

MAKING FASHION A FORCE FOR GOOD

# RIVER ISLAND

## SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

12 COMMITMENTS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET



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## A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Reader,

First of all, thank you for taking an interest in how we at River Island are approaching sustainability across our business. We have been spreading the joy of fashion as River Island for over 30 years now. Fashion is our world; it's who we are, it's what we do and it's what we believe in. We also believe that fashion can be a force for good, and that belief forms the foundations of our sustainability work. We have established our 12 Commitments for People and Planet, aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, to keep us focussed and grounded on our sustainability journey. I am so proud of how much change we have been able to drive forward during the last year - in spite (or perhaps in light) - of the realities we have been facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular:

- We have launched our sustainable materials framework, formalising several years of work to improve the sustainable attributes of our garments. We have committed to 50% of our garments being sustainably attributed by 2023.
- Wellbeing has come to the fore more than ever. We have worked to help our staff cope with the changed realities of lockdown and made mental health a priority. This starts with the act of listening and fostering a culture that encourages people to speak out and share how they feel.
- We have had a bumper year for new partnerships, joining forces with groups that will help us deliver on the commitments we have made. We are incredibly happy to welcome the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) and Blueprint for all (formerly the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust) to the RI Family.

There is still much more to do and we remain committed to our targets. Over the coming year, we will continue to focus upon improving transparency throughout our global supply chain. This will promote the ethical treatment of workers and better improve the sustainable attributes of our products. At home, we will be working together with our Islanders to further prioritise wellbeing through new initiatives such as the 'Care, Detect and Promote' culture, alongside our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) programmes. Other areas to build will be establishing robust water and chemical programmes. We know these are great challenges we can't face alone. We will continue to collaborate, to seek partnerships, to share our journey and be transparent about our challenges as well as our successes.

Lastly, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to all our Islanders during this generation-defining era - it has been quite the year. For fashion, for the high street; for everyone. COVID-19 is one of the most significant challenges that River Island has ever faced and throughout it we've worked relentlessly to protect our business, our people and our community. We have been working hard to change the way we make clothes, and with each year our staff drive us forward more and more. We stand together for a brighter future for all who want fashion to be a force for good.

**WILL KERNAN, CEO**

"FASHION IS OUR WORLD; IT'S WHO WE ARE, IT'S WHAT WE DO AND IT'S WHAT WE BELIEVE IN. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT FASHION CAN BE A FORCE FOR GOOD, AND THAT BELIEF FORMS THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR SUSTAINABILITY WORK."

**WILL KERNAN, CEO**



# Fashion is our world.

It always has been and it always will be. We love the creativity, empowerment and fun that fashion brings to the world, but we want to be mindful of the impact fashion can have on the planet and on the people who live in it.

This is our commitment to building a relationship with the environment and our society that puts in more than it takes out, so that all Islanders can enjoy the pure joy of fashion, free from worry or guilt. So what will we do about it?

We've made 12 commitments for people and planet, aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, that guide us towards a more ethical future. We've made good progress in some areas but want, and need, to do more. Join us?



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY,  
INCLUSIVITY



WELLBEING



ETHICAL WORKING



COMMUNITY



SUSTAINABLE  
MATERIALS



CHEMICALS



WATER



WASTE & RECYCLING



CLIMATE CHANGE



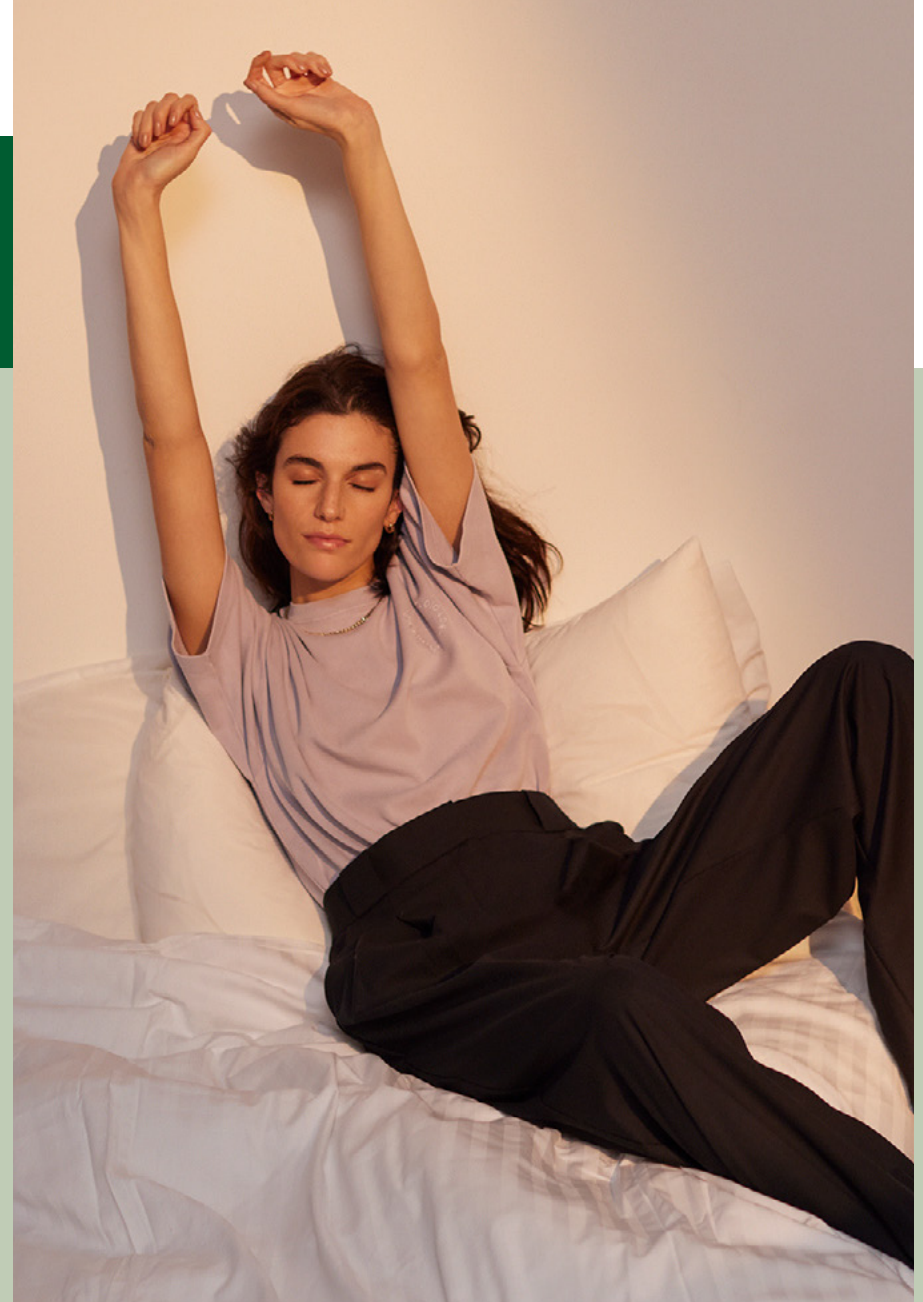
TRANSPARENCY



ADVOCACY



PARTNERSHIPS





PEOPLE		1. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY	Cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace, across all areas of our business
		2. WELLBEING	Foster a culture centred on people's wellbeing
		3. ETHICAL WORKING	Continuously improve working standards for our own employees and for those in our supply chains, underpinned by a commitment to eliminate Modern Slavery
		4. COMMUNITY	Give back to our communities; to those who help make our products, our colleagues that create and deliver our brand and to those who wear them
PLANET		5. SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS	Design more sustainable products, support responsible production practices and improve new and current products to reduce waste
		6. CHEMICALS	Eliminate all hazardous chemicals from our products and meet the highest industry standard
		7. WATER	Integrate sustainable water stewardship throughout our value chain
		8. WASTE & RECYCLING	Eliminate waste to landfill from all of our operations, and increase recycling
		9. CLIMATE CHANGE	Take action to reduce our carbon footprint through Science Based Targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions
PRINCIPLES		10. TRANSPARENCY	Attain full transparency through the business & supply chain in order to measure and deliver our commitments.
		11. ADVOCACY	Engage transparently with our customers, employees and stakeholders, sharing our journey to drive positive change
		12. PARTNERSHIPS	Collaborate through partnerships to validate our ideas and develop solutions for our material issues that require scale

# Our Key Targets.

ACTIVELY PROMOTE  
THE RECRUITMENT OF  
CANDIDATES FROM  
DIVERSE SOCIAL  
BACKGROUNDS.

