

**HUMAN  
RIGHTS REPORT  
& MODERN SLAVERY  
STATEMENT**

**2020/21**

## OUR 2020/21 HIGHLIGHTS



Waitrose stocks the widest range of Fairtrade products of any physical UK supermarket



400+

Partners who recruit and supervise temporary workers trained in responsible recruitment and spotting the signs of modern slavery

9

Workshops being run to support farm health workers in South Africa to enable them to support worker communities throughout the pandemic



10

Covid-19 capacity-building webinars open to all UK retail suppliers and attended by Waitrose suppliers

£145k

Provided by the John Lewis COVID-19 fund to support supply chain worker wages throughout the pandemic



48

Food manufacturing suppliers, and four of their labour providers, signed up to use the Responsible Recruitment Toolkit which aims to develop robust and ethical working practices

### PARTNERSHIP GNFR<sup>1</sup> RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYMENT GROUP

Established in 2020 to review recruitment policies, processes and procedures within GNFR supply chains



£200k

To support Waitrose & Partners Foundation farming communities respond to the pandemic

£14m

Invested since the launch of the Waitrose & Partners Foundation to improve the lives of and create better opportunities for the people and communities who grow, pick and pack our fresh produce



2,947

Employee responses in John Lewis's Chinese supply base to the John Lewis Better Jobs survey which was piloted with 15 suppliers

### WOMEN IN SUPPLY CHAINS REPORT

Published, which unpicks the challenges women face in our supply chains and what the Partnership is doing about it



100%

Of all cocoa used in own-brand confectionery is now certified Fairtrade

Our founder, John Spedan Lewis, believed that the Partnership should support positive change in society. True to this vision, today we strive to ensure that every person in our supply chains, whether they grow, pick, manufacture or pack our products, is treated fairly and rewarded fairly for their work.

At no time has this been more important or challenging than during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ensuring the health and safety of those within our supply chains became paramount. I am proud of the Partnership's response, which embraced our Partnership values. We supported suppliers and factories that remained open with access to our guidance and our expertise. We advised on health and safety, and the social distancing measures required to help reduce the spread of the virus. Where our stores had to shut and this resulted in product orders being cancelled, we paid in full for any own-brand finished products, or committed to pay in full once they were shipped. Where work had already begun to produce goods, we committed to take these orders at a later date or pay in full for the raw material costs incurred by suppliers.

The John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners Foundations continued to operate throughout the pandemic. The £200,000 unlocked by the Waitrose & Partners Foundation supported farming communities in response to the pandemic by providing much-needed advice on social distancing, as well as sanitation kits and food parcels for communities, helping just over 100,000 workers.

Wherever possible, we continued with our due diligence programme in our factories and packhouses. We paid particular attention to our own operations where, due to the rise in demand from customers for online orders and delivery, the use of temporary workers recruited via agencies increased the risk of human rights violations. Over 400 Partners who hire and supervise temporary workers were trained in responsible recruitment and spotting the signs of modern slavery. We continue to provide responsible recruitment practice training for suppliers in our supply chains.

We know that auditing programmes only provide a snapshot in time. This report outlines our most salient human rights risks and the programmes in place to address them. Last year, this included adapting the John Lewis UK Better Jobs programme and piloting the programme with 15 of our suppliers in China. The human rights landscape is constantly changing. We are committed to doing whatever it takes to protect those who work in our supply chains.

Modern slavery is one of the most severe breaches of human rights imaginable. As you will see from all our initiatives this past year, we are determined to make a difference in rooting it out and preventing human exploitation. We cannot tackle this alone and are committed to continuously sharing our insights and collaborating with others.

This report details many examples of our progress in protecting human rights and tackling modern slavery in our supply chains during the year ending 30 January 2021. We hope you find the details provided useful.

SHARON WHITE  
Partner & Chairman



## CONTENTS

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Our business                       | 6 Addressing risk           |
| 2 Policy                             | 7 Training                  |
| 3 Governance                         | 8 Effectiveness             |
| 4 Risk assessments and due diligence | 9 Who we work with          |
| 5 Our salient human rights risks     | 10 Modern Slavery Statement |

## OUR BUSINESS

The John Lewis Partnership is the UK's largest employee-owned business and parent company of our two cherished retail brands, John Lewis and Waitrose, which are owned in trust by over 80,000 Partners. We have 34 John Lewis shops plus one outlet and 331 Waitrose shops across the UK, along with johnlewis.com and waitrose.com. We also have two international sourcing offices, a soft furnishings factory, various distribution centres, three Waitrose cookery schools, a content production hub, a heritage centre and our own Waitrose farm.

### OUR PURPOSE

Our founder, John Spedan Lewis, established the John Lewis Partnership to be a better way of doing business, driving positive change in society. We follow the Principles and Rules set out in our Constitution, which defines the Partnership's role in society and our responsibilities to Partners, customers, suppliers and wider communities in which we operate.

We are driven to make a difference to people's lives and create positive social change. Our definition of success is not just commercial: our Constitution requires us to make 'sufficient', not 'maximum', profit and that's why we are focused on reinvesting our profits back into our Partners, our business and the communities in which we operate.

We know we're not perfect but we are working hard to be as good as we can be. As an organisation with a strong heritage in being purpose-led, it's critical we continue to build on our history and ensure our purpose is clear, responds to the world our Partners, customers and suppliers live in today, builds a compelling vision for the future and drives decisions and actions for our business.

As part of our five-year Partnership Plan, which we launched in October 2020, we had an exciting opportunity to update our ambition as a business. This has driven our commercial decisions and is helping shape our employment practices. It influences the services we offer to customers and how we work with new commercial partners. It sees us, for instance, taking firmer action on pay, working conditions and diversity and inclusion. We have also been providing support to suppliers throughout the pandemic.

By working together, our Partnership purpose can achieve great things.

331 Waitrose shops	34 John Lewis shops	3 Waitrose cookery schools	1 heritage centre
5 John Lewis shop-in-shops worldwide	2 head offices, one in London and one in Bracknell	23 customer delivery hubs <sup>2</sup>	2 sourcing office locations in India and Hong Kong
1 content production hub	7 distribution centres <sup>3</sup>	44 countries and territories stock Waitrose products	60 Own-brand product sourced from over 60 countries
1,700 Over 1,700 Goods For Resale tier 1 own-brand supplier sites	6 Customer contact centres <sup>4</sup>	1 soft furnishings factory	1 Waitrose farm, the Leckford Estate
5 Partnership hotels for Partners' use			

<sup>2</sup> Figure includes three customer fulfilment centres.

<sup>3</sup> Three out of seven distribution centres are run by a third party.

<sup>4</sup> Four of the contact centres are run by a third party.

## OUR PARTNERSHIP VALUES

As employee-owners, we all have a share in the business and a shared commitment to go above and beyond for each other, our customers, and the communities and environments in which we operate. We have a set of five values that were created by Partners to explain what it means to be a Partner.

Our values are:

### DO RIGHT

We act with integrity and use our judgement to do the right thing.



### ALL OR NOTHING

We put everything we have into everything we do.



### GIVE MORE THAN YOU TAKE

We put more in, so everyone gets more out.



### BE YOURSELF. ALWAYS

We're quirky, proud and at our best when we are free to be ourselves.



### WE NOT ME

When we work together, anything is possible.



You can read more about our business in our [2021 Annual Report and Accounts](#).

# POLICY

The John Lewis Partnership Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice (RSCOP) sets out our commitment to workers' rights and our expectations of our suppliers regarding issues such as pay, working hours and child labour. It is based on the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code and relevant Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The RSCOP is approved and signed by the Chairman of the John Lewis Partnership and is applicable to all suppliers of goods and services to the John Lewis Partnership, in all sourcing countries and at all tiers<sup>5</sup> of our supply chain.

Suppliers trading with the Partnership are expected to comply with the RSCOP and, in so doing, must also comply with all relevant national and other applicable laws. Where there is a difference between the protection offered by the law and that offered by RSCOP, then the higher standard should be applied. If suppliers are unable to comply with a provision of RSCOP, they must explain to the Partnership how their own policies, processes and standards address the fundamental principles of that particular provision, and demonstrate how their standards have been developed in collaboration with workers.

The Partnership requires audits and risk assessments to demonstrate compliance with our RSCOP, focused on our high-risk supply chains first and those where we can have a direct impact. They ensure the required standards within our supply chains are upheld and highlight where improvements can be made. More details can be found under the 'Risk Assessment and Due Diligence' section of this report.

As outlined in this report, the RSCOP is the first point in a continuous improvement journey for our suppliers and their supply chains. The Partnership regularly consults with internal and external stakeholders on strengthening our approach to improving the human rights of workers in our supply chains. Recognising risk assessment and ethical audit limitations, we are always horizon-scanning to ensure we capture any new issues that arise and take the appropriate action required.

<sup>5</sup> A tier is defined as a stage in the supply chain carrying out a particular activity in the production of a product. For example, tier 1: sites manufacturing a finished product, or where the majority of assembly and packaging of the product bearing the John Lewis or Waitrose label occurs.

# GOVERNANCE



Strong governance in managing and mitigating the risk of human rights issues – including modern slavery – in our supply chains is critical in ensuring we are meeting and exceeding our ethical responsibilities and the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act.

Governance of human rights matters in the Partnership forms part of our wider Ethics and Sustainability governance. The Executive Team proposes the strategic direction for Ethics and Sustainability, including human rights. Their strategy is agreed – and implementation overseen – by the Partnership Board.

Since the end of the financial year, the Partnership Board formally agreed to create a Board-level Ethics and Sustainability Committee, which will meet on a quarterly basis. The Committee is chaired by the Chairman and comprises one Non-Executive Director and one external independent member with four Executive Directors: Finance, Strategy & Commercial Development, John Lewis and Waitrose. Its purpose is to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities in this area by ensuring that ethics and sustainability remain central to the Partnership strategy and that the Partnership continues to build inclusive, sustainable and transparent relationships between our suppliers and customers, as well as responding to the increasing environmental and social challenges faced by today's society. Nina Bhatia, Executive Director, Strategy & Commercial Development, has accountability for human rights and our responsible sourcing performance across all Partnership operations.

# RISK ASSESSMENT AND DUE DILIGENCE

All suppliers of goods and services to the Partnership are required to comply with our Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice (RSCOP). We tailor our risk assessments to ensure compliance with RSCOP based on several factors: the level of associated supply chain risk, including country of origin, industry and product type, and the level of influence and impact we are able to have on our supply chains.

The types of risk assessments we use include third-party ethical audits, supplier self-assessments, worker interviews and feedback and insight from stakeholders, such as trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These sources of information help us identify where workers are likely to be experiencing treatment that is not in line with the RSCOP, and can also highlight indicators of modern slavery.





