

Asda Stores Limited response to “Sowing the seeds: A blooming English horticultural sector”, *House of Lords, Horticultural Sector Committee*

16th November 2023

We have positive long-standing relationships with our network of British farmers spanning decades. We have clear standards and processes for having constructive discussions around the prices that we pay to all of our suppliers, and we recognise the importance of sustainable long-term buying agreements to benefit our customers as well as our suppliers.

We are committed to the principles of sourcing responsibly, respecting human rights, and promoting the dignity of all those who contribute to our business. Partnering with our suppliers and their global facilities, we work to mitigate risks, drive remediation, and improve standards for workers via our risk-based approach. We are active members of external collaborations such as the Ethical Trading Initiative (of which we are a founding member), Stronger Together, and the Food Network for Ethical Trade which continue to support their members to drive continuous improvement. Through these partnerships we engage with other retailers, NGOs, Trade Unions, and suppliers to address risks, share best practice, investigate issues where appropriate, and establish initiatives to achieve collective goals.

We expect suppliers to operate responsibly, abiding to applicable local labour and employment laws and adhering to our Standards for Suppliers. Where an issue is identified in the supply chain, we are committed to working with suppliers and third parties to understand the root cause and provide relevant guidance and resources to support thorough investigation and remediation for impacted workers.

We have been working with industry since 2022 to address the issues identified and detailed in this report about the UK’s Seasonal Worker Scheme and illegal recruitment fees. This began through collaboration with other UK Supermarkets to fund [Just Good Work](#), an initiative that provides migrant workers with critical information to migrate to the UK and find fair and safe work. In March 2023 we supported the establishment of the [Seasonal Worker Scheme \(SWS\) Taskforce](#) and continue to be an active member. The SWS Taskforce is a collaboration of industry trade bodies, retailers, growers, recruiters, and non-profits focussed on implementing tangible actions to help safeguard and ensure access to workers’ rights in the UK Seasonal Worker Scheme and wider UK horticulture.

We acknowledge that there are fundamental issues with the existing framework for the Seasonal Worker Scheme and will continue to work with our suppliers and industry stakeholders to address these challenges.