ACQUIRE FULL  
VISIBILITY UP TO TIER 4  
IN OUR PRODUCTS'  
SUPPLY CHAIN BY 2023

AT LEAST 50% OF  
OUR GARMENTS  
SUSTAINABLY  
ATTRIBUTED BY 2023

ADOPTION OF AN MRSL  
BY TOP 50 SUPPLIERS  
BY 2023

REDUCE WATER USE  
IN OUR PRODUCTS'  
MANUFACTURING  
PROCESS IN 50%  
BY 2030

ZERO WASTE TO  
LANDFILL FROM ALL UK  
OPERATIONS BY 2023

ZERO WASTE TO  
LANDFILL FROM  
OUR PRODUCTS'  
MANUFACTURING  
PROCESS BY 2025

ELIMINATING ALL  
SINGLE USE PLASTICS  
FROM OUR UK  
OPERATIONS BY 2022

INTRODUCE PRODUCTS'  
END-OF-LIFE SOLUTION  
FOR CUSTOMERS BY  
2022

NET-ZERO CARBON  
EMISSIONS BY END  
2040





# Our Key Successes.

56% OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM IS FEMALE *	100% TRACEABILITY AND AUDITING OF TIER 1 SUPPLY CHAIN	OVER £1,000,000 SPENT IN 2020 PARTNERING WITH CHARITIES & SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN THEIR PURPOSES
100% OF JEANS MADE FROM RESPONSIBLY SOURCED COTTON	OVER 450,000 GARMENTS REUSED OR RECYCLED THROUGH NEWLIFE PARTNERSHIP IN 2020	20% OF OUR PRODUCTS CURRENTLY SUSTAINABLY ATTRIBUTED
ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL AT OUR DC	100% RENEWABLE ENERGY IN UK OPERATIONS	ONE OF THE TOP 10 FASTEST MOVERS ON THE FASHION TRANSPARENCY INDEX 2020 **

\* RIVER ISLAND GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2018  
\*\* FASHION TRANSPARENCY INDEX 2020





# Do Good...

for people and society. We believe it's our people that make us what we are. Our aim is to place diversity and wellbeing at the heart of the River Island culture while educating and inspiring our community to help make our world fairer and more sustainable.



# People.







## Commitment 1: Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity

Our community is always open

We believe it's our people that make us what we are - a passionate, diverse community of individuals bound together by a real love of fashion. Everyone's welcome. We celebrate difference and embrace unity and we do not tolerate judgement or discrimination.

Our aim is to be an inclusive employer that proactively supports our people in building a culture that values diversity and celebrates the cultures, personalities and preferences of our people. Along with other leading retailers, we have signed the British Retail Consortium's Better Jobs Diversity and Inclusion Charter which commits us to take decisive action to improve diversity practices across the retail industry, focussing on oversight, recruitment, progression, reporting, inclusivity and responsibility.

Our approach is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 - we won't unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, colour, nationality, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or political belief/opinions.

We are proud to have a workforce that is 73% female, and a senior leadership team that is 56% Female.

But there is more to do and our ongoing partnership with Blueprint for all (formerly the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust) is designed to help us audit, review and evolve the business' policies and activity around equality, diversity and inclusion. It is crucial that every member of River Island's workforce is heard, represented, and feels proud to work for a brand that is truly dedicated to unity. Some of our planned initiatives for 2021 include unconscious bias training for all, leadership programmes for employees in under-represented groups and our

largest ever entry-level apprenticeship programme to help improve the diversity and socio-economic diversity within our workforce.

### Our Successes.

- 73% FEMALE WORKFORCE
- 56% OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM IS FEMALE
- 6.7% MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP (V UK AVE 17.9%) 2018

### Our Targets.

- IMPROVE REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AT SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND OPERATING BOARD LEVEL
- ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE RECRUITMENT OF CANDIDATES FROM DIVERSE SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS
- INVEST IN SYSTEMS THAT ALLOW FOR BETTER DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING ON ED&I BY 2022

### Our Partnerships.



#### OUR COMMITMENT.

CULTIVATE A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE, ACROSS ALL AREAS OF OUR BUSINESS.

## RI STORIES



# All Islanders are seen and celebrated.

We are so proud of our people so it felt right to begin our Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity (EDI) journey with them. Alongside our plans to implement training and new recruitment strategies, we've been working with our people to understand how we can do better. Passionate representatives from every level and discipline of the business have come together to form our first internal EDI action group and help create the change they want to see.

While still in the early stages, the group has already ensured that we broaden our conversations, both internally and externally, to make sure that all Islanders are seen and celebrated. We've been proud to tell more stories from inside RI and shine a light on our incredible talent. During Black History Month we interviewed several team members, including Marketing Operations Manager Camealia Xavier-Chihota, who shared the story of her granddad's remarkable contribution to The Race Relations Act of 1968 and her plans to continue his legacy. This is one of the many features available on our dedicated EDI hub that also includes information on our commitments and journey so far.



"FOR TOO LONG I'VE KEPT MY HEAD DOWN AND NOT SPOKEN ABOUT MATTERS THAT ARE IMPORTANT." **CAMEALIA**



"I'M A BLACK FEMALE AND I'M A MOTHER, SO I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT I CAN REPRESENT AND BE PRESENT." **CAMEALIA**







## Commitment 2: Wellbeing

### Care, Detect, Promote

We are lucky to have such hugely passionate employees who truly love River Island. Inevitably, work makes up a huge part of our life and overall wellbeing and to this end, we want to ensure our Islanders feel as supported as possible through their work in all areas of wellbeing.

Since COVID-19, our focus has shifted more than ever to mental health. But even before the COVID-19 pandemic, poor mental health in the workplace was increasingly more common. According to the Health and Safety Executive, 57% of lost work days in 2018/19 were due to 'stress, anxiety or depression' and only 16% of employees felt they could talk openly to their line managers about how they feel. This is something we need to address. And, as a family-owned business, we are focused on supporting our colleagues and fostering a culture centred on people's wellbeing.

For World Mental Health Day 2020, working with Mind, the mental health Charity, River Island staff opened up publicly about their personal mental health in an effort to normalise conversations around mental health in the workplace.

In January 2021, we launched our mental health allies across head office and our Distribution Centre in order to provide a safe and confidential space for Islanders to talk about mental health. Our allies are volunteers from existing staff who have a variety of lived experience in mental health and we have provided them with more formal training.

This year, we have also launched our 'Care, Detect, Promote' wellbeing programme, rolling out Mental Health awareness training for managers to help them spot the signs and address the issues head on. The training utilised a mixture of online resources, communications and events for all staff focussed on promoting healthy lifestyles, self-care, resilience and prevention.

Additionally, our ongoing Employee Assistance Programme, a partnership with the Retail Trust, gives confidential access to support services outside of River Island.

Our future focus is on gathering the right information and data to truly understand our employees' wellbeing and extending that support beyond head office into our retail estate. That will allow us to identify the opportunities for us to improve and start reporting on our progress. Disclosure also remains at the forefront, empowering our line managers to spot the signs and have the right conversations are some of the most effective ways to relieve mental health in the workplace - training is paramount.

