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Labour Immigration Policy Pre and Post EU Exit Association of Labour Providers – Briefing and Position Paper

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Introduction

The Association of Labour Providers (ALP) is a trade association promoting best practice for organisations that supply the workforce to the consumer goods supply chain across the food processing, horticultural and wider manufacturing, industrial, warehousing and distribution sectors. The ALP supports and represents its members and provides a range of services to help labour providers achieve social compliance and ethical good practice.

The ALP has approximately 320 organisations that voluntarily choose to be members of the Association on payment of an annual subscription and commitment to abide by the membership regulations. ALP member organisations supply approximately 70% of the temporary contingent workforce into the food growing and manufacturing supply chain. Many of these workers progress to form the permanent workforce for the UK food industry. All organisations that supply labour into these sectors are required to be licensed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA).

Labour providers operate in a very competitive market largely resulting from the downward pressure on costs exerted by food growers and producers as a feature of operating in a supermarket supply chain. It follows that margins are thin, although just adequate to allow efficient businesses to continue.

ALP's members predominantly provide unskilled workers but also source and supply specialist skilled and semi-skilled workers to the food industry. Market pressures mean that unskilled work is either at, or very close to, national minimum wage (NMW). Few indigenous British workers are willing to work at or near NMW in such roles. For many years these irregular low-paid jobs have been largely filled by migrant workers, able to earn more than they can in their home country. Depending on region EU workers make up between 70 and 100% of workers supplied by labour providers into the food industry with a national average of between 90-95%, the remainder being British nationals and those migrants from non-EU countries that have been given right of residence in the UK.

The UK is by no means unique in depending on temporary migrant labour, especially in horticulture, as this is a common feature across all developed economies - US, Canada, Australia, Spain, Poland, Greece and so on. This is principally due to the nature of the work being irregular, seasonal and away from urban centres and so not desirable to the resident labour force.

It should be noted that pay rates and terms of employment for temporary agency workers supplied by labour providers are set not by the labour provider but by the hiring client in accordance with the requirements of the Agency Workers Regulations 2010. As such, pay and benefits of temporary agency workers is a cost passed on to the labour user.

The actual hourly rate charged by a labour provider to the hiring client for the supply of temporary workers is ultimately a commercial agreement. Any agreed rate should take into account the particular costs of supply. Hirers of temporary labour that pay unrealistically low rates are knowingly or recklessly conniving in illegality as these rates can only be achieved either through worker exploitation or tax evasion or both.

Labour Supply and Demand – The Current position

Labour shortages are currently the worst that they have been since prior to 2004 when the A8 state nationals were given the right to work in the UK. One large labour provider cites applications for vacancies in October 2016 at 52% of the rate that they were at the same period in 2015. Other labour providers cite reductions between 30% and 70%.

Labour shortage at a national level can be addressed in a limited number of ways:

- Reducing unemployment – UK unemployment statistics measure those people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last 4 weeks and are available to start work within the next 2 weeks.
- Increasing the number of economically active individuals from within the existing population - There are 8.81 million people aged from 16 to 64 who are economically inactive (not working and not seeking or available to work). It is worth noting that in 2015 the minimum school leaving age rose to 18 meaning that 16 and 17 year olds can only be employed either part time whilst in education, or as part of a recognised training programme i.e. an apprenticeship. This means that the economically inactive figures are inflated by people who are not able to work.
- Reducing underemployment – Underemployed individuals are those who want to work more hours at the going wage rate. The UK has the seventh highest rate of underemployment of the EU28 states at around 5.7% with over 1 in 5 people working in elementary occupations underemployed.
- Increasing the hours worked of economically active individuals who do not consider themselves underemployed.
- Immigration.

The current labour shortage is due to a combination of both labour supply and demand factors.

With regard to labour demand:

- At 74.5%, there is the highest level of employment in UK since records began in 1971. This means there is availability of regular / permanent work over temporary / seasonal work as well as strong demand from other sectors.
- There are 1,132,844 [advertised](#) job vacancies

With regard to labour supply:

- The Office for National Statistics on 19 October 2016 confirmed that there are 31.8 million people now in work – up by more than 560,000 in the past year.