**FOOD AND GROCERY**

**TIER 1 PROGRAMMES**

Waitrose sources food and groceries from the UK and overseas. Our policy requires all tier 1 sites to complete a comprehensive Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) self-assessment questionnaire to be reviewed and updated once a year, the results of which are analysed to determine the level of risk. Sites deemed low-risk are approved but

subject to spot checks. Those which are assessed as medium- or high-risk (616 sites) are required to carry out a third-party ethical audit.

The Partnership's Human Rights Team analyses the results to determine if a site will be approved for production, or will allow production to continue at an existing site already in use.

**IMPACT OF COVID-19**

Throughout the pandemic, Waitrose stores remained open and where possible our tier 1 suppliers continued to operate. For our suppliers' UK factories in particular, lockdown restrictions meant in most cases that audits were prohibited.

One response by the industry to this challenge was to introduce a virtual assessment tool; the Partnership was part of the consultation process with Sedex and audit companies on this. The Partnership believes that one of the most important parts of an ethical audit is worker interviews and, based on the short time periods available for worker interviews in a standard ethical audit, we made the decision to only accept virtual assessments under certain circumstances, such as to resolve non-conformances raised on previous audits where in-person worker interviews would not be required. Instead, Waitrose offered a derogation, allowing for a longer period between ethical audits, ensuring workers' and auditors' Covid-19 safety and enabling full worker interviews to take place when audits resumed.

TIER 1 PRODUCTION SITE RISK RATINGS 2020/21			
Sector	Risk rating		
	High	Medium	Low
Food & Grocery	181	435	132
General Merchandise	140	334	564
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>696</b>

Table 2

Waitrose worked directly with suppliers, sharing advice and expertise on challenges faced by factories operating throughout the pandemic. This included worker health and safety, for example, ensuring personal protective equipment (PPE) was available, adequate cleaning procedures were in place and the use of staggered shifts to ensure social distancing was maintained. Meat and fish-packing factories were identified as being at higher risk of Covid-19 outbreaks so we paid close attention to these suppliers and their factories, ensuring they were up to date with and followed the latest Covid-19 guidance.

Our buying teams highlighted challenges, including a case where employees were afraid to go to work. We followed up individually with this supplier and factory, providing them with practical examples of safety measures we had implemented with our own Partners and directing them to the most up-to-date guidance.

We worked closely with our suppliers to ensure they felt comfortable talking to us if they had concerns and needed support.

**BEYOND TIER 1**

Within food supply chains, we are aware that human rights risks are most prevalent below tier 1. We focus our efforts on our own-brand supply chains carrying the greatest level of risk as well as those where we can influence positive change.

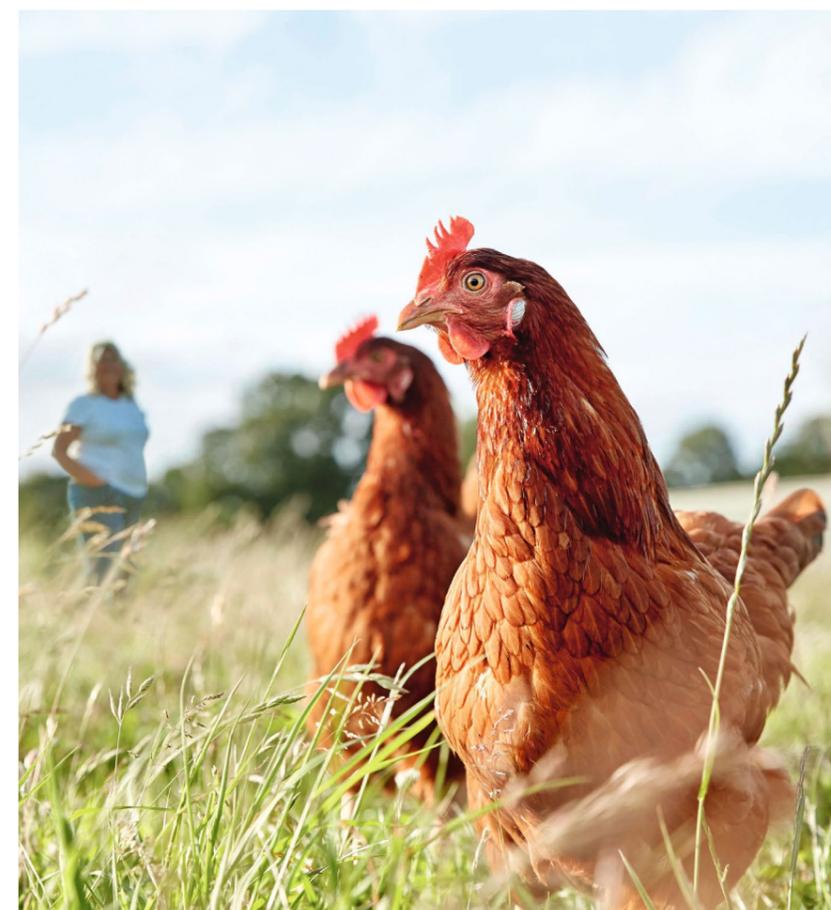
**LIVESTOCK**

In our meat, shell egg and fresh milk supply chains, most of which are based in the UK and Ireland, we support farmers with written guidance on how to comply with our RSCOP and UK employment legislation. A biennial worker welfare self-assessment questionnaire highlights where farmers need further support in understanding and complying with RSCOP. In 2019, 1,598 farms completed the biennial questionnaire. We report the aggregated findings to our supplier-led Waitrose Farming Partnership Livestock Steering Group, and the supplier members work directly with their farmers to improve employment practices, including employee welfare. In 2020 we worked with our nine direct supplier members to close off the gaps identified at farm level in the 2019 self-assessment. We are

TIER 1 PRODUCTION SITE DATA 2020/21				
Sector	Number of site <sup>6</sup>	Number of audits or self-assessment questionnaires graded in 2020/21	Non-conformances found in audits which took place in 2020/21	Non-conformances closed in audits which took place in 2020/21
Food & Grocery	748	619	973	739
General Merchandise	1,038	64	184	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>846</b>

Table 1

<sup>6</sup> Number of sites based on factory list run on 01.04.21.



in the process of undertaking a new SAQ to confirm these gaps have been closed off. More importantly, we supported suppliers through the impacts of the fluctuation in demand for products that the pandemic brought.

FISH

In 2019, 199 UK-farmed salmon and trout fisheries completed the biennial worker welfare self-assessment questionnaire and were supported by supplier members of the Waitrose Farming Partnership Livestock Steering Group to improve their employment practices and worker welfare. We are working with a small number of other farmed fish suppliers not yet taking part in the self-assessment questionnaire to establish the most suitable audit programme for them. We have also started to conduct deep-dive [modern slavery risk assessments](#) into our global farmed fish supply chains to help us address the systemic issues found within them.

In our wild-caught fish supply chains, we are working with our suppliers to sponsor the adoption of the [Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard](#) (RFVS) for UK vessels and foreign vessels supplying our own-brand fish.

Our main supplier of British wild-caught fish, Flatfish Ltd, is working with the [Scottish White Fish Producers Association Ltd](#) and 30 of their vessels, which supply Waitrose via Flatfish Ltd, to adopt the standard. Through this certification we are able to obtain a baseline assurance that good standards of worker welfare are being met. We voluntarily disclose a

list of all our wild-caught, farmed fish and shellfish sourcing via the [Ocean Disclosure Project \(OPD\)](#).

IMPACT OF COVID-19

The closure of many UK exports and routes to market meant that demand for UK wild-caught fish dropped. The Partnership supported our suppliers by keeping Waitrose fish counters open throughout the pandemic, promoting wild-caught fish in branches, launching new lines such as [Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\)](#) certified Dorset clams and cockles and promoting the benefits of eating fish through various customer communications channels.

During the pandemic, the heightened risk of workers being on distant water fleets for longer periods than the standard 12–18 months was well documented globally. We were made aware of the plight of migrant fishermen who were stuck at the UK dockside border with expired visas and without access to basic facilities. We raised this as a concern to the [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#), via the [British Retail Consortium \(BRC\)](#). Eventually it was possible for these fishermen to have their visas renewed or to return home to their families.



FRESH PRODUCE

In our global fresh produce and horticulture supply chains, our direct suppliers undertake online training in order to be able to conduct [Waitrose Farm Assessments \(WFA\)](#) on their farms. Through these assessments our suppliers are able to identify gaps in compliance with the [RSCOP](#) and work with the farmers to make improvements on key worker welfare indicators.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

In 2020 our direct suppliers were unable to undertake [Waitrose Farm Assessments](#) on their farms. Instead, Waitrose turned its attention to supporting suppliers throughout the pandemic and relied more heavily on information regarding the situation on the ground to be provided by other sources, for example NGOs, trade unions and industry groups.

70,000

In 2020, Waitrose worked closely with [ITV](#) to support [DEFRA's 'Pick for Britain'](#) campaign, aiming to recruit 70,000 new pickers who would replace the vacancies left by the migrant labourers who had been prevented from returning to farms for the season due to Covid-19 restrictions.

We shared information with other retailers, suppliers and vice versa, and met with [DEFRA](#) to inform them on the insight we had gathered from our supply chains, contributing to the industry-wide assistance for suppliers in need.

Global migration patterns were very different in 2020 as national lockdowns resulted in overseas travel being severely restricted. This meant that the human rights risks connected to migrant workers contrasted with the previous year and those disclosed in our [2019/20 Modern Slavery Statement](#). For example, in 2019 one of the highest-risk areas related to the treatment of migrant strawberry pickers in Spain. This mass worker migration did not happen in 2020.

Where possible, we give preference to buying British produce when it is in season. Our supply chains therefore have a proportionally high requirement for migrant labour during the UK peak harvest periods. In 2020, Waitrose worked closely with [ITV](#) to support [DEFRA's 'Pick for Britain'](#) campaign, aiming to recruit 70,000 new pickers who would replace the vacancies left by the migrant labourers who had been prevented from returning to farms for the season due to Covid-19 restrictions. Although there were challenges with the programme throughout the season, it was able to support farmers to harvest their crop before the borders reopened to migrant labour.

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

TIER 1 PROGRAMMES

These sites are often highly labour intensive and, as our country risk assessment tool tells us, are often based in countries considered high-risk with regard to labour practices. Our policy requires all own-brand tier 1 general merchandise and fashion sites to demonstrate they comply with our [RSCOP](#) through a recognised biennial third-party audit. There are a few exceptions to this policy explained below, and in some cases we require additional due diligence to be undertaken:

- For many of our smaller, specialist suppliers, which are often unique and artisan in nature, we recognise that a full ethical audit is not appropriate. For these suppliers, and those where the order value at tier 1 production site is less than £25,000, we require an annual online SAQ to be completed.

- Sites on our [Better Jobs programme](#) are not required to undertake audits, as we receive direct information from the workers about what the working conditions are like. The worker voice survey is more in-depth than a compliance-based audit and provides insight on topics such as job security, wellbeing and reward. You can find out more information on the [Better Jobs Programme](#) and 2020 findings throughout this report.