### Our Successes.

- INTRODUCED NEW STRATEGY OF CARE, DETECT, PROMOTE TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE
- LAUNCHED OUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME GIVING CONFIDENTIAL ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES OUTSIDE RIVER ISLAND
- SET UP MENTAL HEALTH ALLIES ACROSS HEAD OFFICE, RETAIL AND DC

### Our Targets.

- INVEST IN SYSTEMS THAT ALLOW FOR BETTER DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING ON WELLBEING BY 2022
- CONDUCT EMPLOYEE SURVEY ON PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, FINANCIAL, AND SOCIAL WELLBEING AT LEAST ANNUALLY, AND REPORT ON ACTIONS BASED ON RESULTS BY 2022

### Our Partnerships.



### OUR COMMITMENT.

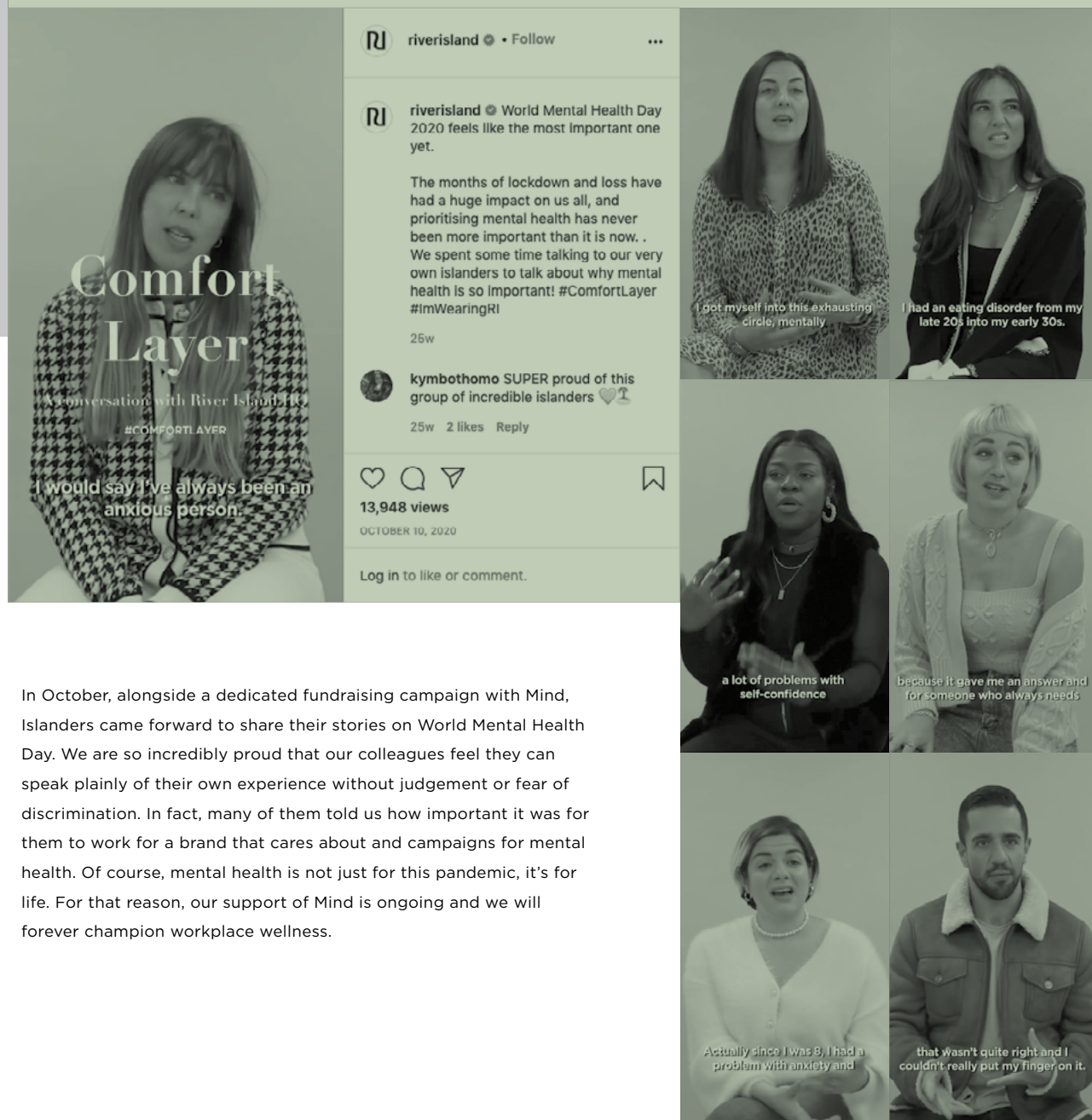
FOSTER A CULTURE  
CENTRED ON PEOPLE'S  
WELLBEING.

## RI STORIES



We wanted to send a clear message that open conversations about mental health are not only welcomed but necessary.

While mental health has always been a priority, the pandemic made us think differently about how we address it. With our worlds drastically changed and many of our coping mechanisms on pause, mental wellness was something we all needed at the top of our agenda. So we teamed up with mental health charity Mind in the very early stages of the pandemic to raise vital funds but also to increase awareness and break down the stigmas of mental health. We didn't just want to donate, we wanted to send a clear message to our colleagues and audience that open conversations about mental health are not only welcomed but necessary.



In October, alongside a dedicated fundraising campaign with Mind, Islanders came forward to share their stories on World Mental Health Day. We are so incredibly proud that our colleagues feel they can speak plainly of their own experience without judgement or fear of discrimination. In fact, many of them told us how important it was for them to work for a brand that cares about and campaigns for mental health. Of course, mental health is not just for this pandemic, it's for life. For that reason, our support of Mind is ongoing and we will forever champion workplace wellness.





## Commitment 3: Ethical Working

Safe and fair work for all

River Island has a steadfast commitment to protecting human rights and the dignity of all persons within our global supply chain. As members of the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI), we work continuously to eliminate modern slavery, improve working conditions and promote decent work for all in our supply chains.

In 2019, River Island employed around 7500 people in UK owned operations. Additionally, approximately 325,000 people work at our suppliers' main (Tier 1) factories. We use the ETI Base Code as the minimum standards that should apply across our supply chain, striving to keep workers free from exploitation and improving the lives of workers worldwide. This base code is founded on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is an internationally recognised code of good labour practice.

River Island recognises that many ethical and trading issues are complex and cannot be solved overnight. However, we strongly believe significant change is achievable and that we can better influence change through wider collaboration.

It's not about walking away from "bad" factories - that doesn't solve our collective challenge in ethical working. It is important for us to help support, encourage and reward those factories that are willing and proactive in addressing issues. Traditionally our factory ratings have only incorporated issues that arise but we are moving to a model that looks at rewarding good behaviour in remediating problems, too.

In 2018, we worked alongside fashion brands and retailers, public bodies, NGOs and others to create the Apparel and General Merchandise Public Private Protocol. This initiative commits signatories to work together to raise awareness to prevent worker exploitation, protect vulnerable and exploited workers, disrupt exploitative practices and help bring criminals to justice.

### OUR COMMITMENT.

CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE WORKING STANDARDS FOR OUR OWN EMPLOYEES AND FOR THOSE IN OUR SUPPLY CHAINS, UNDERPINNED BY A COMMITMENT TO ELIMINATE MODERN SLAVERY.

We are proud to have signed the Transparency Pledge in 2020, committing to publishing a list of our approved Tier 1 factories. This is an important step in driving greater transparency within the Fashion Industry, in order to ensure fair and safe working conditions in factories worldwide. It also enables industry collaboration to prevent serious global issues such as Modern Slavery.

### Our Successes.

- 100% TRACEABILITY AND AUDITING OF TIER 1 SUPPLY CHAIN (AND LIST PUBLISHED ON OUR WEBSITE)
- ONE OF THE TOP 10 FASTEST MOVERS ON THE FASHION TRANSPARENCY INDEX 2020
- 464 FACTORY AUDITS AND CONDUCTED 242 ETHICAL SITE VISITS. 99% OF OUR ETHICAL AUDIT VISITS ON AN UNANNOUNCED BASIS IN 2019
- UNCOVERED 15 INSTANCES OF UNAPPROVED SUB-CONTRACTING WHICH LED TO REMEDIATION WITH 9 SUPPLIERS (15 PRODUCTION SITES) IN 2019
- IN 2019 PROVIDED TRAININGS ON SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY, HOMEWORKING, AND MODERN SLAVERY TO OUR TOP 30 SUPPLIERS IN CHINA AND OUR TOP 20 SUPPLIERS IN INDIA

### Our Targets.

- ACQUIRE FULL VISIBILITY UP TO TIER 4 IN OUR PRODUCTS' SUPPLY CHAIN BY 2023
- INTRODUCE A REVISED INTEGRATED SUPPLIER SCORE SYSTEM FOR ASSESSING MORE ACCURATELY A FACTORY'S SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE, BY 2022
- UPDATE OUR MODERN SLAVERY RISK ASSESSMENT AND REPORT ON OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLANS BY 2022.

### Our Partnerships.



1.

EMPLOYMENT IS  
FREELY CHOSEN

2.

FREEDOM OF  
ASSOCIATION  
& THE RIGHT  
TO COLLECTIVE  
BARGAINING  
ARE RESPECTED

3.

WORKING  
CONDITIONS  
ARE SAFE  
AND HYGIENIC

4.

CHILD LABOUR  
SHALL NOT BE  
USED

5.

LIVING WAGES  
ARE PAID

6.

WORKING  
HOURS ARE  
NOT EXCESSIVE

7.

NO  
DISCRIMINATION  
IS PRACTICED

8.

