

ALP

Association of Labour Providers



ADDRESSING UK FOOD INDUSTRY LABOUR SHORTAGES

ALP POLICY POSITION PAPER

JUNE 2021

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THE ASSOCIATION OF LABOUR PROVIDERS

The Association of Labour Providers (ALP) (www.labourproviders.org.uk) is the trade association for the organisations that source and supply the workforce for the UK food supply chain. ALP develops and promotes globally leading responsible recruitment and labour supply good practice.

ALP members supply approximately 75% of the temporary contingent workers to the agricultural and food processing and packing sectors. These workers often progress to direct employment, forming the permanent workforce. All businesses that supply labour into these sectors must be licensed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

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REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Industry requires sufficient workforce supply at all skills levels to survive and thrive.

Labour supply in the UK has been tightening for a number of years. A challenging environment is now tipping into crisis with both labour providers and employers agreeing that the food industry will not have access to the labour it needs this year or in the foreseeable future. The consequences of these shortages are and will be restrictions in output, reduced exports, increasing empty shelves and food waste, food inflation and risks to animal welfare.

Actions required to address this include:

- Government must urgently adopt a radically new, coherent and comprehensive national strategy to enable future access to labour
- A collaborative approach is required between government departments and the food industry to address and remedy skills and labour constraints.
- The food industry must work effectively and collaboratively to address the underlying causes for its labour and skills shortages
- Each individual food business must take responsibility to improve its working environment, terms of engagement and recruitment and retention strategies to effectively attract and retain workers.

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN LABOUR SHORTAGES IN THE MEDIA

- Food shortages now "inevitable" due to labour crisis – worst is yet to come
- UK faces chilled food shortages over summer as a result of chronic shortage of HGV drivers
- UK meat industry cuts production as Brexit labour shortages bite
- Farming must change image to attract workers
- Post Brexit labour shortages impact in agriculture and other sectors
- Scottish meat processors reporting 10-12% labour shortages
- Why is there a shortage of lorry drivers?
- UK 'faces labour shortage' as Covid and Brexit fuel exodus of overseas workers
- British supermarkets are facing the threat of a fruit and vegetable shortage this summer
- Brexit 'leads to a 90% drop' in the number of foreign workers coming to the UK to work on farms in the summer
- Veg pickers being 'paid £20 an hour' thanks to Brexit and Covid
- Fresh produce 'being dumped' due to driver shortage
- Tesco suppliers forced to bin nearly 50 tonnes of food each week due to lorry driver 'crisis'



ALP MAY 2021 LABOUR SURVEY RESULTS

The ALP conducts biannual labour supply surveys with labour providers, food growers and manufacturers. The key outcomes of the May 2021 survey are:

- In the last six months over three quarters of labour providers could not meet their clients' requirements for workers; the shortage of supply is deepening:

Labour Providers: In the last 6 months:	Oct 2019	Mar 2020	Nov 2020	May 2021
We have met all our clients demand	26%	27%	23%	21%
We have short supplied our clients by 0-10% of their demand	38%	49%	11%	15%
We have short supplied our clients by 10-20% of their demand	23%	15%	22%	21%
We have short supplied our clients by 20-30% of their demand	8%	4%	22%	20%
We have short supplied our clients by 30-40% of their demand	2%	4%	9%	7%
We have short supplied our clients by 40-50% of their demand			3%	4%
We have short supplied our clients by over 50% of their demand			10%	12%

- Almost eight in ten labour providers do not expect to meet their clients' requirements for workers in the coming months, with a marked drop in confidence to supply:

Labour Providers: In the next 6 months:	Mar 2020	Nov 2020	May 2021
We have met all our clients demand	27%	23%	21%
We have short supplied our clients by 0-10% of their demand	49%	11%	15%
We have short supplied our clients by 10-20% of their demand	15%	22%	21%

- Almost eight in ten labour providers do not expect to meet their clients' requirements for workers in the coming months, with a marked drop in confidence to supply:

