



Seasonal worker approaches and developments

David Camp, Association of Labour Providers



ALP

Association of Labour Providers

ALP is a not-for-profit trade association promoting responsible recruitment and good practice for organisations that source and supply the UK food supply chain workforce





Seasonal Workers' Scheme-Overview

- 45k (55k if needed) visas for up to 6 month's seasonal work in horticulture, 2k for up to 3 months in seasonal poultry
- Workers may be recruited from any country
- 7 visa sponsor licence holders recruit and supply all the workers – licence may be revoked for failure to meet immigration targets or maintain worker welfare
- 32 hour per week minimum at NLW
- It is a Temporary Migration Programme, visa holders cannot
 - Remain in the UK long-term
 - Bring their families
 - Work outside the sector
 - Work other than through their Sponsor
 - Access public funds, benefits or full free healthcare

Negative worker experiences

- Illicit hidden fees to third parties
- Entering into debt to cover the legally allowed visa and transport costs
- Lack of understanding of expectations of work in UK prior to departure
- Insufficient week's work to cover costs
- Working under duress - unrealistic picking targets, work withdrawn when not met, threats of loss of work, treatment by supervisors
- Difficulty accessing health needs
- Unsafe / dirty accommodation
- Being refused transfers to other farms

WEED OUT EXPLOITATION

How to improve the reporting of labour exploitation, and protect the seasonal agricultural workers staffing Britain's farms.

02 March 2022

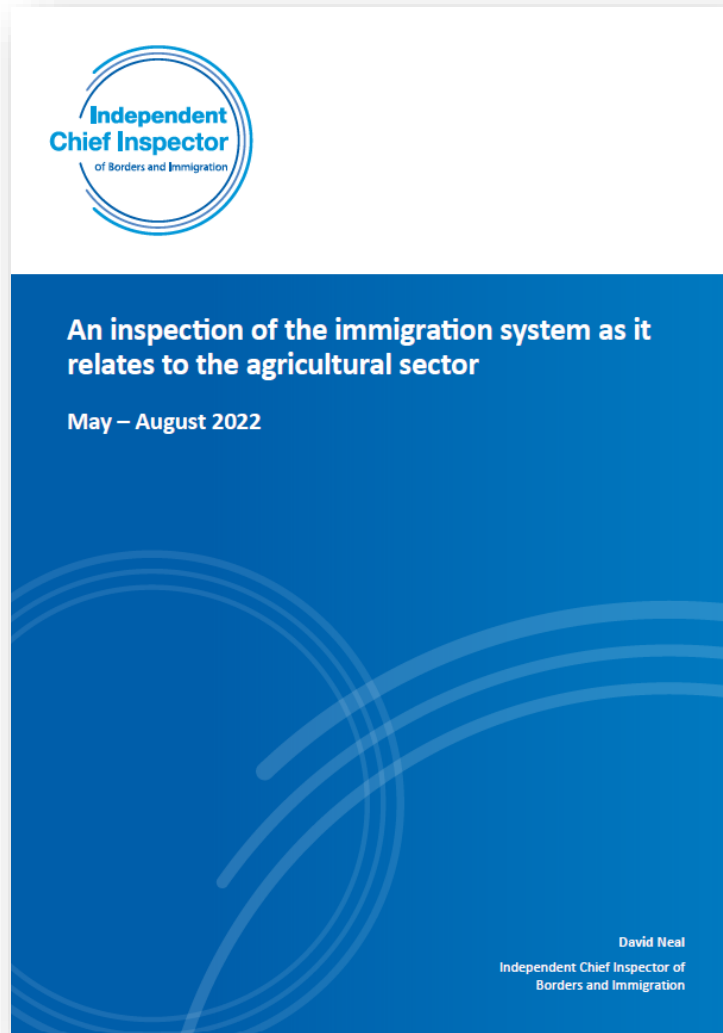
WoRC
Work Rights Centre

ASSESSMENT OF THE RISKS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR FORCED LABOUR ON THE UK SEASONAL WORKERS PILOT



FOCUS ON

Why have there been negative experiences?