REGULAR  
EMPLOYMENT  
IS PROVIDED

9.

NO HARSH  
OR INHUMANE  
TREATMENT IS  
ALLOWED







## RI STORIES



## We held ethical trade training days in Istanbul, Delhi and Shanghai.

As part of our on-going ethical programme, we offer our suppliers advice and training to help them meet the River Island Ethical Code of Conduct requirements. In Istanbul we trained our top 30 suppliers, in Delhi we trained our top 20 and in China our top 30. All members of our in-country teams are experienced in various areas of ethical trade and can offer help and support to the suppliers, factories and workers, if required, during factory visits or specific pre-arranged training days.

Following on from the successful Ethical Trade Supplier Day in Istanbul in 2018, in 2019 we held training days in Delhi, India, as well as in Shanghai and Dongguan, in the north and south of China. Supported by external industry experts, we provided training and discussions on topics including supply chain transparency, homeworking and modern slavery, and how they link closely to the requirements of the River Island Supplier Agreement. The content was delivered in both English and the local language using live translators. The topics discussed were all linked with the potential causes of modern slavery and we hope it was useful in giving our suppliers the capacity and understanding to deal with the current issues that exist within the supply chain.



## ETHICAL WORKING PROJECTS

### SUPPLIER RELATIONS

OUR STRATEGIC SUPPLIER PROGRAMME IS IN PLACE WITH TEN KEY SUPPLIERS (APPROXIMATELY 40% OF OUR BUSINESS AT COST VALUE), WITH AN INCREASED FOCUS ON RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND INNOVATION. EACH RECEIVES ACCESS TO PERSONALISED STRATEGIC SUPPLIER INFORMATION OUTLINING RIVER ISLAND'S COMMITMENT TO CLOSER COLLABORATION, SHARED VISIBILITY AND PLANNING, AND IMPROVED WAYS OF WORKING. IT DEFINES THE EXPECTATIONS AND BENEFITS FOR BOTH PARTIES. SO FAR WE HAVE BENEFITED FROM IMPROVED VISIBILITY OF STRATEGY AND PLANNING, AND GREATER OPENNESS TO JOINTLY DISCUSS COST CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES.

### SUPPLIER ONBOARDING

WE CONTINUE TO PUSH TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR WAYS OF WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS AND AS PART OF THIS PROCESS WE EXAMINE HOW OUR ACTIONS CAN AFFECT SUPPLIERS, FACTORIES, AND THE WORKERS WITHIN THE FACTORIES. AS PART OF THE ONBOARDING PROCESS, SUPPLIERS COMMIT TO RIVER ISLAND'S ETHICAL WORKING POLICY. THIS POLICY DEFINES THE SHARED ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN SUPPLIERS AND RIVER ISLAND BUYERS AND ENABLES THE SUPPLIER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM WHEN WORKING WITH RIVER ISLAND, BUT ALSO IMPORTANTLY WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT FROM US IN TERMS OF OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP. WE WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD ON THESE PRINCIPLES GOING FORWARD TO BUILD STRONG LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS.

### LIVING WAGE

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT WORKERS MANUFACTURING OUR PRODUCTS SHOULD BE PAID A FAIR LIVING WAGE. WE ALSO RECOGNISE THAT THIS IS NOT A STRAIGHTFORWARD PROCESS, AND THAT COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS IN THE INDUSTRY AND WITH GOVERNMENTS IS ESSENTIAL TO DRIVE SIGNIFICANT SYSTEMIC CHANGE. WE ALSO SEE THAT MAINTAINING A GOOD DIALOGUE AND RESPECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS AND THEIR ABILITY TO ORGANISE AND BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS OR INDUSTRY, ARE ALSO SIGNIFICANT COMPONENTS. AT RIVER ISLAND, WE ARE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHERS IN OUR INDUSTRY TO UNDERSTAND PROGRESS MADE IN THIS AREA AND EXPLORE WHERE WE CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THIS GOAL.

### MONITORING & REMEDIATION

WE HAVE ETHICAL TEAMS BASED IN FIVE KEY MANUFACTURING COUNTRIES THAT TRAVEL REGIONALLY TO CONDUCT REGULAR AUDIT/VISITS TO FACTORIES. THEY FOLLOW-UP ON THIRD PARTY AUDITS, MONITOR CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS AND SUPPORT WITH ISSUE RESOLUTION. IN 2019, OVER 99% OF THESE VISITS WERE UNANNOUNCED TO ENABLE US TO UNCOVER THE REAL ETHICAL CONDITIONS AND VALIDATE THAT PRODUCTS ARE BEING MANUFACTURED IN THE AGREED FACTORY. WE AIM TO WORK PROACTIVELY WHEN ISSUES ARE FOUND, AND WE ASK THAT SUPPLIERS AND FACTORIES WORK TOGETHER WITH US USING CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME METHODOLOGY TO CORRECT ISSUES AND IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY.

### MODERN SLAVERY

WE TAKE THE ELIMINATION OF MODERN SLAVERY VERY SERIOUSLY AND WE HAVE INCORPORATED THIS OBJECTIVE INTO OUR ETHICAL TRADE POLICY AND PROGRAMME. WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS THE ETHICAL TRADING INITIATIVE (ETI) AND ITS MEMBERS, GOVERNMENT BODIES, NGOS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER PARTNERS, IN ORDER TO TACKLE THIS GLOBAL CHALLENGE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR EFFORTS, PLEASE READ OUR MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT ONLINE.





# COVID-19 and Our Supply Chain

The COVID-19 global pandemic was an unexpected challenge in 2020 that forced our business to act and adapt as quickly as we could to the new conditions imposed and the new ways of work.

From the start we knew that the pandemic had the makings for being a significant disruption for our industry and our suppliers across markets, so throughout these challenging times we maintain an open dialogue with our suppliers to find the best solutions for our employees and for the workers who make our garments. We partnered with the independent third-party organisation, The Reassurance Network, and supported factories from our top suppliers with COVID-19 resilience guidelines and checks to ensure workers were provided with a safe environment. We also made sure that suppliers were paid fully and on time and continued to work collaboratively and openly with all our suppliers to cause as little disruption as possible.







## Commitment 4: Community

### Giving back

With over 300 stores and a global supply chain that spans 20 countries, River Island has a place in the hearts' of communities across the world and we're proud to support charities and organisations that strive to improve these communities.

Our longest standing charity partnership is with Newlife, a charity we helped establish in 1991. As well as directly donating 100% of our UK carrier bag levy money to support families with disabled and terminally ill children, we also partner with Newlife for all our terminal stock, which is either sold to raise further money for charity or broken down for recycling.

Other key charities in 2020 included our long-standing partnership with the Fashion Targets Breast Cancer campaign, and a new partnership with Mind, the mental health charity, on our "Comfort Layers" campaign aiming to break down the stigmas of mental health. Mind also formed part of our Covid Community Partnership alongside The Prince's Trust and Place2Be.

And despite the pandemic, our Giver Island internal staff donation scheme, which provides monies to match staff fundraising, payroll giving and volunteering day allowances had another strong year, donating to a wide variety of charities and community events across the UK.

Our focus in 2021 is going to be on expanding our community investment programme to our major supply chain partners to further support the communities who need it most. Whilst our commitment and investment in supporting sound ethical labour practices is strong, supporting our supply chain colleagues in their international communities forms part of our commitment to give back.

### OUR COMMITMENT.

GIVE BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES; TO THOSE WHO HELP MAKE OUR PRODUCTS, OUR COLLEAGUES THAT CREATE AND DELIVER OUR BRAND AND TO THOSE WHO WEAR THEM.

### Our Successes.

- OVER £1,000,000 SPENT IN 2020 PARTNERING WITH CHARITIES & SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN THEIR PURPOSES
- £100,000 DONATED VIA OUR GIVER ISLAND STAFF DONATION SCHEME
- OVER £200,000 DONATED AS PART OF OUR OVERALL COVID COMMUNITY RESPONSE
- NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH MIND, THE MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY.

### Our Targets.

- LAUNCH AT LEAST ONE INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT INITIATIVE AT OUR SUPPLY CHAIN COMMUNITIES BY 2023
- DEVELOP A COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY ALIGNED WITH BUSINESS OBJECTIVES BY 2022

### Our Partnerships.



Improving children's mental health



## RI STORIES



We've been able to help hundreds of colleagues support hundreds of different charities.