In the last 6 months, how was your site with regards to availability of the following:	Fine, No problems	Just Ok	Inter-mittent Shortages	Chronic Shortages
Highly-skilled: Degree level and above e.g. Engineers, Directors etc. (RQF 6 and above)	49%	17%	25%	9%
Skilled: Requiring a degree & experience e.g. Production / Operations/HR Managers, (RQF 6)	39%	26%	27%	7%
Semi-skilled: Requiring experience & training e.g. Skilled trades (RQF 3-4)	28%	23%	29%	21%
Lower-skilled Permanent: Requiring some training/ experience e.g. Process operative, skilled field worker (RQF 2)	14%	16%	43%	27%
Lower skilled temporary / agency / seasonal	13%	19%	34%	34%
Unskilled: Requiring minimal training /experience, e.g. Elementary roles, picking, packing etc. (below RQF 2)	13%	18%	31%	38%
Unskilled temporary/agency/seasonal	13%	19%	30%	38%
Got Worse	Stayed the Same		Got Better	

- Food growers and manufacturers expect a high level of shortages in lower skilled roles throughout 2021:

Throughout 2021, how do you foresee your site with regards to the following:	We will be fine	We should be just Ok	We will struggle	It will be a crisis
Lower-skilled Permanent: Requiring some training/ experience e.g. Process operative, skilled field worker (RQF 2)	16%	22%	48%	14%
Lower skilled temporary/agency/seasonal	12%	22%	44%	22%
Unskilled: Requiring minimal training/experience, e.g. Elementary roles, picking, packing etc. (below RQF 2)	11%	22%	44%	24%
Unskilled temporary/agency/seasonal	12%	20%	43%	25%
Got Worse	Stayed the Same		Got Better	



REASONS FOR LABOUR SUPPLY SHORTAGES

Labour supply shortages to the UK food supply chain are anticipated to be the most extreme experienced this generation. The reasons for this are broadly:

1. **An exodus of EU workers, including those with pre/settled EUSS status who have left the UK as a consequence of Brexit and Coronavirus and either have decided not to return, or the difficulties and costs of travel during coronavirus have prohibited them from returning.**

The **Office for Budget Responsibility** has said that the future population may be “substantially smaller” than official estimates suggest, causing a “scarring impact”: “Recent analysis of labour market data (discussed in paragraphs 2.67 to 2.71 below) suggests that the population may be substantially smaller than official statistics suggest as a result of significant numbers of foreign-born nationals returning home during the pandemic and lower levels of immigration than pre-pandemic projections assumed. Many of those leaving will have settled status and some can be expected to return after the pandemic but potential new migrants from the EU will henceforth face a tougher immigration regime. And unless most of these ‘missing workers’ do indeed return or are replaced by other migrants after the pandemic, the scarring impact from net outward migration may be rather larger than we previously assumed. Indeed, on a worst-case basis the population could be as much as 2 per cent smaller.”

In the country as a whole, the ONS estimate that the number of residents born outside the UK, has fallen by about 900,000. The Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence **estimates** the UK-born population as essentially unchanged and the non-UK born population falling by 1.3 million – the biggest population fall since WWII.

2. **Those EU nationals who for a variety of reasons, will choose not to or will fail to apply for pre/settled status EU Settlement Scheme.**

Whilst around 6 million EU nationals will obtain pre/settled status there will be a significant number, who for a variety of reasons, will choose not to, or will fail to apply by the deadline of 30 June. Those that continue working without a suitable immigration status will be committing a criminal offence. They and their families may not use the NHS or other services, enrol in education or training or claim benefits and if they travel home to the EU, re-entry may be refused if Border Control believe they are intending to work without the legal right to do so.

3. **No ongoing general or sectoral low skilled immigration routes, other than for edible horticulture.**

Government policy is to constrain lower skilled immigration, as per the Home Office immigration policy statement published on 19 February 2020: “We will not introduce a general low-skilled or temporary work route. We need to shift the focus of our economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe and instead concentrate on investment in technology and automation. Employers will need to adjust.”

The government is telling businesses to concentrate on developing the skills of domestic workers to fill shortages as the economy grows. Kevin Foster, the minister for future borders and immigration, said: “Engaging with training, apprenticeship programmes and schemes to get people back to work, especially when many UK-based workers face an uncertain future, should be the first recourse for employers with vacancies, rather than viewing immigration as the primary solution.”

