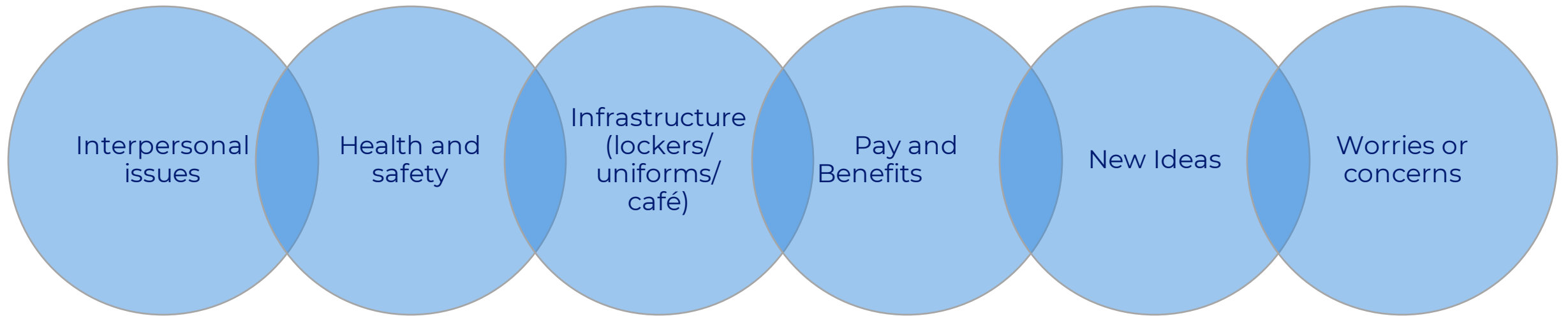


Project Task

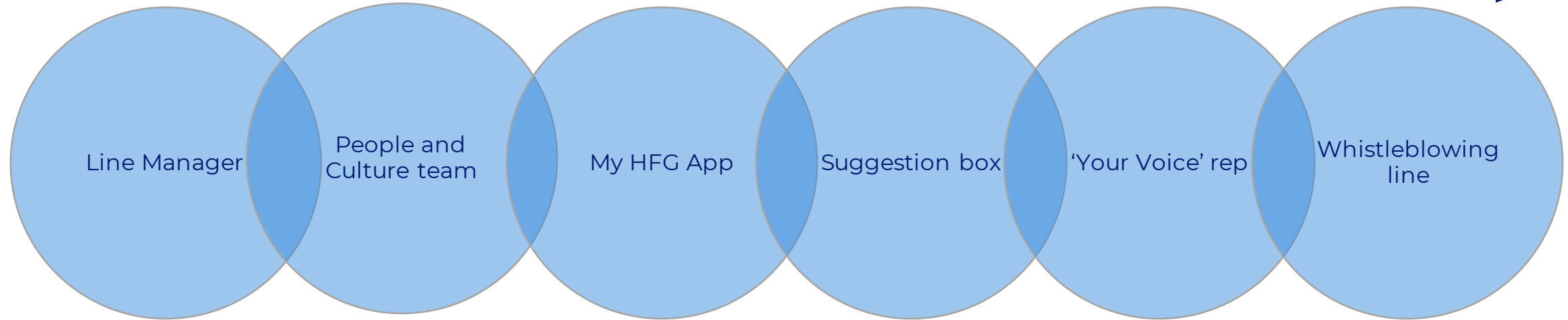
Beginner	Select	Intermediate	Select	Advance	Select
No formal grievance mechanism has been set up		Grievance mechanism set up by the company	X	Grievance mechanism set up by the company and its intended users together	
Grievances are addressed on an ad hoc basis		Grievances are addressed in a systematic manner	X	Grievances are proactively solicited	
Company is aware of grievances mostly by chance		There is a designated place/entry point for logging grievances		There are multiple entry points for logging grievances	X
Grievance handling is an add-on activity		Grievance handling is an integral part of stakeholder engagement	X	Grievance handling is integral to all parts of the business	
No grievance owner	X	Grievance officer		Grievance officer + Grievance committee	
Same issues keep coming up		Systematic response to avoid repeat grievances	X	Independent oversight committee	
No recourse mechanism		Recourse mechanism available	X	Funds available for acquiring independent expertise/mediation	
No systematic database or other tracking system		Grievance database that allows to track, report and analyse	X	Database is automated (including escalation, reminders, etc.)	



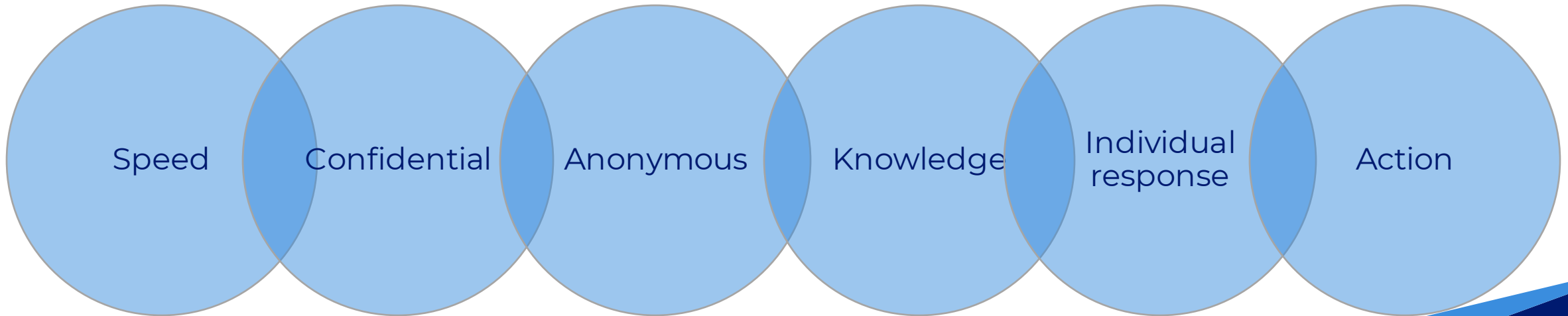
What is important



Ways to speak to HFG?



What's important when telling HFG?



