


*12 COMMITMENTS TO PEOPLE AND PLANET*

# THE KIND SOCIETY



MAKING FASHION A FORCE FOR GOOD

by River Island

*SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE REPORT 2023/24*





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# Letter from the General Counsel

Dear Reader,

Please find our 2023/24 Sustainability Update detailed in this report.

As a long-standing presence on the UK high street, we have learnt the importance agility, resilience and innovation; each of which will be needed to build a responsible and sustainable business in this rapidly evolving environmental and social landscape. At River Island, we relish this challenge.

We remain focused on our 12 commitments for people and planet, aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as set out when we launched River Island's Sustainability Strategy in 2020. These goals have remained integral to how we operate the business despite the significant global challenges that we have all experienced over recent years.

Our Kind Society initiative continues to drive our sustainability ambitions, supporting our quest to help make fashion a force for good. The Kind Society helps us to communicate our ambition, our progress to date and the challenges we continue to face. Ultimate responsibility for human rights and environmental issues sits with our Sustainability Board which works to define our strategy and the actions we need to take.

We have continued our support for our Islanders with the cost-of-living crisis during this period which remains challenging for many in our community and beyond. Our people make River Island the business that it is today, and we are proud that we have been able to continue to offer support to help offset rising costs. Our thanks goes to every Islander for their continued dedication as we navigate these difficulties together.




























We have made progress in several key areas since our last Sustainability Report. We have completed the mapping and assessment of our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions and developed Science-Based Targets to help us achieve our goal of Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040. During mid 2024 these targets were approved by the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTI) - full information on this is detailed in this Report. We understand that there is still a great deal of work to be done to meet our target of Net Zero by 2040. However, already we have reduced our scope 1 & 2 emissions by over 92% by switching to 100% green energy in all Stores, Head Office & Distribution Centre.

As we move towards circularity, we continue to successfully develop our Take Back, Re-use and Recycling programmes. Our partnership with Newlife has seen over 250,000 garments reused or recycled in 2024. We have also received over 35,000 garments via our customer Take Back scheme, all of which will be resold or recycled through our partnership with Reskinned. All of our carrier bags and ecommerce bags are made from 100% recycled plastic a large percentage of which is sourced from our own internal operations.

We are currently introducing new chain of custody collection systems, as well as processes to authenticate certification for fabrics, components, and suppliers. Additionally, we carry out in-country social and technical audits to spot check ways of working to ensure our own business and our supply chain partners are working towards a sustainable future. We have carried out over 200 audits during 2024 using both our internal ethical and technical teams as well as our in-country partners. We have also continued our long-standing partnership with the Fashion-Workers Advice Bureau in Leicester (FAB-L), as a key resource for providing workers with an independent advisory group on worker rights and welfare support in Leicester.

Despite the various economic challenges faced by the retail industry right now, our commitment to being a responsible and sustainable business is unwavering. We are looking forward to continuing our journey towards circularity .

**Daniel Raymond**  
**Chair of the Sustainability Committee**

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS			12 COMMITMENTS TO PEOPLE AND PLANET	
<div><div><div>6</div><div>CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</div></div><div><div>7</div><div>AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</div></div></div> <div><div><div>9</div><div>INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</div></div><div><div>11</div><div>SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</div></div></div> <div><div><div>12</div><div>RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</div></div><div><div>13</div><div>CLIMATE ACTION</div></div></div> <div><div><div>14</div><div>LIFE BELOW WATER</div></div><div><div>15</div><div>LIFE ON LAND</div></div></div>	ENVIRONMENTAL		1. SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS	Design more sustainable products using globally recognised certified material standards driving more responsible production practices
			2. GREEN CHEMISTRY	Eliminate all hazardous chemicals from our products and meet the highest industry standard
			3. WATER	Integrate sustainable water stewardship throughout our value chain using more certified material standards and EIM scoring for our denim
			4. MOVING TOWARDS CIRCULARITY	Developing more sustainable products through integrating circular design principles: reducing material impacts, designing for longevity and fibre recovery to eliminate waste, re-use and recycle
			5. CLIMATE CHANGE	Take action to reduce our carbon footprint through Science-Based Targets to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions
<div><div><div>1</div><div>NO POVERTY</div></div><div><div>3</div><div>GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</div></div></div> <div><div><div>5</div><div>GENDER EQUALITY</div></div><div><div>8</div><div>DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</div></div></div> <div><div><div>10</div><div>REDUCED INEQUALITIES</div></div></div>	SOCIAL		6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY	Cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace, across all areas of our business
			7. WELLBEING	Foster a culture centred on people’s wellbeing
			8. SOCIAL IMPACT	Continuously improve working standards for our own employees and for those in our supply chains, underpinned by a commitment to eliminate Modern Slavery
			9. 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
<div><div><div>16</div><div>PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</div></div><div><div>17</div><div>PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</div></div></div>	GOVERNANCE		10. TRANSPARENCY	Attain full transparency through the business and 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 develop solutions and drive change within the business and throughout our supply chain



# Our Key Targets.

<b>Increase outreach: audit Top 10 Tier 2 Fabric Suppliers by end 2025.</b>	<b>Net Zero carbon emissions by end 2040</b>	<b>Increase use of recycled polyester to 95% of total polyester usage by 2030</b>
<b>Increase use of cotton from more responsible sources to 95% of total cotton usage by 2030</b>	<b>Training for all Buying and Product Tech Teams on Circular Design Principles by end 2026</b>	<b>Carbon Neutral in our direct emissions (Scope 1 &amp; 2) by 2030</b>
<b>Increase Tier 2 audit coverage to include top 20 fabric mills and Laundries by end 2026</b>	<b>30% increase in employee participation in the Giver Island Programme by 2030</b>	<b>Increase current stock take back levels by 30% on 2024 levels by end 2026</b>



# Our Key Successes.

**100% Green Energy used in all Stores, Head Office & Distribution Centre**

**In 2024 we submitted our Net Zero Targets to the Science- Based Targets initiative and received validation**

**Over 265,000 garments reused or recycled through our partnership with Newlife**

**Carried out a full Modern Slavery Assessment of our Distribution Centre in partnership with Slave Free Alliance**

**Partnered with the Fashion-Workers Advice Bureau - Leicester (FAB-L), providing workers with an independent advisory group on worker rights and welfare support in Leicester**

**Over 92% Reduction of our Scope 1 & 2 emissions by since 2019**

**Over 350 leaders attended the inclusive leader's workshops**

**100% of our carrier bags and ecommerce post bags made from 100% recycled plastic, including our own plastic waste**

**Funded work with two of our Bangladesh factories, partnering with the Ethical Trade Initiative on their Gender Sensitive Workplace Programme**







# Commitment 1: Sustainable Materials

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

At River Island, we continue to adapt and refine our sustainability approach as the industry evolves. A key focus area for us is the use of more sustainable materials. Fabric is the biggest source of our Scope 3 emissions. This is linked to the production of fabrics, components, and garment manufacturing processes.

In 2023/24, the Competition and Markets Authority introduced new guidelines to ensure brands provide accurate and meaningful sustainability claims. These developments have guided us to reassess and strengthen our commitments, especially regarding the materials we use and the certification to authenticate them.

Over the past year, we revisited our purpose and vision, redefining who we are and where we aim to go. This process has helped us realign our strategy, refine our targets, and clarify our priorities while staying true to our core values. We have outlined a product-focused strategy to ensure progress and transparency across all levels of our business.

