

GUIDANCE FOR JOHN LEWIS SUPPLIERS - COMMUNICATION WITH INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS INCLUDING HOMEWORKERS

Effective communication is key to implementing the John Lewis Homeworkers Policy. We recognise that communication with informal workers and homeworkers in your supply chains can be a challenge given the different types of contracts, geographical spread, illiteracy and the cultural and social sensitivities.

Here are some suggestions on different ways of communicating with workers (both informal unit workers and homeworkers):

1. Word of mouth: Do not underestimate the power of the spoken word, especially if it comes from you or your staff who regularly deal with contractors. Research shows that when contractors were asked about why they do not implement socially responsible practices with workers, the response was unanimous 'we had no idea' and 'exporters never talk to us about these things!' We know this could be an exaggeration, but we do know that interaction with exporters staff focuses exclusively on orders and there is often no time or inclination for anything else.

You should ensure that QC or other staff that visit contractors' locations, routinely talk to workers on key messages. These could relate to a particular Health & Safety suggestion or encouraging them to send children to school. These messages should be agreed by you and understood by all your staff.

2. Visual materials: Booklets/ leaflets/ posters can be used as an aide for re-enforcing messages or training. These materials should be of a high visual content and in languages that are understood by workers. These materials can be distributed to workers through contractors or directly by your QC/other staff. A good idea may be to do a series of pictures with 'good' and 'bad' practice, this immediately shows the workers what is right and wrong. An illustration of this is attached in Appendix 1.

As far as possible, these materials should be prepared in consultation with your staff and the contractors as they usually have appropriate knowledge of workers capacities. Attached is a booklet produced by the John Lewis Rug Suppliers Group on Health & Safety for Carpet Weavers.

3. Information camps: A very effective way of communicating information to workers is to organise camps/meetings. Workers can be asked to come to a convenient location where information can be disseminated in an interesting and interactive manner. Contractors can be given the responsibility of organising these events. At the camp, information can be made available through - talks by experts, street plays, audio-visual presentations, films, etc.

Whilst this is more resource intensive, it is the most effective way of communicating information to a large number of people with low literacy levels. Once a set of workers have experienced such a camp, it is easier for contractors/your staff to reinforce the key messages over time.

4. Co-ordinating with external agencies to deliver communication material: It is not necessary for a single company to prepare information material or to organise camps. This is an activity on which several companies from an industry can collaborate. It would be useful to find out if any NGOs/ Government agencies already have such information or may like to collaborate on creating information or organising a camp. Agencies you could get in touch with include: District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), District Urban Development Agency (DUDA), local office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts (DCH), Central Board for Workers' Education (CBWE), local private or government insurance agencies. These agencies are mandated with improving the conditions of artisans and informal workers.

Appendix 1: Example of 'Good' and 'Bad' practice posters

आँखों का बचाव



व्यवस्थित कार्य स्थल

- ❖ कार्य मे आने वाली वस्तुएँ जैसे सूई धागे सितारे मोती इत्यादी को अलग अलग करके पारदर्शी डिब्बों में रखे ताकि अव्यवस्था या दुर्घटना होने की संभावना से बचा जा सके।