The Giver Island match-funding scheme was established in 2012 with the simple aim of helping River Island colleagues support the causes that are closest to them. The scheme's motto is: "If it's important to you then it's important to us". And with this approach we've been able to help hundreds of colleagues support hundreds of different charities.

So far, the fund has provided over £700,000 for colleagues to add to their own fundraising totals. Cancer Research UK has been the most supported charity every year, with Macmillan and Alzheimer's Society also receiving consistently strong support. In addition, we've been very happy to add to support for the smaller 'hidden' charities, and perhaps this reflects the real value of Giver Island. Fundraising for smaller unknown charities is hard work but people build a connection for all sorts of very personal reasons. For these colleagues, the chance to donate a sum that has been enhanced by match-funding is a huge boost because they know the impact this will have on a small charity.

Often, applications for support are accompanied by the deeply personal stories that inspired the fundraising effort and we've been delighted to help colleagues make their stories feel just a little more positive, even if it's just for a moment.

Like one staff member shared:

**"CANCER HAS IMPACTED MANY LIVES. MY SISTER IS UNDERGOING TREATMENT, WHICH WHY AS A TEAM WE ARE WALKING TO RAISE MONEY FOR AN INCREDIBLE CHARITY."**  
**GIVER ISLANDER, 2021**



**"THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE MAX MATCHING DONATION. I'M BLOWN AWAY BY RIVER ISLAND'S GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT..."** **GIVER ISLANDER, 2018**

# Do Good...

for the planet. That thing about us only having one?  
It's true! We love fashion and we want to make sure we  
are part of the solution. From climate change  
to sustainable materials and recycling, we're on a  
journey to address the impact our business has  
on the environment.



# Planet.







## Commitment 5: Materials

Enhancing quality through sustainability

River Island is committed to improving the sustainability credentials of all clothing and accessories. Our goal is to have at least 50% of our garments made using sustainable materials by 2023.

To get there we are constantly improving our sourcing approach to make sure we select materials with the lightest footprint possible. Our Sustainable Materials Framework outlines the process in which we evaluate and validate the materials we use. Any claims you see on our products meet that framework.

The framework sets out the minimum sustainable material mixes in order for any 'sustainable' claim to be made. For River Island, these minimums usually sit at around 50% composition with some materials up to 100%. In addition, all sustainable claims must be accredited with relevant standards, for example the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) or the Global Recycled Standard (GRS), to name a few. All fabrics must be accompanied by scope and transactional certification in order to validate them.

Animal Welfare is also a key consideration in the selection of our materials. River Island supports the Five Freedoms for Animal Welfare as defined by the UK Farm Animal Welfare Council, which affirms every living being's right to humane treatment. We strive to ensure that animal products are obtained from fair and ethical sources and that animals from these sources are treated humanely at all times.

All our suppliers must be socially responsible when sourcing animal products, and they are responsible for demonstrating due diligence in ensuring this policy is observed. We are proudly fur free, and are listed on the Fur Free Retailer Programme.

### OUR COMMITMENT.

DESIGN MORE  
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS,  
SUPPORT RESPONSIBLE  
PRODUCTION PRACTICES  
AND IMPROVE NEW AND  
CURRENT PRODUCTS TO  
REDUCE WASTE.

### Our Successes.

- 20% OF OUR PRODUCTS CURRENTLY SUSTAINABLY ATTRIBUTED
- 100% OF JEANS FROM RESPONSIBLY SOURCED COTTON
- BANNED THE USE OF FUR, MOHAIR & ANGORA

### Our Targets.

- AT LEAST 50% OF OUR GARMENTS SUSTAINABLY ATTRIBUTED BY 2023
- 100% SUSTAINABLE COTTON BY END 2023

### Our Partnerships.





## OUR SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS.

### ORGANIC COTTON

ECOLOGICALLY GROWN WITHOUT THE USE OF GMO SEEDS, CHEMICAL PESTICIDES OR FERTILISERS AND USES 71% LESS WATER THAN CONVENTIONAL COTTON. IT IS GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD (GOTS) OR ORGANIC CLAIMS STANDARD (OCS) ACCREDITED.

### RESPONSIBLY SOURCED COTTON

OUR RESPONSIBLY SOURCED COTTON IS SOURCED MORE SUSTAINABLY THROUGH THE BETTER COTTON INITIATIVE (BCI). THE BCI EXISTS TO MAKE GLOBAL COTTON PRODUCTION BETTER FOR THE PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE IT, BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IT GROWS IN, AND BETTER FOR THE SECTOR'S FUTURE.

### RECYCLED MATERIALS

HELPING TO DIVERT WASTE AWAY FROM LANDFILL, WHICH FOR MAN-MADE FIBRES MEANS REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS BY 54%. GLOBAL RECYCLED STANDARD (GRS) OR RECYCLED CLAIMS STANDARD (RCS) ACCREDITED.

### SUSTAINABLE VISCOSE

MADE FROM FSC OR PEFC WOOD, MUCH OF WHICH IS FULLY TRACEABLE. NEARLY ALL THE CHEMICALS USED DURING PRODUCTION ARE RECOVERED AND REUSED, RESULTING IN 50% LESS EMISSIONS AND USING HALF AS MUCH ENERGY AND WATER.

### LYOCELL

LYOCELL IS MADE FROM FAST-GROWING EUCALYPTUS TREES IN A CLOSED LOOP SYSTEM WHERE ABOUT 99% OF THE CHEMICALS USED TO CREATE THE FIBRE ARE RECOVERED AND RECYCLED DURING THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS. WE USE ONLY WOOD SOURCED FROM FSC OR PEFC CERTIFIED AREAS AND SOURCE ONLY FROM LENZING AND BIRLA SUPPLIERS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN SUSTAINABLE ASSURANCE IN YARN AND/OR FABRIC PRODUCTION.

### SUSTAINABLE MODAL

MODAL IS VERY SIMILAR TO VISCOSE HOWEVER IT HAS A HIGHER CHEMICAL FOOTPRINT WHICH IS WHY WE ONLY SOURCE FROM LENZING OR BIRLA WHERE 95% OF THE CHEMICALS USED IN THE FIBRE PRODUCTION ARE CAPTURED AND RECYCLED. MODAL ORIGINATES FROM BEECH WOOD (FSC OR PEFC CERTIFIED) THAT IS PULPED AND THEN EXTRUDED VIA A CHEMICAL PROCESS SIMILAR TO VISCOSE AND TURNED INTO A FIBRE.

### RESPONSIBLY SOURCED LINEN

OUR RESPONSIBLY SOURCED LINEN IS CERTIFIED EUROPEAN FLAX, WHICH USES RAINWATER WITH NO NEED FOR ADDITIONAL IRRIGATION, NO GMOS, NO WASTE AND NO CHEMICAL PESTICIDES OR FERTILIZERS. THE RETTING PROCESS (SEPARATING THE FIBRES FROM THE STALKS) IS ALSO DONE IN FIELDS RATHER THAN WATERWAYS, IS COMPLIANT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION AND HAS FULL TRACEABILITY.

### RESPONSIBLY SOURCED WOOL

OUR RESPONSIBLY SOURCED WOOL IS MADE USING RESPONSIBLE WOOL STANDARD (RWS) WOOL, DESIGNED TO RECOGNISE THE BEST PRACTICES OF FARMERS, ENSURING THAT WOOL COMES FROM FARMS WITH A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING THEIR LAND, AND FROM SHEEP THAT HAVE BEEN TREATED RESPONSIBLY. ACCREDITATION MUST BE VERIFIED THROUGH EACH STEP OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN.

### RESPONSIBLY SOURCED LEATHER

OUR RESPONSIBLY SOURCED LEATHER IS MADE USING GOLD-CERTIFIED LEATHER BY THE LEATHER WORKING GROUP (LWG). SINCE 2005, LWG HAS IDENTIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES IN THE INDUSTRY AND PROVIDED GUIDELINES FOR CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT SUCH AS IMPROVING CHEMICAL USE, REDUCING WATER WASTE AND RECYCLING. RIVER ISLAND IS NOT YET A MEMBER OF THE LEATHER WORKING GROUP BUT IS WORKING TOWARDS MEMBERSHIP.



## RI STORIES



## Holding educational events for female farmers and run women's learning groups.

In Pakistan, women have few opportunities to influence farming practices or business decisions even within their own families. Female cotton workers are often restricted to low paid, manual tasks, with less job security than men. With the help of their implementing partners on the ground, BCI is working to change this by holding educational events for female farmers and run women's learning groups. In this way, they help women to overcome cultural, financial and practical challenges and learn how to farm cotton more sustainably.