Speak Up Channel	Qualities
Line Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential and knowledgeable response • Your line manager can give you an initial response quickly as they see you everyday
The People and Culture Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential and knowledgeable response • You can speak to a member of the P&C team in the office, or by giving them a call or by sending an email. Multiple languages can be supported. • The P&C team have the best knowledge of your contract, hours and wage
HFG App – ‘Feedback & Ideas’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes directly to P&C team • Reviewed every day • Multiple languages can be supported
Your Voice Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to Your Voice rep, and bring up issue as agenda item for committee • Good for issues or questions which concern a group of employees, rather than individuals • The Your Voice Committee meets bi-monthly
Hazard Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise a hazard card on the shop floor for any health and safety concerns
Suggestion box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to submit anonymously if wanted, accessible to everyone • Box reviewed once per week
Formal Grievance in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal, structured process of dealing with an issue • Able to be represented by a fellow employee or an accredited trade union representative • Able to formally appeal the outcome
Call or submit concern to HFG Whistleblowing line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to submit anonymously if wanted, accessible to everyone • Multiple languages can be supported

Monitoring and Learning



Speak Up Officer will:

- Make sure all staff understand the Speak Up Policy
- Receive all the issues raised
- Keep a log of all issues raised to improve over time
- Monitor the time taken to resolve issues



The Your Voice team will:

- Get to feedback on how effective the Speak Up Policy over time
- Help improve the policy over time
- Comment on whether time taken to resolve grievances is appropriate
- View summaries of grievance data (categories of issues & time to resolve) to help find new solutions



SPEAK UP

Hilton Foods UK

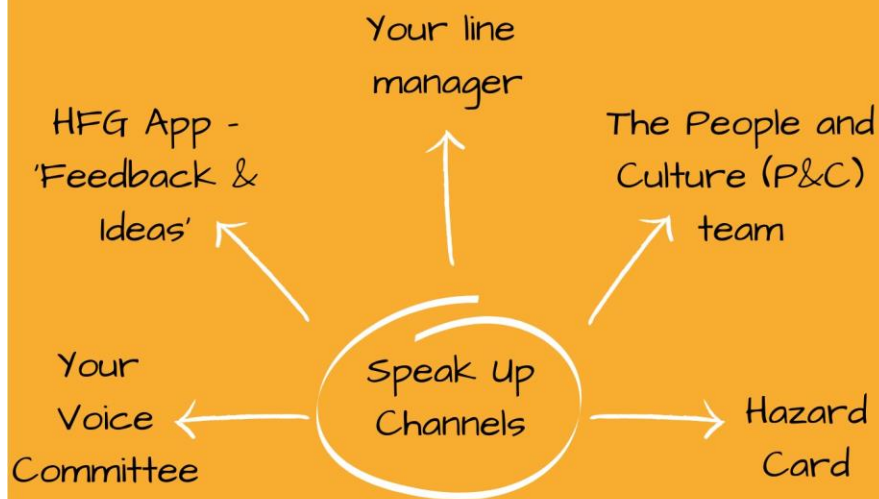


SPEAK UP

Hilton Foods UK

We want to give everyone within Hilton Foods the confidence to speak up to ensure we are living our values and building a strong future ready organisation.

It's important to us that you know where to take both your ideas and questions about work, and trust that we will respond in a transparent, fair, and predictable way.



Suggestion box

Formal Grievance in writing

Call or submit concern to HFG Whistleblowing line

Which concerns?



Ideas and Innovations

Interpersonal problems
Seeking advice



Pay, benefits, recruitment and working hours

Business misconduct



HILTON
FOODS



SPEAK UP

Hilton Foods UK

Data

- **110** Speak Ups since policy launched in June 2022
- **105** completed, 5 pending action
- **86** raised through the My HFG app, **23** via Suggestion Boxes, **1** via email
- Average turnaround is under 1 week
- Regularly communicated through the 'Your Voice' Committee in every month's meeting
- Reduction in formal grievances:-
 - **2022** = 24
 - **2023** = 8

Category	Number of Speak Ups
Improvements	44
Benefits	2
Canteen	34
Working Conditions	6
Contractual	15
H&S	1
Car Park	3
Recognition	1
Portal	3
Behaviour	1

- **1 new category**
Recognition of employees

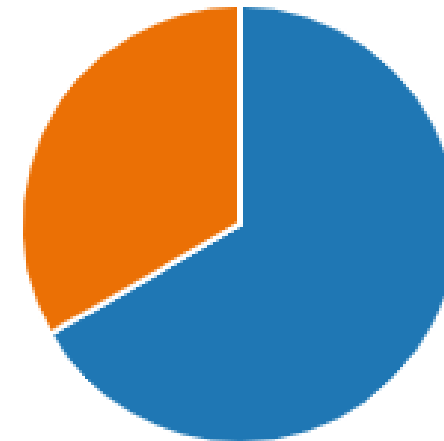
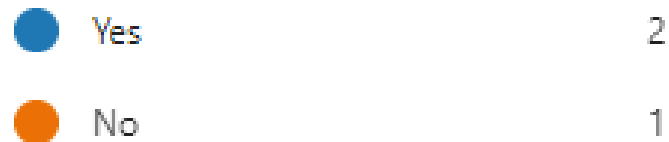
THANK YOU

ANY QUESTIONS?

The Retailer Perspective – Results of Survey

1. Do you have a specific requirement for your suppliers regarding Grievance Mechanisms?

[More Details](#)



The Retailer Perspective – Results of Survey

2. Please Outline Your Requirements for Grievance Mechanisms

"Workers, suppliers and people from communities that the Partnership sources from must be able to raise grievances where they feel their rights have been or are at risk of being infringed on. This grievance process must be inclusive for all, irrespective of gender, sex, migration status, refugee status, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age. They must be able to do so without fear of retribution or reprisal.

Suppliers must have in place a documented grievance policy in place. It must include provision to ensure that workers have the ability to safely raise sensitive gender-related grievances."

The supplier shall ensure access to fair and transparent grievance mechanisms in the production sites. Any complaints will be immediately reported to ourselves and investigated.

If a complaint is justified, the cause of the complaint must be adequately remedied or the complainant must be compensated.

We monitor and report on access to worker rep or unions at tier one sites in our supply chain, but do not formally require a GM to be in place

Retailer Expectations

All suppliers: Worker Committees

- 1.1.12 All direct sites (manufacturing and packhouses) and A-list sites with 50 or more workers must have an effective and representative trade union or worker committee in place.