- Where we have identified a particular risk associated with a country and industry, we require additional due diligence to be undertaken. These sites often participate in collaborative industry initiatives:

- In Bangladesh, Cambodia and Indonesia, John Lewis is working with the [Better Work](#) programme, a partnership between the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, to improve working conditions and respect labour rights for workers, while boosting the competitiveness of the apparel sector. 6 out of 60 sites currently manufacturing own-brand products for John Lewis in these countries have joined the Programme. John Lewis, Better Work and the factories are working towards improvement on key risk areas identified during compliance assessments including freedom of association, forced labour, discrimination and working hours. All

improvements are being made through a systematic and sustainable approach which also takes into account workers' voices.

- John Lewis has been a member of the [Bangladesh Accord](#) since its inception, alongside 16 out of 18 sites producing own-brand fashion products for the Partnership in the country. The agreement holds both brands and factories accountable for ensuring the safety of workers.

- It focuses on addressing fire and building safety concerns. The inspections, corrective actions and grading it requires ensure factories are safe for workers.

Following the appropriate assessment, we examine the results to determine if a new site should be approved for the manufacture of our products, or an existing site allowed to continue production. If a new factory does not meet our minimum requirements, it has six months to make the improvements suggested by the auditor before they can be proposed again.

IMPACT OF COVID -19

Due to factory closures, national lockdowns and restrictions on local and international travel, our third-party auditors were, in many cases, unable to conduct on-site audits in 2020. The decision was made not to accept remote/virtual site audits due to the ambiguity these can create in terms of the evidence shown to the auditor. For example, it would be very difficult to tell if the worker's voice was being monitored during interviews.

John Lewis offered a derogation on a case by case basis, allowing for a longer period between ethical audits, ensuring workers' and auditors' Covid-19 safety and enabling full worker interviews to take place when audits resumed.



**RAW MATERIAL AND COMMODITY CERTIFICATION AND PROGRAMMES**

Within our raw material supply chains, we have less visibility beyond tier 1 but know that there is often a high risk of systemic human rights abuses. We are actively investing in tools and technology that will enable more precise traceability of raw materials throughout our supply chains. Currently, for a number of key raw materials used in our own-brand products, we require our suppliers to work towards certification or be part of a membership programme, most of which have set criteria on working conditions. This enables us to assess whether the basic standards are met:

**SOYA AND PALM OIL**

Soya and palm oil are often in the limelight because of their potential negative environmental impacts, but these are also important areas of consideration for human rights risks. They are sourced via long and complex supply chains that involve significant labour requirements in harvesting and processing stages, and they have impacts on local and indigenous communities. Our [soya sourcing standard](#) states that soya procured either directly or in animal feed must be organic or certified to a specified certification standard. These certification standards are selected on the basis of a number of criteria, including the requirement to respect human rights, in particular the prohibition of forced/child labour and respect of land rights.

All of the palm oil in our own-brand products is required to be certified by the [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil](#), which also includes detailed human rights requirements. In addition, we are active members of the [Palm Oil Transparency Coalition](#) and the [Soy Transparency Coalition](#). Both are pre-competitive coalitions aimed at removing exploitation and deforestation from these commodity sectors by using a robust engagement and evaluation process to assess the ambition, commitments, progress and impacts of both importers and traders of these commodities into the UK and EU market.

**COTTON**

Large quantities of cotton are sourced by our suppliers for use in a number of the Partnership's own-brand products. We are aware of the human rights concerns associated with the industry and have a target in place for all cotton used in our own-brand products to be from sustainable or recycled sources. Schemes we accept in order to comply with this target include products certified to the [Global Organic Textile Standard \(GOTS\)](#) and [Global Recycled Standard \(GRS\)](#), both of which have social criteria in place to ensure ethical treatment of workers in the supply chain. Focused at farm level, we also accept cotton sourced for use in our own-brand products which supports the [Better Cotton Initiative \(BCI\)](#). This includes supporting farmers in promoting 'decent work' principles in accordance with the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) definition](#). For details on the human rights risks associated with cotton sourcing from Xinjiang, see page 25.



Waitrose offers the widest range of Fairtrade products of any UK physical supermarket.

**TEA, SUGAR, COFFEE AND COCOA**

Waitrose has supported the [Fairtrade Foundation](#) since its launch in 1994 and was one of the first supermarkets to stock Fairtrade products. We achieved our ambition of offering the widest range of Fairtrade products of any physical UK supermarket, thanks to our commitment to be 100% Fairtrade across key own-brand categories including coffee, black teas and the cocoa used in our confectionery, as well as carrying a wide range of Fairtrade brands such

as Cafédirect, Clipper and Barts. We recognise the role that the Fairtrade system plays in monitoring and helping to drive improvements in workers' rights in some of the most challenging commodity supply chains. In 2020 we actively worked to increase the level of transparency of our Fairtrade supply chains. Information on our [tea](#) and [banana](#) supply chains is already available and we are committed to publishing details on more Fairtrade categories going forward.

The Partnership recognises that smallholders, or small-scale farmers, are very important within these food supply chains. These farmers deserve a fair system of value distribution down the supply chain and Fairtrade enables farmers to receive a fair price for their goods and an income that enables them to sustain their livelihoods. Importantly, as part of Fairtrade certification, farmers develop skills to better manage their crop, increase output and develop their business.

**CASHMERE**

From sweaters to bobble hats, cashmere is included in a wide range of John Lewis products. Cashmere production is the backbone of nomadic herders' livelihoods in Mongolia and other cashmere-producing regions in Northern China. The Partnership is a pioneering member of the Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) and is contributing to the funding of a three-year programme to support the expansion of the new SFA Cashmere Standard from Mongolia into China. The SFA's programmes and standards help provide stability for herders and farmers in both countries by connecting them to strong networks within the industry as well as providing them with the tools and knowledge to sell higher-priced certified fibre

destined for the global market. The SFA works directly with herding organisations and farmers, and conducts robust training, assessments, and audits – which in China are supported by the SFA's partner organisation, the International Cooperation Committee of Animal Welfare (ICCAW). In 2021, the SFA plans to begin the process of introducing its Clean Fibre Processing Code of Practice into China, with the intention to make it a mandatory requirement for all primary processing plants looking to be certified by the SFA. The Code of Practice is already a requirement in Mongolia and addresses safe working environments and fair working conditions, among other stipulations.



**GOODS NOT FOR RESALE (GNFR)**

Within the Partnership's own operations we have robust due diligence procedures in place to ensure we know how and where our direct employees (Partners) are recruited and all our contracts include our requirements to uphold labour standards.

Partners who have a business need that requires external suppliers of goods and services must complete an Inherent Risk Questionnaire (IRQ) to initiate a project. Suppliers deemed medium- or high-risk, including those providing low cost or temporary labour, are flagged and the preferred supplier following our procurement sourcing process will be required to complete the Retail Supplier Qualification System (RSQS) prior to being awarded a contract.

RSQS has two stages that assess the supplier specific risk compared to the inherent risk of the service assessed via the IRQ. The first stage collects basic information regarding the supplier and their operations, and captures agreement from the supplier of compliance with our RSCOP. Based on the information provided, this may trigger the second stage in which responses from the supplier will be assessed by the Partnership's Ethics & Sustainability team. This team may require additional provisions and commitments to be made in the contract. Additional risk modules were integrated into the registration process at the beginning of 2021. These enable us to better focus regular engagement with those suppliers where we have identified higher risks so we can work together to mitigate these.



**GNFR RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYMENT GROUP**

During 2020, we set up the GNFR Responsible Employment Group to review the Partnership's use of agency labour. This group comprises senior managers from across the business including People, Legal, Commercial, Procurement, Risk and Ethics & Sustainability. Through this group we have conducted an internal review and gap analysis of our GNFR procurement policies, processes and procedures and will be addressing any gaps where they have been identified. In our own operations we also commissioned four deep-dive ethical assessments, focusing on in-depth worker interviews to ensure that the requirements of the RSCOP are being upheld by our third-party labour providers.

**IMPACT OF COVID-19**

Throughout the pandemic, and as per the government guidelines, we closed our John Lewis stores to ensure the safety of our Partners, customers and local communities. However, as an essential retailer, Waitrose stores remained open,

and we worked hard to help our customers shop safely and ensure that our Partners were protected. This included supporting our Partners by providing them with PPE before it became mandatory, adding checkout screens and limiting the number of customers in our shops at all times.

We were very conscious that the short turnaround time frame and strain on supply chains producing PPE meant that we had to secure its supply from multiple sources. We were aware of the inherent risks associated with this, and specifically the risk of human rights abuses connected with the rubber gloves industry in Malaysia. Our procurement teams worked with our key PPE suppliers to ensure that desktop due diligence was undertaken and that appropriate certification was put in place.

We saw a rapid uplift in the demand for online orders from both John Lewis and Waitrose during the pandemic, which impacted our warehouse picking and packing operations. This was mirrored with a significant increase in demand across our Waitrose stores. The shift in consumer demand meant we would need to employ the use of agency labour and have previously identified that there is a higher risk of modern slavery and worker exploitation where we do not directly employ workers. This risk was managed by the Partnership through the combined efforts of the business, redeploying over 4,500 Partners from closed John Lewis stores, and working with assured contingent labour providers to ensure the increased demand was fulfilled in accordance with Partnership policies, including RSCOP.

All new suppliers of medium- or high-risk goods and services, including low cost or temporary labour to the Partnership are required to register on our Retailer Supplier Qualification System and provide information including their corporate responsibility programme and agreement to the Partnership's RSCOP.

# OUR SALIENT HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS

The John Lewis Partnership recognises the possibility that poor labour practices, exploitation and human rights abuses could happen within our supply chains. Our salient risks are those which are most common or have the most negative impact within these supply chains.

Since 2015, we have followed the [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs) guidance on how to identify issues of concern. The UN principles provide a framework for companies to prevent, address, and remedy human rights abuses committed within business operations or which are worsened by a company's activities. Our understanding of those issues is constantly developing.

Salient risks are different for individual countries, industries, cultures and contexts. The John Lewis Partnership categorises these differences under three groupings: our two brands, John Lewis (general merchandise) and Waitrose (food and grocery), and a third category for goods not for resale (GNFR). The associated risks are reviewed regularly, most recently in 2020. Multiple approaches, as outlined under the 'Addressing Risk' section of this report, are taken to address these issues. The risk of modern slavery in our supply chains remains one of the most severe human rights risks we have identified.