To support these efforts, we collaborated with the Carbon Trust and Textiles 2030 to gather industry insights, enabling us to implement effective carbon reduction and material targets.

In 2024, we introduced a new internal system to streamline the tracking of sustainable material usage and supply chain mapping. This system has become an integral part of our operations, enhancing our ability to collect, verify, and audit product data with greater accuracy.

## COTTON

River Island proudly partners with Better Cotton to promote sustainable cotton farming globally. Better Cotton operates on a mass balance system, meaning it is not physically traceable to end products, but the equivalent volume sourced benefits farmers directly. By 2030, we aim to source 95% of our cotton from more responsible sources.

## SYNTHETICS

We have also prioritised the transition to more sustainable synthetic fibres, such as recycled polyester. Despite limited availability of recycled materials compared to demand, we are committed to increasing recycled polyester usage to 95% of total polyester consumption by 2030.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal welfare remains a cornerstone of our materials strategy, despite animal-derived materials constituting a small portion of our supply chain. In 2022, we strengthened our Animal Welfare Policy to reflect evolving industry standards and customer expectations. This policy is continually updated to drive meaningful change and uphold our ethical standards.

## Our Successes.

- 78% of cotton sourced was from more responsible sources
- We introduced a new internal system to streamline the tracking of sustainable material usage and supply chain mapping

## Our Targets.

- Increase use of recycled polyester to 95% of total polyester usage by 2030
- Increase use of cotton from more responsible sources to 95% of total cotton usage by 2030
- Increase average packing recycled content to 30% by end 2027

## Our Partnerships.

**Higg**

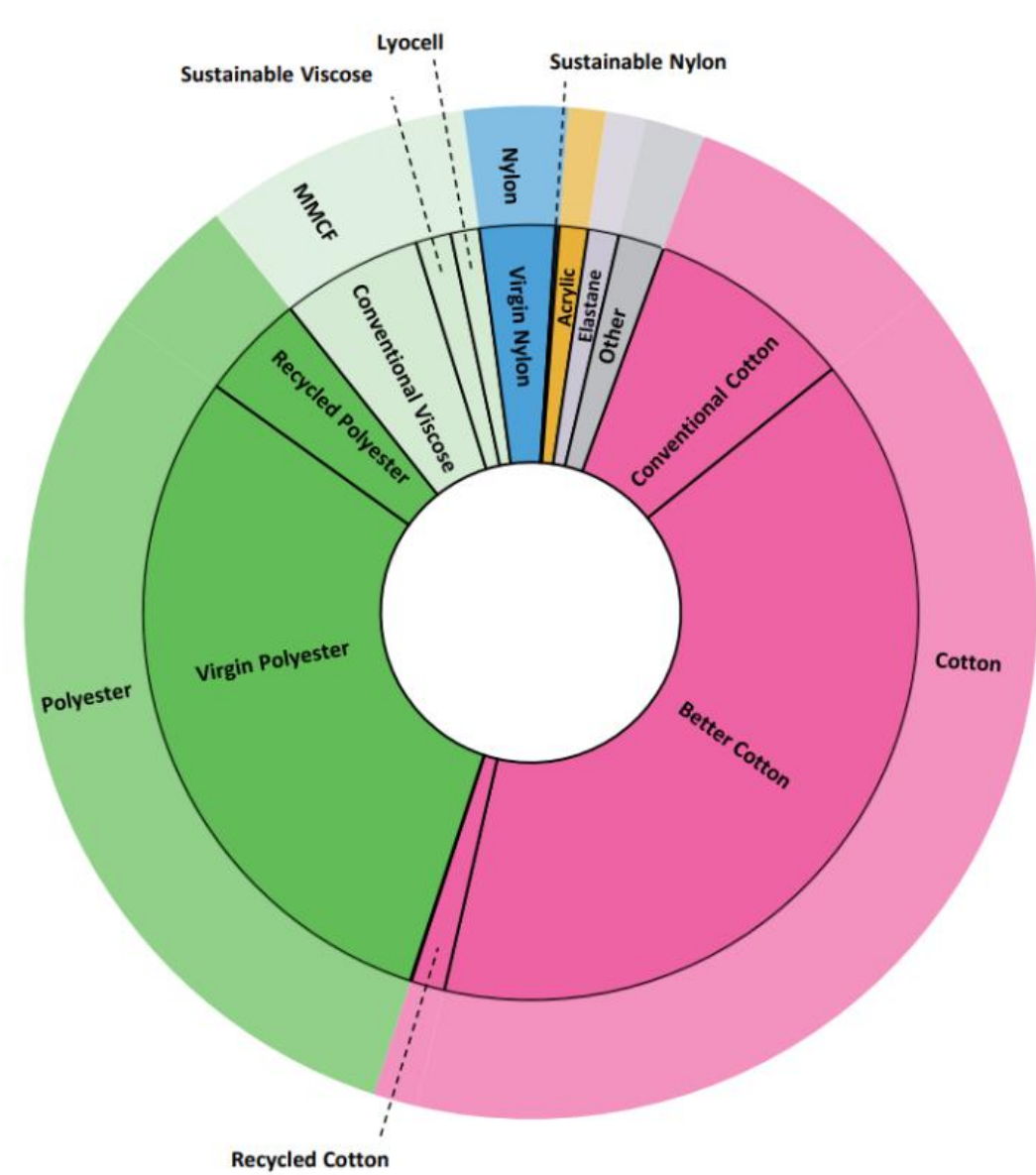
**BCI** Better Cotton Initiative  
BetterCotton.org