- There are 26.25 million UK born people and 5.40 million non-UK born people working in the UK. There are 2.23 million non-UK nationals from the EU and 1.21 million non-UK nationals from outside the EU working in the UK.
- There is an unemployment rate of 4.9%, with 1.66 million unemployed people, 118,000 fewer than for a year earlier. However an estimated of 77% of these claim disability or single parent benefits. In many rural communities unemployment is less than 2%, with in effect a full employment economy existing.
- Across the 28 countries in the European Union, according to Eurostat figures, unemployment fell to 8.6 percent in August, the lowest rate for the EU since April 2009 (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics). German unemployment has fallen to 4.2%, its lowest level since reunification in 1990. Germany has also introduced the first nationwide wage floor of 8.50 euros per hour.
- Of the 1.66 million unemployed people and those receiving wage related in work benefits, the rigidity of the benefits system dissuades many from taking up irregular work or increasing hours. The Universal Credit is designed to address this by introducing flexibility and to ensure that increased work undertaken means increased pay.
- Current employment tax and NI policies discourage a proportion of workers from working longer hours. Hitting the tax and NI threshold acts as catalyst for a proportion of EU workers to cease working in the UK.
- Since 2014 there have been no new labour markets supplying into the UK – Romania and Bulgaria are the current principal sourcing regions for new workers into UK food and horticulture.
- Since the referendum result the pound has devalued significantly against the euro meaning that the exchange value of wages for EU workers has fallen by 14%, more than counteracting the national living wage increase.
- During the referendum and particularly following the result, there has been a rise in openly expressed anti-migrant sentiment and hate crimes; negative briefings by certain EU states to their citizens regarding working in the UK and UK EU exit negotiating strategy delaying a commitment to EU workers currently in the UK. These all combine to create an uncertainty regarding future employment opportunities and a feeling amongst EU nationals of that they are not welcome in the UK anymore.

The consequences on labour supply to date have been:

- A smaller pool of workers to select from resulting in a lower quality workforce and lower spoken English and comprehension levels.
- Increased labour sourcing costs as labour providers need to invest more in advertising and recruitment costs.
- Higher turnover as workers are presented with availability of other work options.
- Peak period supply challenges, but which as yet have not significantly impacted on food production.

The immediate future consequences are:

- A labour shortfall to meet the Christmas peak.

- Increasing employer focus on workforce planning, recruitment and retention strategies to source and secure labour supply.
- Labour providers investing in candidate resourcing and increasing efforts to source labour from rural Bulgarian and Romanian communities and exploring opportunities in EU countries with high unemployment rates.
- Increased labour costs:
 - Higher labour sourcing costs
 - Increased wage rates to attract and retain a labour force

These labour cost increases compound the already spiralling labour cost increases of the national living wage - 5 years of around 7% per annum increases plus the accelerator effect of these increases across the whole pay bill, increasing pension auto-enrolment and apprenticeship levy costs.

“Following pensions, living wage, NI increases and the apprentice levy about to come there is only so much businesses and our industry can take. I am concerned for the future viability our high volume low margin business on the very thin margins we are working on.” ALP Member July 2016

The longer term consequences are:

- An increase in business failures – *“Up to 7,803 UK food and drink manufacturers are now in a state of financial distress following the introduction of the National Living Wage, revealed insolvency firm Begbies Traynor” Food Manufacture October 2016”.*

During the ALP webinars on “Implementing the National Living Wage” food growers and producers were asked “What impact will the National Living Wage have?” The answers were as follows:

- 11% We can absorb the NLW cost increase
- 48% We will have to make cost savings, productivity improvements and price increases but our business will stay essentially the same
- 41% We will need to substantially change the way we operate to survive
- Increased production costs passed on as higher retail selling prices and consequent food inflation.
- Movement of growing and food production overseas to where labour supply and labour cost are more favourable to business.
- Increasingly favourable return on investment decisions for mechanisation and technological solutions to replace manual jobs. However in certain sectors such as soft fruit this is estimated to be at least 10 years off - “Robots 'could replace' migrant workers post-Brexit. Britain’s departure from the EU may see firms relying on robots to fill a void left by migrant workers, Resolution Foundation study finds. Brexit has the potential to fundamentally change firms’ business models if promises to end freedom of movement are delivered. Some sectors of the fresh produce industry might consider the use of robots and greater automation, while others will require a carefully considered immigration policy to prevent damaging staff shortages.” *Fresh Produce Journal July 2016.*
- Opportunities for import substitution and export for our highly productive UK food industry, particularly at a time where in this regard exchange rates act favourably, are constrained through lack of labour and skills. This is contrary to Government policy to put trade at the heart of its agenda and the ambitions and objectives of the International Action Plan for Food and Drink, the International Food Plan and the Great British Food Unit.

