



Where Does It Come From? and the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015

What is the Act about?

The UK Modern Human Slavery Act came into effect 29 October 2015.

From this date every UK business with a turnover of more than £36 million must make an annual statement outlining the steps they plan to take to ensure there is no slavery or human trafficking in their business or supply chain.

The act does allow businesses the option to state that they are taking no steps, but it is unlikely that many businesses will choose to take this option as it will reflect poorly on their ethical credibility.

There are no legally binding requirements to conduct due diligence and no penalties currently for non-compliance.

What is Where Does It Come From?

Where Does It Come From? is a UK based clothing brand with a core ethos of traceability. The brand currently retails and wholesales designs that come with a code on the label to allow the customer to trace their garment's creation journey. All products are ethically made with a transparent supply chain.

Why is the Act Necessary?

Almost 21 million people worldwide are victims of forced labour – 11.4 million women and girls and 9.5 million men and boys. In the UK in 2014, 2,340 people were identified as potential victims of trafficking - a 34% increase on 2013 figures. Of those 2,340 potential victims 671 of were children. (source www.unseen.org).

The garment industry alone turns over almost \$3 Trillion a year (source www.labourbehindthelabel.net). However garment workers are victims of low pay (as low as \$21 per month), poor and dangerous working conditions, bonded labour and trafficking. 80% of garment workers are women.





These abuses of human rights are what has led to the creation of the UK Slavery Act 2015 as a bid to ensure brands take seriously their responsibilities to those who create their products.

What This Means for Businesses

Businesses who wish to be ethically credible will need to explore their workforce and supply chain and produce a statement in their annual report and on their website.

They will need to outline steps that they are taking to ensure no slavery or trafficking which could be:

- A thorough investigation of all suppliers and their suppliers. Depending on the size of the business and complexity of the supply chain this is likely to be a major, long-term and very expensive task. Many suppliers in the garment industry use subcontractors themselves who in turn subcontract. Sometimes the actual work is done several steps from the initial supplier and by 'informal' factories with little or no regulation or traceability.
- Set in practice new guidelines for suppliers stating that thorough and auditable supply chain information must be available. This will be complex for suppliers and suppliers are likely to increase their prices to submit to more rigorous guidelines.

External agencies, such as PWC, are offering to undertake some or all of the work necessary to meet the provisions of the act, such as building frameworks and strategies and providing any training needed to staff or suppliers.

How Where Does It Come From? can work with you

Where Does It Come From? was set up in 2013 to provide clothing with an ethical and traceable supply chain. Since 2014 the business has been retailing its clothing and in 2015 has launched a wholesale service. We work closely with our suppliers on our collections to ensure that our clothing is created according to Fairtrade and ethical principles. The workers are part of large co-operatives who manage the distribution of work. During the garment making process the workers are visited and, if willing, photographed and interviewed for garment stories. Where Does It Come From? is a member of BAFTS (The British Association of Fairtrade Shops and Suppliers) and is licenced by the Fairtrade Forum. Our supply chain has been visited by Fairtrade International with a view to further certification.





Where Does It Come From? can work with your business as a supplier brand. We can

- Provide wholesale items from existing stock (where available). End customers can then access their garment's story using the Where Does It Come From? website.
- Or we can work with your business to create a custom collection. All traceability and ethical information would be provided both to the brand and to the end customer (via the website) to ensure transparency and credibility.

Working with Where Does It Come From? will demonstrate your business's commitment to the 2015 Modern Slavery act by giving a clear indication of your intent to improve the clarity of your supply chain.

Jo Salter

jo@wheredoesitcomefrom.co.uk

07598 323952



www.wheredoesitcomefrom.co.uk