SALIENT HUMAN RIGHTS RISK	SECTOR	SUPPLY CHAIN	COUNTRY
Freely chosen employment <a href="#">SDG 8.7</a>	Food and grocery	Fresh produce	UK
	General merchandise and food and grocery GNFR	Raw materials	China – specifically Xinjiang
		Our own operations	UK
Freedom to associate <a href="#">SDG 8.8</a>	Food and grocery	Fresh produce	Peru and South Africa
	General merchandise	Fashion and Home	UK and China
Health, safety and wellbeing <a href="#">SDG 3</a> and <a href="#">8.8</a>	Food and grocery	All	Global
	General merchandise		
Child labour <a href="#">SDG 8.7</a>	Food and grocery	Cocoa	Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana
Low wages and sustainable incomes <a href="#">SDG 1.1</a> , <a href="#">1.5</a> and <a href="#">8</a>	Food and grocery	Bananas, coffee	Dominican Republic (and more)
	General merchandise	Fashion	China / India / Cambodia
Gender and discrimination <a href="#">SDG 5</a> , <a href="#">8.5</a> and <a href="#">8.8</a>	Food and grocery and general merchandise	All	Global
Regular employment <a href="#">SDG 8.3</a> , <a href="#">8.7</a> and <a href="#">8.8</a>	GNFR	Our own operations	UK

Table 3



# ADDRESSING RISK

We focus our 'beyond audit' supply chain programmes in the sectors and locations identified as our salient human rights risks and where we can have the biggest impact.



## FREELY CHOSEN EMPLOYMENT

### SDG 8.7

We use the [International Labour Organization's \(ILO\)](#) indicators of forced labour including withholding wages, debt bondage and abusive living and working conditions to highlight risk areas in our supply chains when carrying out ethical audits and self-assessment questionnaires. Forced labour and human trafficking are both forms of modern slavery, a complex crime and ones which cause great harm to victims.

During the pandemic, in some supply chains, this particular risk was reduced, for example in supply chains that in previous years might have employed more workers from overseas. In other areas the risk increased. Changes in consumer behaviour due to lockdown impacted the size and shape of our orders and subsequently impacted the cash flow in a number of supply chains. In addition, in some supply chains, there was a risk that workers would feel forced to work despite Covid-19 safety concerns.

## FOOD AND GROCERY

### FRESH PRODUCE

Coinciding with the start of the UK harvest, the labour shortages feared as a result of the pandemic threatened to increase the level of risk of modern slavery occurring in UK supply chains. The Partnership took a number of steps to help reduce this risk:

- As outlined on page 15, Waitrose partnered with ITV to support DEFRA's Pick for Britain campaign aiming to bridge the labour shortfall of 70,000 seasonal workers needed. By ensuring a pool of legal workers was available, this reduced the need for supply chains to find alternative labour, thus reducing the risk of modern slavery.
- Where additional workers were still needed, supply chains were once again reliant on a migrant workforce, with some even chartering their own flights to bring workers to the UK. Waitrose worked with its suppliers to mitigate the risk to migrant workers when they arrived. Waitrose, alongside other UK retailers and members of the [Food Network for Ethical Trade \(FNET\)](#), sponsored and collaborated on a two-part series of ten Covid-19 capacity-building webinars open to all suppliers. These included raising awareness of complex situations which could arise and be considered risk indicators for modern slavery, such as migrant workers having to quarantine on arrival into the UK with no pay. One of the webinars focused on the economic impact of Covid-19, with specific reference to best practice on sick pay, social protection and longer-term provisions. This webinar was attended by over 300 people, though not all of these attendees were from Waitrose's direct supply chains. The webinar series also focused on how businesses could support and engage their workers through this anxious time.
- Following the outcome and learnings of Operation Fort, the UK's largest-ever modern slavery prosecution, as reported in our [2019/20 Modern Slavery Statement](#), Waitrose joined a pilot scheme for a new Modern Slavery Intelligence Sharing Network (MSIN). This industry group, made up of retailer and supplier members, aims to disrupt the pattern of modern slavery through member collaboration and sharing of information.

## GENERAL MERCHANDISE

### WITHHOLDING WAGES

One of the biggest risks of modern slavery in general merchandise supply chains last year was the risk of wages being withheld from workers in factories where orders from international buyers were cancelled, primarily due to the closure of retail services as part of national lockdowns. More detail on how we supported our general merchandise suppliers with this challenge can be found on page 34.

### RAW MATERIAL SOURCING FROM XINJIANG

In 2020 the Partnership became increasingly aware of the human rights violations, including forced labour, associated with materials sourced from Xinjiang, China, and responded to the government enquiry on this matter. One of the key materials produced in Xinjiang is cotton. Whilst the John Lewis Partnership does not have operations, own-brand suppliers or factories in Xinjiang, we do source a small amount of product where the cotton originates from China.

No matter where they are in the world, we expect our suppliers to obey the law and respect the rights, interests and wellbeing of their employees, communities and the environment. Our RSCOP sets out the Partnership's expectations of suppliers on issues such as forced labour, pay, working hours, child labour, worker rights and representation. As outlined on page 6, all suppliers must sign up to these requirements as part of our terms and conditions of trade and we have a number of mechanisms to ensure our supply chains meet our expectations. We have a highly qualified team of 107 people working with suppliers in China and India, and in 2019, 28 of our own-brand factories based in China piloted a two-year training programme, which included modules on ethical hiring and building effective dialogue between workers and managers. This training provided frameworks for suppliers' management to establish effective hiring processes that reduce the risks of exploitation, trafficking and child labour.

We engaged with industry working groups to identify other products, including food, manufactured in our supply chains that may contain components – or raw materials – sourced from Xinjiang. For example, tomatoes sourced from the region can be used as ingredients. As part of our commitment to sourcing our key raw materials, including cotton, sustainably,



The John Lewis Partnership supports and helps fund the [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) through our membership of the [UNSEEN Back2Source](#) programme. We utilise UNSEEN's business portal as part of our ongoing due diligence checks and gather intelligence regarding issues related to our UK supply chains. More detail on its effectiveness can be found on page 42.

by 2025, we have allocated specific funding to invest in tools and technologies that allow physical traceability of these materials. This will enable us to have greater visibility and control over where suppliers source cotton from, for all our own-brand products.

### FREELY CHOSEN EMPLOYMENT – SUPPLIER TRAINING

We continue to support and carry out awareness training and supplier improvement programmes in our supply chains to raise awareness of the risk of modern slavery and how to combat it.

## GOODS NOT FOR RESALE (GNFR)

The biggest risk of modern slavery occurring in our own operations relates to the use of agency labour to cover our peak trading periods. In 2020, despite a sudden increase in online orders through John Lewis and, in particular, Waitrose, we were able to reduce this risk by redeployment of our John Lewis branch Partners who would otherwise have been placed on furlough due to store closures (see page 19).

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to carry out due diligence checks across our operations, conducting four deep-dive ethical assessments in our warehouses, Waitrose & Partners farm<sup>7</sup> and distribution networks. These deep-dive assessments focused heavily on worker interviews and highlighted a need for better communication channels with agency workers on-site.

Following the success of our 2019 'Spot the Signs' pilot training programme with the Slave Free Alliance, in 2020 we undertook an ambitious programme to provide this training to all frontline Partners for the peak trading period (starting in October). This was delivered in-house using the train-the-trainer framework. More details can be found on page 37 of this report.

339

In 2020, 339 trading Partners completed mandatory responsible sourcing e-learning which includes specific training on spotting the signs of modern slavery.

107

We have a highly qualified team of 107 people working with suppliers in China and India.

<sup>7</sup> The Leckford Estate, Hampshire.



### COVID-19

Waitrose funded and collaborated on a series of ten COVID-19 capacity building webinars open to all suppliers. These included raising awareness of complex situations which could arise and be considered risk indicators for modern slavery such as overseas migrant workers having to quarantine on arrival into the UK with no pay.



## Stronger Together

**STRONGER TOGETHER UK**  
During 2020, 173 delegates, representing 54 different UK suppliers which supply our food business, attended Stronger Together's 'Tackling Modern Slavery in UK Businesses' course. Delegates were provided with a range of measures they can put in place to prevent modern slavery from occurring in their own operations and how to spot signs that workers might be victims of exploitation or slavery.

Stronger Together UK also provides a Progress Reporting Tool (PRT), a free online self-assessment tool that enables suppliers to measure the progress they have made in addressing modern slavery risks within their own operations and supply chains. Developed in alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the framework provides data analytics which allows suppliers to track their progress over time, benchmark their performance

against peers and identify improvement opportunities. Since launch, 19 of our UK suppliers have completed the progress-reporting tool and the average progress score for all UK users has increased by 2% year-on-year.

**STRONGER TOGETHER SPAIN**  
Despite the pandemic, in 2020, Stronger Together Spain launched, including a number of online training modules. Ten Spanish growers who supply fresh produce to Waitrose have already

completed the module 'Combating Forced Labour in Spanish Agricultural Companies' and have taken away specific contextualised examples to apply the learnings on their own farms.

**STRONGER TOGETHER SOUTH AFRICA**  
In 2019, the UK Home Office Modern Slavery Innovation Fund agreed to fund Stronger Together South Africa for a further two years. Waitrose remains a supporter of their work. In 2020, 78 individuals, representing 41 suppliers that supply Waitrose, attended the 'Detecting, Deterring and Dealing with Forced Labour in Agri-Businesses – South Africa' course. 15 individuals, representing 14 companies, attended the follow-up course 'Taking Your Next Steps: A Follow-up Workshop for Agri-Businesses, South Africa'.

173

173 delegates, representing 54 different UK suppliers which supply our food business, attended Stronger Together's 'Tackling Modern Slavery in UK Businesses' course.

## Responsible Recruitment Toolkit (RRT)



The Partnership recognises that one of the biggest risks to workers becoming trapped in slavery is the requirement to pay back recruitment fees.

The Responsible Recruitment Toolkit (RRT) offers an industry leading online tool designed to support businesses to develop robust ethical and professional recruitment practices. Forty-eight of our 600+ food manufacturing suppliers, and four of their labour providers, have signed up to use the tool. It allows them to progress through a series of modules

focused on international ethical standards and record actions they have taken. Sixty-three per cent have now completed the modules, up 49% from November 2020.

The toolkit also provides our suppliers with access to free online interactive webinars.

- Representatives from 74 of our food manufacturing suppliers have now completed the 'Introduction to Responsible Recruitment' webinar, which introduces responsible

recruitment and explains the business case for it.

- Representatives from 21 of our suppliers have completed the 'Eliminating Worker-Paid Recruitment Fees' webinar, which provides delegates with details on eliminating recruitment fees. It also outlines what businesses should do if they find out workers have paid recruitment fees during their recruitment process.

## FREEDOM TO ASSOCIATE

### SDG 8.8

The freedom to join a trade union of your choice is one of the basic human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>8</sup>. Trade unions play a vital role in democracy and support their members in negotiating with their employers. We recognise that not every worker in supply chains supplying products and services to the Partnership wants to join a trade union. Sometimes union representation is not in place. Whenever workers are without representation we encourage and support effective worker voice and committees as demonstrated by our Better Jobs programme and the Waitrose & Partners Foundation.