4. **A better than forecast jobs recovery**

The UK is still coming out of lockdown, and we not yet seen the full impact of the pandemic on unemployment levels but figures are more positive than had previously been forecasted. The Bank of England’s **Monetary Policy Report - May 2021** revised its unemployment rate projections down to 5.2% for Q2 2021 falling to 4.7% by the same time next year. The latest CIPD **Labour Market Outlook Report** shows that all sectors are experiencing a jobs recovery, alongside an improvement on pay prospects, with redundancy and recruitment intentions returning to pre-pandemic levels this quarter.

5. **The effect of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme** in taking potential workers out of the supply chain – An estimated 3.4 million workers still on furlough at the end of April 2021.



PROPOSED NATIONAL LEVEL ACTIONS TO INCREASE LABOUR SUPPLY

1. REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

Prior to Covid-19, the unemployment rate (number unemployed as a proportion of those in work plus those unemployed) had remained at around 3.9% for some time, the lowest since 1975. In many rural communities, unemployment at under 2%, is to all intents and purposes, a full employment economy.

Figures at date of publication show the UK unemployment rate fell slightly to 4.7% for the quarter February 2021 to April 2021, 0.7% higher than a year earlier. These figures are more positive than had been forecasted, however, with the delays announced to coming out of lockdown and furlough continuing, we will not see the full impact of the pandemic on unemployment levels until later in the year.

- 1.61 million people unemployed, up 246,000 from the same period last year, 10,000 down on the previous quarter
- Unemployment rate for 18-24s fell to 10.4%, slightly higher than last year, but for 16-17s, it was 29.3%, 6.4% higher than last year.
- Over 6 million people claiming Universal Credit, 1.8 million higher than a year ago and 3.5 million higher than pre-pandemic levels
- Economic inactivity rate increased during the pandemic with more than 1.1 million people with 'other' reasons not looking for work
- Payrolled employees increased for the sixth consecutive month to 28.5 million, 553,000 below the pre-pandemic figure
- Vacancies increased to 758,000, only 27,000 less than before the pandemic
- 3.4 million still on furlough at the end of April 2021, down from 4.3 million in March

The UK government has introduced schemes, grants and programmes to assist employers and workers whose business and jobs are impacted by the coronavirus pandemic including:

- Reimbursement schemes such as the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)
- New and extended training schemes such as [T Levels](#), the [Sector-based Work Academy Programme](#) (SWAP), [Traineeships](#) and the [Skills Toolkit](#)
- Employer incentives to recruit and train young people such as the new Kickstart Scheme and extended [Apprenticeships](#)

Government must now accelerate policies to incentivise individuals claiming unemployment benefit to return to work and for businesses to reintegrate long term unemployed into the world of work.

- The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) should work at a national strategic level with industry sectors. For the food supply chain, there should be a dedicated access to employment website for each sector i.e. Agriculture, Food Manufacturing, Logistics created, funded and operated in partnership with the sector bodies. This should detail entry choices into work; outline career opportunities and pathways; detail trailblazer and other apprenticeship options; promote the sector as a career of choice and be a point for the industry to coalesce around to promote these sectors.
- DWP account managers should work together at a local level with employers to proactively provide work opportunities within the local community, to access untapped sectors of the market such as students in higher education, to connect with Jobcentres in urban centres and regional areas where unemployment remains at a higher level and also to be connected on a wider level with national programmes.