**Cascale**

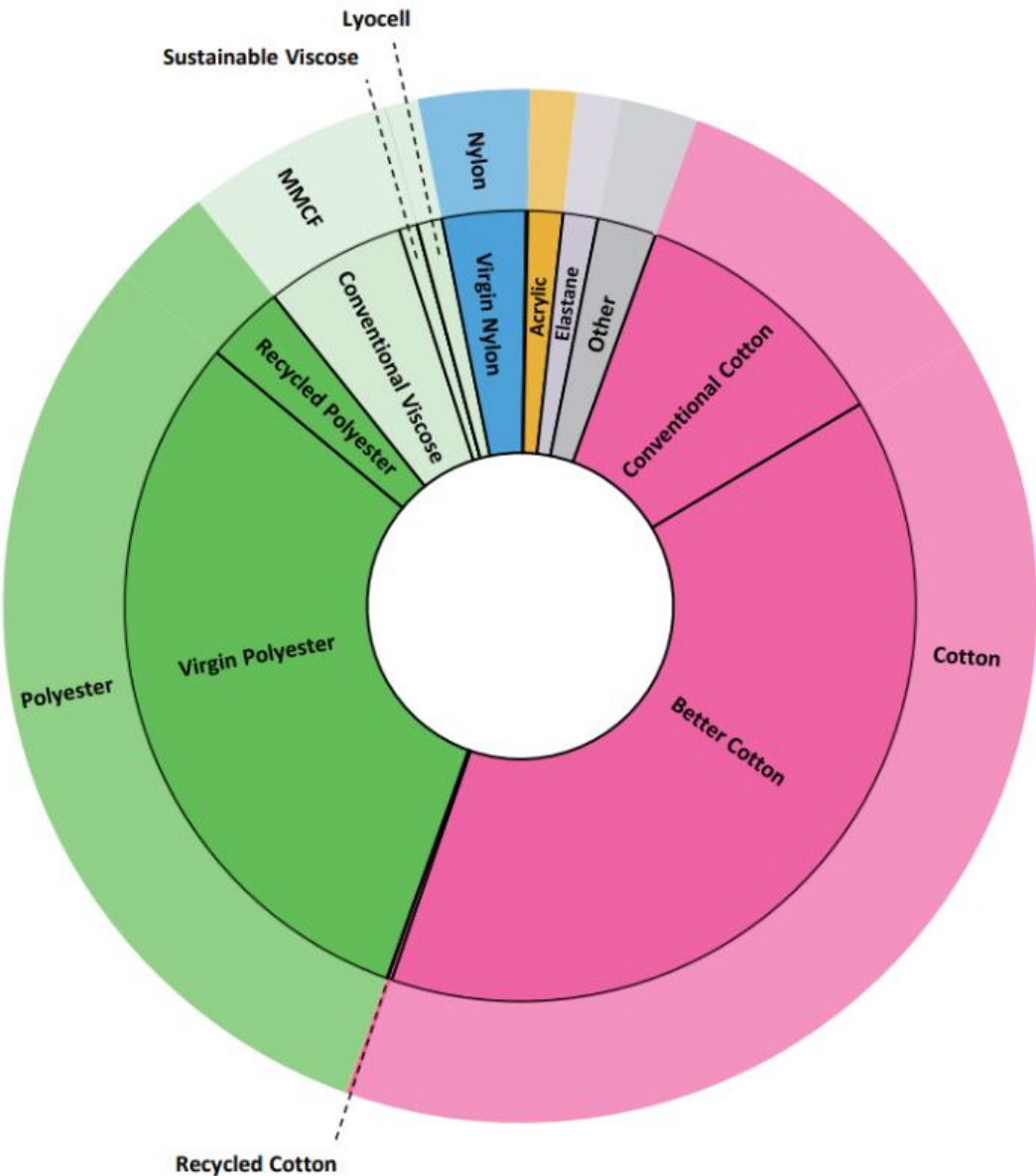


# Commitment 1: Sustainable Materials

Our 2023 Fibre Usage



Our 2024 Fibre Usage







## Commitment 2: Green Chemistry

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

As a responsible business we ensure that our products do not contain any chemicals that could be harmful to our customers, the environment, and all the workers who make our goods.

River Island is a signatory to the ZDHC Roadmap programme to Zero programme that has the key aim to eliminate harmful chemicals from global supply chains within the fashion industry. As part of this membership, we collaborate on the promotion of industry wide improvement in the use of responsible and environmentally friendly chemicals along with wastewater management in textile products.

We are stepping up efforts to reach 100% of our supply base being registered onto the Higg FEM. We continue to work to increase the figure to 60% by the end of 2024 and aim to reach 80% by the end of 2025. We see this work as being key to increasing the accuracy of our environmental data going forward.



## Commitment 3: Water

We constantly work to reduce the impacts that we have on the environment and improve the ways in which our products are made as enablers to this target. We have partnered with Better Cotton who operate a Global Water Stewardship Programme to enable cotton farmers to improve their ways of working with a clear impact being the reduction of water usage. [Water stewardship: how Better Cotton is improving water use in cotton production](#). Water stewardship in our supply chain is essential.

We understand sites such as laundries, mills and tanneries, use large quantities of water and responsible management is vital to ensure there is sufficient safe, clean water for local communities. We

are a signatories of the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero programme which aims to eliminate harmful chemicals from the fashion industry's global supply chain and through this programme we have begun to start monitoring our suppliers. Through the ZDHC programme we collaborate on promoting industry-wide change in responsible chemical and wastewater management in textile and leather production processes (such as dyeing, printing and laundering textiles, and tanning and dyeing leather).

As part of our membership with Textiles 2030 we are also working to a 30% reduction in overall water footprint of new textile products through our collaboration with other members of the programme.

### Our Successes.

- Introducing MRSL guidance to all of our suppliers
- Signatories to the ZDHC Roadmap to Zero Programme.

### Our Targets.

- 80% of Suppliers by business volume on Higg FEM by end 2025

### Our Partnerships.







## Commitment 4: Moving Towards Circularity

### DEVELOPING MORE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS THROUGH CIRCULAR DESIGN PRINCIPLES, ELIMINATING WASTE, RE-USING OR RECYCLING PRODUCTS AND SUPPORTING NATURE REGENERATION

At River Island, our key raw materials include cotton, polyester, MMCFs (such as viscose), and leather. We recognise that sourcing these materials utilises natural resources and can pose significant environmental and social challenges. Issues such as deforestation, climate change, and water stress are directly linked to their extraction and production. In line with our commitments, we aim to create products which are:

- Sourced from more responsible sources where possible.
- Fit for Purpose
- Safe and Functional
- High Quality
- Do not contain harmful substances

River Island's partnership with Textiles 2030 reflects our commitment to driving sustainability within the fashion industry. Textiles 2030, a government-supported, voluntary initiative led by WRAP, brings together UK brands, retailers, and recyclers to collaborate on ambitious sustainability targets aimed at reducing the environmental impact of textiles. Throughout 2023/24, we continued to report on our progress against the Textiles 2030 industry targets:

- 50% reduction in the overall carbon footprint of new textile products – in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change
- 30% reduction in the overall water footprint of new textile products
- Industry collaboration to achieve the Textiles 2030 Circularity Roadmap ambitions

By collaborating with other UK industry leaders within Textiles 2030, we're working to create systemic change and set new standards for sustainable practices in the fashion sector.

All our carrier and ecommerce bags are now produced in the UK, reducing carbon emissions associated with transportation and supporting a circular production model. By recycling plastic from our supply chain at our distribution centre (DC), we've created a closed-loop system where this waste serves as raw material for bag production.

Our collaboration with Newlife Charity continues to make an impact. In 2023, we donated 265,000 units of clothing to their stores, generating vital funds while extending the lifespan of our garments.

Through our in-store take-back initiative, customers returned 35,000 items in 2023. These items were resold or recycled, ensuring none were sent to landfill. We are committed to increasing customer participation in this scheme through greater awareness campaigns.

Since 2020, our head office and DC's have maintained a zero waste-to-landfill status. We are actively working towards achieving this across all our stores by collaborating with landlords to streamline waste processes and align them with our sustainability goals.

#### Our Successes.

- Over 265,000 garments reused or recycled through our partnership with Newlife.
- Over 35,000 garments returned in 2023 as part of our in-store take back scheme.

#### Our Targets.

- Internal Training for all buying and Tech Teams on Circular Design Principles by end 2026
- Increase customer awareness of take back scheme to increase current take back levels by 30% on 2024 levels by end 2026

#### Our Partnerships.







## Commitment 5: Climate Change

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

In 2020, River Island joined the British Retail Council's commitment to achieving Net Zero emissions in the fashion industry by 2040. To support this goal, we partnered with the Carbon Trust to evaluate our carbon footprint and create a comprehensive roadmap to Net Zero. In 2022, we conducted a full value chain assessment to measure both direct and indirect carbon emissions, particularly focusing on the emissions associated with our products.

We have since developed science-based targets (SBTs) to guide our journey toward Net Zero. In late 2023, we submitted these targets to the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), ensuring they include both near-term and long-term milestones. By early 2024, these targets were officially approved.