In the Vehari district of Punjab, BCI's implementing partner, the Rural Education Economic and Education Development Society (REEDS), helped an ambitious, capable young woman called Almas Parveen to raise productivity on her own cotton smallholding and become a BCI Field Facilitator. 27-year-old Almas is one of four siblings and has been running her family's nine-hectare farm since 2009, in place of her elderly father. Instead of deferring the management to a third-party male farmer, as is often the custom in Pakistan, Almas was determined to run the farm herself, cultivate healthy crops and produce the best possible yields to sustain her family.

Almas was offered the opportunity to join the BCI training sessions and learn sustainable farming techniques. As her interest and competence grew, Almas discovered that she wanted to do more than boost her own yields. She wanted to spread the word and enable other farmers - both men and women - to benefit from the techniques she was learning. With support from REEDS, Almas completed the training and qualified to become a Field Facilitator (someone who is responsible for training BCI Farmers) and in addition to managing her own farm, she began a paid position training local BCI Farmers in March 2017.

Almas' transition to a position of responsibility in her community did not run smoothly. She experienced opposition from community members, who did not agree with a young woman working on her own and providing training to male farmers. The farmers, too, were wary of Almas and questioned her right to train them. But Almas stood strong. Undeterred and supported by her family and REEDS, she continued to deliver BCI training sessions. In time, the farmers' perceptions changed as her technical knowledge and sound advice resulted into tangible benefits on their farms. She had won the community's respect.

"THIS YEAR, I RAISED MY YIELD AND PROFIT BY 18% AND 23% RESPECTIVELY COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND I ACHIEVED A 35% REDUCTION IN PESTICIDE USE. WITH THE ADDITIONAL PROFIT, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY AND PAY FOR MY BROTHER'S WEDDING." **ALMAS PARVEEN, 2018.**

PHOTO : BCI/KHAULA JAMIL



# Animal welfare.

It is our policy that any animal-related products are obtained from fair and ethical sources and that animals from these sources are treated humanely at all times. Our policy is based on industry best practice defined by the UK Farm Animal Welfare Council - the Five Freedoms for Animal Welfare.

We ask that all suppliers must be socially responsible when sourcing animal products, and are responsible for demonstrating due diligence in ensuring this policy is observed. All leather, skins and feathers must only be sourced as a by-product of the meat industry. Animal products and synthetic materials made to look like animal products must be clearly labelled to avoid confusion. We request that where possible suppliers source materials with accreditation such as Responsibly Sourced Wool (RSW), Responsibly Sourced Down (RSD) and Leather Working Group (LWG) sourced leather. And we have a strict policy that no products will ever use endangered species, real fur, Angora and Mohair, bone, horn, shell or teeth.

Finally, River Island is against animal testing. None of our beauty products are tested on animals, in accordance with the EU ban which came into effect on the 11th March 2013. .







## Commitment 6: Chemicals

### Eliminating the baddies

River Island is committed to ensuring that our products (including fabrics, dyes, prints, components and trims etc.) are manufactured in safe working conditions and that workers are not exposed to any chemicals that are classified as hazardous or harmful. This includes chemicals that may have a known detrimental impact on the environment.

We also have an obligation to our customers to ensure all the products we sell are safe and do not contain any chemicals that may cause harm to them or the environment. The River Island Restricted Substances List details chemicals that are either restricted by legislation or due to industry best practice. Each chemical has a maximum limit which must not be exceeded in the finished product so that we meet the requirements of all our intended markets.

River Island's Restricted Substances List has been communicated to all our suppliers and they must comply with this as part of our chemical policy. They use independent laboratories to verify our products and make sure they comply with the chemical standards. As part of our internal due diligence process we also test for restricted heavy metals on our products in our Distribution Centre. Here we use an XRF analyser to check the components on clothing, bags, footwear etc. To date since its introduction, we have scanned thousands of products.

The next stage of the journey is to implement a Manufacturing Restricted Substance List (MRSL) within our supply base. This process goes over and above current regulatory requirements and endeavours to reach the level where suppliers formulate raw materials. A list of prohibited chemicals will be detailed on the MRSL which will help us eradicate even more harmful chemicals. We aim to have this fully operational by 2023.

### Our Successes.

- INTRODUCED A RESTRICTED SUBSTANCE LIST (RSL) TO ALL SUPPLIERS IN 2020
- 100% OF OUR PRODUCTS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY RSL COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION
- ANNUAL TRAINING PROVIDED TO SUPPLIERS TO ENSURE THAT STANDARDS ARE MAINTAINED

### Our Targets.

- ADOPTION OF AN MRSL BY TOP 50 SUPPLIERS BY 2023
- 100% OF SUPPLIERS TO RESPOND THE HIGG FACILITY ENVIRONMENTAL MODULE (FEM) BY 2023

#### OUR COMMITMENT.

ELIMINATE ALL  
HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS  
FROM OUR PRODUCTS  
AND MEET THE HIGHEST  
INDUSTRY STANDARD.



## Commitment 7: Water

### Building our stewardship

Water is one of the key natural resources impacted by the fashion industry and it's a human right that everyone should have access to it. Our ambition is to both reduce the amount of water used in our processes and to minimise the wastewater produced.

Our water programme is still in its infancy. Currently we reduce water consumption at the farm level through our partnership with BCI. BCI farmers use 20% less water than conventional cotton farmers in their production methods. We also harvest rainwater at our Distribution Centre used for the toilets and gardens.

But there is still a lot to do, particularly playing a more active role in water conservation. We have set ambitious targets to reduce our water usage by 25% in 2023 and 50% in 2030. Our future work is twofold: 1) we are working towards treatment and safe disposal/ discharge of water programmes, and 2) increasing the conservation of water through our supply chain more generally. The good news is that many of our Tier 1 suppliers have a strong record in their water treatment. The majority of our denim suppliers in particular have built in water management systems to manage waste water and are already monitoring, recapturing and recycling the water they use. We are working towards transparency through our Tier 2 and 3 supply chains and in particular our dyeing houses where water impact is the largest.

### Our Targets.

- REDUCE WATER USE IN OUR PRODUCTS' MANUFACTURING PROCESS BY 50% BY 2030
- INTEGRATE A WATER STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMME BY 2023

#### OUR COMMITMENT.

INTEGRATE SUSTAINABLE  
WATER STEWARDSHIP  
THROUGHOUT OUR  
VALUE CHAIN.





## Commitment 8: Waste & Recycling

### Saying goodbye to landfill

Our goal is to eliminate waste to landfill generated by the manufacturing of our products through our entire supply chain by 2025. Our current focus is on eliminating the waste we produce directly through our owned operation. Our Distribution Centre (DC) is already zero waste to landfill, with everything that comes through the DC either recycled or reused, from plastic garment bags to cardboard shipping boxes. That's 1223 tonnes of cardboard and 20 tonnes of plastic in 2020. Furthermore, food and general waste is also either recycled or reused - either via green incineration to generate fuel or broken down to make asphalt, oil.

When it comes to product waste, we sell nearly all of our clothing. Any items we don't sell are either broken down for recycling or sold through charities or other third parties. We do not incinerate any of our clothes. Last year we reused or recycled over 450,000 garments through our partnership with Newlife. Additionally, we have been donating all the fabric and sample scraps from our design room to the Watford Recycling Arts Program for the last 15 years, where it gets used by the local community in arts projects.

In store, we are working hard on our packaging and in-store collateral - all of our carrier bags and shipping bags are made from recycled materials and are recyclable, and we have converted all our core swing tickets to FSC/PEFC cardboard. We've switched our plastic gift cards to compostable versions and all the ink for our tills and lightbox graphics is recycled.

The next big focus is to look at waste in our supply chain. We will look at waste and understand how our suppliers process it, starting with fabric.

The other key area we're looking at is giving customers options to put garments back into the system once they are finished with them. What happens to our clothes after they are sold is going to be a critical issue at River Island in the coming years.

