

John Lewis

POLICY ON HOMEWORKERS				Reference:	MS003
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1. POLICY

- *John Lewis acknowledges the existence of homeworkers in the supply chain, and is open and positive towards homeworking.*
- *This policy is applicable to John Lewis own branded exclusive product suppliers. Where applicable we will make our position clear to branded product suppliers.*
- *This policy defines homeworking and provides guidance improving the working conditions of homeworkers.*

2. BACKGROUND

John Lewis expects its suppliers not only to obey the law, but also to respect the rights, interests and wellbeing of their employees (including homeworkers), their communities and the environment. We also expect our suppliers to be honest about the issues they face and share best practice so we can work together to make realistic, long-term improvements.

John Lewis recognises that the lack of visibility in the supply chain and their irregular employment status, makes homeworkers a vulnerable group. They often face conditions that fall below minimum standards laid down by international and national legislation. This normally translates into irregular work, low pay, and often unsafe working practices.

We believe that the first step towards reducing the vulnerability of these workers is to acknowledge their presence in our supply chain and being open and positive towards home working. Reacting negatively towards homeworking is likely to either remove a much needed source of income for these workers (mostly women) who cannot participate in the formal economy; or drive them underground and thereby preventing any progress in improving working conditions

3. DEFINITIONS

HOMEWORKING

Our definition is based on the ILO Homeworking Convention (1996, C177, Article 1), it states:

a) the term homework means work carried out by a person, to be referred as a homemaker.

- in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer.
- for remuneration
- which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used, unless this person has the degree of autonomy and economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker under national laws, regulations and court decisions

b) persons with employee status do not become homeworkers within the meaning of this convention simply by occasionally performing their work as employees at home, rather than their usual workplaces

c) the term employer means a person, who, either directly or through an intermediary, whether or not intermediaries are provided for in national legislation, gives out home work in pursuance of his or her business activity.

4. REFERENCES

- ILO Homeworking Convention (1996, C177)
- UK: National Group on Homeworking: www.ngh.org.uk
- Homeworkers Worldwide.
- ETI Homeworking Guidelines

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The John Lewis Partnership Responsible Sourcing Code applies to all suppliers and John Lewis expects all its suppliers to abide by it. However, we acknowledge that improving working conditions for homeworkers is a complex issue, and achieving sustainable improvements will take time and require a stepped approach by John Lewis and its suppliers.

5.1 John Lewis commitments:

5.1.1 John Lewis will communicate our position on homeworkers throughout the company and to those who supply us.

5.1.2 We will ensure that the presence of homeworkers in the supply chain will not lead to the relocation of work or cancellation of orders.

5.1.3 We will work with our suppliers to identify where homeworking occurs in the supply chain beneath them.

5.1.4 We will work with our suppliers and other relevant stakeholders for the sustainable improvement of labour conditions of homeworkers in our supply chain.

5.2 Supplier expectations:

5.2.1 Suppliers will ensure all their factories are registered on Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange)

5.2.2 Suppliers should work with their contractors and subcontractors to identify where homeworking is occurring in the supply chain.

5.2.3 Suppliers should compile an action plan with their contractors and subcontractors to improve working conditions of homeworkers.

5.2.4 Suppliers must introduce a management process that can demonstrate progress.

5.3 Working conditions from the Responsible Sourcing Code adapted for Homeworking:

5.3.1 Every effort shall be made to provide a safe and hygienic working environment in the units and at home. Suppliers should assess the risks especially in informal sector units and workers homes and establish plans for appropriate actions to improve health and safety.

5.3.2 Wages and benefits shall be comparable with locally benchmarked industry norms or national requirements, whichever is higher. Wages shall always be sufficient for basic needs whilst still providing some discretionary income.

5.3.3 Information relating to wages shall be available to workers in an understandable form. All records on these transactions will be maintained by the supplier.

5.3.4 Supplier should spread the awareness of record keeping at the homeworkers level. The records relate to number of pieces completed and payments made.

5.3.5 Suppliers shall provide information on and encourage workers to participate in insurance schemes, especially for life and health.

5.3.6 Children under the age of 14 shall not be recruited or employed.

5.3.7 Young Persons under 18 shall not work at night or under conditions that are potentially detrimental to their health and physical or mental development.

5.3.8 Where children work within their own families in learning the family craft or skill, this should be encouraged. However, these children must also be encouraged to attend full time school.

5.3.9 Suppliers should support education initiatives in homeworker locations. This could be by supporting NGO/Government led initiatives, contributing to scholarships, supporting schools, for example.