### FOOD AND GROCERY

#### FRESH PRODUCE

Two of our sourcing countries, Peru and South Africa, are those where we have identified the biggest risk to effective freedom to associate.

#### PERU

Last year, the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), of which we are members, joined forces with the Netherlands Trade Union, Mondiaal FNV, to develop a joint programme of work in Peru to promote social dialogue. An in-person launch event was initially organised for December 2020 to introduce Peruvian growers to the proposed programme and representatives

from five Waitrose supplier farms were due to attend. Sadly the event was postponed due to unrest in the country and a retailer update was held instead. We hope that further progress will be made in 2021.

We also engaged with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and shared some of the anonymised findings from our deep-dive modern slavery risk assessments in order to try and support their work on improving conditions in the Peruvian agricultural sector.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

Our joint programme of work with the Ethical Trading Initiative in South Africa (see our 2019/20 Modern Slavery Statement, page 23) was put on hold in 2020 as the country suffered greatly from the impacts of the pandemic.

### GENERAL MERCHANDISE

#### BETTER JOBS PROGRAMME

As a co-owned business, all Partnership employees (Partners) share power and have a say in how the business operates. We believe this is essential for ensuring an engaged workforce. Our Partnership Council is elected through a democratic process and we strive to mirror this democratic process through our supply chains.

Our Better Jobs programme aims to improve worker conditions, worker voice

and job satisfaction through identifying opportunities to improve businesses and support suppliers in making their own action plans. Principally available to factories producing John Lewis own-brand goods, employers are able to access free online resources and a framework which covers seven main themes: growth, reward, security, job design, respect, health and wellbeing and voice; workers are asked for their opinions via an online survey.

Since inception in 2019, 52 UK sites manufacturing John Lewis own-brand products are participating in our Better Jobs Programme, this is approximately half of our current UK own-brand supply base. The 2020 UK survey was adapted to account for the impact of the pandemic on worker welfare. This included questions regarding worker concerns on areas such as job security, income, job flexibility, having the right skills for the job at hand and, importantly, the impact of the pandemic on mental health. Over half of the employees that responded to the survey had to develop new skills in 2020, which evidences the opportunities to upskill workers. This is illustrated in feedback from one of our Home suppliers, 'rucomfy', who commented, "With the

<sup>8</sup> United Nations (n.d), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, last accessed on 01.06.21, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

huge demand of orders to manufacture and process daily, our staff have been shadowing colleagues and have upskilled". Over 70% of workers felt secure in their employment and felt part of a supportive team.

In 2020, the Better Jobs framework was adapted and piloted with 15 suppliers in our Chinese supply base. 2,947 employees participated in the survey. The pilot has given us valuable insight into what parts of the programme work well and which parts need to be further developed for this supply base and workforce, including allowing workers more time to complete the survey and streamlining the questions to ensure clearer and comparable answers across the questionnaire.

The results from the pilot have been positive overall and include 89% of workers feeling they're able to openly and constructively voice opinions.

For more information on the Better Jobs Programme including the findings from the China pilot, please see our [2020/21 Better Jobs Report](#).

### John Lewis & Partners Foundation

The Partnership supports workers in the communities where we operate to bargain for better working conditions, raising the bar at sector level. Over the past three years, the [John Lewis & Partners Foundation](#), established in 2007 to benefit communities in the UK and overseas where John Lewis operates, supported a programme with Action Aid in Delhi and Chennai. It focused on giving women a voice by helping them form collectives and use this forum to argue

for fairer wages and better working conditions. In 2020, ten new groups were formed and the project now has a total of 77 collectives, covering over 2,900 garment workers. The programme's success, whilst not directly related to our supply chains, has led to workers being able to successfully negotiate with their employers, including 20 collectivised workers negotiating an 8% pay rise.

45%

45% of the 115 UK sites manufacturing John Lewis own-brand products are participating in our Better Jobs Programme.



### Developing worker voice with the Waitrose & Partners Foundation

The Waitrose & Partners Foundation was created in 2005 with the ambition of improving the lives of, and to create better opportunities for, the people and communities who grow, pick and pack our fresh produce. Since then, £14m has been invested back into the communities from which we source. The Foundation also aims to strengthen

the voice of farm workers through active worker committees. Workers decide as a committee how the money is spent in their community and at farm level, giving them ownership of the programme and ensuring that their wants and needs are met, rather than just those of the employer.

£14m

£14m invested back into communities from which we source.

For more information please see our [2021 Waitrose & Partners Foundation report](#).



### HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

SDG 3 and 8.8

The physical safety of workers within our supply chains throughout the pandemic has been our highest priority. The pandemic meant that many places of work closed. In many countries, those who could work from home were told to do so, and those who were working in farms, packhouses and manufacturers had to make changes to the way they operated.

#### FOOD AND GROCERY

##### CAPACITY BUILDING

Since the start of the pandemic, the Waitrose supplier communication website, Engage, has outlined key actions our UK supplier sites should take based on government guidance, including illustrative examples the Partnership was taking to safeguard our Partners.

As mentioned earlier in this report, alongside other UK retailers and members of the Food Network for Ethical Trade (FNET), Waitrose funded and collaborated on a two-part series of ten Covid-19 capacity-building webinars open to all suppliers. The second webinar focused on occupational health and safety, including accommodation and transport. Although not all from Waitrose suppliers, it was attended by nearly 700 people. Guidance included:

- staggering start and finish times and break times;
- reducing capacity within shared areas such as the canteen or smoking areas;
- introduction of temperature checks;
- putting up screens in production sites;
- increasing cleaning procedures, including within transport;
- employee daily health questionnaires;
- ensuring no visitors were allowed on site; and
- allowing some accommodation to

be residential areas for those with Covid-19 symptoms or for those who needed to quarantine on arrival. Attendees found the webinars useful, particularly hearing case studies from other businesses as this gave them a means of sense-checking measures they had already put in place.

In September, the second series included two webinars providing practical guidance on managing Covid-19 risks during the winter. These were launched as part of the [Covid-19 Winter Response Project](#). Of the 1,100 attendees, approximately 460 were from Waitrose supply chains.

Globally, we supported our suppliers in a number of ways:

- Sharing information and best practice with our Spanish suppliers via the [Spanish Ethical Trade Forums](#), who set up a Covid-19 working group producing five sets of training materials to support

## The Farming Community Network

Founded in 1995, The Farming Community Network (FCN), which is supported by Waitrose, helps members of the farming community manage and thrive through difficult times and periods of change. It provides a listening ear and essential support to those in need. The FCN has helped thousands of people deal with a wide range of issues, from financial difficulties and animal disease to mental ill health.

The charity has a network of 400 volunteers in England and Wales who have a great understanding of the issues farm workers and farming families regularly face. It runs a free, confidential, national helpline (03000 111 999) and e-helpline (help@fcn.org.uk), which is open every day of the year from 7am to 11pm. For more information, visit [www.fcn.org.uk](http://www.fcn.org.uk) and [www.farmwell.org.uk](http://www.farmwell.org.uk)

John Gregson, Partner & Ethics and Sustainability Advisor at the John Lewis Partnership, is an FCN volunteer. He said: "I grew up on a small farm in Lancashire and saw the impact on my family and our neighbours as farming changed in the 1980s. Traditional customers such as hospitals and education authorities moved their meal ingredient procurement away from local sourcing to more centralised models. Suddenly, small farms seemed redundant and incomes plummeted. Several of our neighbours took their own lives and I'm convinced it was only because I encouraged my father to open up to me that we found strength together and avoided a similar tragedy. This is why I believe that the work FCN does to walk with farmers in difficult times is critical, especially now the industry is facing its greatest period of change for half a century or more."



1,100

Of the 1,100 attendees, approximately 460 were from Waitrose supply chains.

suppliers and their workers.

- Being part of the ETI's Africa Agriculture Vulnerable Supply Chains Fund work. Key activities included offering technical assistance to suppliers in East Africa to implement health and safety measures to try and combat the pandemic, to help build resilience to manage any future challenges and for the lessons learnt to be shared with other businesses in the area.
- Working directly with our suppliers when they needed individual assistance, for example, one supplier, who had been on the receiving end of a complaint regarding health and safety in the workplace, was given guidance on how to stagger shifts and breaks, and how to amend the organisation of workers on the lines to ensure social distancing was in place.

The John Lewis & Partners Foundation supported a programme of work to improve access to water for marginalised groups in India living in artisanal communities. Through this programme, over 1,800 people secured access to clean water last year and three community hygiene programmes were run. The programme also supports schools attended by children of the artisanal workers. Last year five sanitary blocks were developed in five government schools with over 1,000 children and staff benefiting from water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

What became increasingly clear was the need to focus on mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, particularly in the UK farming community as it goes through a period of enormous change. The decision by UK voters to leave the European Union has brought uncertainty. The way the government offers financial support to farmers is changing and the consequences remain unclear to many businesses. Add the enormous focus on the environment, and the need of the agricultural sector to adopt more sustainable agricultural practices and products, and it is easy to understand why many farmers feel under pressure.

Agriculture is a relatively low-paid sector for many, with producers operating in volatile markets and at the mercy of the weather. Many in the industry find it difficult to ask for help when facing issues such as financial worries, family breakdown and concern about the future. Research by the [Farming Community Network](http://www.fcn.org.uk) in

the UK offers up some stark statistics. Farmers work on average 64 hours a week. The 700+ farmers who took part in the Network's 'Fit2Farm' survey only took an average of 11 days' holiday per annum. More than 80% of those surveyed had trouble sleeping<sup>9</sup>. In the UK, more than one agricultural worker a week in the UK dies by suicide<sup>10</sup>.

### GENERAL MERCHANDISE

Our Better Jobs programme addresses worker health and wellbeing with specific questions regarding physical health, mental health and supportiveness. In 2020, over 60% of workers who responded to the UK survey felt that their working environment did support their wellbeing. Similarly, over 60% of workers felt full of energy and enthusiastic at work. However, 30% of workers felt anxious or under pressure and 30% of workers felt that their workload was either too much or far too much, a 7% increase on the results in 2019. We are working with each supplier individually to address the findings.

60%

Over 60% of workers who responded to the UK Better Jobs survey felt that their working environment did support their wellbeing; this was a 15% increase on the previous year's findings.

1,800

Through this programme, over 1,800 people secured access to clean water last year and three community hygiene programmes were run.