Key Recommendation 1 – Defra commissions research which provides the appropriate statistical and evidential base to properly inform the UK Government and Home Office / BEIS EU exit teams in order to ensure that future immigration policy decisions secure UK food supply and support continued UK based food growing and production and enable the UK food and farming industry to flourish.

Key Recommendation 2 – Government should accord additional resource to accelerate the rollout of the Universal Credit.

Key Recommendation 3 – Government should share their research into the 8.81 million people aged from 16 to 64 who are economically inactive and UK underemployment and consult on, develop and implement a range of strategies to encourage a proportion of these to seek and commence working.

Labour Immigration Policy Post EU Exit

Whilst still at a formative stage, ALP initial position on post EU exit labour immigration policy is outlined below.

In reaching its position ALP has taken account of the underlying significance of the EU referendum result on government policy; the need to prevent a contraction of the UK economy through insufficient labour supply; a focus on what the UK food industry requires in order to survive and thrive. The ALP position builds on experience and lessons learned from previous models and also takes account of the Prime Minister's pronouncements that her agenda will be to drive "Responsible Capitalism" where her Government will be a "force for good" to help working people protect jobs and "repair" free markets and challenge those businesses which recruited "cheap foreign labour" at the expense of British workers.

1. Current EU nationals living in the UK

There is a broad consensus for separating the status of current EU nationals living in the UK from future policy changes that may apply to new migrants. The ALP policy is in line with that of the official Vote Leave position that there should be "no change for EU citizens already lawfully resident in the UK. These EU citizens will automatically be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and will be treated no less favourably than they are at present".

Since the referendum, there has been pressure to secure an immediate government commitment to guarantee the rights of EU nationals living in Britain. The Government has delayed making a specific commitment on EU nationals, on the grounds that it needs to seek reciprocity for British nationals in the EU. Polling from ICM for British Future found that 84% of the British public supports letting EU migrants stay – including three-quarters (77%) of Leave voters – with any future changes applying only to new migrants.

The Government has said that it does anticipate that the principle of EU nationals being able to stay and settle in the UK will eventually be agreed, but there will be many complexities about how to uphold this in practice as exemplified through the questions posed by a recent British Future led inquiry into this area:

- Is the best policy option to give qualifying EU nationals permanent residence in the UK in order to guarantee their right to remain? Are there any legal or practical problems in implementing such a decision?
- Should EU job-seekers, potential higher and further education students, long-term non-working EU nationals, family members and self-sufficient persons be treated the same way as workers and the self-employed?
- What healthcare and benefits rights should existing EU nationals be afforded? Should family members and self-sufficient persons be afforded the same set of rights as those in employment?
- How should the Government manage cut-off dates for changes to the status of EU nationals in the UK?
- What is the likelihood of significantly increased immigration flows from the EU from those who are trying to beat cut-off points and policy deadlines? What might be the scale of such an increased flow? How might immigration surges be managed?
- What is the best administrative means for EU nationals to show their legal residence in the UK? Are current Home Office systems for issuing documentation fit for purpose or will increased demand for registration certificates require extra staffing?
- Are there any groups of EU nationals who might struggle to establish their legal residence? Are there useful ways in which employers might be able to work with government to facilitate an efficient process?
- Will all groups of EU nationals in the UK be able to navigate any future Home Office administrative processes, or do some populations risk being non-compliant?
- Are there sufficient advice services for EU nationals in relation to securing residence rights or appealing decisions?

It would seem as a natural development of EU exit that the current [Biometric Residence Permit](#) (BRP) will become mandatory for all non-UK nationals working in the UK. The BRP contains biometric residence permit biographic details (name, date and place of birth) and biometric information (facial image and fingerprints), and shows an individual's immigration status and entitlements while they remain in the UK. This will enable all employers to use the free online government [BRP checker](#) to establish right to work and support the Government's policy to make the UK a more hostile environment for those not legally entitled to be or to work in the country.

