



Do you weave?

No – but we can arrange this. We work mainly with weavers in Wales, but there are also several others, including in Scotland, the Midlands, Yorkshire, etc. as well as handloom weavers for smaller quantities. See below for a small selection of contact details, try online search or contact us for further information.

In order to have a successful outcome, you need to discuss your fabric with the weaver and then give us the agreed specification for the yarn, which we then make to order and can send direct to the weaver. Weavers have a range of specialities and we can discuss the most appropriate person for you to work with.

The best option – for all your weaving – is to visit, see samples, discuss your fibre and work directly. The weavers will be able to suggest possible ideas, colour-ways, textures and what is fashionable, classic or traditional and can show you a wide range of options. Some weavers will make up a small sample for you.

All **hand weaving** is comparatively expensive, and to get a reasonable price it is necessary to have a length of cloth made, not just a single item. For single items it is best to approach your local Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers (www.wsd.org.uk is the central website for these). Hand looms are smaller and narrower than mechanical ones, though they may be considerably more versatile in that a hand weaver may be willing to undertake a more complicated warp design on more shafts than a mill weaver.

The small-scale **mill weavers** in Wales, with whom we often work, do not all have websites and neither do several larger ones. Curlew is Organic registered. Some weavers have a 27 inch Harris-tweed style loom, some have around 1 metre wide, some 60 inches and some even wider – in all cases the finished width of the fabric will be less due to shrinkage in the finishing process.

Smaller mills use dobby looms, which are versatile and good for making a variety of pieces of fabric as they are flexible to set up. The alternatives are the faster rapier looms or the complex jacquard looms. A rapier loom usually requires a finer, smoother 2-ply yarn, to reduce the risk of fluffy hairs sticking out and causing breakages while weaving. A jacquard loom is very flexible, for complex designs, and generally will have a standard cotton warp over which a weft covered design is woven in your yarn. Short sample lengths can be made on jacquard looms, which are computer driven, though it sometimes requires more cost for setting up.

The warp needs to be strong to withstand the tension of the loom and so can be spun as a stronger, harder yarn with the weft as a softer yarn to give softer handle. Wool wefts can be woven onto wool, silk, cotton, linen or alpaca warps, and occasionally vice versa, but normally the harder yarn is the warp. Warps and wefts may be singles or plied, depending on the effect required.



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The normal practical length of dobbie mill-woven cloth is 50 metres long and 160 cm wide. This can be woven as:

- a single length of suiting cloth (although the weft colour may be varied to create more than one shade)
- a row of 2-metre scarves across the weft and then along the warp (a total of 5 across and twenty-five along to make around 120 (allowing for a couple to be poor), allowing variation of stipe or plain in the warp and shade in the weft
- 24 throws, all 160 cm wide and 2 metres long, with or without various styles of fringed ends
- Throws, Rugs or Blankets 160 cm by 2 metres, or smaller knee blankets, baby blankets, etc.

You need to remember the selvedge and also if scarves are made that they will have a frayed edge along all four sides (you would need to use a handloom or specialist equipment otherwise).

For 50 metres of 160cm fabric, the cost will be approximately £12-13 per metre or around £600-700 a piece (including finishing), depending on the complexity and for 30 metres of narrower fabric it will be £28 or £840 a piece. Meanwhile, the spinning will cost around £400-600 plus VAT. For a 50 metre length, the weavers require about 31 kilograms of yarn for a single colour, and more if there are more colours. There may be extra charges for cutting into throws or scarves and for fringes at each end. Cloth may be dyed as a piece at around £2 per metre. A 30 metre narrow piece will need around 12 kilograms of yarn. So the fibre needed to make these quantities will be up to twice as much as the yarn required, due to yield in processing. Spare yarn colours can be saved for another weaving session.

After weaving, a fabric goes for finishing, which washes and evens out the fabric: the equivalent of blocking of knitted items. The finishing also textures the final result, so that it can be smooth, shiny, fluffy, etc. but it will also shrink to a finished width of around 90% of the original woven piece.

For rugs and carpets, these may be woven or tufted. In either case, due to the weight, the yarn is prepared washed on cone, rather than leaving the spinning oil on it. Carpets and rugs are therefore not finished in the same way as fabric, though they may have fringes attached and be sheared to make them more even, if tufted.

Generally the weavers with whom we work will create designs for you and also include a finishing service within their work, while others may require a loom ticket (the recipe for the weave) and also that you then deal direct with the finishers.

If you have booked ahead, the turnaround for weavers may be between 6 and 10 weeks from receipt of yarn, but this can vary greatly depending on how busy they are and within this is an allowance for 2-3 weeks with the finishers. It is also important to note that many mills have summer holiday closures, which can add at least a month to the overall weaving and finishing time. Also everyone is working towards Christmas! So the time to get quick turnarounds is the New Year ...



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PLEASE CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR CALL DIRECT TO:

FABRIC – smaller mills

- Curlew Weavers (Roger Poulson), Rhydlew, Llandysul, Carmarthen, SA44 5RL (also organically accredited)
01239 851357 <http://www.westwales.co.uk/curlew.htm>
- Melin Teifi (Raymond Jones), Cambrian, Drefach Felindre, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire SA44 5UP
01559 371003 <http://melinteifi.com/>
- Taobh Tuath Tweeds (Rebecca Hutton) Northton, Isle of Harris (traditional accredited Harris weaver, weaves for Uist Mill)
contact by email at taobhtuathtweeds@gmail.com website: <http://www.taobhtuathtweeds.com/>
- The Islay Woollen Mill Company (Gordon and Sheila Covell), Bridgend, Islay, Argyllshire PA44 7PG
01496 810563 <http://www.islaywoollenmill.co.uk/>
- Isle of Mull Weavers & Ardanish Organic Farm (Anne and Andrew Smith), Ardanish Farm, Bunessan, Isle of Mull PA67 6DR
01681 700265 <https://www.ardanish.com/> (may only now make for themselves)
- Bristol Weaving Mill, 1a Barton Road, Top Floor, St. Philips, Bristol BS2 0LF
0117 329 3450 <https://www.bristolweavingmill.co.uk/>

For special projects, also consider Sam Goates at Woven in the Bone <http://www.woveninthebone.com/> or Minta Birse Stuart at <https://www.aramintacampbell.co.uk/> and there are many more ... such as Humphries Weaving in Suffolk <https://www.humphriesweaving.co.uk/about-us/>

A good source for current weavers is the regularly updated listing at <http://www.theweaveshed.org/suppliers-services/commission-weavers/> supported by Central St. Martin's College and The Worshipful Company of Weavers, which lists weavers willing to undertake commissions.

FABRIC – larger mills

- Joshua Ellis, Grange Valley Road, Grange Road, Batley. WF17 6LW
01924 350070 <http://joshuaellis.com/>
- John Spencer Textiles (David Collinge), Ashfield Mill, Active Way, Burnley, BB11 1BS
01282 423111 <http://www.johnspencer.com/>
- Townend Weaving Mill (John Liversedge), Holm Mill Cottages, West Slaithwaite Road, Huddersfield JD7 6LS
01484 843970
- The London Cloth Company, (Dan Elliot) 07722 244182 <http://www.londoncloth.com/about/>

WOVEN RUGS

- Solva Woollen Mill (Tom and Anna Grime), Middle Mill, Solva, Haverfordwest, SA62 6XD
01437 721112 <http://www.solvawoolenmill.co.uk/>

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