Access to Remedy

- 3.1.1 All suppliers must ensure their own workers, including agency workers, have access to a direct workplace grievance mechanism (or operational grievance mechanism).
- 3.1.2 In addition, suppliers must ensure their own direct suppliers have workplace or operational grievance mechanisms in place.
- 3.1.3 All suppliers must protect every worker from any form of reprisals and ensure that there is no retribution in relation to any grievance brought forward.
- 3.1.4 All suppliers should actively engage in bringing about remediation, working individually or in cooperation with other actors where a negative human rights impact has been identified.
- 3.1.5 All suppliers must establish plans and remediation policies to respond to severe human rights issues.

In addition to worker committees, we encourage suppliers to seek guidance on effective grievance mechanisms.

Grievance mechanisms must be available in all locations within Asda's supply chain. In order to be effective they must be;

- *Robust, legitimate, accessible and functioning effectively*
- *Available and communicated to all, driving engagement and dialogue*
- *Reviewed impartially with outcomes to allow dialogue, all of which are treated confidentially*
- *Drive dialogue and action with a focus on solutions and remediation*
- *Open to an appeals process against findings and equitable in their engagement*
- *Outcomes must respect internationally recognised Human Rights*
- *Tracked and managed suitably by an accountable individual in a predictable manner where trends are analysed*
- *Accessible directly to individuals and communities that may be adversely impacted by a business enterprise*

We view effective grievance mechanisms as a journey starting with enabling whistleblowing through a 3rd party, to achieving constructive, regular communication and collective bargaining between worker and employer. We know from our own experience as a large employer that establishing continuous feedback routes enables business to address potential issues before they materialise.

We expect operational-level grievance mechanisms to be in place throughout our supply chain but we understand that, in some contexts, this may be harder to put in place – for example where the broader socio-political environment adds complexity.

We therefore seek to work through different approaches where necessary.

Considering the specific context of the industry, country, and site to ensure mechanisms are meaningful is important and we recognise that access to grievance mechanisms may be more limited for women, migrant workers, and smallholders.

Summary Key Messages from Retailer GM's

- ❖ Inclusive for all
- ❖ Access without fear, reprisal or retribution
- ❖ Fair and Transparent
- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Robust Investigation Process
- ❖ Remediation and Compensation
- ❖ Equitable
- ❖ Ability to safely raise gender – related grievances
- ❖ Tracked and Managed to identify trends
- ❖ Align with UN Guiding Principles

External Help Lines

4. Do you require suppliers to display a Whistle-blower or Helpline poster at their sites?

[More Details](#)

Yes	0
No	3



[More Details](#)

FaceUp	0
OneTrust	0
Navex	1
Peopleintouch	0
Safecall	0
ProtectorLine	0
Other	2

A whistleblower is someone who wishes to report certain types of wrongdoing usually, but not always, relating to their employer. They are protected by law and must not face any form of retaliation for raising concerns.

In order for the whistleblower process to be effective, suppliers must;

- Maintain a robust whistleblowing process, preferably via a third party, for raising concerns and a framework to create an environment of trust and transparency
- Communicate the process, the steps and how whistleblower's concerns will be raised and managed including outputs
- Promote, advertise and communicate your whistleblowing processes to ensure they are known and utilised by employees

All suppliers should publicise the Hotline number and information to their workforce

5. Explain your concerns regarding an FNET Unified Hotline

"The challenge with multiple different hotlines is the complexity and confusion it adds to those who want to use the grievance mechanism and also those who need to investigate any grievances. A hotline should only be used when all other internal grievance processes have

been exhausted anyway. If FNET is to set up a new hotline, how do they propose that

- a) this is aligned with others already out there - eg Stronger Together, Modern Slavery Helpline etc and
- b) how will they manage the follow up as you cannot put in a hot line and then not follow through with a process.
- c) is this going to be 24 hours? / what languages will it be available in etc
- d) how do FNET propose to sell this to the NGOs who challenge retailers on not having their own.

Our requirements on whistle blowing mechanisms are international and I don't believe we would get sign off

We currently operate a Navex / Ethics Point whistleblowing hotline for all colleagues. This is accessible by suppliers but not regularly communicated and there is no formal requirement for suppliers to display a poster with details of this service at site level. I would definitely be open to a discussion on a single, unified WB line for use by all FNET members. This would likely still need to operate alongside our Navex platform as this is also used to support obligations under GSCOP.

Reporting and Follow Up

8. How do you keep suppliers engaged with your learnings from the whistle blowing line?

Limited detail available on our corporate website

We investigate any reports immediately and provide confidentiality for complainants where requested. We actively report to stakeholders including ETI, and in our sustainability report.

**When a site is involved in a whistle blowing case, they are kept up-to-date via emails and regular meetings. For those not involved, they are informed of the number of whistle blower cases we received (and how we received them) via our Human Rights Report.
We do not share learnings specifically**

We will contact suppliers that we receive reports of LA and MS Cases. In these meetings, we are ensuring that suppliers are informing farmers that they have the WBL on show in common areas and training. We also support the grower roadshows that are put on by the SWS Taskforce that work on areas such as this.

The importance of having this information available in workers first languages.

Lunch and Time



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Grievance Mechanisms: Insights from Toolkit Implementation

Monica Romis
Private Sector Human Rights Advisor
5th October 2023

Oxfam Business
Advisory Service



Outline

- Introduction to Oxfam Business Advisory Service (OBAS)
- Introduction to grievance mechanisms (GM)
- Setting the scene: Grievance Mechanism Toolkit
- Insights from toolkit implementation
 - Insights from engaging with supplier companies
 - Common challenges and solutions

Oxfam Business Advisory Service

We provide practical guidance, advice and support to companies on the human rights issues that matter to their workers, customers and investors

Our Approach



worker centric



gender sensitive



participatory

Introduction to Grievance Mechanisms and why they are important for business

What grievance mechanisms are

A grievance mechanism (GM) is a process that can be used by individuals, workers, communities and/or civil society organisations that are being negatively affected by certain business activities and operations.

Operational grievance mechanisms are **established at site-level** with the goals to:



Enable workers and affected communities to feel empowered to speak up and have their concerns acknowledged and addressed.



Be easy to access and efficient in providing remedy by being located closest to where problems occur.