<sup>9</sup> Farmers Weekly, 2018, Fit2Farm: Hard work and long hours take toll on farmers, last accessed on 07.06.21, <https://www.fwi.co.uk/farm-life/health-and-wellbeing/fit2farm-farmers-weekly-campaign-to-improve-farmers-health#tabs-2>

<sup>10</sup> Farming UK, 2018, More than one agricultural worker in UK commits suicide a week, figures show, last accessed on 07.06.21, [https://www.farminguk.com/news/more-than-one-agricultural-worker-in-uk-commits-suicide-a-week-figures-show\\_48613.html](https://www.farminguk.com/news/more-than-one-agricultural-worker-in-uk-commits-suicide-a-week-figures-show_48613.html)



## Waitrose & Partners Foundation Global Fund: supporting workers during the pandemic

In March 2020, the Waitrose & Partners Foundation Global Fund, focusing on the most vulnerable countries and communities within our food supply chains, unlocked £200,000 to support its farming communities in response to the pandemic. Among other benefits, this helped provide much-needed advice on social distancing, as well as sanitation kits and food parcels for the communities, estimated to have aided just over 100,000 workers.

The Waitrose & Partners Foundation Global Fund also supported wellbeing training programmes for workers in Foundation supply chains. See page 31.

“

The COVID-19 pandemic affected our work significantly. For starters, we couldn't export all the flowers produced in the farm. We therefore began operating on half-day shifts. The new working terms affected our livelihoods because our salaries were cut by half. Fortunately no worker was laid off because we were all on a half-day shift. The reduced salaries were a blow to our families because we had to squeeze our budgets so as to adjust to the tough economic times. To our relief, the Waitrose Foundation came to our rescue by issuing a food package to workers. We were supplied with 20kg of maize flour, five litres of cooking oil, 10kg of beans and a 5kg packet of rice. The food gave us a good boost because we were drained financially. Thankfully the market has now rebounded and our operations are slowly going back to normal.”

Flower farm worker, Kenya

## CHILD LABOUR

### SDG 8.7

The United Nations (UN) recognised early on in the pandemic that children were at risk of being amongst its biggest victims<sup>11</sup>. With schools and usual labour migration routes closed, children became more vulnerable to becoming child labourers. If parents became sick with the virus, the risk of children having to play a role in supporting the family increased. According to UN Women, estimates show that an additional 11 million girls globally may leave school by the end of the Covid-19 crisis and evidence from previous crises suggests that many will not return<sup>12</sup>.

Whilst we are not aware of, or have been alerted to, any cases of child labour being found within our supply chains, we know there are areas where the risk that it could occur is high, for example in the agriculture sector, where children often support their parents in the family business.

Whilst our expectations regarding child labour are outlined in our RSCOP, we felt that, in light of the pandemic, the Partnership should provide additional guidance for suppliers. We developed a detailed document to assist suppliers on interpreting child labour guidance. It outlined the Partnership's expectations of suppliers and advised on the best steps of remediation if a case were to arise.

### COCOA SUPPLY CHAINS

Child labour is a particularly high risk in the cocoa sector. In 2020, Waitrose moved all cocoa in its own-brand confectionery to Fairtrade. To achieve Fairtrade certification, no child labour (as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) minimum age and the worst forms of child labour conventions) should be employed. Paying a premium for Fairtrade products ensures families can earn a sustainable living and in doing so, it is hoped that they become less reliant on their children for additional income. More broadly, Waitrose supports the commitment the

Fairtrade Foundation is making to fight the root causes of child labour and prevent exploitation and child abuse.

Waitrose is also a founding member and current co-chair of the Retailer Cocoa Collaboration (RCC). The principal activity of the RCC is the Annual Trader Assessment. This is a robust process whereby major traders of cocoa, voted for by the RCC members, are assessed on their progress in topics such as traceability, gender equality, farmer incomes, deforestation and child and forced labour. The results of this assessment drive engagement with traders and inform our own approach.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, 2020, Policy Brief: The impact of Covid-19 on children [online], United Nations, [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/160420\\_Covid\\_Children\\_Policy\\_Brief.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/160420_Covid_Children_Policy_Brief.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Women, 2020, Covid-19 and its economic toll on women: The story behind the numbers, last accessed on 17.05.21, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>



## LOW WAGES AND SUSTAINABLE INCOMES

### SDG TARGETS 1.1, 1.5 and 8

The pandemic significantly impacted the lives of workers globally. With many businesses closed, employees were furloughed or, where this type of support was unavailable, businesses were forced to reduce hours, reduce pay or even lay off staff. Our food supply chains continued to operate throughout the pandemic but certain areas of the industry felt the impact. Hospitality was closed, for example, and travel restrictions created supply chain disruption, meaning products could not be imported or exported in the usual way.

### FOOD AND GROCERY

The Partnership supported suppliers in a number of ways:

- We had already committed to paying our smallest suppliers within seven days. In addition, we supported the most vulnerable in our supply chains by speeding up payments to help maintain their cash flow. We took more stock of horticulture products than ever before, providing a much-needed lifeline to British nurseries that supply it. As part of the Covid-19 capacity-building webinars, we provided guidance and case studies for UK food suppliers on the correct steps and impacts to consider when furloughing workers.
- Through the Waitrose & Partners Foundation we were able to understand a number of the key challenges in some of our sourcing countries through our implementing partners and their farms. In the flower sector, the global market collapsed almost overnight, with many customers cancelling orders. In some cases, workers were asked to take annual leave, or given reduced hours. We worked with overseas suppliers to rationalise or amend product ranges so that processes at the pack house were simplified to allow for social distancing. Through our Waitrose & Partners Foundation Global Response Fund, we were able to support workers on reduced salaries through provision of essential food parcels.



RUDY CORDERO BATISTA. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSE DOMINGO GARCIA

### BANANA SUPPLY CHAINS

Even without the impact of Covid-19, low wages are a systemic challenge for plantation workers in the banana industry who are also often subject to poor working conditions. In the Dominican Republic, the legal minimum wage is particularly low compared to the cost of living. To try to tackle this issue, Waitrose, in partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation, is running a programme to improve productivity on banana plantations, though this has been challenging to implement. The programme focuses on raising workers' incomes, creating a better working environment, and introducing better planning and training.

In St Lucia, banana production is key to the local economy. Here, small scale farmers face rising costs of production, but a stagnation in prices means that, for those outside the Fairtrade system, production is often unsustainable. Our commitment to purchasing only Fairtrade-certified bananas means that these smallholders receive the Fairtrade Minimum Price, which ensures they can meet the cost of production, as well as receiving Fairtrade Premiums to invest in improvements to their environment and community.

In September 2020, Waitrose participated in Fairtrade's consultation, which proposed a move towards a living wage for all workers at Fairtrade-certified plantations worldwide. From July 2021, the new Fairtrade Base Wage will result in higher wages for thousands of workers, helping them to meet their basic needs.

COFFEE SUPPLY CHAINS

About 80% of the world's coffee is produced by 25 million smallholders<sup>13</sup>. It is one of the most valuable and widely grown agricultural products. We recognise that smallholders need particular support to ensure the resilience of their businesses to the impact of climate change, including alterations in weather patterns which make production more unpredictable, reducing yields and profitability. By sourcing all of our own-brand coffee from Fairtrade certified growers, we demonstrate our shared commitment to ensuring sustainable livelihoods for these small-scale farmers and ultimately improve their income opportunities in the future. A proportion of Fairtrade Premiums are spent on projects chosen by farmers and workers that help to tackle climate change and its impacts. Within our supply chain, these include tree planting, irrigation, crop diversification and clean energy projects.

We also worked with Fairtrade to establish the world's first Fairtrade coffee co-operative in Java, investing in the KSU Surya Abadi Kayumas Co-operative (KSU) to enable them to achieve certification. This project resulted in the launch of the UK's first-ever Fairtrade Java ground coffee, Waitrose No.1 Java Coffee. The Fairtrade Premium has enabled the co-operative of 150 members to make a number of improvements to their local area. They have rebuilt farm roads, which have created an easier and safer route to transport coffee to market. A nursery for coffee seedlings has been established, ensuring the sustainability of the crop long into the future. The office building was also renovated and equipped with laptops and

internet access. Throughout the pandemic, farmers have been able to access training and education in this remote region. Over the next few years, the co-operative has plans to improve its coffee processing facilities and develop a farm waste management system.

Another coffee co-operative we source from is the Cooperativa Departamental de Caficultores Risaralda Ltd (COOPCAFER) in Colombia. COOPCAFER has 3,569 members, of which 25% are women. The co-operative puts a focus on using Fairtrade Premium, generated through sales of Fairtrade coffee, towards improving the quality and productivity of their crop. They have made improvements to wet and dry processing plants and put in a water treatment system to clean the water used to wash coffee (the 'aguas mieles'). The co-operative also provides its farmers with shade trees to plant on their farms and gives training for members on how to improve productivity.

APPROXIMATE FAIRTRADE PREMIUMS GENERATED BY WAITROSE ANNUALLY

Bananas	£1,300,000
Coffee	£600,000
Tea	£320,000
Cocoa	£100,000
Sugar	£100,000

To be invested by small-scale farmers and workers in their local communities

Table 4

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

When the pandemic hit, within the UK we began to see a shift in customer purchasing behaviour, which had a direct impact on our stock and ordering. In John Lewis, customers were not able to shop in stores and there was a significant decrease in demand for general merchandise.

John Lewis issued best practice trading principles guidance to our trading teams, including buyers and merchandisers (aside from our regular purchasing practice guidance). The topics covered included amending and cancelling unwanted orders as a result of the significant decrease in demand. The trading teams were advised to always conduct business relationships with integrity and courtesy and not to leave our suppliers in financial distress, especially where raw materials had been committed to or finished goods had been produced.

Collaborative conversations were held between suppliers and John Lewis as to how they and the Partnership could work together to limit the negative impact caused by changes in demand including the management of stock revision requirements. Where workers were impacted by product cancellations or a fall in demand, the Partnership committed to help cover their wages in order to guarantee an income during the pandemic so the most vulnerable had some security.

Covid-19 Fund

For factories most impacted by the pandemic and order changes, John Lewis set up a £2.2m Covid-19 fund to support worker wages. Specific criteria helped determine eligible factories who were invited to apply for fund support. With the help of our appointed consultants, the applications were screened and submitted for approval. Surprisingly, uptake has been low, with £145k provided in support, however, this has helped roughly 3,000 workers (48% female and 52% male) across factories supplying fashion products to the Partnership in China and India (two of our largest sourcing countries) and Cambodia. An audit was carried out either on-site or virtually to ensure the payments were made correctly.

<sup>13</sup> Fairtrade Foundation (n.d.), Coffee Farmers, last accessed on 01.06.21, <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/farmers-and-workers/coffee/>



GENDER AND DISCRIMINATION

SDG 5, 8.5 and 8.8

The first two articles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights outline that all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that there should be no discrimination<sup>14</sup>. However, the Partnership recognises that women face discrimination in the workplace – and beyond – every day.

In certain countries, the legal system itself penalises women, but even where equality is a legal requirement, women often face more barriers than men. This could be unequal pay for their work or having reduced capacity to take paid employment because of having to perform unpaid domestic work, including caring for others.