### Our Successes.

- OVER 450,000 GARMENTS REUSED OR RECYCLED THROUGH NEWLIFE PARTNERSHIP IN 2020 SAVING OVER 1200 TONNES OF CO2
- ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL AT OUR DC - 1223 TONNES OF CARDBOARD AND 20 TONNES OF PLASTIC SAVED IN 2020
- ALL OF OUR CARRIER BAGS & ECOM SHIPPING BAGS ARE MADE FROM RECYCLABLE MATERIALS AND ARE RECYCLABLE
- ALL CARE LABELS NOW PRODUCED USING RECYCLED PLASTIC AND ALL CORE SWING TICKETS NOW PRODUCED USING FSC BOARD
- ALL RFID LABELS NOW PRODUCED USING RPET PLASTIC, MEANING THEY CAN NOW BE RECYCLED
- ALL ADULT GARMENTS HANGERS PRODUCED IN A CLOSED LOOP SYSTEM USING RECYCLED PLASTIC
- SWITCHED TO COMPOSTABLE GIFT CARDS FROM PLASTIC CARDS, SAVING 3750KGS OF PVC PLASTIC AND 15,000 KGS OF CO2

### Our Targets.

- ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL FROM ALL UK OPERATIONS BY 2023
- ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL FROM OUR PRODUCTS' MANUFACTURING PROCESS BY 2025
- ELIMINATING ALL SINGLE USE PLASTICS FROM OUR UK OPERATIONS BY 2022
- INTRODUCE PRODUCTS' END-OF-LIFE SOLUTION FOR CUSTOMERS BY 2022

### Our Partnerships.



### OUR COMMITMENT.

ELIMINATE WASTE TO LANDFILL FROM ALL OF OUR OPERATIONS, AND INCREASE RECYCLING.

## RI STORIES



## What happens to the clothes we don't sell?

River Island has been supporting Newlife, the UK's largest children's charity provider of specialist disability equipment, since its inception 30 years ago. We donate any unsold, excess or end of line items to Newlife to be resold or recycled avoiding additional landfill.

Newlife's aim is to honour the energy and resources used in production. Where possible, items are sold to raise money to support disabled and terminally ill children. Where issues are significant enough to prevent their reasonable reuse, the items are recycled for raw material reclamation. Clothing can be shredded to extract its fibres and used to make new products, or used as wadding to fill everything from car doors to mattresses. Newlife is registered with the Department of the Environment and Newlife's recycling and reuse partner has decades of experience in this sector, working in transparent ways to optimise the benefits of waste product.

In 19/20, Newlife collected 2,190 tonnes of clothing, diverting over 2,000 from landfill (generating 13,050 tonnes of carbon savings) and reusing 3.3 million items. This is the equivalent to taking 4,800 cars off the road, or the carbon used by 1,610 homes, enough to fill 80 Wimbledon Centre Courts. Every penny raised is used to fund Newlife's core care services and to change children's lives.







## Commitment 9: Climate Change

Net Zero here we come

Climate change is the greatest threat facing our planet and River Island is committed to change.

The signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015 saw an international commitment to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrialised levels.

Aligned to the same goals as the Paris Agreement, River Island has committed to the British Retail Consortium's Climate Roadmap to net-zero emissions by 2040, along with many of our friends on the high street.

This net-zero commitment applies to both our owned operations and through our entire supply chain. But we are currently looking for partners to help us set our targets and assess each stage of scope delivery. Scope 1 and 2 outlines any greenhouse gases emitted on our owned sites or that we buy from grid. Scope 3 covers our supply chain impact. We want our targets to be science-based, which means they are certified by the Science Based Targets Institute (SBTi). We will aim at setting targets based on emission reductions through direct action within our own value chain. We are proud to be using 100% Renewable energy through our UK operations. Small changes can also make a large impact at scale. For example, we have redesigned our shoe boxes to ship more efficiently, dramatically reducing the amount of carbon required in their production and shipping and our store estate is mostly using LED lighting.

### OUR COMMITMENT.

TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT THROUGH SCIENCE BASED TARGETS TO ACHIEVE NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS.

### Our Successes.

- 100% GREEN ENERGY IN UK OPERATIONS
- 10% OF UK OPERATIONS ENERGY GENERATED BY OUR OWN SOLAR PANELS AT DC AND HO
- LEDS THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE STORE ESTATE

### Our Targets.

- MAP OUR CO2 EMISSIONS AND DEVELOP SCIENCE BASED TARGETS (SBT) TO HELP REDUCE OUR FOOTPRINT BY 2023
- NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS BY END 2040

### Our Partnerships.



## GOING SOLAR.

Since 2016, we began operating solar panels at both our Head Office and at our Distribution Centre (DC). Today, these solar energy systems are providing 600,000 kwh a year, which on average represents 10% of our energy needs.



## Do Good...

when it comes to what we stand for. Transparency is a word we hear a lot in fashion - and for good reason. We intend to reach full transparency throughout our supply chain by forging positive partnerships and being true advocates for the things that matter most.



## Principles.







## Commitment 10: Transparency

Honesty is a good look

Traditional fashion supply chains are complex, even for relatively small fashion businesses, so attaining transparency is a key commitment across the industry.

River Island works hard to define, report and audit our supply chain network. Our Tier 1 supplier (manufacturers) list is now regularly published on our website, and in 2019 we conducted 464 factory audits and 242 Ethical site visits, 98% of which were unannounced.

We are in the process of mapping our Tier 2 and 3 suppliers (yarns, trims and fabric producers) and expect to be finished before the end of 2021. We commit to full supply chain transparency, including Tier 4 suppliers (fibre producers) by the end of 2023. We are excited to be piloting a blockchain technology this year in order to better our transparency work.

We are also very pleased to partner with the Sustainable Apparel Coalition in 2020. As a member of the SAC, River Island is able to access valuable measurement and benchmarking tools, like The Higg Index, which help us to assess the social and environmental impact and credentials of our suppliers and materials so that we can clearly identify areas where improvements should be made.

As a result of the work we have done over the last couple of years, we were ranked one of the top 10 fastest moving brands on the Fashion Transparency Index 2020.

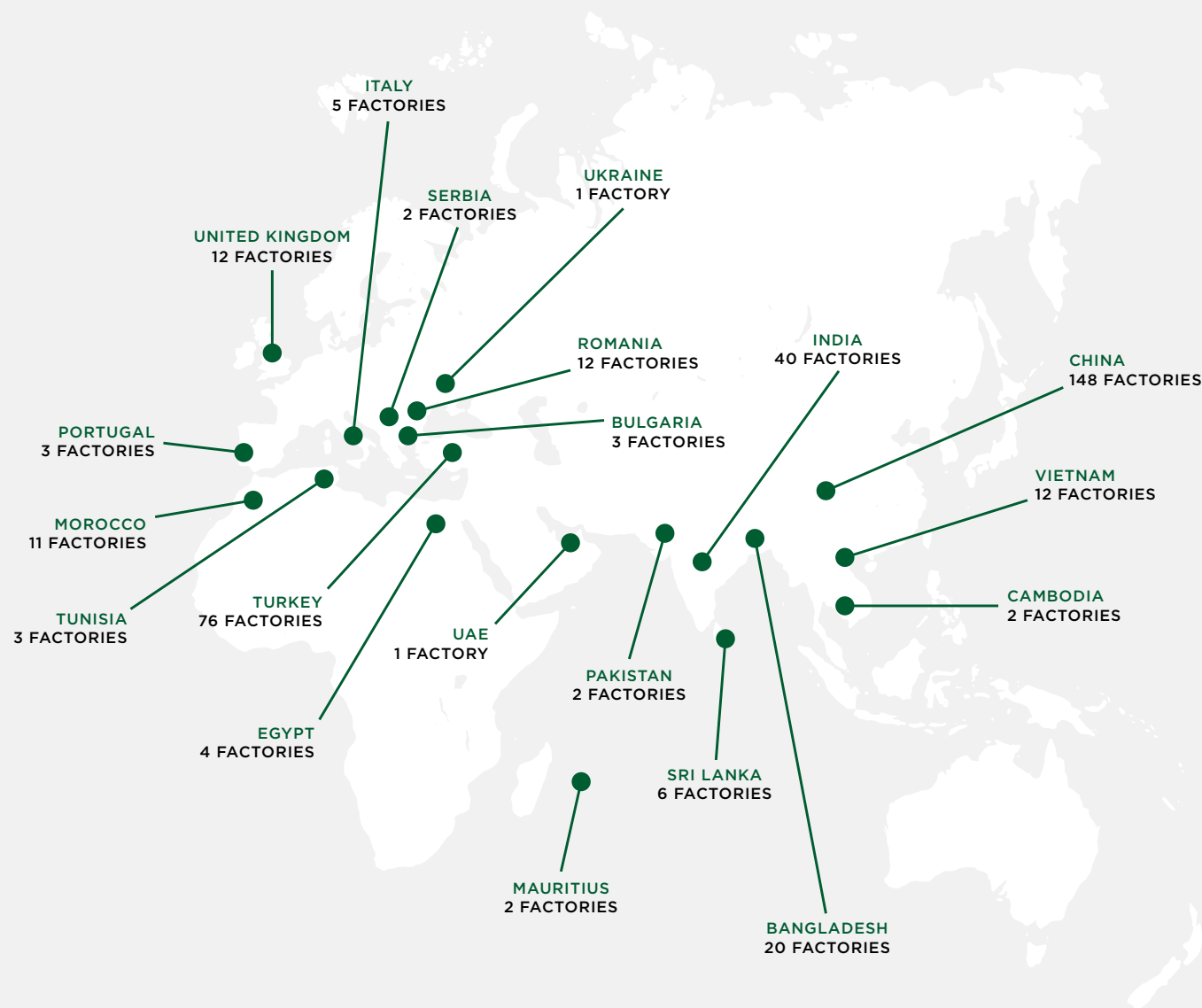
### OUR COMMITMENT.