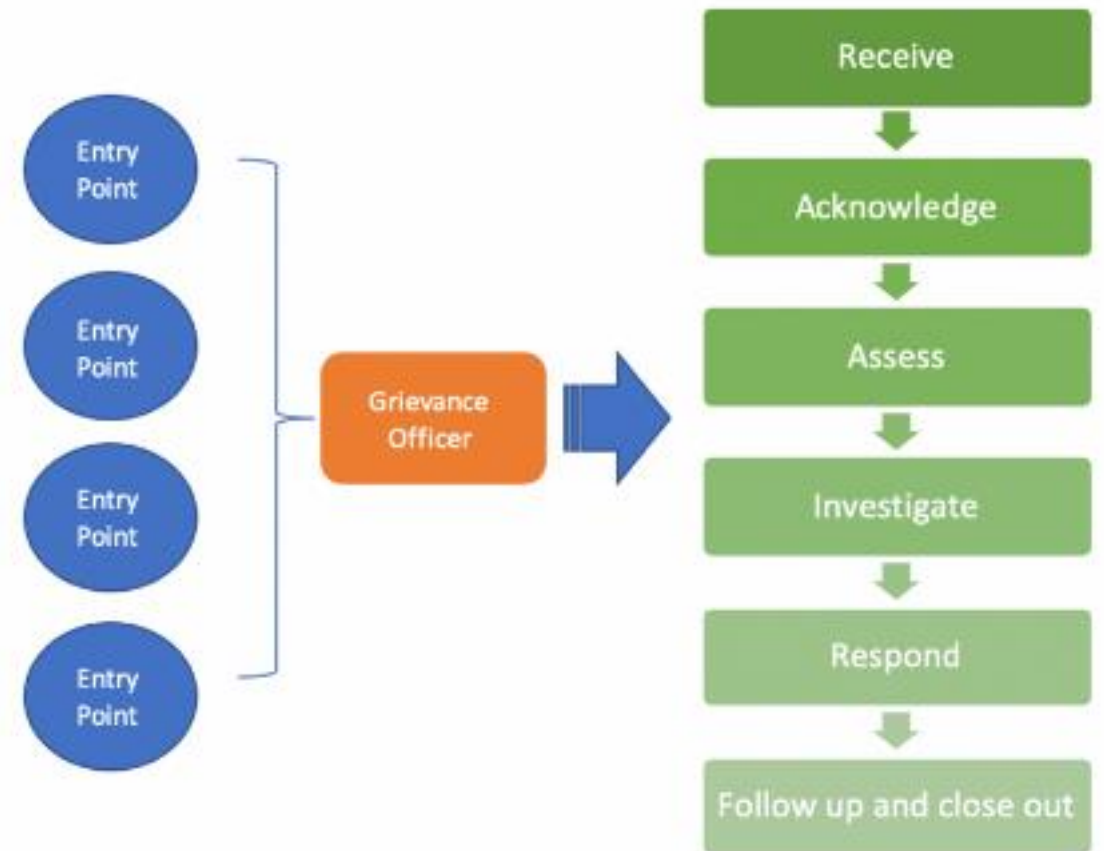
What grievance mechanisms look like in practice

Be widely accessible to its intended users through **multiple entry points**

Have a single **coordination point**

Combine **different tools and approaches** to handle a grievance

Figure 1. Typical flow of a grievance mechanism



4 reasons why grievance mechanisms are good for business



Not “one size fits all”

UNGPs Effectiveness Criteria



1. Legitimate



2. Accessible



3. Predictable



4. Equitable



5. Transparent



6. Rights compatible



7. Source of learning
for the company



8. Based on
engagement and
dialogue

Overview of the Grievance Mechanism Toolkit and how to navigate it

Background: Grievance Mechanism Toolkit with Reckitt

- In **2021/2022**, **Oxfam Business Advisory Service** worked with **Reckitt** (member of AIM-Progress grievance mechanism working group) to develop and pilot a **grievance mechanism toolkit**.
- The toolkit details the **practical steps** for companies in **different maturity levels** to develop and implement effective operational (site-level) grievance mechanisms, with a focus on Tier One manufacturing suppliers.



LEARN MORE & DOWNLOAD THE TOOLKIT [HERE](#)



Navigating the toolkit

PART 1

Understanding grievance mechanisms

Provides a broad overview of grievance mechanisms, including what they are and what benefits they bring to companies that use them.

Grievance Mechanisms Toolkit

PART 1. UNDERSTANDING GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

Grievance mechanisms can take different forms depending on **how grievances can be raised** (the **entry points** to raise a grievance) and **how grievances are handled** (the **tools** used to handle them).

**Entry points**

Provide multiple “**entry points**” through which potentially affected people (workers and communities) can raise their concerns. This could be through informal discussions, submission of formal complaint, submission through a third party or reported through another source (media, NGOs, MSIs). This will make the grievance mechanism widely **accessible** to its intended users.

**Single coordination point**

Channel grievances through a **coordination point** (usually a grievance mechanism officer) who will formally acknowledge and log the grievance into a system.

**Combine tools and approaches**

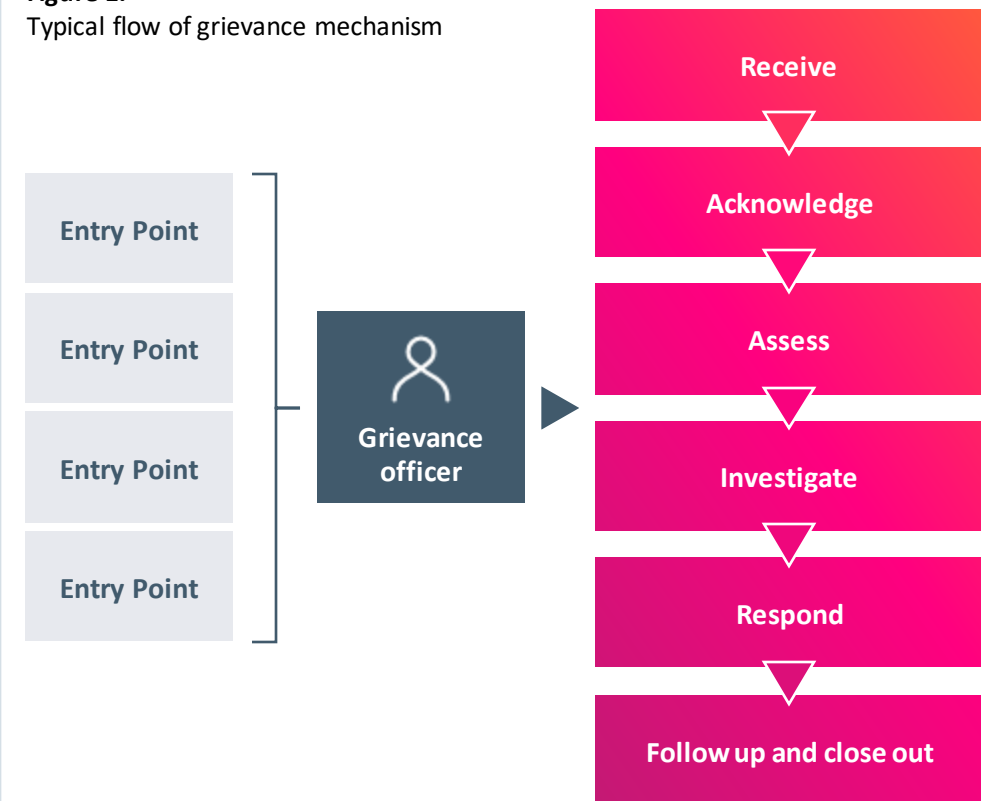
Combine different tools and approaches to assess, investigate and resolve grievances with a satisfactory outcome for all parties.