■ Government

- Scheme rules build in risks to workers
- Last-minute political decisions exacerbate risks
- Failure to engage with industry & stakeholders
- Labour market enforcement is inadequate

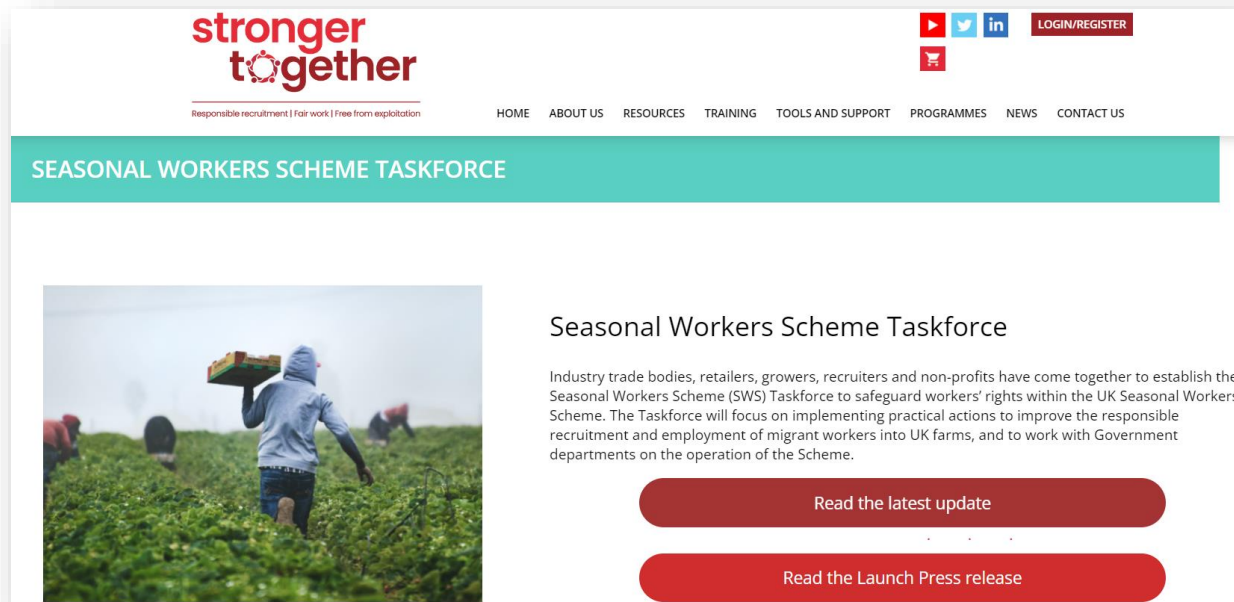
■ External Influences

- Third party exploitation is hidden & difficult to remedy
- Global events – Covid, war in Ukraine and bird flu
- Agriculture – weather, crop unreliability

■ Industry

- Scheme Operators and growers vary in ability to apply due diligence and deliver a positive experience
- Industry delayed in forming effective sectoral collaboration to drive good practice

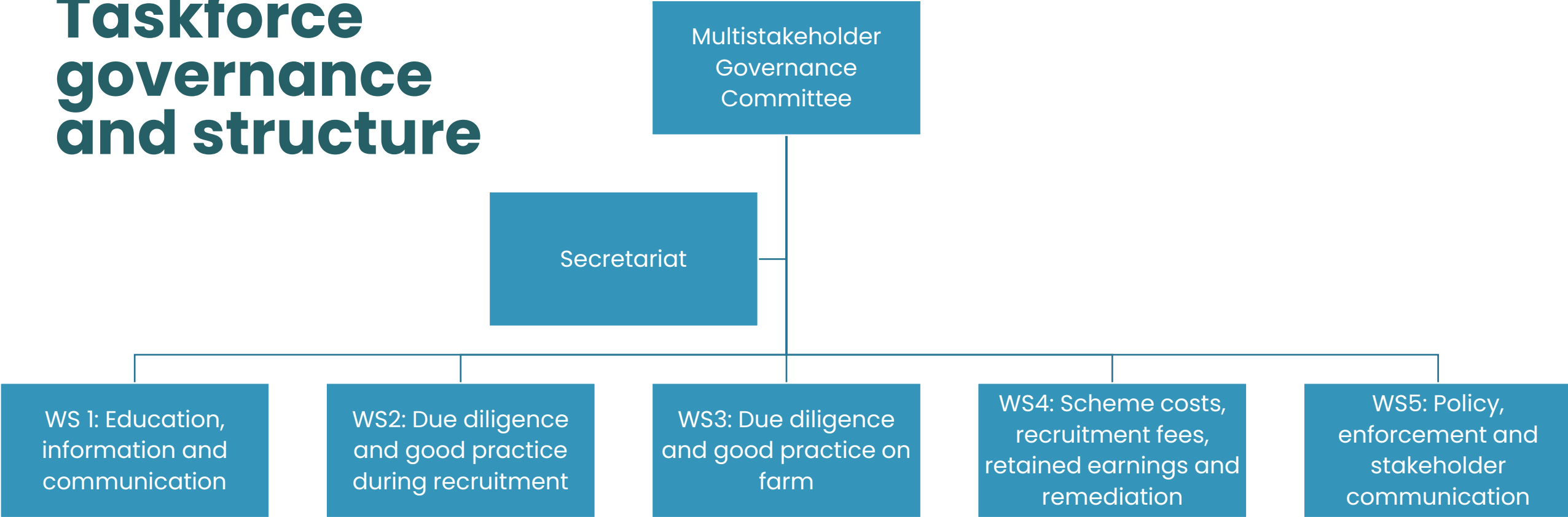
The Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce



The screenshot shows the website for 'stronger together', which has the tagline 'Responsible recruitment | Fair work | Free from exploitation'. The navigation menu includes: HOME, ABOUT US, RESOURCES, TRAINING, TOOLS AND SUPPORT, PROGRAMMES, NEWS, CONTACT US. There are also social media icons for YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and a 'LOGIN/REGISTER' button. The main heading is 'SEASONAL WORKERS SCHEME TASKFORCE'. Below this is a photograph of a worker in a blue hoodie carrying a crate in a field. The text reads: 'Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce. 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 Scheme.' Two red buttons are visible: 'Read the latest update' and 'Read the Launch Press release'.

- Following roundtables in autumn 2022, industry trade bodies, retailers, growers, recruiters and non-profits 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

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

Progress of projects

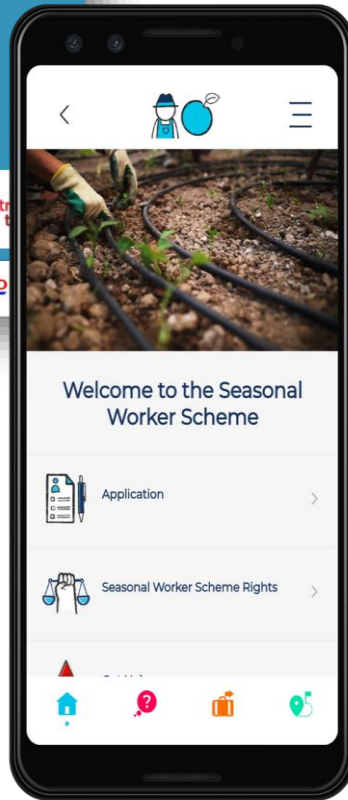
Projects funded by UK Supermarkets (and others) with industry input which came out of the autumn 2022 roundtables; included:

- 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 multi-language Just Good Work worker information app — which now includes updated seasonal worker scheme specific content and further translations and worker outreach
- Plus IOM PDO development and worker advice and help from Work Rights Centre/Worker Support Centre



UK Grower Seasonal Worker Toolkit March 2023

Collaborating partners:



Skilled Worker visa recruitment



- The number of UK companies holding a Skilled Worker visa sponsor licence has doubled since Brexit to around 64,500 with long-term work visas granted to main applicants increasing more than two and a half times (+161%), from 63,757 in 2019 to 166,408 in 2022
- The visa route allows Visa Sponsors to use any recruitment agent in any country with no due diligence requirements (other than GLAA roles)
- As of January 2023, the Home Office had 70 visiting compliance officers to cover all the sponsor companies
- The route has opened up mass global exploitation opportunities for online recruitment scams, human trafficking and for agents, officials and brokers to charge recruitment and work-finding fees

Skilled Worker Recruitment Models

- **Employer Pays Model** – Employer covers all recruitment costs (£10-£15k)
- **Managed Service model** - Sham or misunderstood worker contracting service used by recruitment agencies as a legislation work around
- **Professional Bonded Worker Pays Model** – professional and legal recruitment process, employer pays upfront costs, worker has wages deducted over years to pay back all costs
- **Naïve/negligent/collusive model** - Employer uses a UK/overseas recruiter with no due diligence and pays a low recruitment cost - *“GLAA investigators spoke to Nepalese workers ...More than 100 confirmed that they had paid between £12,000 and £13,000 in order to find work in the UK”*

Yearly increase in job demand



Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority

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Nepalese recruitment agency loses GLAA licence
13th March 2023

A Nepalese recruitment agency has lost its Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) licence after investigations revealed that workers were charged exorbitant job-finding fees before arriving in the UK.