

Submission – Don Thompson (Jersey Fishermens Association) – 21st April 2023

Work visas and conditions on fishing vessels in the UK and Ireland has raised a lot of controversy with employees having to complete written English tests, which they struggle to do despite having a good standard of spoken English (hopefully not necessary in Jersey), accusations of overly long hours and issues over pay.

At the same time the vast majority of foreign fishing crew interviewed have been very happy with their employment and it has been some isolated cases seized on by the media.

I am not sure how relevant it is to contracts etc under Jersey law, but fishing is an industry, subject to stoppages for weather, time spent steaming to fishing grounds etc, where normal hours are impractical.

While we do not currently have a large number of foreign crews working in Jersey and I am not fully au fait with their contracts, I believe it would be pertinent to make a case for fishing specific contracts.

In terms of ensuring that workers are treated properly, I can only suggest that it would make a lot of sense to create a role in government for someone who had authority to speak with workers across various sectors to check on their welfare.

I suspect that few foreign workers would know where to go, or who to speak to in order to deal with an issue.

Finally, fishing is becoming an increasingly regulated industry, to the extent that it can be very difficult to recruit local crews with sufficient certification and experience. Whilst it is always useful to ensure scope for local people to be recruited into the industry, we are keen that the criteria and process for application of foreign crews is not made overly difficult or complex.