This will help the grievance mechanism to be adaptable to the specific context, and flexible to handle the specific nature of each individual grievance.

**Close and monitor**

Officially close a grievance only when the process is concluded and monitor the implementation of outcomes and actions. If the outcome is not satisfactory for either of the parties involved (management and worker/community), they should have the right to appeal.

Figure 1.
Typical flow of grievance mechanism



Navigating the toolkit

PART 1

Understanding grievance mechanisms

Provides a broad overview of grievance mechanisms, including what they are and what benefits they bring to companies that use them.

PART 2

Step-by-step toolkit

Contains step-by-step guidance on how to plan, design, and implement a grievance mechanism in the workplace.

Grievance Mechanisms Toolkit

PART 2. STEP-BY-STEP TOOLKIT

This section outlines the steps to follow to set up an effective grievance mechanism. They are organised into three phases:

PHASE 1: PLANNING

PHASE 2: DESIGN

PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

For each phase, there is a summary table with key steps for each level (beginner, established, advanced) followed by additional guidance and practical tips on how to implement those steps.

Further resources and tools are linked throughout the document and can be found in the Annexes. The guidance has been written to work across most contexts and situations. Here is an overview of the entire process.



Grievance Mechanisms Toolkit

PART 2. OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT



BEGINNER



ESTABLISHED



ADVANCED

In addition to Beginner

In addition to Established

PHASE 1:
PLANNING

[Detailed
guidance here](#)

- Agree on the meaning of the word “grievance”.
- Get buy-in from senior management.
- Set up a taskforce to actively involve GM intended users (workers and/or community members) in the design and implementation phases.
- Map out and review existing internal processes and tools available to raise grievances.
- Conduct a gap analysis of existing processes.

- Make the business case for GM internally.
- Carry out a series of consultations with intended users and stakeholders.
- Understand local norms that may affect stakeholders’ access and use of GM.
- Build on existing legislation for designing site-level GM.

- Engage with the buying company
- Consider appointing a stakeholder oversight group.
- Engage with internal and external stakeholders (including trade unions and rights-holders representatives, women’s rights organisations, ensuring representation of women and vulnerable groups) and experts in the design, development, implementation and performance of the mechanism.
- Provide feedback to stakeholders on how their inputs have been considered to reinforce trust.
- Identify state and non-state mechanisms already available to stakeholders.
- Assess the effectiveness of these mechanisms (use questions in the toolkit).

Grievance Mechanisms Toolkit

PHASE 1: PLANNING – PRACTICAL GUIDANCE AND HOW-TO

How-to: Engage with intended users



SET UP A TASKFORCE

As a very first step, set up a taskforce group made of an equal number of management and worker representatives. The group should also have a representation of women workers and those from vulnerable groups where possible.

This group will be responsible for leading the design of the GM by having periodic meetings to discuss different aspects of the mechanism. When needed, the taskforce will seek input from wider sections of management and workers.



CARRY OUT A SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS

with the wide groups of users on the core design elements of the mechanism: the work of the taskforce can be strengthened by involving a wider group of workers at specific touchpoints; this could be done via specific meetings/forums or surveys.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

can be further enhanced and formalised throughout the design and operation of the GM through the appointment of a **Stakeholder Oversight Group** that can provide real-time review during the operation of the grievance mechanism (see example of Tesco in the Good Practice box on page 28).





Navigating the toolkit

PART 1	Understanding grievance mechanisms	Provides a broad overview of grievance mechanisms, including what they are and what benefits they bring to companies that use them.	
PART 2	Step-by-step toolkit	Contains step-by-step guidance on how to plan, design, and implement a grievance mechanism in the workplace.	
PHASE 1: PLANNING		PHASE 2: DESIGN	PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION
PART 3	Annex Useful definitions	Additional resources	Includes practical tools and additional resources.

Grievance Mechanisms Toolkit



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Checklist for UNGPs criteria](#)[Self-assessment tool](#)[Internal mapping of
existing grievance mechanism](#)[Gap analysis](#)[External mapping of
existing grievance
mechanisms](#)[Roles and responsibilities
in a typical grievance
mechanism](#)[Terms of reference for
grievance officer](#)[Example of complainant
feedback form](#)[Template for logging
and tracking grievances](#)



Implementation of the Grievance Mechanism Toolkit

Engagement with 26 suppliers in 19 countries

Region	# of supplier per country
Africa and the Middle East	1 Egypt 2 Türkiye 1 South Africa 1 United Arab Emirates
Americas	2 Brazil 1 Mexico 1 Peru
Asia	3 China 2 Pakistan 2 India 1 Malaysia
Australia	1 Australia
Europe	2 UK 1 Denmark 1 Iceland 1 Latvia 1 Lithuania 1 Poland 1 Italy

Overview of OBAS support

Guidance for suppliers

- GM Toolkit
- Tailored guidance for specific contexts

Hands on support to supplier sites

- Companies across 19 countries
- One-on-one meetings or small groups meetings

Insights and learnings

- To make GM toolkit more practical and user-friendly
- To provide additional support to other sites

Key steps companies took



Benefits from using the toolkit

Engagement with users in design

- Ensures it meets users' needs
- Accessible to *all* workers

Users involved in governance

- Independence of the grievance mechanism from management
- Perceived as legitimate by workers

Clear step-by-step process for handling grievances

- Process is predictable and easy to understand
- Increased transparency

Effective management system

- Allows to track grievances and solutions
- Enables organizational learning

Benefits to the business

- Tool for dialogue between management and workers
- Issues become visible
- Systemic solutions
- Improved productivity
- Reduced turnover and absenteeism

“There often needs to be a change in mind set about what is meant by grievance.”