Our Scope 1 and 2 emissions encompass the carbon output from all our operations in the UK and ROI. Using pre-pandemic data from 2019 as our baseline, we calculated our total Scope 1 and 2 emissions for that year at 10,357 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*. Of this, 71% (7,356 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*) stemmed from energy purchased via the National Grid, making it the largest source of emissions.

To address this, we transitioned our UK operations to a Green energy tariff, ensuring all purchased energy comes from renewable sources. This shift has significantly reduced emissions. By 2023, our total direct emissions had dropped to 792.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*, reflecting a 69% reduction compared to our updated 2021 baseline of 2,557 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*. Additionally, renewable energy procurement offset 5,701.30 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\* of emissions.

Scope 3 emissions, which represent indirect emissions across our value chain, accounted for 99% of River Island's total emissions in 2023. Our total Scope 3 emissions for 2023 were calculated at 332,352 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*. The largest contributors included:

- Products purchased for resale: 60% (198,549 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*)
- Upstream transport emissions: 16% (52,748 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*)

As part of our science-based target setting, we have decided to follow the absolute contraction approach. We have set a Scope 3 near-term target of 30% tCO<sub>2</sub>e\* absolute reduction, aligned to the UN scenario

of global temperature rises well below 2° C (e.g. 3% annual linear reduction) by 2032. Of this we are aiming to achieve a 60% reduction in the physical intensity, which refers to emissions based on number of products sold, by 2032.

We have set a Scope 3 long term target of 90% tCO<sub>2</sub>e absolute reduction, aligned the UN's 1.5° C scenario by 2040, including a 97% reduction in physical intensity. To achieve our Net Zero targets by 2040, we aim to have 10% residual emissions neutralised by 2030 and 10% increase year on year for residual emissions neutralisation to achieve Net Zero by 2040. By 2040 we aim for residual emissions neutralised to have reached 100%.

River Island remains steadfast in our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint, and these efforts represent significant progress toward achieving a sustainable future.

#### Our Successes.

- Reduction of Scopes 1 & 2 by over 69% on our 2021 baseline
- SBTi targets have been approved in early 2024

#### Our Targets.

- Net Zero by 2040
- Green Energy: Continue commitment to annual sourcing of 100% renewable electricity in UK and ROI, through 2030 and beyond.
- Reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions 90% by 2030 from a 2021 base year.
- Reduce absolute Scope 3 GHG emissions 30% by 2032 from a 2021 base year
- Reduce absolute Scope 3 GHG emissions 90% by 2040 from a 2021 base year

\*Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent. Carbon Dioxide equivalent is a standard unit for counting greenhouse gas emissions, and also includes other gases, such as methane.





## Commitment 6: Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity (EDI)

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

At River Island, we believe our people make us what we are. Our goal is to place diversity and wellbeing at the heart of River Island's culture: educating and inspiring our community to help make our world fairer and more sustainable.

We currently have a senior leadership team that is 60% women, which represents an 9% increase compared to 2021. We're also proud that members of the LGBTQ+, disability and social mobility communities are all represented within this team. We are always working to improve access to our leadership team, by offering opportunities for mentoring and coaching.

In 2023 we launched our Inclusive Leader Programme. This programme supports our EDI goals and has strengthened the capabilities of our leaders. Going forward we will continue rolling out the programme, which will now form part of the induction process for all new managers and leaders.

As part of our work to increase the employment of individuals from diverse backgrounds starting in 2025, we will provide additional training to our hiring managers to ensure that our recruitment processes are always inclusive and without bias. We also include Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) statements to all our career opportunities, which can be seen below:

***"Our Island is made up of a diverse community, where we all belong and feel part of something bigger. We are committed to equality of opportunity and welcome applications from individuals, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic background, religion and/or belief. We will consider flexible working requests for all roles, unless operational requirements prevent otherwise."***

We continue our partnership with Diversity in Retail, the leading collaboration community in the retail sector. Their expertise and industry insights support us in improving equality, diversity, and inclusion across River Island. They also provide us with opportunities for development through their learning programs and mentorships.

Understanding the EDI needs of our Islanders is also a vital focus for us, and this is strengthened through our partnership with the Retail Trust who offer help and support in health and wellbeing and can provide counselling along with financial help and support

We also continue to strengthen our partnership with the British Retail Consortium, the trade association for UK retail businesses. Their purpose is to make a positive difference to the retail industry and its customers, today and in the future. We are also signatories of the BRC D&I charter and continue to work on achieving all aspects of the charter commitments, supported by insights and expertise from the BRC.

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#### Our Successes.

- Over 350 leaders attended the inclusive leader's workshops
  - We have increased our Senior Leadership team to be 60% Female which is a 9% increase since 2021
- 

#### Our Targets.

- During 2025 we will provide additional training to our hiring managers to ensure that our recruitment processes are inclusive and without bias.
  - We will make our Inclusive Leaders programme part of our standard induction process for new manager and leaders in 2025
- 

#### Our Partnerships.





Selection of feedback from Islanders on Care Packages and cost of living support measures:

"Wow what a lovely gesture – it's such a special thing to do"

"This will really support me with Christmas this year"

"The timing of this couldn't have been better, thank you so much"



## Commitment 7: Wellbeing

FOSTER A CULTURE CENTRED ON PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

At River Island we continue to encourage our teams to take a proactive approach to their wellbeing and we are dedicated to supporting our teams wherever possible through workshops, a calendar of events, and our ongoing partnership with the Retail Trust.

To support our Islanders, we have a team of accredited Mental Health Allies who provide support and signposting for all things relating to mental health and wellbeing, we continue to provide financial support through our own care fund which includes support for people escaping domestic abuse and we continue to stock our kindness cupboards out in retail and provide our hygiene packs for everyone.

Recognising the need for greater support during life events, we have enhanced resources for Islanders experiencing menopause. Additionally, we have expanded education and support on topics such as domestic abuse, suicide response, and sexual harassment prevention.

We have partnered with the Business Disability Forum to ensure we have the correct support for our neurodivergent Islanders. As part of this initiative, we have developed a workshop for managers to foster a more inclusive workplace. Additionally, we have created guides and online resources to educate and provide clear signposting for support.

### Our Successes.

- In 2024 we have expanded education and support on topics such as domestic abuse, suicide response, and sexual harassment prevention.
- We have partnered with the Business Disability Forum to ensure we have the correct support for our neurodivergent Islanders.

### Our Targets.

- We will provide additional support for returning parents through our parental transitioning coaching programme
- We will continue to provide education for our people managers to provide supportive workspaces that promote a culture of wellbeing and support people's mental health

### Our Partnerships.





## Commitment 8: Social Impact

### 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 committed to continuously improving working standards for our own employees and for those in our supply chains, underpinned by a commitment to eliminate modern slavery.

In 2023 we continued our partnership with the Slave-Free Alliance as our critical friend when addressing the issue of modern slavery within our business and Supplychain.

In January 2023 we held a Modern Slavery Site Assessment at our Distribution Centre in Milton Keynes to identify any issues that may exist, or any checks or training that needed to be improved. We also wanted to ensure that there was a clear understanding of Modern Slavery Issues and a full awareness of what actions to follow should there be a suspected case of Modern slavery. We will be revisiting our DC in 2024 to hold a worker awareness day and also to follow-up on the above risk assessment. We will continue working in this area going forward to address any current areas of risk as well as identifying and addressing new risks.

