

The Fair Work Agency: What Agricultural Employers Need to Know

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The creation of the Fair Work Agency (FWA) represents a significant shift in how the UK enforces labour market standards. For agricultural employers, understanding this new enforcement landscape is essential to maintaining compliance and protecting your business. Here's what you need to know about the FWA and how it affects the agricultural sector.

Understanding the Fair Work Agency

The Fair Work Agency has been established as the UK's single, intelligence-led enforcement body for labour market standards. Rather than managing enforcement through fragmented agencies with overlapping responsibilities, the FWA brings together expertise, powers and operational experience into one coherent organisation.

This consolidation moves the system from fragmented enforcement to joined-up impact, creating:

- A clearer route for workers to raise concerns and access their rights

- A simpler pathway for responsible employers to understand and meet their obligations
- Stronger, more coordinated action against serious non-compliance and exploitation

The Three Pillars of FWA's Mission

The Fair Work Agency operates with a clear three-part purpose that directly impacts agricultural businesses:

1. Support for Workers

Help workers and those impacted by labour exploitation understand and access their rights and support, and be able to raise their concerns with confidence.

2. Employer Support

Work with partners and employers to help make compliance simpler and support business in understanding and acting on their obligations.

3. Enforcement Action

Take tough action against rogue employers who exploit workers or undercut legitimate business.

What Brought the FWA Together?

The FWA consolidates the work of three previously separate enforcement bodies:

- **Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate** – responsible for regulating employment agencies and labour providers
- **Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)** – focused on preventing worker exploitation and labour abuse

- **Office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement** – providing strategic oversight of enforcement activities

This consolidation is particularly significant for agriculture, an industry where labour sourcing, seasonal employment, and labour provider arrangements have historically required oversight across multiple regulatory bodies.

Why This Matters for Agricultural Employers

1. Enhanced Enforcement Capability

The FWA's integrated approach means coordinated intelligence and enforcement across all areas of labour market compliance. Agricultural businesses using labour providers, gangmasters, or employing seasonal workers will face more joined-up scrutiny.

2. National Minimum Wage Enforcement

As of 2026, the FWA has assumed statutory responsibility for National Minimum Wage (NMW) enforcement. While HMRC continues to deliver this under contract until April 2027, the full transfer to FWA oversight means agricultural businesses need to ensure complete NMW compliance. This is critical for farms that employ casual labour or operate through third-party suppliers.

3. Simpler Compliance Pathways

While enforcement is tougher, the FWA also aims to support responsible employers in meeting their obligations. Having a single contact point rather than managing relationships with multiple agencies should simplify compliance for agricultural businesses committed to fair employment practices.

4. Targeted Action Against Non-Compliance

Agriculture has been identified as a sector at higher risk for labour market abuse. The FWA's intelligence-led approach means they can identify patterns of exploitation and non-compliance more effectively. Rogue employers who undercut standards will face stronger consequences.

Key Areas Agricultural Employers Should Review Now

To prepare for FWA oversight, agricultural businesses should audit their compliance in these areas:

- **Wage Records & NMW Compliance** – Ensure all workers, including casual and seasonal staff, are paid at least the National Minimum Wage and keep detailed records
- **Payroll Systems** – Use robust payroll management to demonstrate accurate, transparent wage payments
- **Working Time Regulations** – Verify compliance with working time directives, especially for seasonal workers

- **Labour Provider Arrangements** – If using recruitment agencies, labour providers or gangmasters, verify they hold appropriate accreditation and compliance status
- **Worker Rights Information** – Ensure workers understand their rights and have accessible channels to raise concerns
- **Health & Safety Standards** – Maintain documentation of safe working conditions and accommodation (if provided)
- **Contract Transparency** – Keep clear employment contracts and terms of employment for all staff

The Road Ahead: 2027 and Beyond

The FWA's full integration of National Minimum Wage enforcement will be complete by April 2027. This represents a critical transition point for all employers, particularly those in agriculture where wage compliance has sometimes been overlooked.

The shift to a single, intelligent enforcement body signals the government's commitment to tackling labour market abuse and protecting workers. For legitimate agricultural businesses, this should strengthen confidence in fair competition and reduce the risk that unscrupulous employers can operate with impunity.

How MooHR Can Support Your Compliance

At MooHR, we understand the specific challenges agricultural employers face in maintaining compliance with evolving labour regulations. Our platform is designed to help you:

- Maintain accurate, auditable payroll records
- Ensure National Minimum Wage compliance across all pay scales
- Manage contracts and worker documentation efficiently

- Demonstrate compliance to regulators with confidence

If you're an agricultural employer navigating the Fair Work Agency landscape, we're here to help. Contact the MooHR team to discuss how we can support your compliance journey.

Source: This article references the [Fair Work Agency Delivery Plan 2026 to 2027](#) published by the UK Government.

Ensure Your Agricultural Business Is FWA-Ready

Schedule a compliance review with MooHR today and strengthen your labour practices for the modern enforcement landscape.