Senior management, Company A

“Don’t be intimidated, work together to address problems”

CEO, Company A

Company A (India)

- Created a **grievance mechanism taskforce**
- Ran workers election to appoint two **grievance officers** representative of workforce composition
- Formed a **grievance committee**
- Spelled out **issues** to be covered by GM
- Identified **multiple channels** to raise issues
- Created a **dashboard with aggregated information** about all grievances raised and their status to be displayed on noticeboards
- **Monitoring** system and **feedback** from workers

Suppliers' feedback



It is more than reviewing a policy, it implies a new way of working and communicating with workers (*Manager*)



These conversations were eye opening (*Manager*)



Before, there was no visibility about the procedure and no clarity about the role of the union. Now everything is clarified on paper (*Union rep*)



It was eye opening that speaking to employees can give you very valuable feedback, if you give them the right forum to share ideas (*Manager*)

Insights from implementation: Common challenges and solutions

Common Challenges

1. Understanding the meaning of the word grievance and defining the scope of the GM

4. Involving workers in managing the GM

2. Understanding the need to engage directly with workers to strengthen the GM

5. Keeping the workers informed about the functioning of the GM

3. Identifying barriers different groups of workers might face in accessing the GM

6. Understanding how to utilise the grievance data to strengthen the GM

Oxfam Business
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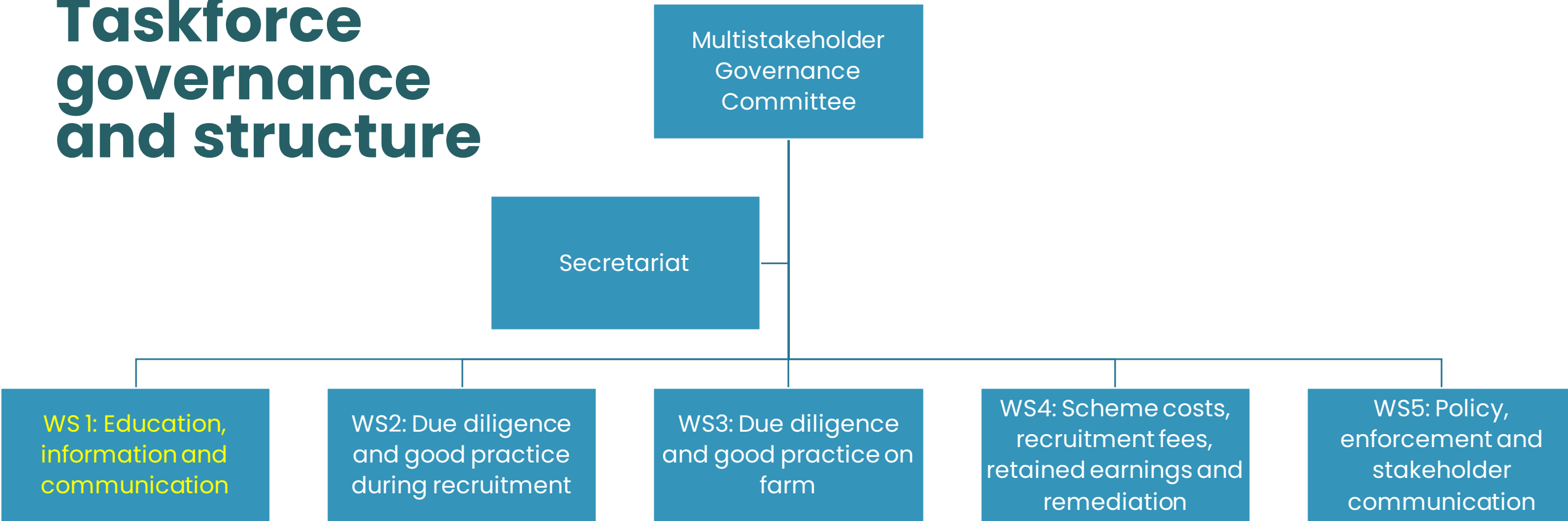
THANK YOU

If you have any questions about OBAS' work on grievance mechanisms, get in touch: mromis1@oxfam.org.uk



Update on WS 1 Worker helpline/support/grievance channels workplan

Taskforce governance and structure



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

Current SWS workers grievance process

- Raise any grievances with the recruitment process (or matters within the control of the Scheme Operators such as transfers) with the Scheme Operators
- Raise any grievances on farm with the grower (and if not satisfactorily resolved, with the Scheme Operator)
- Two NGOs Work Rights Centre (England and Wales) and Worker Support Centre (Scotland) provide multi-lingual advice and case management services for seasonal workers:
- Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline also provides multilingual, 24/7 advice but does not currently provide case management for seasonal workers.
- No known trade unions offering representative support to seasonal workers
- Home Office advice is for seasonal workers to raise grievances through the 'Report an immigration or border crime' route. GLAA directs workers to other channels to report issues
- There are a confusingly large number of helplines/hotlines available but no dedicated independent seasonal worker helpline.

Seasonal workers survey results 2021

Updated 18 July 2023



- 92% of respondents said they would work on UK farms again
- 6% said they had paid fees to recruiters in their home countries
- 16% said they did not feel supported by managers while working
- 11% said they were not treated equally by farm managers;
- 10% said they had been threatened by farm staff
- Accommodation – 11% said did not match the description; 11% inadequate cooking facilities; 17% inadequate running water; 25% no toilet facilities; 50% no Wi-fi / internet and 52% inadequate privacy
- 47% said they were not provided with the appropriate clothing and equipment needed to undertake their work safely
- 20% of respondents said they became sick or injured and of these 51% said that farms did not ensure they received adequate treatment.
- Of those who raised a grievance, 40% said it was not easy and 44% said that their complaints were not followed up by farm managers

WS1-Grievance Mechanisms Workplan Objectives

UK Seasonal Worker Scheme Taskforce Workstream 1 Worker helpline / support / grievance channels Workplan Draft v08/08/23

Objectives

This work activity seeks to ensure:

1. Prevention and reduction in the causes of grievances through:
 - o Provision of standardised information to workers prior to departure to the UK, on arrival on farm and ongoing through their stay (which includes their rights, where they can seek independent help and access to legal advice, if problems occur)
 - o Good recruitment practice (with Taskforce Workstream 2)
 - o Good on-farm practice (with Taskforce Workstream 3)
2. Provision of independent free, impartial and confidential information, support and advice, to all workers on the seasonal workers' visa on workplace rights
3. Effective and fair management of worker grievances at farm and Scheme Operator level
4. Provision of a neutral third party scheme grievance and remedy mechanism, accessible to all workers on the seasonal workers' visa that operates in accordance with UN Guiding Principles and recognised good practice and provides data to drive improvement (with Taskforce Workstream 4).