- Government should enable employers, recruitment businesses and labour providers to use the Apprenticeship Levy to fund retraining and access to work payments for the long term unemployed and for those on national programmes providing work opportunities to harder to reach sectors of the community such as young workers, single parents, ex-forces, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders etc. Additionally, apprenticeship requirements should be redesigned to remove (or reduce) the functional skills training which forms a barrier for many learners, remove the minimum requirement for one year's learning and remove the requirement for apprentices to be employees. Labour providers could make much better use of their apprenticeship levy if these barriers were removed.
- The rigidity of the UK benefits system dissuades many unemployed people from taking up irregular work or increasing their hours. The Universal Credit being rolled out across the UK over a period of years is designed to address this by introducing flexibility and to ensure that increased work undertaken means increased pay. It needs to deliver this. Integrating the benefits system with HMRC Real Time Information reporting will help to ensure that unemployed people can transition into work by taking up temporary and irregular work on a week to week basis in a way which is financially beneficial and administratively straightforward.
- Government should address how the National Minimum Wage Regulations constrain the availability of work, particularly:
 - The accommodation offset rules should be re-examined in detail so that employers are able to assist their employees by providing them with somewhere decent to live at reasonable market rates rather than only being able to economically provide the lowest standard of shared accommodation
 - That provision of optional transport to work by employers and labour providers should not be prevented by an unintended consequence of the legislation but instead the transport fare should be allowed through deduction from wages.



2. INCREASE THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION

There are 8.72 million people aged 16 to 64 not in the labour force. Economic inactivity measures those people without a job but who are not classed as unemployed because they have not been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and/or they are unable to start work within the next two weeks. Since comparable records began in 1971, the economic inactivity rate has generally been falling because of a rise of the proportion of women working. The current male employment rate however is 80.6% compared to 92.1% in 1971.

It is clear that policy actions can influence the proportion of people in our society who are economically inactive. In the last four years, the number of economically inactive individuals has fallen by half a million, but the Coronavirus pandemic has seen that trend reverse.

Atypical work patterns such as flexible, part-time and home-working may provide solutions to many of the economically inactive and so Government should research what the potential employment rate for both men and women could reasonably be, and develop, consult on and implement a range of policies to work towards this target. The economically active population consists of different groupings and each will need targeting with different policy approaches.

The major groupings are as follows

■ Young workers and students (over 2 million)

- Government should continue to develop and implement policies which promote a broader proportion of young people to start their working careers at an earlier age, whilst continuing their educational development, such as apprenticeship schemes and apprenticeship degree schemes.
- Part time working for young people aged above 16 should be positively encouraged and be seen as normal and integral to the preparation of younger people for the wider world of work.
- The private recruitment sector should be engaged to readily offer work to young people aged above 16 and through their student years. Work is beneficial in developing life skills for younger people.
- Perceived barriers should be addressed. For instance, the most significant impact of young persons' health and safety legislation appears to have been to deter employers from employing young people. Many businesses arbitrarily state that they do not employ workers aged under eighteen for "insurance" reasons. The language around this legislation should be re-examined so it is not seen as a barrier to recruiting young workers in industrial and agricultural environments .
- Gov.UK websites should clearly state the legal position regarding employing young workers. In Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland young people can be employed once they have reached school leaving age. . [**The Education and Skills Act 2008 \(ESA\)**](#) requires young people in England to continue in education or training until the age of 18, specifically:
 - full-time study in a school, college or higher education institution;
 - full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more per week) combined with part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualifications; or
 - an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship

However, Chapter 3 of the ESA covers the responsibilities of employers but has not yet been enacted and remains provisional, meaning that ESA has no current requirements on private sector employers meaning employers may recruit and employ young people, as long as they are compliant with other relevant legislation, notably in terms of [**Health and Safety**](#). The ESA is enacted for public sector employers as per the guidance [**Participation of young people in education, employment or training**](#). General information on employing young people can be found at [**Youth Employment UK**](#).



■ Early retirees (over 1 million)

- Policies to extend working life such as delaying access to state pensions and removing the state retirement age have been successful, though not always popular. There is a disparity between the public and private sectors. Private sector pension schemes have had to face the financial reality of an aging population and most organisations have ended final salary pension schemes and/or remain with significant pension deficits.
- Research identifies that almost three quarters (73 per cent) of employees expect to work beyond the traditional retirement age, up from 67 per cent in 2016 and 61 per cent in 2015. Activities to promote employment of older workers such as second career schemes should continue and be enhanced.