Key Recommendation 4 – Government should, with urgency, provide assurance that EU nationals will be able to stay and settle in the UK, and a timetable for when the detail of this will be agreed.

2. Free movement of EU nationals post EU exit

ALP, together with most industry representatives, supports continued free movement of EU workers post EU exit. Free movement is the outcome to be desired, however it is understood that any long-term commitment to retain free movement post-EU exit is politically challenging in a referendum in which immigration and control over borders was a central theme. If free movement of EU workers post EU exit cannot be achieved then various complex schemes will have to be put in place in mitigation.

The ALP does believe that a position of controlled immigration of EU labour (and better control of non-EU labour) which meet the needs of UK industry and the UK economy whilst addressing the concerns of the UK electorate expressed through the referendum result is politically achievable.

This will be through a combination of a Seasonal Workers' Permit Based Quota Scheme and Sector/skill permit based schemes.

Political policy on immigration should be supported by a wide ranging and pioneering programme of social policy initiatives to drive community cohesion. A starting position is the ability of existing British nationals and those seeking residency to be able to speak English.

3. Seasonal Workers' Permit Based Quota Scheme

The ALP is supportive of the introduction of sector based Seasonal Workers' Permit Based Quota Schemes or Guest Worker Programmes for seasonal work ("Seasonal Workers' Scheme"). This should be allowed for those sectors that can evidentially demonstrate a seasonal workers requirement which cannot be met through local supply. Such a programme will need to satisfy the dual objectives of meeting industry's urgent need for a workforce without increasing net migration flows.

Employers wishing to engage workers supplied through a Seasonal Workers' Scheme should meet certain conditions such as:

- All vacancies sought to be filled through the Seasonal Workers' Scheme must be advertised locally through the Jobcentre for at least one month prior to commencement of work
- Each employer wishing to use the Seasonal Workers' Scheme is assigned a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) account manager to be working together proactively to provide work opportunities within the local community, to untapped sectors of the market such as students in higher education, into urban centres and regional areas where unemployment remains and where internal temporary migration may be possible.
- Every employer above a certain size threshold wishing to use the Seasonal Workers' Scheme must be operating a DWP scheme to provide employment opportunities to harder to reach sectors of the working community such as young workers, ex-forces, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders etc.
- Consideration should also be given to allowing refugees and asylum seekers, who are currently not allowed to work, to undertake such roles.

Farmers and growers express the urgent need for a Seasonal Workers' Scheme for horticulture for the 2017 season:

If there are limits on EU nationals' right to work in the UK in future, then a seasonal workers' entry permit scheme must be introduced instead. "The decision by the UK electorate to leave the EU will mean that there is now a serious question mark over the future availability of sufficient numbers of seasonal workers to harvest our 100,000 tonne annual crop of berries between March and October". British Summer Fruits July 2016

"Apples and pears are harvested by hand, for which seasonal workers are required. Despite enormous efforts by growers, which has included joint action with labour providers, government departments and Job Centres, it has proved impossible to recruit from the UK any more than a small proportion of the numbers necessary. In short, the British are not prepared to undertake this type of work. Consequently, almost all seasonal workers are from abroad, and at present, mainly from eastern Europe." English Apples & Pears July 2016

The NFU is calling on government to trial a seasonal workers scheme next year to resolve what she called “an emerging crisis” in fresh produce recruitment... “The reason that we need that trial urgently – and it has to be next year – is that Brexit has had unfortunate results. The message it has sent out into the EU, combined with the sliding sterling has meant that in the latter part of the season, workers that would have come here are now choosing to go elsewhere. We have a bit of a crisis emerging.” - Fresh Produce Journal October 2016

The ALP supports this industry demand for the reintroduction of a Seasonal Workers' Scheme for horticulture for the 2017 season in order to remedy the extreme labour shortage this sector will face next year. This support comes with two provisos:

- That it is introduced as a transitional arrangement and a pilot for examination and testing prior to rollout of a Seasonal Workers' Permit Based Quota Schemes across other sectors
- That the new Seasonal Workers' Scheme for horticulture corrects the failings of the previous scheme

Factors to be taken account of are:

