



GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LEP FOOD SECURITY

Latest news and updates

27th April 2020

Please continue to feed your experiences, solutions and concerns to gllepbusinessintelligence@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP continues to work closely with businesses, facilitators, and government to support the Covid19 impact on the food chain and support the food sector to continue feeding the nation. The two schemes which are widely promoted and operating now remain as [Feed the Nation](#) and [SWAP](#). [Deliver to the Nation](#) and the [Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport](#) are also two additional logistics schemes now fully operational.

Please follow the latest updates on our website www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk and follow us on [@GreaterLinclsLEP](#) and through [LinkedIn](#).

Summary Updates:

- DEFRA's [Pick for Britain](#) website has gone live and offers information on how to apply to a number of farm vacancies. This urgently needs Lincolnshire farmers and agricultural businesses to [register](#) their requirements as the Lincolnshire area is currently very sparse. The website does not yet reflect the 80,000 seasonal jobs needed across the sector for harvest work and we would encourage Lincolnshire businesses to ensure your harvest vacancies are on this site both to attract staff and so that the industry and government have a true picture of how many staff are needed.
- We are pleased to confirm that government has announced [new categories](#) of key workers eligible for CV19 testing to include critical personnel in the production and distribution of food, drink and essential goods. [Registration](#) is required to book appointments via the government website but we are aware of some delays in accessing the site and processing new applications - please keep trying as the government is releasing new slots every day. Latest information and toolkits are available on the LEP website [here](#) and further toolkits and guidance are being developed and will be available at the [Coronavirus Campaign Resource Centre](#). Local testing sites will be announced soon.
- Local perceptions of migrant workers congregating in Lincolnshire towns to use banks and not following social distancing have been causing adverse comments on social media. Lincolnshire Police have made enquiries and believe it is partly due to smaller companies and Gang Masters paying these staff, most of whom work in the food chain, by cheque. To mitigate this problem, employers are being asked to make direct payments to bank accounts for these workers.
- Follow up online meetings are taking place to accelerate development of automation potential in the food chain led by the University of Lincoln and Greater Lincolnshire LEP. The LEP is working

with partners and government to develop a programme to address this area and is keen to hear from more businesses who would like to participate.

- The Greater Lincolnshire LEP has been asked to share best practice and knowledge from on-going food supply chain work at the next DIT Agri-tech call across all English LEP's. The LEP input will be supported by the University to help promote the need for the drive on automation and robotics.

Latest Announcements:

- DEFRA Secretary of State, George Eustice led the government news conference on 26th April and reported that their intelligence gathering shows that across the industry as a whole:-
 - Food sales are now back to, or slightly below, normal. In contrast, some feedback from Lincolnshire food businesses last week suggested demand was still 10-15% above normal. We would be interested in any other feedback or views on this;
 - Staff absentee rates have been falling and are now only about half what they were 3 weeks ago. This confirms feedback from industry members in Lincolnshire at the end of last week, but again we would be interested in further feedback on this issue.
- He also recognised that some migrants had arrived to help with harvest, but promoted the need for the industry to make more use of furloughed staff to meet harvest demands later in the year. The LEP welcomes the use of furloughed staff, but would be interested in any further views which industry has on how deliverable this is to inform the feedback it provides to government.

Information and Links:

- The Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB) have produced a comprehensive guide of [best practice](#) for seasonal workers to avoid the spread of CV19 on farms.
- The Association of Labour Providers also has a comprehensive support page focused at the food sector. Click [here](#) to view.

Looking forward - Seeking your input on developing farming and the food chain post Covid-19?

- The Greater Lincolnshire LEP is starting to work with partners and government to review changes in consumer patterns and the supply chain from CV19. The aim is to develop a clear plan to grow the sector after the pandemic and we would welcome any input you can offer on this, in particular on the priorities you think will be important.
- In addition to the main review, the LEP and South Holland District Council are reviewing the impact on the horticulture and potato sector as it represents 1/3rd of the LEPs agricultural output (much higher than national) and some sectors of horticulture have been particularly badly affected e.g. ornamentals. This sector also has the greatest need for seasonal staff. If you have information on the impacts on this sector or how we can develop it in the future please contact the LEP.

Coronavirus

- Find out what support is available for your Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland business. Visit [Business Lincolnshire](#)
- Arrange a call with a local business adviser. Contact 01522 782189 or email businesslincolnshire@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- Can your business help to provide masks, gowns or hand sanitiser? Visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-support-from-business>
- Tell us about the impact on your business so we can help Government develop the right solutions. Email gllepbusinessintelligence@lincolnshire.gov.uk