

ASOS Policy on Gender Equality in the Supply Chain

INTRODUCTION

This Policy applies to all own brand suppliers to ASOS, including agents and licensees and sets out the minimum standards that ASOS expects within its supply chain. This Policy applies in addition to the ASOS Code of Integrity and other ASOS Policies as set out in your Supplier Agreement.

BACKGROUND

ASOS acknowledges that Gender is a cross cutting dimension that is inherent to each of the elements of the ASOS Code of Conduct. Therefore, preventing any form of gender-based discrimination and working towards promotion of gender equality at the factory level is fundamental for all ASOS suppliers to ensure compliance with the ASOS Code of Conduct.

Traditional gender norms in a society directly impact potential human rights violations at workplace level, such as: violence against women; sexual harassment; gender pay gap; and lack of employment security. These risks impact particularly significantly on women, who are more likely to be on non-standard forms of employment, such as migrant, contracted or informal labour.

WOMEN IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Women are an important workforce in garment supply chains (including ASOS' supply chain) constituting 56% at the time of writing this Policy. This Policy focuses on women considering that the majority of the workforce in the garment industry are women. However this policy must be taken into consideration in relation to any groups of workers in the supply chain that are impacted due to Gender roles, stereotypes, and patriarchal power relations. Discrimination that people face need to be addressed as a matter of human rights, and businesses have ethical and legal responsibilities to eliminate discrimination in their workplaces and supply chains.

Despite some formal non-discrimination provisions in the local laws of supplier countries and the ethical codes of businesses, women continue to experience different kinds of discrimination. This is due to patriarchal power structures, social norms and gender stereotypes, limitations of available regulations, poor guidance on and monitoring of implementation of local regulations and inefficient redress¹.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy, ASOS recognises the following definitions:

¹ World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law Index 2022 global score is 76.5 out of 100, indicating that an average economy gives women around three quarters of the legal rights of men.

Gender: Socially constructed roles of and power relations among men, women, and gender non-binary persons.

Violence and harassment in the world of work: refers to a range of unacceptable acts, omissions or behaviours, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts whether occurring in public or in private life. It includes gender-based violence and harassment.

Gender-based violence and harassment: including sexual harassment, means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately.

Sexual Harassment: is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work.

Discrimination: shall mean any form of unequal treatment that is not permitted by local law and/or any ASOS policies and shall include unequal treatment based on race, caste, age, role, gender, gender identity, religion, country of origin, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, dependents, disability, social class, union membership or political views or on the grounds of work status e.g. part-time, fixed term or agency Workers;

Worker: a person who provides any form of work or service to a Supplier

Homeworker: a Worker who performs a stage of manufacturing, assembly or packaging in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer.

Supplier: an organisation that manufactures or procures goods or services, including agents and sub-contractors (collectively “Supplier(s)”)

GUIDING INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

There are numerous international conventions and tools setting the standards and providing the guidance for businesses to prevent gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality in the world of work. Please see below. The “world of work” is defined by the ILO not only as the traditional physical workplace but also commuting to and from work, work-related social events, public spaces including for informal workers such as street vendors, and the home, in particular for homeworkers, domestic workers and teleworkers.

- International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 100 – Equal Remuneration
- ILO Convention No. 111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)
- ILO Convention No. 156 – Workers with Family Responsibilities
- ILO Convention No. 177 – Homeworkers Convention
- ILO Convention No. 183 – Maternity Protection
- ILO Convention No. 190 – Violence and Harassment
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often described as the international bill of rights for women, and the General Recommendations of the Committee on the elimination of Discrimination against Women

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, and the General Comments of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Women's Empowerment Principles
- The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 – as a stand-alone Goal 5 Gender Equality and cross-cutting priority across all Sustainable Development Goals
- United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

THE ASOS COMMITMENT

Under this Policy, ASOS commits to:

- integrating a three step framework for promoting gender equality in the Supply Chain as recommended by the United Nations' Working Group on Business and Human Rights: this includes gender responsive assessment, gender transformative measures, and gender transformative remedies;
- in order to do this, working with women's human rights defenders and civil society organisations at every level (including planning, implementation, monitoring of any strategic programmes and/or factory level actions) to ensure that implementation of this Policy will not only prevent or solve any problems occurring in the Supply Chain but will also ensure that the actions taken and remedy being provided will be transformative towards gender equality and empowering for women;
- integrating a gender sensitive approach and gender aggregated data into our ethical auditing and monitoring processes;
- providing guidance and support to our Suppliers to promote gender equality within the Supply Chain;
- work with Suppliers, civil society organisations, and women's human rights defenders to prevent gender based violence and harassment in the world of work and establish gender sensitive remedy mechanisms;
- providing a safe and secure and enabling environment for workers; and
- share this Policy with stakeholders including women working in the Supply Chain, in accessible language and format.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPPLIERS

Under this Policy, Suppliers must:

- develop an open approach to work towards eliminating gender based discrimination and promoting gender equality in the world of work;
- provide all data requested by ASOS related to the gender dimension of work, including employment, promotion, payments;
- collaborate with ASOS to support establishment of gender sensitive grievance and remedy mechanisms with the guidance from ASOS;
- not permit discrimination in any form, including discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status;

- develop a policy and procedure to prevent discrimination at the workplace, in particular with regard to recruitment, wages, benefits, promotion, training, transfer, termination, and retirement;
- not implement any irrelevant health checks, including pregnancy tests, during recruitment or at any time of employment relationship;
- provide same/similar job positions with no wage reduction for women after maternity leave;
- protect their Workers from bullying, verbal or physical harassment, victimisation, discrimination or physical abuse in the workplace, whether from management, from their colleagues or from members of the public;
- Disseminate this Policy to women working in their supply chain in accessible language and format that will be shared by ASOS.

CONTACTS

For further information please contact the Ethical Trade Department at: ethicaltrade@ASOS.com