



Ethical Business Policy

The North Circular

March 2010

1. Ethical Focus, Certification and Standards

The North Circular Is committed to:

- Using sustainable fibres & yarn: organic wool, rescued wool, recycled wool; organic cotton; other sustainable fibres
- Keeping manufacturing local to yarn source
- Creating good working conditions and sustainable livelihood for workers
- Supporting and reviving traditional knitting skills
- Supporting British industry

Story, home based knitters who hand knit accessories

2. Business structure and practices

- Sourced and manufactured in UK (sourcing, spinning, dyeing, knitting) – model for production circles close to yarn source; take the business model (hand knitted items) to other places in the future → Peru, Mongolia
- All accessories are hand knitted by home workers, wages are set in agreement with knitters
- Plan to focus on RTW collection → machine knitted, manufactured in Scotland

3. Sourcing and Supply Chain policies

The North Circular is committed to:

- Sourcing wool from sustainable sources (currently Izzy Lane's rescued sheep & a Manchester based supplier that sells recycled and end of line wool)
- Sourcing other yarns (cotton and alpaca for next collections) from sustainable fibres (eg organic cotton, UK alpaca, fairly traded alpaca); researching sustainability of fibres & yarns before using new fibres
- Creating "production circles" in country of origin of yarn
- Using organic / Fairtrade certified fibres wherever possible
- Working towards certified organic textile

4. Factories

The North Circular is committed to:

- Building long term relationships with manufacturing units
- Producing in UK as long as using UK wool
- Working with supplier factories and mills re organic textile certification
- Designing RTW product to the strengths of the factories with which it already has a relationship

5. Fair Trade & Community Producer Organisations & Co-operatives

The North Circular is committed to:

- Investigating whether Fairtrade certified cotton may be possible for its products
- Working with fair trade producers, community producers and co-operatives when “production circle” model is taken to developing countries

6. Culture and Skills

The North Circular is passionate about and committed to:

- Keeping knitting traditions and skills alive and developing them for new generations
- Supporting British wool mills (or local mills in other countries with “production circles”
- Involving the elderly
- Involving the knitters with their knowledge, experience and skills, in the design process; being able to trace items back to the individual knitters

7. Key Targets

Year 1

- Establish business commercially
- Develop RTW line
- Work on reducing cost price without compromising ethics
- Develop ethical trading policy for supplier factories and use when sourcing new suppliers
- Ensure legal and best practice requirements are being followed with regard to homebased knitters
- Research relevant certification (eg organic fibre / organic textile) and discuss with suppliers
- Link with relevant charities supporting the elderly
- Set 5 Year targets

5 Year

- Expand “production circle” model to other countries
- Be “best practice” model for working with homebased workers
- Have certified fibres and garments where possible
- Be recognised for keeping and developing traditional knitting skills