Elsewhere, we have continued our work with the UK Fast Forward programme. The work carried out with the programme enables us to ensure we work with ethical factories in the UK. These factories work directly with us to ensure their workers have a safe, secure and compliant workplace, are paid a decent wage and are not mistreated or harassed at work. We are currently working with Fast Forward to ensure the integrity of the programme is maintained, by leading on the Brand Support Programme. This programme helps new and existing brands to understand the standards that should be upheld when auditing and following up on audits. It also guides brands on the best ways to develop good relationships with workers, factory owners and suppliers. Through this, we have provided training and support for other brands on the programme, working alongside the Fast Forward team.

We have also continued our partnership with the Fashion-Workers Advice Bureau - Leicester (FAB-L), to offer workers an independent group that can provide help and support in several

areas. These include worker's rights and employment law, health, safety and injuries at work, benefits and welfare advice, form filling and letter writing, housing and living conditions, immigration and legal advice, financial hardship support, courses and training, domestic violence and harassment support. This group is based at the Highfields centre in Leicester and has already proved valuable for many workers in and around the area. [FAB-L – Highfields Centre](#)

Gender Sensitive Workplace Programme. (Ethical Trade Initiative): Having been members of the Bangladesh Accord for the past 10 years, we have seen the great improvements that have been made, although there has been little focus on the empowerment of women or addressing the issues of female worker harassment which have been heavily publicised in the media over recent years. In 2022/23 we partnered with ETI who are running the Gender Sensitive Workplace Programme, selecting two key sites in the region. The project works to empower the female garment workers through multiple training sessions, giving them increased knowledge of their rights, to increase female representation in supervisor positions and to enable the factories to strengthen their grievance mechanisms against gender-based harassment through setting up a Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee.

Addressing Modern Slavery in the Bangladesh Ready-made Garment (RMG) Sector. During late 2023 we partnered with MSIF and Goodweave to carry out a deep dive into our supply chain in Bangladesh at 2 suppliers. The goal of the project is to establish a comprehensive evidence base of risk, prevalence, and root causes of modern slavery in Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) sector. Working with our selected suppliers the team aim to carry out supply chain mapping and assessment of high-risk suppliers and subcontractors in the lower tiers of the supply chain, with a view to analysing the risks to vulnerable workers focusing on the potential of forced and child labour, providing full remediation if and when issues are found. It is hoped that a preventative programme can be built from the work carried out.

*"Slave-Free Alliance is pleased to partner with River Island, to support the business to improve its human rights initiatives in its goods and services not for resale operations and supply chain. To date, we have engaged with a wide range of River Island stakeholders including the CEO, sustainability, facilities management, procurement and distribution center colleagues. River Island staff are highly engaged in our projects; keen to play their part to mitigate the human rights risks and we are looking forward to further engagements on these crucial initiatives."*

Marc Stanton, director, Slave-Free Alliance





## Supplier Support

At River Island, we have a global social sustainability team through our partnership with the Reassurance Network. They regularly visit our key sites and check that they adhere to the River Island Code of Conduct. When required we can offer training to our suppliers and factories to ensure that they understand what needs to be in place to meet our standards, as well as giving them an understanding of their local laws and current issues that may affect their ability to meet our standards. We see internal capacity building as key to improving our supply chain and providing our suppliers and factories with the necessary tools to build capacity being key to the process. In 2024 we provided 11 suppliers and their factories with bespoke training to help them maintain the required standards to work with River Island. We also provided 3 Suppliers with training direct to their CSR managers. The managers had been newly appointed during late 2023 and early 2024 and were trained to ensure that they were fully aware of the requirements of our code of conduct when working with their factories.

## Our Successes.

- Partnered with **Slave Free Alliance** to carry out a full Modern Slavery assessment of our Distribution Centre
- Funded work with two of our Bangladesh factories, partnering with the Ethical Trade Initiative on their **Gender Sensitive Workplace Programme**
- Partnered with the **Fashion-Workers Advice Bureau - Leicester (FAB-L)** providing workers with an independent advisory group on worker rights and welfare support in Leicester.
- Strengthened our approach to tackling Modern Slavery we partnered with **MSIF and Goodweave** to carry out a deep dive into our supply chain in Bangladesh at 2 suppliers

## Our Targets.

- Increase outreach: Audit Top 10 Tier 2 Fabric Suppliers by end 2025.
- 40% of Suppliers completing the Higg FSLM by end of 2027

## Our Partnerships.





# River Island Base Code For Suppliers.

1.

Employment is freely chosen

2.

Freedom of association and 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





# Ethical Working Projects.

## Monitoring & Remediation

We have Ethical Teams based around the globe who regularly conduct audits at our key sites in China, India, Turkey, E.Europe, UK, Vietnam, Cambodia and Morocco along with other surrounding countries and regions. The teams conduct audits, create and review corrective action plans and support with issue resolution. We see this process as being a partnership with our suppliers offering key help and advice when issues are found.

We also encourage worker feed-back and all our visits include worker interviews where we encourage open discussion on human rights issues and provide workers with a means of contacting our in-country teams outside of the work environment should they wish to discuss sensitive issues.

## Addressing Modern Slavery in the Bangladesh Ready-made Garment Sector.

Having been members of the Bangladesh Accord for the past 10 years, we have seen the great improvements that have been made, although there has been little focus on the empowerment of women or addressing the issues of female worker harassment which have been heavily publicised in the media over recent years. In 2023/24 we partnered with ETI who are running the Gender Sensitive Workplace Programme, selecting two key sites in the region. The project works to empower the female garment workers through multiple training sessions, giving them increased knowledge of their rights, to increase female representation in supervisor positions and to enable the factories to strengthen their grievance mechanisms against gender-based harassment through setting up a Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee.

## Modern Slavery Risk

We continue to see modern slavery as a key risk for our business, both internally and within our supply chain. We are committed to working collaboratively with our key stakeholders to tackle the issue. During 2023, we carried out a Modern Slavery Risk Assessment at our Distribution Centre. This assessment was carried out in partnership with Slave Free Alliance and this work has enabled us to target potential areas of improvement that may be required. We will be holding the next assessment in Jan 2025. We continue to monitor our distribution centre, procurement and facilities teams to ensure that current processes are robust and make improvements where we feel they are required to ensure we reduce any modern slavery risk across these departments.

## Fashion Advice Bureau FAB-L Highfields Centre

Working with the (Fashion Advice Bureau (FAB-L) in Leicester has helped to provide workers in a key garment producing region of the UK the ability to have a safe space to discuss workplace issues. It allows workers in the area to have easy access to experts, enables grievances to be handled quickly with the support of FAB-L team and with brand support as well as gaining access to other areas of help through Highfields. Working with FAB-L has been invaluable in allowing the workers to understand their workplace rights. [FAB-L – Highfields Centre](#)

## Safe And Fair Work For All

Protecting human rights and the dignity of all employees and workers in our business and supply chains continues to be a steadfast commitment for River Island. As members of the ETI we continue to use the ETI Base Code as our ethical code of conduct, around which our supplier code of practice is based. Working alongside our in-country teams we continue to ensure that we keep all employees and workers in our supply chain free from exploitation and to help to improve their lives through the work we do <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/resources/eti-base-code>





## Commitment 9: 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

We constantly evaluate our community engagement strategy, to ensure we maximise the impact our efforts have in our communities. Over the previous year our community on the Island, and our customers, have provided incredible support to several key charities and partners.