■ Long-term sick (over 2 million) and temporary sick (160,000)

- The 2019 DWP consultation [Health is everyone's business - Proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss](#) sought views on ways government and employers can take action to reduce ill health-related job loss. The proposals aimed to support early action by employers for their employees with long-term health conditions, and improve access to quality, cost-effective occupational health. Proposals need to be implemented.
- Government reports that there are a further 1.4 million more disabled people in work than in 2013, with more than 16,000 employers signed up to the [Disability Confident Scheme](#). In 2015, the Northern Ireland Executive developed the '[Enabling Success](#)' strategy for reducing economic inactivity and unemployment targeting the main limiting factors that kept people out of the labour force. This identified the long-term sick and disabled – the key target group within this category is people with work limiting health conditions or disabilities who, with the right level of support and reasonable accommodations from an employer, should be able to work. Further action is required..

■ Looking after family/home (nearly 2 million)

- The Northern Ireland '[Enabling Success](#)' strategy also identified lone parents and carers who are currently in receipt of out-of-work benefits and would be better off in work but are unable to make the transition due to a lack of appropriate support and/or opportunities.
- [Working Families](#) is the UK's work-life balance charity with a mission to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face to create a flexible, high-performing workforce. They support parents, carers and employers and advocate on behalf of the UK's 13 million working parents. Government and Working Families should collaborate to develop and implement a national strategy.

■ Living off wealth, supported by a partner, career break etc. (nearly 1 million)

- Government should promote some form of work as part of a rounded and fulfilling life strategy
- Government should instigate a wide ranging and pioneering programme of social policy initiatives to drive community cohesion. A fundamental foundation of such a strategy, and one which will also increase the available workforce is the ability to speak English of all non-UK born nationals who have been given permanent leave to remain; those seeking residency and those EU nationals with pre-settled status. Funded ESOL courses should be available for all those who need them.



3. REDUCE UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND INCREASE HOURS WORKED

Government should research why the UK has one of the highest rates of underemployment in the EU28 with around 1 in 5 people working in elementary occupations underemployed. From this, government should develop, consult on and implement a range of strategies to reduce this underemployment.

- Government should accelerate the rollout of the Universal Credit and ensure that the benefits system rewards rather than discourages those who work extra hours. Increased work undertaken should mean increased pay.
- It is cheaper for businesses to limit hours worked and employ more workers to work part time due to the employers' national insurance thresholds. Currently, workers can work around 20 hours per week without a business incurring any NI costs. Government should implement a work tax and NI strategy which does not disincentivise businesses from providing full time work.
- Government should examine whether the national insurance thresholds limit hours worked by economically active individuals. Currently, due to the NI free limit, workers can work full time for around half the year at the national living wage rate without incurring any national insurance costs. Hitting the tax and NI threshold acts as a catalyst for a proportion of workers to cease working and return to their home countries.
- Employers and labour providers should survey their workforce to gain a greater understanding of those workers who consider themselves underemployed or who do not consider themselves underemployed but who would work extra hours if offered and implement new patterns of working to address this shortfall.

4. REGULARISATION OF UK RESIDENT UNDOCUMENTED NATIONALS

The September 2020 [Public Accounts Committee report on Immigration Enforcement](#) headlines that *"Despite years of public and political debate and concern, the Department still does not know the size of the illegal population in the UK. It does not know what harm the illegal population causes. It does not know how many people come to the UK legally and do not renew their visa, or how many deliberately come illegally. The Home Office has not estimated the illegal population in the UK since 2005."*

London School of Economics research put the number of illegal workers in the UK at the end of 2007 at 618,000, with a range of 417,000-863,000. A June 2017 Civitas report, [The Politics of Fantasy](#), authored by a previous Deputy CEO of the UK Borders Agency and Director General of Immigration Enforcement estimates that 150,000 additional illegal migrants enter the UK each year. Around 10,000 people each year are returned from the UK to another country.

Undocumented workers have virtually no employment protection rights and consequently are vulnerable to exploitation and modern slavery. Many countries have minimum rights for undocumented workers such as to be paid the minimum wage for all hours worked.

