

The Frank Co. Launches Cost to Close to Bring Living Wage Costs Into Fashion Buying Decisions

New solution connects factory payroll data with product-level purchasing decisions, giving fashion brands visibility into the cost of closing living wage gaps

BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX, UNITED KINGDOM, August 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Frank Co.](#), a sustainability consultancy and technology company for fashion brands, has launched Cost to Close, a new solution that translates factory wage data into the cost of closing living wage gaps at the garment and order level.



The Frank Co. Logo

Built within The Frank Co.'s supply chain transparency platform, [The Chain](#), Cost to Close connects factory payroll data with product and order information to show brands what closing a living wage gap would cost per garment and per order. The aim is to put worker impact into the same commercial conversation as product cost, pricing, and purchasing.

[Turning wage data into a commercial decision]

Fashion brands increasingly collect information about wages and living wage compliance across their supply chains. Yet wage data typically remains separate from the buying process, where decisions about product costs, factory pricing and orders are made.

The Frank Co. designed Cost to Close to close that gap.

The solution converts a factory's monthly wage gap into a wage gap per minute, applies the labour minutes required to make a garment, and calculates the resulting living wage uplift per garment. Buyers can then apply that figure to the order quantity to see the total adjustment

required.

This gives buyers a practical financial figure rather than leaving worker impact as a separate sustainability metric.

The need for this kind of number became clear to The Frank Co. through its work with brands. In one deep dive on a supplier in Bangladesh, payroll data showed that around 1 in 3 workers earned below the statutory minimum wage across a six-month window, despite previous social compliance checks. The finding highlighted the value of understanding the actual size of wage gaps and translating them into figures that can inform commercial decisions.



[Making the cost of closing the gap visible]

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Cost to Close™ gives brands a clearer way to understand what their buying decisions mean for workers. It connects the wage data already being collected in supply chains with the commercial decisions”

*Frankie Hewitson, Founder of
The Frank Co.*

A recent Cost to Close case study illustrates this need, involving an anonymized global fashion brand with factories across multiple countries.

The assessment examined payroll-level wage data from 25 factories and found that 21 recorded negative real wage growth in 2025. This means workers' purchasing power declined even where nominal wages increased.

The analysis also showed why headline wage increases can provide an incomplete picture.

In two factories in Europe, workers received nominal wage increases of more than 40%. At one factory, real wages increased by 16.8%. At another, real wages fell by 18.4%. Both operated in the same inflationary environment, demonstrating how nominal wage increases alone can mask declining purchasing power.

Cost to Close takes this type of wage analysis one step further by connecting it directly to the product a buyer purchases.

In one example, the calculation showed that closing the living wage gap for an oversized cotton tee would require a £0.50 uplift per garment. For an order valued at £2,500 FOB, the total cost of closing the gap was £50, representing a 2% increase in the total FOB value.

A separate pilot brand, tracking payroll across three factories that made the majority of its orders, put the tool to work over three years. All three factories eventually sat above the local living wage benchmark, up from wages that had previously sat close to the statutory minimum. Real wage growth on the most closely tracked factory reached more than 25% year on year, with the biggest gains going to the lowest-paid workers.

As one factory put it after seeing its own wage position for the first time: "Seeing the gap, not just a pass or fail, was in itself valuable to us."

[Giving worker impact a place in the buying room]

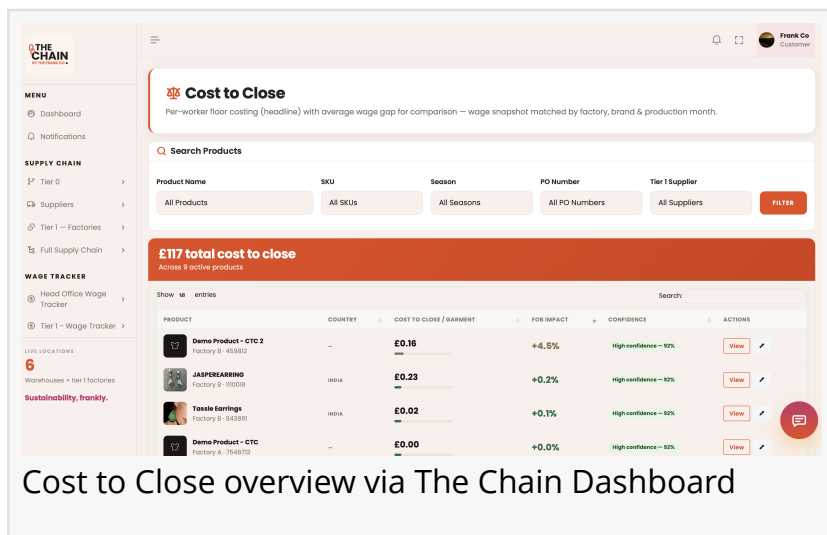
The Frank Co. designed Cost to Close to make wage information actionable at the point where purchasing decisions happen.

The solution provides a per-product and per-order view of the living wage gap, alongside worker impact information, living wage benchmarking and confidence scoring. The Chain ties wage data to the relevant production date and factory, connecting the calculation to the conditions of a specific order.

For suppliers, this creates a mechanism for their wage data to reach the buying conversation. Wage data collected through The Chain can flow into the buying process without creating additional data submissions or audits for the factory.

In practice, this can mean the difference between an order that needs adjusting and one that doesn't. In one order for 400 units with a 14-minute standard minute value, Cost to Close surfaced a £0.05 uplift per garment before the brand confirmed the order. On a second order from a factory already meeting the benchmark, the tool returned £0.00, confirming pay was already where it needed to be rather than leaving the question open.

"The objective is not another sustainability score. It is a practical mechanism that helps brands understand the cost of closing wage gaps and gives worker impact greater visibility when



commercial decisions are being made." - Harrison Atuokwu, Sustainability Compliance Coordinator at The Frank Co.

[Available to fashion brands]

Cost to Close is available through The Frank Co. as part of The Chain, its supply chain transparency platform. The Chain brings together supplier management, factory-level wage information, environmental data, and other supply chain transparency tools, with Cost to Close adding a buying decision layer focused on living wage impact.

Fashion brands can book an introductory call and provide a sample order for The Frank Co. to demonstrate how Cost to Close works and discuss how the solution could support their buying and sustainability processes.

To learn more about Cost to Close, contact info@thefrankco.com or visit thefrankco.com.

[About the Frank Co.]

The Frank Co. is a sustainability consultancy and technology company for fashion brands. It combines deep industry expertise with proprietary software to make supply chain transparency genuinely useful, not simply a compliance exercise. Through The Chain, The Frank Co. helps brands bring together supplier, wage, environmental, and product-level supply chain data to support more informed decisions.

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