Current arrangements for raising grievances

Under immigration rules [SE3.3](#) and [SE3.4](#) Scheme Operators "are responsible for all of the workers you sponsor on this scheme" and must "work closely with the employers where your sponsored workers are placed", "must undertake robust and comprehensive monitoring" to "maintain a high standard of welfare and control" and "procedures are in place to enable workers to report any concerns to you". Each of the Scheme Operators reporting routes and arrangements are detailed in Appendix 1 'Current grievance routes and support mechanisms available for seasonal workers'.

Growers, (other than a proportion of Pro-force workers) are the employer of the seasonal workers and hence their grievance processes should accord with the [Acas Code of Practice](#).

Seasonal workers should:

- Raise any grievances with the recruitment process (or matters within the control of the Scheme Operators such as transfers) with the Scheme Operators
- Raise any grievances on farm with the grower (and if not satisfactorily resolved, with the Scheme Operator)

Two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide multi-lingual advice and case management services for seasonal workers:

- England and Wales - [Work Rights Centre](#) helps people access employment justice and improve their social mobility. Assists workers across the UK through free, multilingual and confidential advice.
- Scotland - The [Worker Support Centre Scotland](#) - supports SWS workers in Scotland to access free, impartial & confidential information about their workplace rights, support and advice. [RSABI](#) provides support to others working within the Scottish Agriculture industry.

At a meeting on 29 June, the Work Rights Centre and Worker Support Centre were invited to share any relevant information and protocols for discussion within this workstream and wider dissemination.

1. Prevention and reduction in the causes of grievances through:

- o Provision of standardised information to workers prior to departure to the UK, on arrival on farm and ongoing
- o Good recruitment practice (with WS2)
- o Good on-farm practice (with WS3)

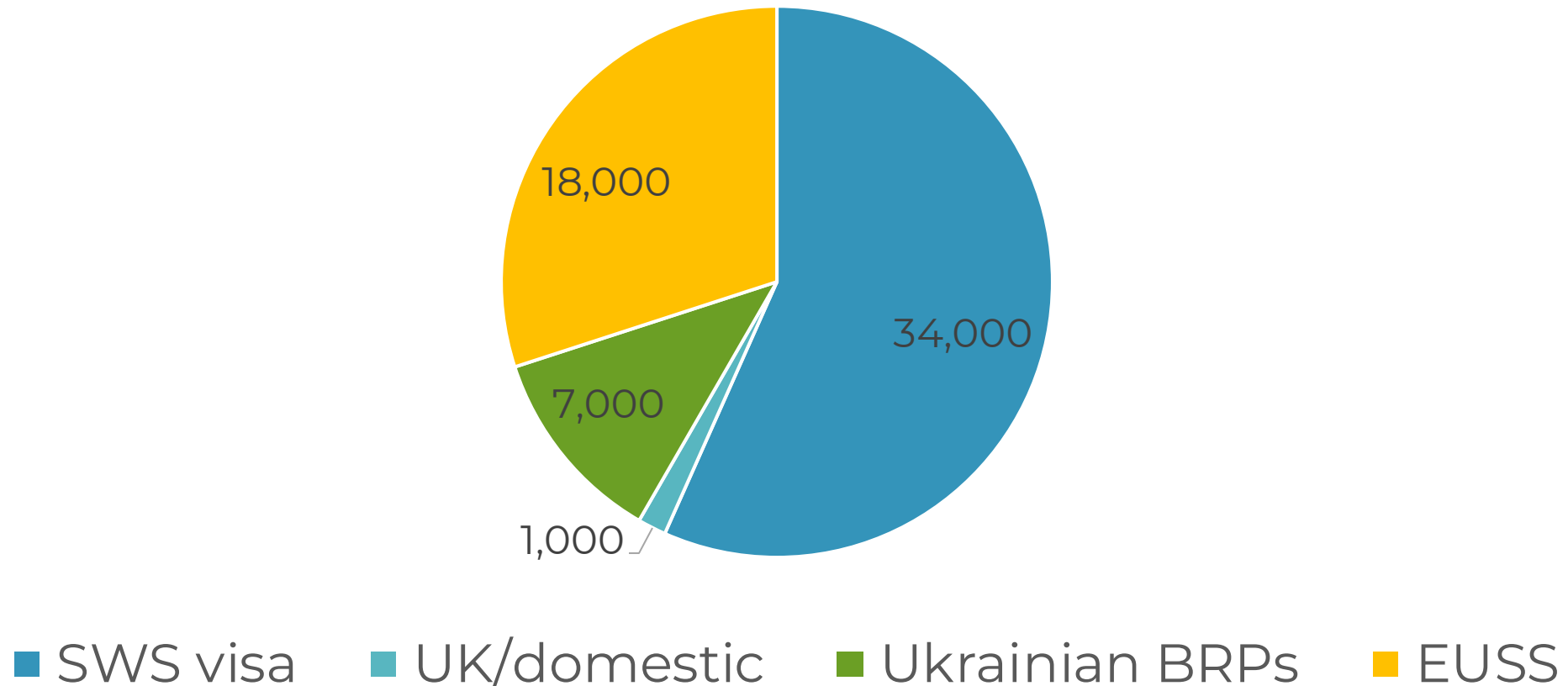
2. Provision of independent free, impartial and confidential information, support and advice, to all workers on the seasonal workers' visa on workplace rights e.g. Just Good Work

3. Effective and fair management of worker grievances at farm and Scheme Operator level

4. Provision of a neutral third-party scheme grievance and remedy mechanism, accessible to all workers (WS4).

SWS workers are one of the groups that makes up the UK horticultural seasonal workforce

Estimate 2023, up to 60,000 total, made up of:



Actions to achieve Objective 4. – Provision of a neutral third party scheme grievance and remedy mechanism

- The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (as was), Dame Sara Thornton called for 'a grievance mechanism, run by a neutral third party and accessible to all workers on the Scheme'.
- Scope and develop a concept note, to be presented to the Governance Committee for discussion and approval:
 - for the development of a scheme grievance and remedy mechanism
 - accessible to all seasonal workers on the seasonal workers' and other visas
 - that operates in accordance with UK employment law and rights, and is in line with global good practice
 - and which includes the participation of affected workers

Nottingham University SWS grievance mechanism research project – What?