To work and earn a living, undocumented individuals in the UK must either:

- work for friends and family, who will protect and support them
- obtain high quality false identity documents from criminal gangs to work in regular employment – though with digital right to work checking, this will become more difficult
- work in the informal economy – online selling, street trading, car boot sales etc.
- work for businesses or bosses who are willing to break the law, making them highly vulnerable to abuse
- resort to, or be coerced into crime



- Government should develop a balanced strategy and policies to regularise and enable access to work for a proportion of those individuals that have entered or remained in the UK without the legal right to do so and for whom there is no reasonable prospect of agreed deportation.
- Asylum Seekers are not permitted to work in the UK. They can only apply for permission to fill a shortage vacancy if they have been waiting for over 12 months for an initial decision on their asylum claim. [Lift the Ban](#) is a multi-stakeholder campaign to give people seeking asylum the right to work. Government should provide refugees and asylum seekers with a route to work legally.

5. TEMPORARY / SEASONAL / GUEST WORKER IMMIGRATION ROUTES

The immigration to work system from 1st January 2021:

- Offers settled status for qualifying EU citizens with indefinite leave to remain and rights to work, benefits, pensions, healthcare identical to those of UK nationals.
- Enables unlimited immigration of higher skilled workers through a points-based system.
- Excludes general immigration for lower skilled workers. The [Temporary Worker - Seasonal Worker visa \(T5\)](#) has been introduced to allow the recruitment of 30,000 seasonal workers for up to 6 months into specified roles in edible
- Time limited T5 sector based schemes should be extended for temporary immigration of lower skilled workers into sectors identified as COVID-19 [essential and critical](#) sectors where MAC has identified that there is an evidence based urgent need. Severe shortages currently exist in meat and poultry processing, HGV drivers and other specialised sectors.
 - Such schemes satisfy the dual objectives of meeting industry's urgent need for a workforce without increasing net migration flows. Evidence shows that seasonal workers return to their home nation at the end of the season of work.
 - Eligibility to be a licensed sponsor under any extension of the the T5 (Temporary Worker) visa route should remain as currently defined to Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority licence holders.
 - T5 sector-based schemes should have worker welfare, good work practices and protection of workers designed in and at their core. Lessons learned from the Seasonal Workers Pilot are detailed in the 'Seasonal Workers' Scheme Code of Good Practice Multi-Stakeholder Working Group' [recommendations](#).
 - Each employer that uses T5 temporary workers should be assigned a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) account manager to be working together proactively to provide work opportunities within the local community, to regions where unemployment remains high and to engage with DWP schemes to provide employment opportunities to harder to reach sectors of society.
- The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) should be the key independent body advising Government on future immigration policy, structured similarly to the Low Pay Commission.
 - In collaboration with the Office for National Statistics, MAC should develop a national skills shortage evidence framework to facilitate consistent intelligence gathering, analysis and reporting. The MAC should develop an annual Shortage Occupation List of workers at all skill levels.
 - T5 sector quota schemes should be authorised by the MAC for specific sectors that can evidence a seasonal or peak worker requirement which cannot be met through local supply. Weighting should be applied to sectors identified as COVID-19 [essential and critical](#) including: health and social care, transport, utilities, food and key goods production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery.
 - The MAC should, on an annual basis, to make evidence-based recommendations (taking account of and balancing a wide range of economic and social factors) to government on sectors, roles and thresholds for T5 immigration.



FOOD INDUSTRY STRATEGY AND POLICY ACTIONS

- Government should form a future vision for promoting careers in **essential and critical** sectors and to determine future skills and training policies. Macro skills and education policy should be developed to address these skills shortages in the medium to long term.
- The Defra Access to Labour Team collaborating with key industry representative bodies coordinated through the ALP, FDF and NFU and the Food and Drink Sector Council should develop a proper indication of the food supply chain's future skills and workforce needs at all levels on which all agree.

