

[Defra updates on Independent Review into Labour Shortages in the Food Supply Chain](#)

Defra has today announced that John Shropshire will chair the Independent Review Into Labour Shortages in the Food Supply Chain. Mr Shropshire is an industry veteran, who stepped down from his role as CEO of major horticulture producer G's Fresh Group last year.

He will be supported by an expert panel that draws in expertise from across the farming, fisheries, processing and manufacturing aspects of the supply chain.

As set out in the [Government Food Strategy](#), the Government recognises the sector cannot sustainably rely on migrant labour, especially in light of global pressures elsewhere. The Independent Review into Labour Shortages in the Food Supply Chain will consider the challenges facing food and farming businesses to recruit and retain the labour they require and will provide recommendations for industry and Government to consider. The review will encompass the roles of automation, domestic employment and migration routes.

Today's announcement builds on actions taken by the Government to support farmers through the current challenges they are facing, including [bringing forward direct payments](#) to farmers to help with cashflow which are now being paid in two instalments. Additionally, the Government has launched a [review](#) of supply chain fairness in the pig sector and has committed to responding to a [review](#) exploring how to fast track the development and adoption of automation across horticulture.

The final report and will be published in 2023 and the Government response will follow.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice said:

I want to thank John Shropshire for agreeing to lead this Independent Review into Labour Shortages in the Food Supply Chain. His industry knowledge and experience make him an ideal candidate to chair the review.

Whilst labour shortages are affecting countries around the world, we have already boosted the number of visas available through the seasonal workers route to 40,000 and extended it to include poultry and ornamental horticulture, and we are working to encourage people to take up jobs in the sector.

Labour is a key issue for British farmers and farming and this report will give the government vital insight into how to address

it in future.

John Shropshire, chair of the Independent Review into Labour Shortages said:

Our farming and food supply sectors are facing multiple challenges, and labour shortages are contributing to this. This review will help us understand how we can address labour shortages and boost productivity in the food supply chain.

I've worked in the horticulture industry for many years and, along with the panel of experts supporting the review, I hope we can make some clear recommendations that will have a long-term impact on reducing pressure on farmers and increasing food security.

The Government encourages all sectors to make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, careers options, wage increases and to invest in increased automation technology. To help with these efforts, Defra is working with industry and the Department of Work and Pensions to raise awareness of career opportunities within the food and drink sector among UK workers.

Chair:

- John Shropshire OBE – John Shropshire was CEO of G's Fresh Group until 2021 and is chairman of G's Fresh Limited. He joined the family farming and marketing business, which was founded by his father Guy Shropshire, after completing a BSc Hons in Agriculture at Newcastle University in 1976. G's Fresh Group is a major UK horticulture business which has won several national industry awards recognising its progress in technical and product innovation, exports and environmental management. He is also Co-Chair of the Modern Slavery Intelligence Network (MSIN) a non-profit organisation created to share intelligence to aid in disrupting modern slavery and labour exploitation within the UK food industry.

Expert panel:

- Fiona Dawson CBE – Fiona Dawson is a non-executive director at Marks and Spencer, the Lego Group, and Kerry Group. She was also previously Global President of Mars Food and Multisales, served as President of the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD), and was Vice President of the Food and Drink Federation. In 2021 Fiona was awarded a CBE for services to women and the economy.
- Martin Ford – Martin Ford is Technical & Sustainability Director at Greencore UK, a leading manufacturer of convenience foods. He has previously worked for a number of food businesses, including Northern Foods and Morrisons.
- Mark Greet – Mark Greet has led Falfish (a Cornish wholesaler and processor of wild-caught fish and farmed fish), where he was a managing

director until 2021.

- William Kendall – William Kendall is a food entrepreneur, and farms conventionally and organically in East Anglia. He led the acquisition of embryonic brands New Covent Garden Soup Company, Green & Black's and latterly Cawston Press and then their successful growth strategies. He co-founded an early-stage venture fund and remains engaged in venture investing. Over the years he has had board responsibilities in sectors as varied as online grocery, hotels, natural building materials and garden centres. William advises a number of family businesses: he is a Trustee of the Grosvenor Estate and of the Gascoyne Cecil Estate which both have substantial farming interests and he is a director of Samworth Brothers which is one of the UK's largest fresh food makers.
- Dr David Llewellyn CBE – David Llewellyn is the former Vice-Chancellor of Harper Adams University, a position he held from 2009 until 2021. He is currently retired. He was also a founding member of the Skills Development Board which helped create the Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH). He was awarded a CBE in the 2022 New Year Honours for his services to higher education, agriculture, and rural industries.
- Helen Sisson – Helen Sisson is Group Technical Director at 2 Sisters Food Group, a food manufacturer with strong presence across poultry, chilled foods, and baked goods. She has over 30 years' experience in Food Manufacturing having previously worked for food businesses including Greencore, Sutherland, Hazelwood Foods and prior to this within the dairy sector. Helen currently sits on a number of industry panels, including membership of the British Retail Consortium (BRC) International Advisory Board and IGD Technical Leadership Forum. Helen is also a Non-Executive Director of Campden BRI and a Trustee of the charity FareShare.

The full list of sectors considered by the Review are:

- Farming Sectors, including: Pigs, Eggs, Poultry, Red Meat, Dairy, Arable and Edible Horticulture
- Primary Processing, including: Meat Processing and Seafood Processing
- Food and Drink Manufacturing

We plan to publish further details of the review in due course.