

# Ethical, Environmental & Social Responsibility Policy

Myakka is a retailer of fair trade furniture and home accessories founded in 1999 by Simon Whitehead and Georgie Hopkins from their Somerset base where the business remains today. Our products are designed and sourced almost exclusively for Myakka from dedicated suppliers in India, Thailand, Vietnam and beyond. Customers can purchase Myakka's products through their mail order catalogue, the ecommerce website or by visiting the Shop in Guildford or Warehouse Outlet in Wincanton.



Myakka has a strong ethical and environmental awareness and is always striving to improve performance in this area as the business continues to grow.



The business is firmly based on the principles of fair trade and to this end, Myakka is proud to currently hold the **Ethical Award** for demonstrating corporate social responsibility (since 2009) and have **BAFTS** recognition as a Direct Sourcing Retail member since 2006 (British Association for Fair Trade Shops & Suppliers).

## Fair trade

Myakka follows the 10 principles of fair trade as set out by WFTO (World Fair Trade Organisation):

### 1. **Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers**

Assisting marginalised producers into economic self-sufficiency.

### 2. **Transparency and accountability**

Good and open communication channels at all levels of the supply chain.

### 3. **Fair trading practices**

Respecting the social, economic and environmental well-being of small producers. Orders are guaranteed, invoices are paid on receipt of documents. Building long term relationships based on trust and respect.

### 4. **Payment of a fair price**

A fair price is one that has been mutually agreed by all through dialogue and participation, which provides fair pay to the producers and can also be sustained by the market.

### 5. **Ensuring no child labour or forced labour**

Adhering to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, there must also be no forced labour in its workforce or home workers.

### 6. **Commitment to Non Discrimination, Gender Equity and Women's Economic Empowerment and Freedom of Association**

Ensuring there is no discrimination hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, HIV/Aids status or age. Opportunities should be encouraged for women including leadership positions and equal pay.

### 7. **Ensuring good working conditions**

Providing a safe and healthy working environment for employees and members. Being aware of the health and safety conditions in groups they buy from, seeking to raise awareness and improve practices.

### 8. **Providing capacity building**

Seeking to increase positive development for small and marginalised producers. Assist in management skills, production capabilities and access to markets.

### 9. **Promoting fair trade**

Raising the awareness and need for greater justice in world trade through fair trade. Honest advertising and marketing techniques are always used.

### 10. **Respect for the environment**

Maximising use of sustainably managed raw materials in their ranges, seeking to reduce energy consumption and minimise their waste stream, use recycled packaging wherever possible and dispatching goods by sea.

The purpose of this document is to set out Myakka's commitments and aims with regards to our ethical, environmental and social responsibility. It is available to all members of staff, supplier groups, partner organisations and members of the public.

## Acknowledging and improving the impact of our business

We understand that no business works in a vacuum and that we are intricately linked with the people and environment our business relies upon. While we operate commercially, we interpret our success on more than just the generation of financial profit. We are committed to making a positive social impact (both at our UK base and in our sourcing and manufacturing countries) while working to minimise the environmental impact of our business operations.

Myakka is a commercial operation, which has a genuine desire to improve the well-being of everyone who comes into contact with the business:

- As a **customer** who is offered ethically sourced, desirable products at affordable prices and an enjoyable shopping experience;
- Through **trade association**, which is done in an open, transparent and respectful manner to create long term lasting relationships;
- As a **member of staff**, who enjoys a supportive working environment and benefits from Myakka's continued expansion;
- As **part of the wider community**, which benefits from the local investment and contribution that Myakka creates.

**Customers:** We work hard to avoid the anonymity often surrounded by ecommerce and mail order businesses. We aim to treat customers as we would like to be treated ourselves and understand that offering excellent, personal service is not an added benefit but a key responsibility for every good business.

- We maintain a fully trained team of knowledgeable staff available to our customers seven days a week.
- Every furniture delivery is booked directly with our customers before goods leave our warehouse.
- We stand by our product, addressing customer concerns with exchanges or refunds where required.
- We actively seek customer feedback and respond to the learning this provides.

We have received recognition from the **Somerset Business Awards** both for our Service Excellence and as Business of the Year.



In addition in 2014 we won the ECMOD Award for Best Multi-channel Business in our size category.

By passing on information of our core values and business principles, we aim to raise the awareness of our customers to fair trade and ethical business. We manage this through regular blogs, social media and events.

We commit to investing resources to maintain our high level of customer service as our business grows.

**Trade Association:** We aim to develop long term business relationships with suppliers who share our business values. Key to trading fairly, we understand that this longevity can only be achieved if the benefits are mutual and all parties have an opportunity to profit from the trade. Profit is not just a financial gain but can also be determined in terms of a wider social benefit.

- For UK suppliers, we research their sourcing methods and take preference of working with those committed to fair trade (and ideally accredited to BAFTS or another recognised body).
- For overseas suppliers, we request each supplier completes our detailed questionnaire when we start our business relationship. This allows us to highlight areas for development as our trading grows.
- We maintain close contact and carry out regular overseas visits & inspections of both our suppliers and any associated sub-contractors.
- We work closely with our suppliers passing on feedback and market learning to develop new product and improve production quality.

As a demonstration of this commitment to our suppliers, we have been working with our key Indian and UK suppliers and for over 15 years. We commit to maintaining our strong links with suppliers, ensuring they continue to adopt Myakka's core values and working together to make improvements to production methods and wider social benefits.

**Members of Staff:** We understand that a dedicated and motivated team is essential to offer our customers an exceptional level of personal service and therefore, for the continued success of Myakka. We aim to provide our members of staff with an environment where they feel valued, enjoy the challenge of their roles and benefit from the supportive working setting of Myakka.

- We improve and develop our communication channels to ensure every member remains informed of company developments.
- We invest in an annual company Away Day every June along with other regular team-building events to develop our sense of community.

We commit to regularly review our personnel policies as the business develops to ensure we offer our members of staff a fair working environment, opportunity to develop and a sense of pride in their work.

**Wider Community:** We understand that the impact of our business extends beyond our doors and as such we feel it is our responsibility to invest in our local communities to ensure Myakka has a positive social benefit. This not only includes our UK base in Somerset, but also our sourcing communities in India, Thailand and Vietnam.

We commit to providing regular support to our highlighted key charitable organisations and other community projects. More information on how we support our communities can be found in our 2016 CSR Report.

### Addressing the environment through our operations

At Myakka, we understand that the efficient use of our resources and effective recycling makes more than just commercial sense. While every operation has an impact on the environment, we work to minimise our footprint. We have identified the key areas of impact as the use of timber in the production of furniture, raw materials in the production of soft furnishings, resources used for direct mail, packaging and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transporting our products.

We commit to continued monitoring and improvement of our waste streams and recycling levels, working both at source and downstream to reduce, reuse and recycle.

### Reporting

As our business continues to grow, we recognise the growing consumer interest in transparency and honesty about our business practices towards our stakeholders. As a result, this year, 2016, marks the release of Myakka's very first annual CSR report.

All information on how we constantly work towards adhering to our EESR Policy can be found in our latest CSR Report [here](#).