- Productivity - It is essential that seasonal workers are able to and are encouraged to return each year. Having now operated in a post Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme environment, successful growers have found that this is achieved by investing in training of seasonal workers, developing engagement and maximising year on year return of experienced, reliable and high performing workers.
- Period – The Seasonal Workers' Scheme permit period should be available for up to 9 months per year dependant on the work available.
- Supply countries – There are currently insufficient workers available within the EU to meet the requirements of a Seasonal Workers' Scheme. Considerations in sourcing workers include:
 - Post EU exit priority should be given to EU nationals
 - There is an argument for sourcing from the closest non-EU countries likely to be able to supply such a workforce such as Albania, Moldavia, Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro. There may be a predisposition towards sourcing from Commonwealth nations. Non-EU countries to source labour from may form part of trade negotiation agreements. Organisations supplying labour from these countries will currently require to be licensed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.
 - Alternatively there is a case to be made to use such a programme as a mechanism to regularise those individuals that have entered or remained in the UK illegally. For want of more current data, the London School of Economics research put this figure at the end of 2007 at 618,000, with a range of 417,000-863,000.
- Scheme operation
 - Scheme operation within the agricultural sector should not be limited to the previously limited small number of operators but should be open to all labour

providers who apply, meet the criteria and are approved to operate such a scheme.

- Scheme operation should be by labour providers rather than by end employers. The reason for this is that tying a worker's visa to a single employer runs the risk of the seasonal workers' scheme being regarded by many as no more than an "official bonded labour scheme" with workers bound by visa restrictions (much as those currently on a Domestic Workers in a Private Household visa). This runs counter to current government modern slavery policy and the January 2016 UK ratification of P029 – Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930.
- Such a scheme design will allow labour providers to: source alternative seasonal work for any workers for whom there is no longer any work with a particular employer; seek to ensure that workers obtain a reasonable amount of work within a week by balancing supply and demand between a number of employers. It provides seasonal workers with the opportunity to leave and seek employment elsewhere through the labour providers operating the scheme if they are not suited to the work and/or environment of the employer they are placed with. It provides employers with the opportunity to engage seasonal workers for the period and hours that they require, accepting that in many agricultural businesses, on-site accommodation of workers is preferred.
- Provision of good work and prevention of exploitation – Design of a future Seasonal Workers' Scheme should correct the failings of the previous Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme which suffered from inadequate scrutiny by official bodies (particularly pre the Gangmasters Licensing Authority) and absence of effective access to remedy for workers. As one ALP labour provider member put it, *"I have been horrified at the expectations and demands of the supervisor from the growers group. He has obviously been used to dealing with students in the past and expects workers to work excessive hours, to turn up at 5 a.m. in the morning with the minimum of notice, always to be readily available to work whenever he wishes and generally do exactly what he wants otherwise they are dismissed."*

Matters that need to be addressed in the design of a future scheme include:

- Freedom of movement – as expressed above, visa restrictions should not create the condition of "tied labour".
- Provision of regular work with more sophisticated contractual models than simple 'zero-hours contracts' such as the Spanish 'Contrato fijo discontinuo' ([near-permanent contract](#)).
- Ensuring that recruitment costs are a business cost and not required to be met or passed onto workers as was endemic within the previous Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme and persists in certain quarters to this day. GLA Licensing Standard 7.1 requires licence holders not to: a) Charge a fee to a worker for any work-finding services b) Make providing work-finding services conditional on the worker using other services or hiring or purchasing goods. [International Labour Organization Convention 181](#) states at Article 7:1. "Private employment agencies shall not charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers."

- That accommodation provided by employers meets minimum standards according to guidance currently under development.
- That workers are provided with appropriate access to remedy without fear of retribution. There are a number of low cost technological solutions that provide such a mechanism.
- That employers are required to demonstrate a proactive approach to implementing steps to prevent forced labour and human trafficking (such as through www.stronger2gether.org).
- That employers above a certain threshold are required to undergo an annual independent third party social compliance audit.
- That workers terminated for gross misconduct offences where an Acas code of practice compliant procedure has been followed may have their seasonal workers permit revoked.
- Employment tax and national insurance arrangements should be reconsidered for seasonal workers so that they are not prompted into leaving once primary thresholds have been reached as exists currently. Deductions could potentially be from week one with no facility to claim rebate for part year worked. By making tax and national insurance contributions such workers may fairly access NHS and other relevant social services.