In addition to working directly with charity partners, we also run schemes to maximise the donations of our Islanders and their chosen charities. One way we do this is through our Giver Island Fund, which matches funding to amounts that River Island colleagues raise for charity. Our teams support causes of their choice via their own fund raising, and we match their sponsorship amounts as part of this internal scheme

*"Our Giver Island programme has now been running for over 11 years and offers support to all our fantastic colleagues on the Island who are fundraising for their own special causes. Over that period, we have awarded over £800,000 in matched funding which has helped hundreds of Islanders to support over 250 different charities, large and small, each of which means something very special to them."*

*The support that Giver Island offers to charities is amazing but I'm equally proud of the feeling behind the scheme which says to colleagues 'If it matters to you, then it matters to us too.'"*

Mark Woodruff, community and charities manager.

One of our longest standing charity partnerships is with Newlife, A charity supporting disabled and terminally ill children. Newlife has been our charitable partner for over 30 years, and we are hugely proud to support them in various endeavours throughout the year.

In 2024 we donated over 265,000 garments to them We also continue to donate the plastic bag levy to Newlife, which raised a total of almost £403,000. We have now donated over £4.3m since the carrier bag levy was introduced in 2016. This money is used to support Newlife's charitable activities, including funding a nurses' help line for families, covering the cost of life-changing equipment provided to families such as play therapy pods. It also helps the charity to continue their invaluable fundraising activities and all associated costs.

Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme offers employees the opportunity to make tax-efficient donations to registered charities. Through this scheme Islanders can make donations to their favourite charities direct from their gross pay and the charity will receive the income tax that would otherwise have been payable on that amount.

We are proud to have employee-led communities that provide us with feedback and insights into how we can best support the people they represent. With a workforce made up of over 80% women, we recognise the importance of supporting the life moments that affect our people. We will increase our support for employees experiencing menopause and introduce coaching support for those returning from maternity leave.

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#### Our Successes.

- Donated over 265,000 garments to Newlife
  - Over £400,000 raised for our charity partner NewLife through the sale of carrier bags
- 

#### Our Targets.

- 30% Increase in employee participation in the Giver Island Programme by 2030.
  - In 2025 We will increase our support for employees experiencing menopause and introduce coaching support for those returning from maternity leave.
- 

#### Our Partnerships.







## Commitment 10: Transparency

### ATTAIN FULL TRANSPARENCY THROUGH THE BUSINESS AND SUPPLY CHAIN IN ORDER TO MEASURE AND DELIVER OUR COMMITMENTS

*During 2023, we continued to work on improving transparency within the business with our partnerships with Transparency Pledge and the Transparency Index as well as carrying on our supply chain transparency work with the Segura team. We also maintained our strong commitment to improve human rights within our business and supply chain and in 2023, we conducted 315 factory audits and 226 ethical site visits.*

Our work with the **Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC)** using its sustainable measuring tool continued to help us monitor our environmental impact using the Higg Index tool, to help increase transparency in areas within our supply chain, but outside of Human Rights due diligence programme.

During 2023 we have continued our focus on their **Factory Social and Labour Module (FSLM)**, working alongside fellow UK brands to try and increase transparency of social and labour issues at sites in the lower tiers of our supply chain. We are currently examining where brands can collaborate to build a clearer picture of shared sites and work together along with the factories to deal with any issues that may exist. We have also continued our work to increase supply chain transparency by continuing our partnership with Segura. Segura is a UK-based company founded in 2015, combining digital expertise with a detailed knowledge of global supply chains, in order to create a simple-to-use business solution. Segura delivers market leading solutions to retailers and brands, focused on helping them to achieve ethical, sustainable, and compliant multi-tiered supply chains. Through Segura, our suppliers report at purchase order level, and give a "live" update of where our products and their components are being sourced, as well as a clear picture of all the production processes used in their manufacturing. This means our lower tier suppliers confirm they are supplying the component or process, directly within Segura. This provides us with the transparency and visibility we require. As a result of the success of the trial, we adopted Segura as part of our standard working practices in late 2021, and on-boarded all own brand suppliers during 2022.

We continue to be committed to delivering full transparency of our supply base for both component and service suppliers although

our initial target of end 2023 proved to be too ambitious, but we will continue our work with an aim to get full visibility of our key supply chain components and services mapped at order level by the end of 2025 including Fabric Suppliers.

#### Our Successes.

- Continued our work with suppliers in the UK as part of the Fast Forward Programme.
- Carried out over 200 visits to key production sites using our in-country teams
- Uncovered 15 cases of subcontracting during 2023 and worked with the suppliers involved to understand the root cause of these occurrences.

#### Our Targets.

- Get full visibility of our key supply chain components and services mapped at order level by the end of 2025 including Fabric Suppliers
- Increase Tier 2 Visibility on our publicly Available Factory List

