

Ethical Sourcing

We take the sourcing of our products seriously. We try to ensure that we buy products from ethical sources and from a supplier that takes an active interest in minimising their impact on the environment.

We would like our patients to be given all this information so they are able to make informed decisions about the products that they are purchasing. With this in mind we are now starting to classify our products depending on some of the environmental issues involved.

The marks given depend on the answers we are given to the following questions:

General

- Does the manufacturer and/or distributor have their own environmental policy, or can they demonstrate that ethical concerns are important to them when making commercial decisions?
- Does the manufacturer and/or distributor have an environmental, quality management or health and safety management system in place (e.g. ISO14001, ISO9001, OHSAS18001) or any other environmental certifications?

2 Points

Why we ask these questions: This is an attempt to see whether our supplier takes ethical and environmental issues seriously. Some of our suppliers are small businesses and may not have the means to apply for an official certification so we will still give them a mark if they take the time to write their own policy.

Traceability

- Can we trace the supply of the product back to original manufacturer?
- Can we trace the supply of materials back to the original raw materials?

2 Points

Why we ask these questions: Being able to trace a product means that we can be more confident that it is produced in an ethical manner. If the product is made from a range of different materials we will still score the product if we can trace over 90% of the materials.

Manufacture

- In terms of labour used at the factory – can we be reassured that the standards within the manufacturing factory are humane and ethical?

2 Points

Why we ask these questions: This is an important aspect of ethical manufacture; as such a product would score two points if the majority of the following questions can be answered.

Questions we will ask include:

Does the manufacturer and/or supplier employ children to work at any of its facilities?

Is the workers freedom of movement unreasonably constrained by the manufacturer and/or supplier?

Do employees receive a fair wage for their work (at or above national minimum wage)?

Do employees have reasonable work hours?

Are there safety precautions in place for workers?

What policies and/or management systems are in place to ensure worker health and safety?

Does the manufacturer and/or supplier have any labour related certifications (e.g. fair trade, social accountability, unionized)?

Materials

- Are any of the materials used in the manufacture of the product considered harmful to the environment?
- Do the materials used to make the frame come from a natural and sustainable source?

2 Points

Why we ask these questions: To be assured that the materials used in the manufacture are environmentally sustainable.

Questions we ask will include:

What is the environmental impact of the material and process used to make the product?

(Are toxins released into the environment during manufacture?)

Does the product contain any plastic? If so, is it a pure or composite material?

Is the plastic a petroleum based plastic or natural-based acetate?

Does the product contain metal alloys? In what concentrations?

Does the product contain any dyes, paints or other additives? If so, is the chemical information available?

Packaging

- Does the manufacturer and/or supplier make any attempt to reduce the environmental impact of their packaging?

1 Point

Recycling

- Is the product or raw material of the product recyclable?

1 Point

Carbon Footprint

This is currently not possible due to the high cost of investigating the carbon footprint of individual products. We hope to introduce this service soon, if the costs can be reduced.

Each product will be given a score out of a maximum of 10. The points available for each section are listed in the text. If our supplier cannot produce an answer, or takes an unreasonable length of time, they will score 0 for that section.

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