Key Recommendation 5 – Defra/Home Office/BEIS should lead a consultation with industry and other experts regarding the design of a future Seasonal Workers Scheme for horticulture. This should be piloted for the 2017 season. Outcomes of the pilot and a further public consultation should form the basis for the design of a multi sector Seasonal Workers’ Scheme.

4. Sector/skill permit based schemes

Theresa May has said “What the British people voted for on 23 June was to bring some control into the movement of people from the European Union to the UK. A points-based system does not give you that control.”

However a sector/skill permit based scheme may be effectively adapted from the existing Tier 2 points-based immigration system.

Initially there should be a nationwide consultation led by the Migration Advisory Committee across all public and private sectors and all skill levels to identify shortage occupation lists. Macro skills and education policy should be developed to address these shortages in the medium to long term.

Employers wishing to engage migrant workers supplied through a sector/skill permit based scheme should meet certain conditions (much as the seasonal workers’ scheme above) such as:

- All vacancies sought to be filled through sector/skill permit based scheme must be advertised locally through the Jobcentre for at least one month prior to commencement of work.
- Each employer wishing to use the sector/skill permit based scheme is assigned a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) account manager to be working together proactively to provide work opportunities within the local community, to untapped

sectors of the market such as students in higher education, into urban centres and regional areas where unemployment remains and also to be connected on a wider level with national programmes.

- Every employer above a certain size threshold wishing to use the sector/skill permit based scheme must be operating a DWP scheme to provide employment opportunities to harder to reach sectors of the working community such as young workers, ex-forces, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders etc.
- Every employer above a certain size threshold using the sector/skill permit based scheme must be able to demonstrate that for the shortage occupation roles that they are filling through the scheme that they are using the apprenticeship levy to invest in developing the workforce and the skills to meet their future workforce requirements.

Key Recommendation 6 – Defra should lead a consultation within the UK food and agricultural sectors to identify shortage occupation roles at all skill levels and anticipated future requirements. Using this information and other research, industry representatives and Defra should collaborate to form a future vision for promoting UK food and farming sector careers and to determine future skills and training policies.

What Next?

- ALP considers this a dynamic document which will be regularly updated as arguments develop and Government policy and negotiating positions becomes clearer. It may be shared openly to inform opinion. Feedback and comments to the author are welcomed.
- ALP will support its members in developing practical solutions to address labour shortages under the provisional working title of “Labour Crisis? What Labour Crisis? – Labour Sourcing and Retention Strategies in a near Full Employment Economy”.
- ALP advocates that representatives of labour providers, food growers, food producers, food distributors, foodservice providers, food retailers and Defra collaborate to develop a balanced, coherent, consistent, evidence based and pragmatic pre and post EU exit labour supply, skills and immigration policy proposal to put to the relevant EU exit teams in BEIS, the Home Office and elsewhere in government as required.

November 3rd 2016

Labour Immigration Policy Pre and Post EU Exit

Association of Labour Providers – Summary of Key Recommendations

1. Defra commissions research which provides the appropriate statistical and evidential base to properly inform the UK Government and Home Office / BEIS EU exit teams in order to ensure that future immigration policy decisions secure UK food supply and support continued UK based food growing and production and enable the UK food and farming industry to flourish.
2. Government should accord additional resource to accelerate the rollout of the Universal Credit.
3. Government should share their research into the 8.81 million people aged from 16 to 64 who are economically inactive and UK underemployment and consult on, develop and implement a range of strategies to encourage a proportion of these to seek and commence working.
4. Government should, with urgency, provide assurance that EU nationals will be able to stay and settle in the UK, and a timetable for when the detail of this will be agreed.
5. Defra/Home Office/BEIS should lead a consultation with industry and other experts regarding the design of a future Seasonal Workers Scheme for horticulture. This should be piloted for the 2017 season. Outcomes of the pilot and a further public consultation should form the basis for the design of a multi sector Seasonal Workers' Scheme.
6. Defra should lead a consultation within the UK food and agricultural sectors to identify shortage occupation roles at all skill levels and anticipated future requirements. Using this information and other research, industry representatives and Defra should collaborate to form a future vision for promoting UK food and farming sector careers and to determine future skills and training policies.