#### Our Partnerships.

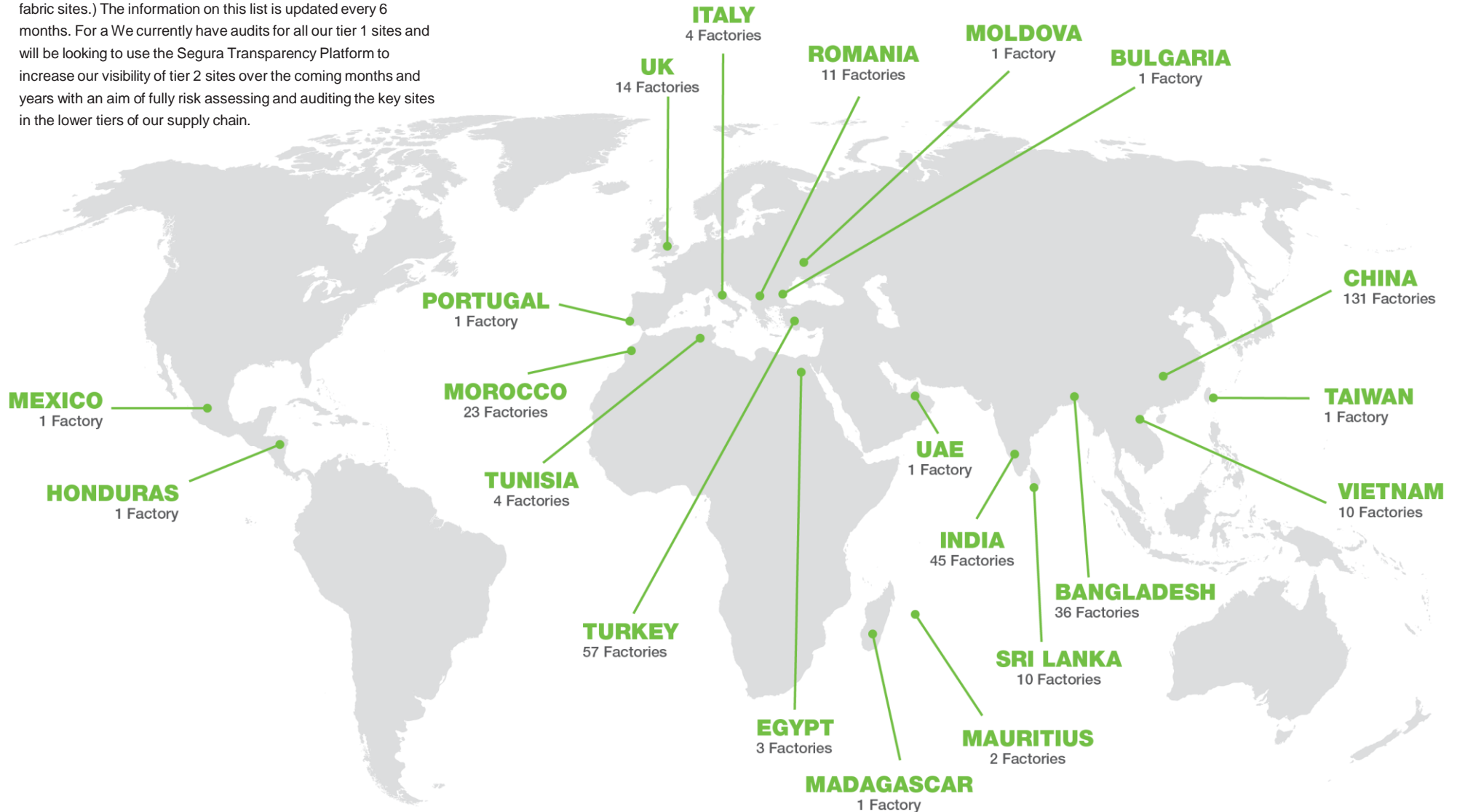




## OUR SUPPLIERS AROUND THE WORLD

During 2023 we worked to consolidate our supply chain and focus more on our key partner suppliers. Below is a map of all of our tier 1 sites that have been used to manufacture our production during 2023/24. The full 'live' RI Factory list can be found [Here](#) (or you can download the Excel version which includes 100% of our tier 1 sites and also a list of our known tier 2 fabric sites.) The information on this list is updated every 6 months. For a We currently have audits for all our tier 1 sites and will be looking to use the Segura Transparency Platform to increase our visibility of tier 2 sites over the coming months and years with an aim of fully risk assessing and auditing the key sites in the lower tiers of our supply chain.

We also continue to be an active member of the Bangladesh Accord. Please click on the attached link where you can monitor the status all of the factories who are part of the on-going [improvement programme. The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh](#)







## Commitment 11: Advocacy

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

Advocacy and communication are core to creating sustainable change in our business and whether directly with our supply chain, through our member 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.

During 2023/24 we have continued our work with The Kind Society communicating our work towards sustainable change to our customers. As well as holding us accountable, the work of the Kind Society helps us to educate our customers on sustainability, empowering them in the choices they can make when they shop with us.

We have continued our support to Islanders due to the prolonged period of the cost-of-living crisis. And have continued to offer a unique package of support that was initially announced for our Islanders in November 2022, with numerous initiatives aiming to offset the rising costs as much as possible.

We continue to be proud of the work that we are doing but also know there is still a very long journey ahead, but there is a fantastic opportunity for us to continue to use our voice to help drive behavioural change through our sustainability programmes.

We are under no illusions when it comes to Transparency and Collaboration, we have a clear understanding that these are the fundamental principles on which our strategy needs to be built, and that our customers, suppliers and stakeholders are key to driving this, whilst finding the balance between sustained progress and ensuring there is commercial gain. This is and will continue to be a very challenging task, but one in which we are fully committed.

### The Islander Support Scheme

A message to Islanders from River Island founder, Bernard Lewis.

"I want to write personally to you all to say that, since starting River Island nearly 70 years ago, I have never known a time when the cost of living has risen so dramatically, so quickly and caused so much distress. We are committed to helping all of you who make this business what it is. It is difficult to know what the best way is to do this, but I am very pleased with the package of support that we have developed, and I hope that it will go some way to helping."

With very best regards,

Bernard Lewis  
Founder







### Islander Support Payment

To help with increased costs we paid an Islander Support Payment to all colleagues who had been in the business for at least three months (except for our most senior leaders).

### Care Packages

Our stores provided care packages including personal care products and a regular supply of food basics, such as breakfast items, tea, coffee, and tinned goods.

In Chelsea House, we offered free breakfasts every day, and free hot lunch options on Mondays and Fridays. We also introduced hygiene packs in all our bathrooms.

### Retail Trust Fund

We worked with the Retail Trust to create a dedicated River Island Financial Support Fund, which will be available to support Islanders in the UK and ROI experiencing financial difficulties with a non-repayable grant.

### Everyday Savings

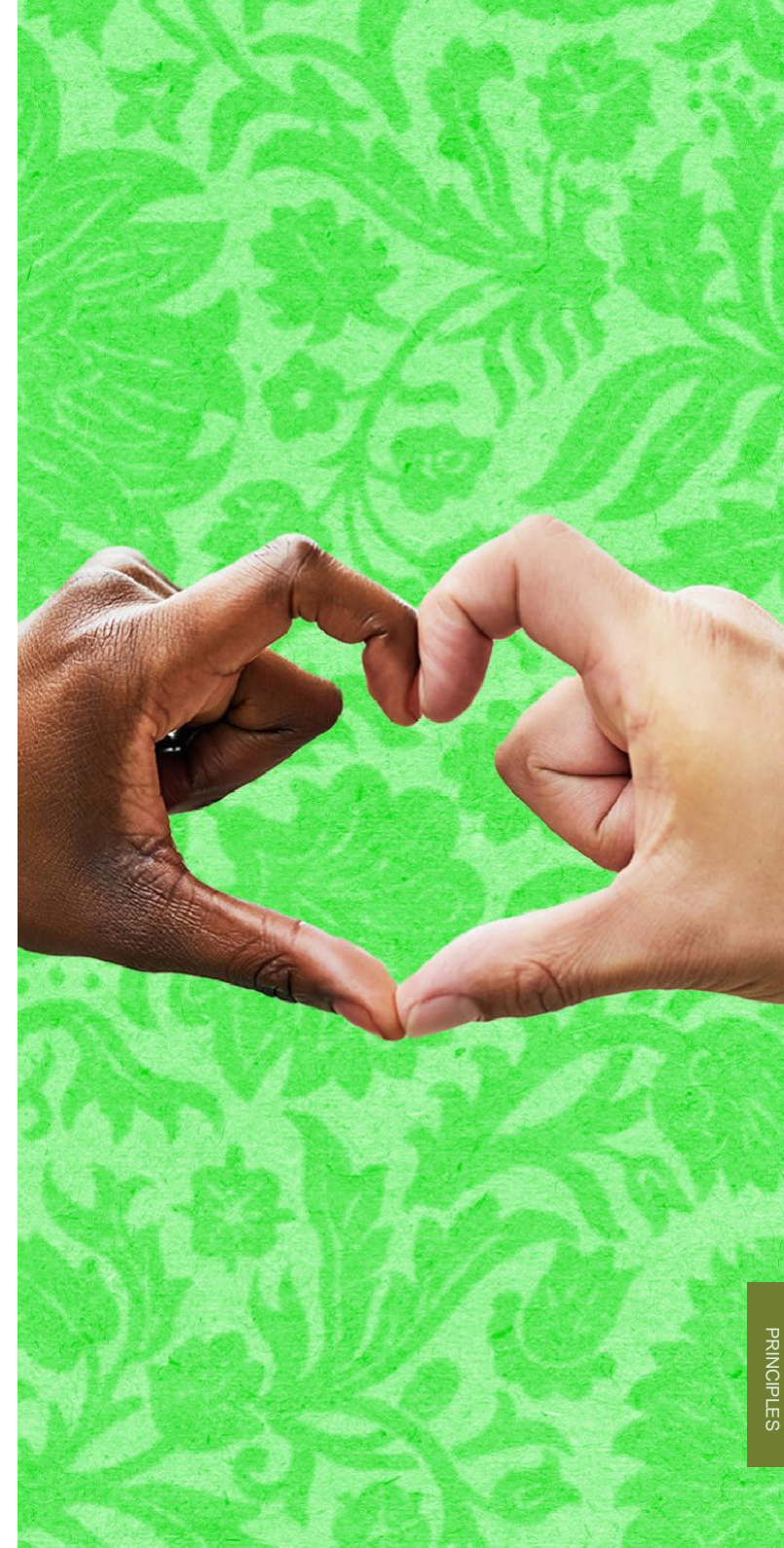
Our engagement platform Life on the Island (LOTI) gives Islanders discounts or cashback on groceries, train tickets, restaurants, insurance and much more, to help save on everyday spending.

