



Homeworker Guidelines

Purpose

Working from home for many is a preferred alternative to working in a factory as it can afford greater flexibility for individuals to balance a need to earn an income with home lives and family. Home workers often possess specialist skills for specific product or components which cannot be made by machinery, or they may produce small quantities of intricate or high quality items.

Historically the lack of visibility of home workers in supply chains, combined with their complicated employment status in many countries, has made them a particularly vulnerable group of workers. Many home workers have been underpaid and are often invisible in the supply chain.

At The Very Group we believe that one of the first steps towards reducing the insecurity of homeworkers is to take an open and positive position towards homeworking. We accept homeworking to be a small but necessary part of our supply chain and we acknowledge our responsibility to put policies and procedures in place that seek to ensure the welfare of such workers.

This Policy is intended to support The Very Group suppliers and factories understand the steps they need to take to responsibly utilise homeworkers within their supply chain in accordance with our standards.

Definition

Our definition of homework is based upon the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention (1996, C177, Article 1) which promotes the equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners, and which states:

The term homework means work carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homemaker,
(1) in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer;
(2) for remuneration;
(3) 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 of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker* under national laws, regulations or court decisions;

* In practice, homeworkers working in global supply chains are producing goods to strict company specifications. They do not have 'the degree of autonomy and of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker', and so they are clearly homeworkers covered by the ILO definition.

Our definition of intermediary is any person(s) or organisations not directly employed by the supplier who is involved in the sourcing of homeworkers, the distribution or collection of homework, a central location attended by homeworkers or any other roles contributing to the completion of homeworkers in our supply chain.

Our Commitment

The Very Group are committed to improving working standards in our supply chain through the application of our code of conduct. This includes a commitment to mapping and improving standards in those parts of the supply chain where homeworking is likely.

Under this policy we commit:

- to communicate our position on homeworking throughout our company, and to those who supply us.
- to ensure that the identified presence of home workers in the supply chain will not lead to the relocation of work or cancellation of orders; and
- to work with our suppliers and factories for the sustainable improvement of employment conditions of homeworkers in our supply chain.
- Engaging, where appropriate, with other brands and relevant non-governmental organisations in the sustainable improvement of labour conditions for homeworkers in our supply chains.



Suppliers Commitment

We expect our suppliers:

- to adopt and commit to a shared policy of acceptance and transparency of homeworking;
- to communicate this policy to their own supply chains, including factories, intermediaries and home-workers themselves;
- to work with us to map their own supply chains; and
- To work with us to develop action plans for improving employment conditions for home workers where these do not meet those set out in international labour standards and our code of conduct, and to involve homeworkers and/or their representatives in this process.

The Use of Intermediaries

The use of intermediaries is common practice in homeworking supply chain. We accept the use of intermediaries however it is the responsibility of the supplier to:

- Establish transparency of all tiers of intermediaries between the supplier and the homeworker, to document this and share with The Very Group upon request
- Engage intermediaries in training on their obligations under this policy and in compliance, with local law and in accordance with The Very Group code of conduct.
- Establish contractual relationships with intermediaries stipulating expectations including:
 - Compliance to all relevant national laws
 - Standards to be upheld in business operations and the outsourcing of work to homeworkers
 - Record keeping for all homeworkers including family members, work distributed to the homeworker, payments made to the homeworker and detail of benefits paid.

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