2020/21 GENDER BREAKDOWN OF EMPLOYEES IN TIER 1 SITES

Product Category	Men	Women
Food	60%	40%
Fashion	42%	58%
Home	61%	39%

Table 5

For many women, this was exacerbated during a year when many schools were closed.

FOOD AND GROCERY AND GENERAL MERCHANDISE

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN

School closures, as a result of the pandemic, disproportionately impacted women from lower incomes in a number of ways:

- Child care  
The Waitrose & Partners Foundation in Southern Africa identified an impact on not only children of farm workers, who risked falling behind on their education because of school closures, but women too, as their care responsibilities increased with children at home. During this time the Waitrose & Partners Foundation shifted its focus to improving equipment at farm aftercare centre facilities. Twenty-four centres have been equipped with the internet and staff have been provided with free online educational resources to support children's learning whilst schools remain closed.

- Health care  
Throughout the pandemic, many women have delayed access to primary health care.



A clinic built by the Foundation in the Western Region of Ghana has seen attendance reduced to 60% of pre-pandemic levels'

Waitrose & Partners Foundation  
Implementing Partner, Ghana

There was often a stigma attached to those who contracted the virus, and this could lead to workers being temporarily ostracised from their workplace or community. This phenomenon required our suppliers to engage properly with their employees to ensure that they were not discriminating against those who caught the virus. In the UK, we supported suppliers through best practice sharing, and through the Waitrose & Partners Foundation, a programme of 'myth busting' was run in Senegal and The Gambia.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations (n.d.), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, last accessed on 01.06.21, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>



- **Mental health**  
The pandemic particularly impacted women's mental health. Income and job insecurity combined with concerns regarding their family's physical health meant that many female workers now feel worried and under increased pressure. It has also, sadly, led to an increase in gender-based violence globally. According to *The Lancet*, 243 million women are thought to have experienced sexual or physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner at some point over the last 12 months and many of the women have been trapped with their abuser<sup>15</sup>. These issues have been recognised in South Africa and the Waitrose & Partners Foundation is conducting a series of seven workshops, three of which have already been completed for farm health workers, enabling them to support both themselves and those in their worker communities who may be experiencing these circumstances as a result of the pandemic.



The John Lewis Covid-19 Fund, page 34, supported workers in our fashion supply chains. One factory in China and one in Cambodia received payments from this fund. Eighty per cent of the workers in these factories are women.

received payments from the fund, with an average 24% of those working in these factories being women. Roughly 3,000 workers globally received payments from the fund, of whom 48% were women and 52% were men, which is a higher proportion of women than the average in our fashion supply chains (see table 5).

We understand the impact on gender inequality won't disappear once the pandemic subsides. Women are still likely to experience long-term setbacks in the workplace, including participation and pay, and the impact on pensions and savings will impact women's future economic security. The fallout will be most severe for the most vulnerable women: migrant workers, refugees, marginalised racial and ethnic groups, single-parent households, youth and the world's poorest.

For more information on the work that the Partnership is undertaking to understand and address gender issues within our supply chains, see our 2021 *'Women in JLP Supply Chains'* report.

<sup>15</sup> The Lancet, 2020, *The indirect impact of Covid-19 on women*, last accessed on 07.06.21, <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099%2820%2930568-5/fulltext>

<sup>16</sup> European Commission (n.d), *Sustainable garment value chains* [online], European Commission, available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/gvc-garment-final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/gvc-garment-final_en.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Ethical Trading Initiative, 2018, *'I can do anything'* Empowering women in India's garment sector, last accessed on 01.06.21, <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/blog/i-can-do-anything-empowering-women-indias-garment-sector>

- **Pay**  
Garment value chains are one of the biggest employers worldwide and over 75% of global garment workers are women<sup>16</sup>. As a result, women were disproportionately impacted when global brands and retailers cancelled orders during the pandemic.

In India, 60% of the total workforce in the garment industry are women<sup>17</sup>. However, many are employed in the informal sector, undertaking home-based work, rather than in factories. Two factories in India



## REGULAR EMPLOYMENT

SDG 8.3, 8.7 and 8.8

### GOODS NOT FOR RESALE (GNFR)

Across food and grocery and general merchandise, many shoppers now expect to order items online and receive them the same day, or the next day. In order to meet these expectations, many retailers, including the Partnership, have adopted an employment model that combines permanent, temporary and outsourced service providers in warehousing and distribution. At present, new, outsourced labour providers are required to complete their details in our Retailer Supplier Qualification System and confirm their compliance with our RSCOP.

The Partnership is in the process of implementing a new centre-led contract management process that will require Business Contract Managers of outsourced labour providers to upload evidence of supplier compliance with RSCOP, along with all other policies and contractual commitments at least annually, or as frequently as is required under their contract. It is hoped that this process will be in place from this autumn.

Black Friday and the Christmas trading period are peak times for our own operations. A high number of agency workers are recruited during this period. With a heavy reliance on agency labour comes the heightened risk of criminal groups infiltrating our operations and exploiting modern slavery victims.

By the end of 2020, we had conducted training in both responsible recruitment and spotting the signs of modern slavery. The programmes, which were taken by over 400 Partners who recruit and supervise temporary workers, included how to report any issues identified. These Partners then trained others, ensuring a wide pool of Partners are aware of the risks and impacts, and how to manage them safely. The training of other Partners continues. It is complemented by communications, sent to all Partners, raising awareness of modern slavery as well as access to the Modern Slavery Helpline. Partner feedback has been very positive, with requests for more training throughout the year and further support with peer-to-peer learning.



**“The story told by one of our suppliers where modern slavery was happening to them was a real eye-opener. You think that it happens in back street shops or with less scrupulous employers, not at a supplier so close to home. You could see how upsetting it was for the owner of that business and I expect that if I found out it was happening in our business I would be equally upset.”**

Partner & Distribution Support Manager

The use of outsourced delivery service providers within our own operations allowed us to meet our customers' demands at a time when the pandemic meant many of our customers stayed in their homes, both for fear of catching the virus and due to the restrictions in place during the national lockdown. However, it is widely recognised that these workers are often part of the 'gig economy', meaning they have a self-employment status and are not subject to the same rights that employees have, such as the minimum wage, holiday pay and sick leave.

Our GNFR Responsible Employment Working Group helps support our contract managers' decision making. This working group is leading a project on what additional standards, above RSCOP, will be put in place for our suppliers that use gig/self-employed workers to deliver goods to our customers.

400

By the end of 2020, over 400 Partners who recruit and supervise temporary workers had been trained in responsible recruitment and spotting the signs of modern slavery.

# TRAINING

Our Partners and our suppliers play a huge role in preventing and tackling modern slavery and other human rights abuses within our own operations and product supply chains. They implement and ensure policy is upheld, and play a supporting role in identifying any signs of modern slavery.



2020/21

739+

Partners trained in ethical recruitment practices and spotting the signs of modern slavery

## SUPPLIER TRAINING

Supplier awareness and understanding of human rights risks, including modern slavery, remains low. We provide, where possible, the appropriate tools and resources to improve engagement in this topic and work with a variety of external stakeholders to provide suitable training programmes. These are open to all suppliers and participation is encouraged. You can use the table below to find specific details on the training programmes covered in this report. It covers both the ones we provide and those undertaken by our suppliers.

AREA OF FOCUS	TRAINING	PAGE NUMBER
Freely chosen employment	- Covid-19 capacity-building webinars	PG 24
	- Stronger Together training: raising awareness of and how to combat the risk of modern slavery	PG 26
Freedom to associate	- Responsible Recruitment Toolkit: supporting businesses to develop robust ethical and professional recruitment practices	PG 27
	- ETI Programmes in Peru: Social Dialogue Programme and South Africa: Freedom of Association (on hold for most of 2020 due to Covid)	PG 27
Health, safety and wellbeing	- The Waitrose & Partners Foundation: Developing worker voice	PG 28
	- Covid-19 capacity-building webinars	PG 29
Low wages and sustainable income	- Waitrose in partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation: programme to improve productivity on banana plantations, Dominican Republic	PG 33
Gender	- The Waitrose & Partners Foundation: Workshops in South Africa	PG 36
Regular employment	- Responsible Recruitment Toolkit: supporting businesses to develop robust ethical and professional recruitment practices	PG 27

Table 6

## PARTNER TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT

Our procurement and buying Partners have a responsibility to behave ethically when procuring products and services for the Partnership, and to understand the risks of modern slavery associated with their sourcing practices.

You can find specific details throughout this report on the training programmes we provide or have been undertaken by our suppliers using the below table.

AREA OF FOCUS	TRAINING	PAGE NUMBER
Freely chosen employment	- Responsible recruitment training for Partners who recruit and supervise temporary workers.	PG 37
	- Trading Partner e-learning	PG 25
Regular employment	- Responsible recruitment training for Partners who recruit and supervise temporary workers.	PG 37

Table 7

# EFFECTIVENESS

Although there is still a long way to go, we are proud of our work and achievements over the past year, particularly to support our supply chains facing the humanitarian crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are working hard to develop better internal tools and measurements to gauge the effectiveness of our programmes, but we also seek feedback from external stakeholders.

Prevention is an important tool, though the success of this is often difficult to measure. Through our work within our own operations and undertaking third-party assessments on our own processes and procedures, we did not identify any major human rights concerns, which gives us a level of assurance that our procurement of labour in our operations and supply chains is reasonably effective. However, we must not be complacent.

We place a great deal of importance on how effectively we are able to identify concerns within our supply chains, or operations, specifically people who are victims of human rights abuses. We also focus on how efficiently we react to these cases in terms of speed and victim support.

We know that risk assessments and compliance programmes on their own will not prevent human rights abuses in our supply chains, but they do provide insight into risk areas and give us the opportunity to be able to investigate further and support our supply chains where there are gaps. For example, ethical audits within our food supply chains have picked up the non-conformances (NCs) listed in Table 8 (page 42), which are often hidden issues and can also be related to forced labour indicators, as defined by the ILO. During the next reporting cycle, we plan to report these details for our general merchandise sites too.



**WHISTLEBLOWING**

We also consider our open approach to whistleblowing to be an indication of the effectiveness of our programmes and grievance mechanisms within our supply chains, as whistleblowers need to feel confident to raise issues with us. During the pandemic, we have received an increase in the number of reports from whistleblowers (Table 9), particularly in the UK. These were usually from those working within our supply chains and had concerns about their safety, but we were contacted by others as well. For example, our customer services team were informed, by neighbours of one of our supplier sites, of concerns at the lack of social distancing. In this case, the local council and police liaisons were notified. They were satisfied that the appropriate health and safety measures were already in place and additional measures were being implemented.

We are currently undertaking a review of our approach to whistleblowing to ensure that it can be effective as part of an overarching grievance mechanism process. Through this review we aim to ensure that channels for whistleblowing are truly accessible and independent.