### Financial Wellbeing

Our financial wellbeing programme gives access to workshops and tools on subjects such as budgeting, debt management and future planning.

### Mental Health Support

We know that financial pressures can take a deep toll on mental health. We opened channels of communication for all our staff, via our People Team, our Mental Health Allies and the Retail Trust for support and guidance if needed.







## Commitment 12: Partnership

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

We continue to make good progress towards our sustainability targets, much of our success is in part thanks to the great partners we have supporting us along the way.

In 2023/24, we worked even closer with the Carbon Trust to map and assess our indirect greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and finalise the setting of our Science Based Targets for achieving Net Zero emissions by 2040. This past year we also continued to partner with the Amos Bursary as part of building a more diverse and inclusive workplace. We also extended our partnership with Mind to further embed wellbeing in our ways of working and strengthened our partnership with the Retail Trust to build our Islanders' Support Scheme to help offset the impact of the rise of cost of living.

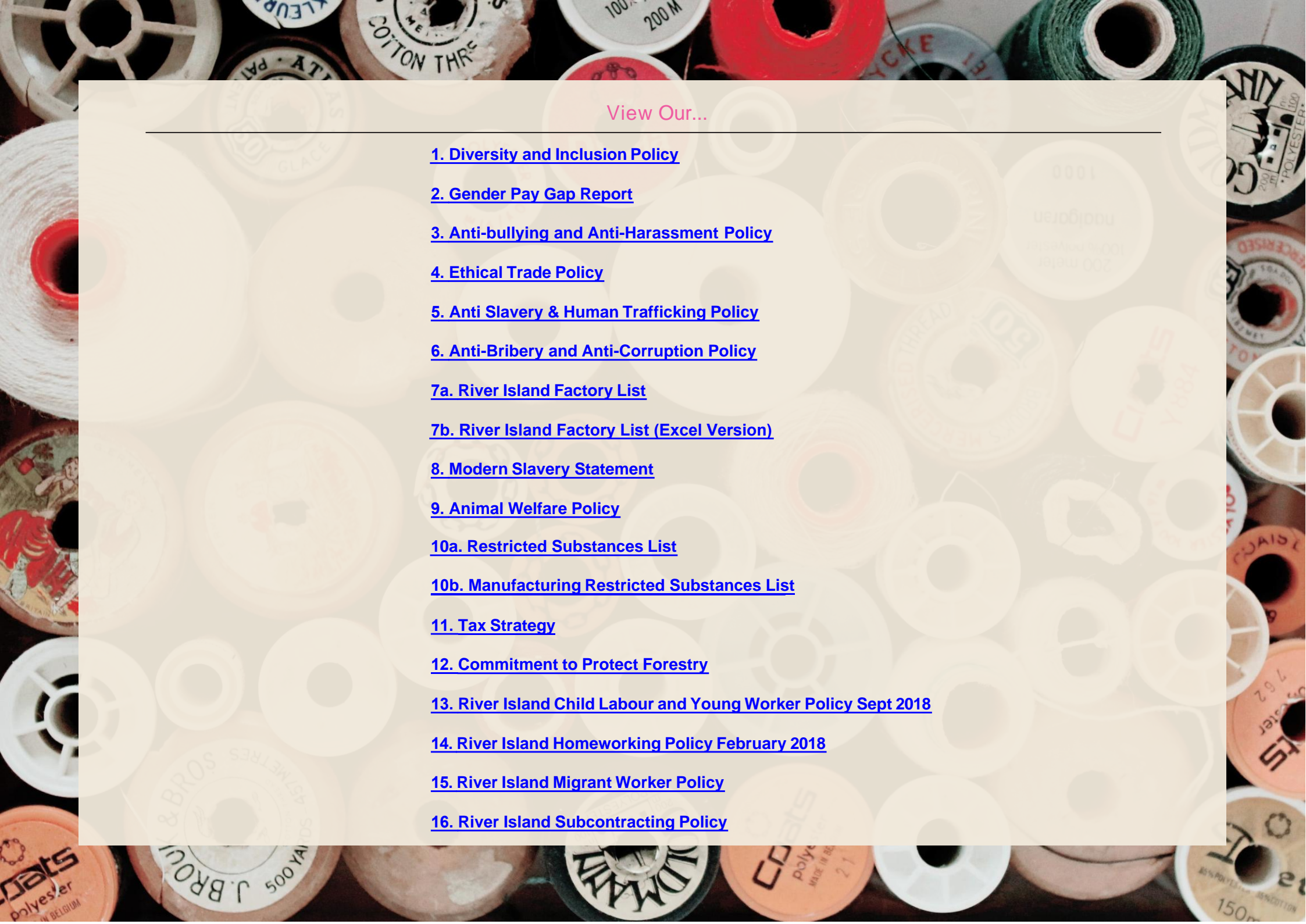
We know that partnerships can help us address the social impact our business can have more effectively, through our own operations as well as through our suppliers. This is why in 2022 we became members of the Slave Free Alliance and performed several assessments both internally and at our Milton Keynes DC to better address the risks of modern slavery within our business. As part of this collaborative partnership, we have carried out Modern Slavery assessment for the whole business as well having a focussed assessment at the DC followed by a worker modern slavery awareness day held in 2024.

As proud as we are of the progress made in 2023/24, of delivering on our commitments towards people and planet, we understand that the impact our industry has is broad: meaning solutions are challenging and complex. We firmly believe that for our industry to become truly sustainable, we need to partner and collaborate with others to drive significant and meaningful change at scale.

Together, we will continue to integrate sustainability further into our operations, supporting the industry we love and care for.







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](#)

[7a. River Island Factory List](#)

[7b. River Island Factory List \(Excel Version\)](#)

[8. Modern Slavery Statement](#)

[9. Animal Welfare Policy](#)

[10a. Restricted Substances List](#)

[10b. Manufacturing Restricted Substances List](#)

[11. Tax Strategy](#)

[12. Commitment to Protect Forestry](#)

[13. River Island Child Labour and Young Worker Policy Sept 2018](#)

[14. River Island Homeworking Policy February 2018](#)

[15. River Island Migrant Worker Policy](#)

[16. River Island Subcontracting Policy](#)



MAKING FASHION A FORCE FOR GOOD

# RIVER ISLAND

## SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

12 COMMITMENTS TO PEOPLE AND PLANET