

Weston Beamor Creative Group: RJC Activity Report 2023

1. Introduction

The Weston Beamor Creative Group comprises of Domino Jewellery, Gecko Jewellery and Weston Beamor. All businesses are actively involved in the manufacturing or supply of precious metal jewellery. Our collective commitment within the WB Creative Group is dedicated to ensuring all products manufactured by or for us are carried out in an ethical and sustainable manner. The WB Creative Group has held accreditation by the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) since 2015, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to enhancing standards and aligning with the principles of the RJC. This report outlines the activities undertaken by our businesses in 2023 to ensure compliance and drive continual improvement in standards.

2. Supply Chain Management

- **Traceability of Materials:** Our group places significant emphasis on the sourcing of materials. We primarily utilise recycled metals from RJC-accredited sources. In instances where non-recycled or non-accredited sources are employed, we collaborate closely with our suppliers to trace the origin of precious metals back to the smelter. Our endorsement is exclusively extended to metals sourced through smelters recognized by the Responsible Miners Initiative, subject to an annual review conducted in Q1.
- **Due Diligence Processes:** Stringent supplier assessment procedures, encompassing third-party accreditations, audits, and detailed questionnaires, are rigorously conducted. Senior management reviews and approves suppliers based on this comprehensive evaluation. Scheduled third-party audits, ranging from 6 to 24 months, are contingent upon risk assessment and prior audit outcomes. Non-compliant suppliers are removed from the approved supplier list.
- **Engagement with Suppliers:** With the lifting of Covid restrictions in 2023, our teams resumed in-person visits to key suppliers worldwide. We prioritise openness, support, and knowledge sharing, valuing our suppliers' contributions and fostering harmonious relationships crucial for sustained productivity.

3. Human Rights and Social Impact

- **Supply Chain Policy Adherence:** All WB Group suppliers must adhere to our supply chain policy, aligned with RJC practices. Ethical audits by independent auditors verify this agreement before supplier approval.
- **Community Engagement:** Acknowledging the pivotal role of the local community, particularly in Birmingham's jewellery quarter, we actively support educational and training opportunities. Collaborating with local schools and academies; we provide training, equipment, and work experience, emphasising inclusivity and diversity.
- **Charitable Initiatives:** Initiatives like the Barnardo's Kidmas jewellery range and annual charity sponsorships demonstrate our commitment to philanthropy, with proceeds supporting charitable causes, including Barnardo's Christmas appeal, the British Beekeepers Association and the Benevolent society within the trade.

4. Environmental Sustainability

- **Leadership Commitment:** Recognising the imperative of sustainable practices, our senior leadership is committed to implementing policies fostering awareness and improved practices within the group. Significant investments in solar panels in 2023 underscore our dedication to reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

5. Labour Practices

- **Living Wage Accreditation:** The WB Group became an accredited living wage provider in 2022, further solidifying our commitment to improving workers' living standards. Regular one-to-one review meetings and ongoing leadership development courses underscore our dedication to staff well-being and growth.
- **"Stepping Stones" Development Programme:** Launched in 2023, this initiative is open to all employees, providing a structured framework for personal development and future succession planning.
- **Fair Labour Sourcing:** Temporary labour is sourced only from agencies that uphold fair employment practices, avoiding zero-hours contracts and ensuring holiday and sick leave entitlements.

6. Product Integrity

- **Quality Assurance:** Rigorous inspection and testing processes, including goods-in inspection, material screening, in-house quality control, diamond screening, and compliance testing, ensure product integrity. Independent tests like REACH compliance and Anchorcert Pro conducted by the Birmingham Assay office are reviewed and acted upon promptly.

7. Stakeholder Engagement

- **Supplier and Customer Engagement:** Face-to-face meetings with suppliers were reinstated in 2023, coupled with regular visits and customer forums aimed at understanding requirements and areas for improvement. Dedicated points of contact within the businesses enhance customer relationships.
- **Grievance Mechanism:** A formal grievance mechanism for external stakeholders was introduced in 2023, providing a confidential channel for suppliers and customers to communicate concerns.
- **Staff Engagement:** A yearly confidential staff survey ensures staff feedback on company policies, practices, and management. The 85% engagement rate in 2023 marks a 6% increase from 2022, highlighting our commitment to fostering a supportive work environment.

8. Future Goals and Commitments

Despite the challenges posed by the UK's economic landscape in 2023, our commitment to staff retention and extensive investments in training and development remains steadfast. Looking ahead to 2024, we aspire to expand the principles of the RJC into the B Corp framework, encompassing environmental considerations not only within the WB Group but across our entire supply chain. This ambitious endeavour aligns with our corporate values, aiming to set new benchmarks within the jewellery manufacturing sector.