

Labour Behind the Label (LBL) Ethical Policy

Preamble:

LBL recognises that its actions can have an impact on the lives of garment workers as well as those in other industries. In addition, as a solidarity organisation promoting responsible corporate behaviour of other companies, LBL recognises its responsibility to ensure its own practices are socially and environmentally responsible.

This may require Labour Behind the Label to invest more resources and staff time to fulfilling its ethical policy, and commit to doing this where financially possible. As a small organisation with limited budget, a balance needs to be struck between acting in a manner consistent with our values and ensuring we have the financial, technical and human resources to fulfil our organisational aims effectively.

This policy aims to set guidelines and minimum standards to ensure that this balance is reached in the everyday functioning of LBL.

Travel

Participation in national and international networks requires effective communication and the development of personal relationships through some degree of face-to-face contact. Outreach work too necessitates travel to the location of target groups. While recognising this, LBL staff should seek to keep the total amount of travelling to a minimum, and to eliminate air travel wherever possible. The following protocols should be applied.

1. Before committing to attend any event or meeting that requires intercity or international travel, staff should fully consider,
 - a) possibilities for replacing meetings with other forms of communication such as Skype or phone conferencing.
 - b) options for staff located closer to the meeting or event to attend in their place.
 - c) whether or not attendance is justified if neither a) nor b) is feasible.
2. Air travel is viewed as an unusual occurrence, not a regular option. Travelling to and/or from a meeting or event by air may not be considered unless one of the following criteria is met:
 - a) it takes place outside of Europe.
 - b) the cost of return travel by train exceeds £300 or travel by coach is outside of budgeted expenditure.
 - c) the time to travel there and back over land exceeds 48 hours.
 - d) another meeting, event or time-critical piece of work falls at a time when the staff member concerned would need to be travelling over land, and cannot be covered for by other LBL staff.
3. Where one of the criteria in 2) is met, the staff member concerned should re-examine the necessity of attending the meeting or event. S/he should seek a second opinion from another member of the staff team or management committee before booking, setting out in writing the reasons why the meeting/event, and the flight, are deemed necessary. Staff should consider options for raising extra funds where cost of travelling overland is the prohibitive factor, reapportioning workloads where time is the prohibitive factor, and travelling over land in one direction if not both.

4. Staff should aim to book travel as early as possible to ensure that the most competitive train tickets are available.
5. Staff will record all their travel noting the location and type of transportation used through their expenses claim forms or invoices for travel.
6. Car hire should only be considered as an option for UK travel when the person travelling is carrying heavy or bulky items.

Ethical Procurement

LBL exists to promote responsible corporate behaviour, and we will therefore seek to source products and services in a way that promotes CSR.

1. All quotes for products will be compared on the basis of their environmental and social impact and this will be given highest priority in sourcing.
2. Where possible, we will aim to use products and services that meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - a) are locally-sourced
 - b) are supplied by local businesses
 - c) are supplied by businesses with a social or environmental aim, social enterprises, or companies from the trade union or co-operative movements.
 - d) are second-hand where appropriate
 - e) are recommended by Ethical Consumer where appropriate
 - f) take into account active campaign recommendations (e.g. electronics campaign)
3. Where LBL sources garments, suppliers must meet all provisions of the CCC model code, including credible independent verification of working conditions, and membership of a multi-stakeholder initiative if appropriate. The manufacturing workforce should be organised into a trade union or cooperative.
4. Organic, fair trade and recycled products shall be bought where available and not prohibitively expensive.
5. Plastics (other than recycled) and polystyrene will be avoided unless absolutely necessary.
6. A brief letter outlining LBL's concerns about working conditions in the manufacturing process will be sent out to relevant companies that LBL purchases from.

Information technology

LBL supports the open source movement as a means of promoting wider access to technology, safeguarding knowledge for the collective benefit, spending our own resources more effectively, and challenging the dominance of corporate monopolies. We also aim to maximise our productivity and professionalism. In order to do both:

1. LBL will work towards the use of open source operating systems and software wherever possible.
2. This includes our website (server, Content-Management System, etc.)
3. Job descriptions should state as "desirable" familiarity with open source software, and new staff without this familiarity should receive comprehensive training as part of their induction.

4. All volunteers should receive basic training in open source software as needed, and twice a year a more comprehensive course for volunteers should be run. Time for this should be built into staff workplans, and money into budgets.
5. LBL will work towards a website that complies with the WCAG 1.0 accessibility criteria (upgraded to 2.0 when appropriate). <<http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505/>>

Energy use

Many of LBL's key stakeholders in the South will be severely affected by climate change. It is therefore imperative that we minimise our carbon footprint:

1. All plugged electrical equipment should be switched off at the wall socket when not in use.
2. All lights will be switched off when not in use, including leaving the room for short times.
3. All office light bulbs will be energy saving (where possible).
4. Computers will be set so that they will go to stand-by within five minutes of non-use and will switch off completely if not used within 15 minutes.
5. Computers and monitors should not be left running at night.
6. We will work to ensure that our offices are run on green electricity tariffs.
7. Heating and cooling should be at the minimum needed in order to maintain a comfortable working environment.

Reduction, re-use and recycling of paper

LBL aims to minimise its environmental impact, while striving to maximise productivity and professionalism. The following protocols should ensure this:

1. Where feasible, documents should be read and stored electronically rather than as paper copies. Office systems should be designed to maximise the amount of work that can be conducted electronically and minimise the amount of paper used.
2. All paper will be printed on both sides of the page.
3. All waste office paper will be recycled after use.
4. Staff are encouraged to print all internal documents two sheets to one page and on both sides of the paper. Appropriate printer drivers should be installed to ensure this is possible.
5. Where appropriate, envelopes and other stationery will be re-used.
6. All office paper should be unbleached and recycled and where not available or inappropriate, from sustainably managed sources.
7. All mass printing will be printed on recycled or sourced from sustainably managed forest paper with water based inks.

Public communication of our ethical policy

LBL aims to set a standard for other organisations to follow, and to demonstrate that an organisation can function sustainably without compromising its effectiveness. To that end:

1. This policy should be placed on the LBL and FEI external website.
2. Wherever possible, documents for external consumption should contain an ethical statement, for example, "Printed on recycled paper using water-based inks. Written in open source software on computers powered by green electricity."

3. Publications should be licensed under the Creative Commons License
<www.creativecommons.org>
4. Documents circulated externally (including online) should be tested for accessibility in open source applications, for example OpenOffice, open source PDF readers, Firefox
5. A statement on implementation of this policy will be included in the LBL annual report.
6. LBL will strive to develop targets to record our performance relating to this policy.

Policy implementation and Review

1. All staff have a responsibility to ensure this policy is implemented in their work and in their workplace
 2. This policy will be reviewed annually by the LBL management committee.
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