The 2017 EFRA Committee inquiry **Feeding the nation: labour constraints** concludes: *"It is apparent that the statistics used by the Government are unable to provide a proper indication of agriculture's labour needs. These statistics and their utility for measuring supply of, and demand for, seasonal labour must be reviewed by the end of 2017 to give the sector confidence in the adequacy of the official data on which employment and immigration policies will be based for the period after the UK leaves the EU."* Despite repeated industry requests and offers to collaborate, the EFRA Committee's recommendation above has not been actioned and four years later, there is still no commonly developed and agreed analysis of UK agriculture's or the wider food supply chain's labour needs. The sector cannot have *"confidence in the adequacy of the official data on which employment and immigration policies will be based"* because no official data is shared or published.

- **The Food and Drink Sector Council** is a formal industry partnership with government to create a more productive and sustainable food and drink sector.
 - The **Workforce: developing skills and labour** vision is: A secure supply of skilled and seasonal labour, driving productivity gains and continuing to produce world-class products for domestic and international markets.
 - The objective is: Securing a world-class workforce capable of enabling the food and drink industry to continue to be world-leading producers of quality, affordable and sustainably-produced food and drink.

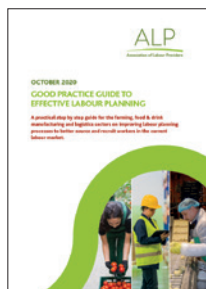
These are laudable and well-defined ambitions but there is no engagement with the wider food supply chain beyond a limited number of large food producers. This needs to be corrected through a programme of national engagement. The food industry has, over decades, failed to address the underlying causes of its labour and skills shortages.

- Likewise the **Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board** has a **Skills strategy** and a **Skills programme**. In the February 2021 ballot on whether or not the statutory horticulture levy which funds the AHDB should continue, 61% of levy payers, voted that it should not. In May, AHDB announced that it is winding down significant activities on behalf of the horticulture and potatoes sectors. A decision on the future is awaited by Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales. This decision should include a workforce and skills strategy and programme for UK agriculture.
- **National Skills Academies** and **awarding bodies** are disconnected from the sectors that they serve. Ambitions for the food supply chain 'to boost productivity, innovation, profitability and growth' need to be targeted, inclusive and realised. These bodies should serve training and skills needs for the whole food supply chain, at all RFQ levels with particular emphasis on Shortage Occupation List roles.



ALP RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SOURCING AND RETENTION OF WORKERS

ALP has produced a number of **practical guides, checklists and training** to support labour providers and employers to attract, recruit and retain the workers they need, including:



Good Practice Guide to Sourcing Workers



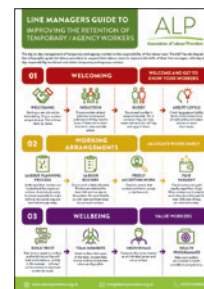
Good Practice Guide to Retaining Workers



Good Practice Guide to Effective Labour Planning



Effectively Sourcing and Retaining Workers



Line Managers Guide to Improving the Retention of Temporary/ Agency Workers



The **Extra Workers Needed Portal** enables businesses that need extra workers to be contacted by GLAA licensed ALP labour provider members that can supply them. Watch the demonstration video [here](#).

The ALP produced **Working in the Food Industry** video uses real food business footage and interviews with real workers to encourage job-seekers to view the UK food industry as a positive career choice.

The video is for all food industry employers and labour providers to use on their websites and in their recruitment campaigns to support in encouraging people to choose the UK food industry for their next job.



ALP funded and **developed the UK content** for the **Just Good Work** interactive mobile app enabling this to be made freely available for all employers, labour providers to distribute to job-seekers and workers. The app contains critical information and advice for everything workers need on their journey to work, from recruitment processes, to employment rights and how to access help. Just Good Work helps businesses to provide relevant and consistent information to workers in a language they can understand.

ALP funded and produced the **Working in the UK** video, in several languages, suitable for those with limited reading skills, to inform workers of their rights whilst working in the UK, signposting both to further guidance, and where to go for help.



ALP has worked extensively with the Home Office and Defra to understand emerging immigration legislation and distil this into practical, straightforward and up to date **Immigration and Right to Work** guidance and resources. ALP partnered with the Home Office to produce the **Workforce recruitment and labour supply from 2021** guide which covers the new immigration rules, right to work checks, and how employers can develop strategies to source, recruit and retain workers within the new system.