- Research project entitled **“Agricultural workers in the UK: the role of policymakers in human rights remedy”**
- Aim, **“To co-develop with the UK Seasonal Worker Scheme (SWS) Taskforce a tailored grievance mechanism that can guarantee effective access to remedy for human rights abuses to seasonal migrant workers in the agricultural sector in the UK”**.
- Deliverables
 1. Grievance Mechanism tailored to seasonal agricultural workers in the UK
 2. Guidance for stakeholders (growers, recruiters, buyers) on what works and what doesn't in the provision of access to remedy for migrant workers
 3. Taxonomy on effective grievance mechanisms that can reflect the right of workers to access a bouquet of remedies, with a specific focus on the vulnerabilities and personal characteristics of season migrant workers, intersected with the challenges of the agricultural sector in the UK and the required effectiveness criteria as set by the UN (UNGP, 31)



Who and When?

- Lara Bianchi; Assistant Professor in Business & Society teaching Business Ethics, and Business & Human Rights in the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility at Nottingham University Business School
- Dr Oana Burcu, Senior researcher, Labour exploitation and global governance
- Duration of the project: Aug 2023–July 2024
- Funder: University of Nottingham (QR SPF)

How?

- Phase 1: Desk research
 - What has been done
 - Strengths and shortcomings of prior research/policy intervention
 - Mapping relevant stakeholders
- Phase 2: Secondary data identification and analysis
 - What are the most common issues reported? How are they reported? How are they managed? How long does it take? -> A taxonomy of grievances
 - NGOs, Businesses, Labour providers
- Phase 3: Primary data collection and analysis
 - Focus groups & Interviews
 - Workers
 - Members of the Taskforce
- Phase 4: Write-up

Questions



Agenda

Timing	Item
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome and introduction of attendees
10.15 – 11.00	Setting the scene – importance of GMs
11.00 - 11.20	Lydia Stirling – Welsh Rugby Union
11.20 - 11.35	ETI –baseline research on Grievance Mechanisms in Agricultural Sector
11.35 - 11.50	Table discussion / to reflect on what people have heard
11.50 - 12.00	Present Feedback of discussions
12.00 - 12.10	Hilton Foods HR Manager on ‘Speak up Hilton’ Hilton’ case study
12.10 - 12.25	Retailer Summary of requirements & aligning with UN Guiding Principles of Effective Criteria GM
12.25 - 12.40	Q & A Discussions
12.40 - 13.40	Lunch
13.40 - 14.10	Oxfam on the GM work – Implementing effective GMs, the toolkit
14.10 - 14.20	Update from SWS workstream 1 and the Nottingham University - David Camp
14.20 - 14.50	Group work & reporting –what constitutes effective GMs??
14.50 - 15.10	Present Feedback from group work
15.10 - 15.20	Individual sharing of two actions points from workshop to improve business GM
15.20 - 15.30	AOB & Close

Group Work

For next 30 minutes consider the following “What makes Grievance Mechanisms Effective?”

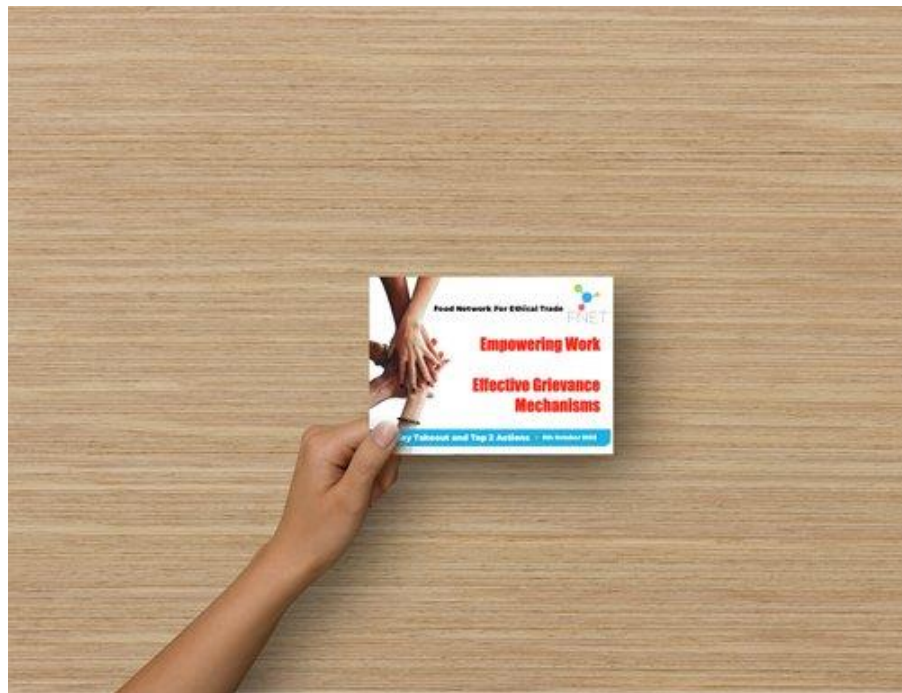
1. Review your own GM do you consider it is effective?
2. Using the gap tool provided by Oxfam, and the case studies that have been shared today, what changes are needed to make it more effective?
3. What challenges do you foresee in your own organisations?
4. Which Criteria(s) will be impacted with your changes?



Select a speaker from each group to share the highlights of your group discussion

FNET Member Accountability

We want you to consider 2 things:-



1. Think about one key learning from the day that you can take back to your business.
2. Consider your own Grievance Mechanism Policy and Procedure, and with consideration of the case studies and guidance on making them effective in today's session how you could make it more effective.
 1. Commit to address the top 2 actions and report back at the next WG meeting what you have achieved.
 2. Write it on the post card provided and put your name and address details on the card. We will post back to you in 3/4 weeks as a reminder of your commitment

Thank You

Thank you to our speakers today who have joined us in person and online for sharing their work and stimulating the workshop.

Thank you for AMFresh for hosting the workshop and for stepping in at such short notice with a venue, we are very grateful.

Thank you to the members for engaging with the process and for being accountable for improving Effectiveness of Grievance Mechanisms in their businesses.

Safe journey home