ATTAIN FULL TRANSPARENCY THROUGH THE BUSINESS & SUPPLY CHAIN ORDER TO MEASURE AND DELIVER OUR COMMITMENTS.



## Transparency Pledge

We are proud to have signed the transparency pledge in 2020, committing to publishing a list of our approved Tier 1 factories on our website. this is an important step in driving greater transparency within the fashion industry, in order to ensure fair and safe working conditions in factories worldwide. It also enables industry collaboration to prevent serious global issues such as Modern Slavery.







## Commitment 11: Advocacy

### Holding hands for change

Advocacy and communication are the bread and butter of driving sustainable change in our business. Whether directly with our supply chain, through our membership associations and partners, internally with our leadership team and colleagues, or with our customers, we believe that education through the honest and transparent storytelling of our journey will help drive positive change. Listening and learning are equally important, and creating formal channels for all stakeholder voices is a key project for 2021.

We commit to regular voluntary public reporting on our progress in sustainability, at least on an annual basis.

And whilst we are still far from achieving our own goals at River Island, we cannot ignore the opportunity of using our voice to help drive behavioural change across our audience network. Collaboration and transparency are fundamental principles upon which our sustainability strategy is built, and that commitment extends right through to our customers. Working to find the right balance between commercial gain and sustainability progress is not easy, but it's a challenge we readily accept.

#### OUR COMMITMENT.

ENGAGE TRANSPARENTLY  
WITH OUR CUSTOMERS,  
EMPLOYEES AND  
STAKEHOLDERS, SHARING  
OUR JOURNEY TO DRIVE  
POSITIVE CHANGE.



## RI STORIES



## #StandingByTheHighStreet

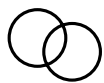
COVID-19 is the most significant challenge in a generation, and has hit our industry hard. Supply chain interruptions and continual store closures have resulted in brands large and small having to close their doors. In an effort to support wellbeing in our industry, in December 2020 we launched the #StandingByTheHighStreet social media movement, posting a yellow heart in honour of our high street friends and inviting other retailers to do the same. In an unprecedented show of solidarity, retailers across the UK high street followed suit, posting their versions of the yellow heart. The movement was then picked up by the wider community as well as press and influencers.

WILL KERNAN, CEO, SAID :

“The high street will always be in fashion. It’s a home we’ve shared with some really good neighbours for a long time. We may be ‘competitors’ but we all shop each other and our people call each other friends. There is no denying that digital plays a vital role in our future, and that we must keep reinventing ourselves to suit the ever-changing landscape. But, the British High Street holds its own special magic and influence and we believe it deserves to keep its iconic status.”







## Commitment 12: Partnerships

### Impact through collaboration

The simple fact is that true sustainability can only come through industry-wide collaboration. Sharing information, best practice, processes and innovation across the industry is imperative. Addressing the key issues in our supply chains takes group effort to drive change through our partners and with government bodies.

We are grateful for the effort put in by other members of our fashion community, in particular the brands we would usually call competitors. Their work, like all in our industry, helps drive forward our work at River Island. Our partnerships also provide third party validation of our work and the information we gather inputs back into the best practice feedback-loop.

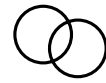
Through our partnerships - specifically with the Ethical trade initiative, Fast Forward and the Sustainable Apparel Coalition - we are able to develop and push through long term change projects in our supply chain that we could not achieve alone. With new information constantly unfolding through the combined industry transparency work, we can also address any specific issues as quickly as they arise with a consistent approach sending a powerful message.

Our partnership with the Better Cotton Initiative supports our efforts to use more sustainable materials and we look forward to building more and more partnerships across all our commitments in 2021, specifically through our planet commitments.

### OUR COMMITMENT.

COLLABORATE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS TO VALIDATE OUR IDEAS AND DEVELOP SOLUTIONS FOR OUR MATERIAL ISSUES THAT REQUIRE SCALE.





# The importance of The Bangladesh Accord

We have been members of the Bangladesh Accord since its inception in 2013. The Accord is an independent, legally binding agreement between brands and trade unions to work towards a safe and healthy garment and textile industry in Bangladesh. The Rana Plaza factory building collapsed on 24 April 2013, killing 1,133 people. In the years prior, numerous fatal factory fires occurred in Bangladesh. The Accord was created to enable a working environment in which no worker needs to fear fires, building collapses, or other accidents that could be prevented with reasonable health and safety measures.

Despite not having any affiliation with the factories operating inside Rana Plaza, we felt signing on to the Accord was the right thing to do. We currently work with 20 sites in Bangladesh with just under 40,000 workers. Of the 20 sites on the programme, nine sites are fully remediated, eight sites are 90-99% remediated and the remaining three sites are new to the Accord in 2020 and are working to make the relevant improvements. We continually monitor all of the sites and work with management, the Accord Team and our in-country representative to help keep the factories on track with their improvement programs.



## OUR PARTNERS

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## VIEW OUR...

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1. Diversity and Inclusion Policy

2. Gender Pay Gap Report

3. Anti-bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy

4. Ethical Trade Policy

5. Anti Slavery & Human Trafficking Policy

6. Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy

7. Tier 1 Supplier List

8. Modern Slavery Statement

9. Animal Welfare Policy

10. Restricted Substances List

11. Tax Strategy



## A LETTER FROM OUR HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY

At River Island, we are proud of selling fashionable clothes and believe that while fashion is fun it also can be a force for good.

A lot has changed since the name River Island first appeared on the high street in 1988. Today, our customers and our own teams expect more from our products. They want to know the story behind them. Where did they come from? Who made them? What was the impact on people and the planet? We owe it to our customers and to everyone at River Island to ask ourselves these same questions. Some of the answers have brought us back to our core values, and some have compelled us to find new solutions and build new partnerships.

I personally feel very proud and excited for the steps we are taking, and for the ambitious targets we have set. We have taken a fresh look into our relationship with the planet and acknowledge that the fight against climate change needs to be at the top of our priorities. We are committed to help reduce the impact our business has on the environment and to achieve net zero carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Agreement.

As it always has been at River Island, we continue to put people first. We have raised our own expectations to do more to build a diverse and inclusive workplace that places equality, wellbeing, safety and fairness at the heart of everything we do. And this extends to work with our supply chain partners to share those same principles with the places where our products are made.



"AT RIVER ISLAND, WE ARE PROUD OF SELLING FASHIONABLE CLOTHES AND BELIEVE THAT WHILE FASHION IS FUN IT ALSO CAN BE A FORCE FOR GOOD." **JOSE ARGUEDAS,**  
**HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY**

In support of achieving our targets, we have set a governance structure where ultimate accountability sits with our CEO. Additionally, all members of our executive team sit on the Sustainability Board, which is responsible for setting the long-term sustainability vision and strategy for the business, and for appointing dedicated action groups within the business to help deliver on our commitments. The action groups are entrusted with developing and delivering on the targets that support our strategy, and for driving the behavioural change needed to integrate sustainability into all aspects of our operations.

We are looking forward to sharing our journey with our customers, partners, stakeholders and with everyone at River Island in our next sustainability strategy update, always guided by the principle of transparency and advocating for what we believe is right. We are also open to listening to anyone interested in learning more about our work, and are happy to receive your correspondence at [sustainability@river-island.com](mailto:sustainability@river-island.com).

**BEST WISHES,  
JOSE ARGUEDAS  
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY**

MAKING FASHION A FORCE FOR GOOD

# RIVER ISLAND

## SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

12 COMMITMENTS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET