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Written statements

WS Home Office

Made on: 06 September 2018

Made by: **Baroness Williams of Trafford** (The Minister of State, Home Office)

Lords **HLWS911**

Migration Policy

My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sajid Javid) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and I are pleased to announce that our departments will implement a nationwide pilot to bring non-EU migrant workers to UK farms, commencing in early 2019.

The pilot will mean fruit and vegetable farmers are able to employ migrant workers for seasonal work for up to six months. 2,500 workers from outside the EU will be able to come to the UK each year, alleviating labour shortages during peak production periods.

Soft fruit production in the UK has grown dramatically, by 130% in the last 20 years. To ensure that this growth continues and the UK is at the forefront of the next agriculture revolution, farmers must also look at ways that technology can reduce demands for labour.

However, automated harvesting solutions are not universally available and so in the short term, this pilot will support farmers during peak production periods.

The Seasonal Workers pilot will be run by two scheme operators, who will oversee the placement of the workers. The arrangements for selecting these will be announced in due course.

The pilot will run until the end of December 2020 and will be monitored closely by the Home Office and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

This statement has also been made in the House of Commons: **HCWS940**