In 2020, UNSEEN's business portal alerted us to four allegations of exploitation of workers, three within our existing food supply chains and one regarding a supplier the Partnership was looking to switch the supply of product to. All the allegations were thoroughly investigated with the involvement of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) in one of the investigations into our existing food supply chains and the police into another. Both turned out not to be cases of modern slavery.

**ADVOCACY WORK**

The Partnership advocates for wider industry change where we are unable to tackle complex, systemic or structural issues on our own, for example:

- The Environmental Justice Foundation and Oxfam raised concerns that the Thai government, following legal reforms which drove human rights improvements in the seafood sector, was planning to roll back on these. As part of a co-ordinated programme, we urged the European Union to require the Thai government to commit to ensuring robust human rights conditions were in place before resuming trade negotiations. As yet there is no resolution but we continue with our efforts to ensure workers' rights through this dialogue.

ILO INDICATOR	COUNT OF NON-CONFORMANCES HIGHLIGHTED THROUGH AUDITS (FOOD AND GROCERY) <sup>18</sup>
Discrimination (eg age, sex or gender, employment status or marital status) that might lead to abuse of vulnerability	14
Debt bondage	0
Physical/sexual abuse of workers	0
Isolation	1 (Unsafe means of travelling between accommodation and places of work)

Table 8

	2020/21		2019/20	
Contact method	Number of cases	Country	Number of cases	Country
Sedex/Audit company	1	China	2	UK, India
Ethical Trading Initiative	1	Zimbabwe	1	Kenya
Media	2	UK	2 (1 was a historic case)	UK, Cambodia
ISSARA	1	Thailand	4	Thailand
Direct letter from a whistleblower	5	UK	2	UK
Direct from tier 1 supplier	3	UK	4 (1 referred to the authorities)	UK
Direct from authorities	1 (unsubstantiated allegation)	UK	1 (allegation regarding an operation on our property)	UK
Trade unions/ Industry bodies	2	UK	0	N/A
UNSEEN Business portal	4	UK	0	N/A
Local MPs	1	UK	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>16</b>	

Table 9

- Waitrose sources tuna from Korean longline fleets. In 2020 there were widespread reports of migrant workers suffering human rights abuses, in contravention of the International Labour Organization Fishing Convention No. 188 (2007) in force since 2017. We continue to work closely with our direct supplier in ensuring human rights in our direct supply chain are upheld. Waitrose is also part of an advocacy team working to persuade the Korean government to ratify the Convention.

- As outlined on page 33, Waitrose, in partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation, is running a programme in the Dominican Republic to improve productivity on banana plantations and participated in Fairtrade's consultation which proposed a move towards a living wage for all workers at Fairtrade-certified plantations worldwide.

<sup>18</sup> Open non-conformances at the end of the 2020/21 financial year.



**LOOKING FORWARD**

Our overall objective is to ensure that companies in our supply chains are working in compliance with our Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice. We are aware that there is still much to be done within our own operations and supply chains to ensure all human rights risks are identified so we are reviewing our key performance indicators (KPIs) for next year.

We will continue to develop our human rights strategy. As we do, we must carry on evaluating our current due diligence programme, including its effectiveness, to ensure it is fit for purpose. We recognise that human rights risks in our supply chains are constantly evolving so we will continue to review them. We will identify the Partnership's emerging, salient human rights. This will ensure our beyond-audit programmes remain relevant and impactful in addressing the risks, including that of modern slavery.

Increasing our supply chain transparency and associated data will provide us with wider access and enable us to identify and address specific risks associated with any supply chain. The effectiveness of this is demonstrated by our transparency work in our tea, banana and fish supply chains. As a result of the findings in our tea supply chains, we will be undertaking a human rights impact assessment (HRIA) in Kenya. This will be done with a 'gender lens' to further understand men and women's different experiences in the workplace.

Our advocacy work and continued engagement with external stakeholders, including brands and non-governmental organisations, will be key to mitigating human rights risks in global supply chains. This is not something we can achieve alone. Developing new supplier and Partner training - and increasing our existing training for these groups - is a key part of this programme as is continuing to work with 'Stronger Together' and the 'Responsible Recruitment Toolkit' to drive engagement.

**EMERGING RISKS**

Identifying emerging human rights risks is integral to our risk management process. We have identified land rights and access to water as emerging risks. We will explore them in more detail in the coming year.

**LAND RIGHTS**

Land rights and reforms pose challenges for both human rights and longer-term business continuity. Tensions caused by historic land rights issues are becoming more apparent, most notably in Kenya and South Africa. These land reforms cause disputes. Friction within the local community regarding access to both the land and natural resources is common. Often, the farms which operate on this land are also a major employer for the local community and this can cause additional friction in the workplace.

**ACCESS TO WATER**

Global water consumption is expected to increase, with agriculture accounting for a large percentage of this consumption. Water systems are stressed and rivers, lakes and aquifers are either drying up or becoming too polluted to use. Climate change is altering weather patterns, causing water shortages and droughts in some areas and flooding in others.

In 2010, the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council formally recognised the right to sanitation and access to clean drinking water<sup>19</sup>. According to the World Health Organization and UNICEF, in 2019, one in three people globally lacked access to enough safe drinking water and over half of the global population lacked safe sanitation<sup>20</sup>. The situation is worsening. Within our global supply chains we are increasingly aware of the impact that climate change is having, in particular on farming communities, and the risk it poses to access to clean water.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, 2014, International Decade for Action 'Water For Life' 2005-2015, last accessed on 02.06.21, [https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human\\_right\\_to\\_water.shtml](https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml)

<sup>20</sup> World Health Organization, 2019, 1 in 3 people globally do not have access to safe drinking water - UNICEF, WHO, last accessed on 02.06.21, <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-06-2019-1-in-3-people-globally-do-not-have-access-to-safe-drinking-water-unicef-who>

Key organisations that we work with:



**Bangladesh Accord**  
A legally binding agreement between brands and trade unions to enable a safe working environment in the Bangladeshi garment industry.



**CIPD**  
The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. They acted in an advisory capacity on the development of the Better Jobs programme. We drew on the CIPD's Good Work index when designing the Better Jobs employee survey.



**Ethical Trade Initiative**  
An alliance of companies, trade unions and NGOs advocating respect for workers' rights around the globe. The John Lewis Partnership are corporate members.



**Farm Africa**  
In Kenya we are working with Farm Africa to deliver activity as part of the Waitrose & Partners Foundation. Farm Africa has been working to strengthen farm worker committees and support them to develop programmes that meet the needs of their communities.



**Food Network for Ethical Trade FNET**  
Established in 2016, FNET uses the collective leverage of suppliers and retailers to bring about positive change in working conditions in global food, beverage and horticulture supply chains by providing guidance, resources, training and opportunities for collaboration.



**International Labour Organisation Better Work Programme**  
A partnership between the UN, ILO, and the IFC aimed at improving labour standards and competitiveness in global supply chains. John Lewis are brand partner members.



**Impactt**  
A worker-focused human rights and business management consultancy with whom we partnered to conduct modern slavery risk investigations and telephone surveys for smaller suppliers.



**Institute of Employment Studies**  
A British human resources employment research centre and consultancy which acted in an advisory capacity on the development of the Better Jobs programme.



**Joseph Rowntree Foundation**  
An independent UK organisation focused on social change research, policy and collaborations that solve poverty. JRF has acted in an advisory capacity in the development of our Better Jobs programme.



**NEF Consulting**  
Supports organisations in the transition to a new economy. We engaged NEF to provide in-house training on measuring social impact so that we can better design programmes to meet needs as well as assessing their success.



**Project Issara**  
Issara is an independent non-profit organisation, based in SE Asia, focused on tackling modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour through data collection, technology, partnership and innovation. At present, they mainly work with our food factories in Thailand, monitoring and adjusting labour conditions through partnering with businesses in empowering worker voice.



**The Reassurance Network**  
The consultancy we partnered with to help deliver the Covid-19 worker funds project within our John Lewis general merchandise supply chain. Working with TRN ensured neutrality and the best approach for a sensitive situation.



**Responsible Recruitment Toolkit (RRT)**  
We sponsor the RRT which allows our suppliers free access to training and an online self-assessment and learning tool to help embed responsible recruitment practices.



**Sedex**  
We are a member of Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) and use the Sedex platform to store supply chain assessment data, such as SAQ and audit information, for Food and Grocery sites.



**Slave-Free Alliance**  
a membership initiative launched by anti-slavery charity Hope for Justice, who partnered with us on 'spot the signs' training for Partners.



**Stronger Together**  
We sponsor collaborative initiative Stronger Together and roll-out their training and guidance to our supply base in the UK, South Africa and Spain on detecting, deterring and dealing with modern slavery.



**The Fairtrade Foundation**  
We work closely with the Fairtrade Foundation to ensure that key commodities including tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar and bananas meet their certification requirements. We collaborate to raise awareness of the difference that Fairtrade makes for farmers in our supply chain and are working with them on additional programmes to drive change.



**Unseen**  
A registered charity working towards a world without slavery, Unseen also run the Modern Slavery.



**United Purpose**  
In 2019 we began working with United Purpose as a delivery partner for the Waitrose Foundation in Senegal & The Gambia. United Purpose is working closely with our farms to develop plans for how Foundation funding can be best spent in local communities.



**Verisio**  
We work closely with Verisio to manage and deliver our ethical audit due diligence programme. Using their Optimus software, we are able to ensure tier 1 suppliers and factories are compliant in supplying valid audits and remediate non-conformances.



**Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull**  
A research hub concerned with contemporary slavery and human rights abuses. Since 2015, the Institute has conducted a number of in-depth human rights impact assessments on Partnership sites as well as in a number of key fresh supply chains.

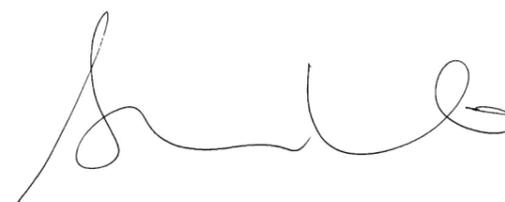
## MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

Modern slavery is one of the most severe breaches of human rights imaginable – as outlined throughout this report, we are steadfastly determined to make a difference in rooting it out and preventing human exploitation. We cannot tackle this alone and are committed to continuously sharing our insights and collaborating with external stakeholders to eradicate the problem.

This statement has been published in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This statement outlines where, in this human rights report, you can find the steps taken by John Lewis plc and Waitrose Limited (including Jersey and Guernsey) during the year to 30 January 2021 to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains.

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS	PAGE NUMBER/S
Organisation structure and supply chains	Page 4
Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking	Page 6
Due diligence processes	Page 10-19
Risk assessment and management	Page 20-27
Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken	Page 40-42
Training on modern slavery and trafficking	Page 39

This report and statement has been approved by the John Lewis Partnership Board at their meeting on 15 July 2021.



SHARON WHITE  
Partner & Chairman

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INCORPORATED AND REGISTERED IN  
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