

Human Rights Report & Modern Slavery Statement 2024/25



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR A HAPPIER WORLD

JOHN LEWIS

WAITROSE

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Reflections from our Chairman

As a purpose-driven business, owned by our employees and built on democratic principles, the John Lewis Partnership is unique. Naturally our customers and Partners have high expectations of our ethical standards, and rightly so. Which is why it's so important that we demonstrate the utmost integrity in how we do business - proactively safeguarding human rights and enhancing lives across our extensive supply chains.

Waitrose and John Lewis, like many businesses, have faced complex challenges this past year. The ongoing impacts of climate change and geopolitical shifts directly affect how we manage our supply chain and reinforce our unwavering dedication to our ethical responsibilities.

Notwithstanding the challenges, we've made great strides with our human rights programme, and it's important we keep building on this progress. I am particularly proud of the dedicated work our teams in the UK, local sourcing offices and implementation partners have put into our human rights programmes which strive to enhance the lives of workers.

Good progress has also been made to enhance our on-the-ground 'visibility' checks within the Asia region - gaining deeper insights into factory practices through our local sourcing office. We've also maintained our commitment to follow-up support and action for suppliers based on our supply chain impact assessments. And, have been actively developing and implementing new climate resilience programmes through the Waitrose Foundation in South Africa, Kenya, Senegal, and The Gambia.

It's been 10 years since the UK Modern Slavery Act was introduced and we remain strongly committed to upholding and improving standards. Addressing modern slavery means more to The Partnership than just following the rules - it's a core part of who we are and our purpose: Working in Partnership for a happier world - and our regular reporting on these issues since 2016 demonstrates the enduring commitment.

This year's report highlights both progress and challenges, while acknowledging there's still more to do. I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the efforts and progress so far. We remain focused on making continuous improvements in collaboration with our Partners, customers, NGOs, trade unions and suppliers worldwide.



Jason Tarry

Chairman



The Partnership

The John Lewis Partnership is the UK's largest employee-owned business and parent company of our two retail brands, John Lewis and Waitrose, which are owned in trust by approximately 69,000 employees (who are Partners in our business). You can find out more about our business in our [Annual Report and Accounts 2025](#).



Our Purpose

Working in Partnership for a happier world

As co-owners we all have a share in the business and a shared commitment to go above and beyond for each other and our customers.

We have a unifying Purpose created by Partners, for Partners. Our Purpose makes it clear why we exist, our ultimate aim as a business and gives us an exciting opportunity to do things differently.

Happier People

Our happier business starts with happier Partners, enjoying worthwhile and satisfying work in a supportive environment we all help to create.

We treat people with fairness, courtesy and respect, and we work with others who do the same. We create an inclusive environment and celebrate diversity with our Partners, customers and the communities we serve. We're at our best when we all feel welcomed and free to be ourselves. We take pride in making our customers happy. We put everything we have into everything we do, earning the loyalty and trust that we need to be successful.

Happier Business

We build happier businesses that are honest, fair and free to think and act for the long term. We aim to make sufficient profit to retain our financial independence, invest in our Partners and pursue our Purpose.

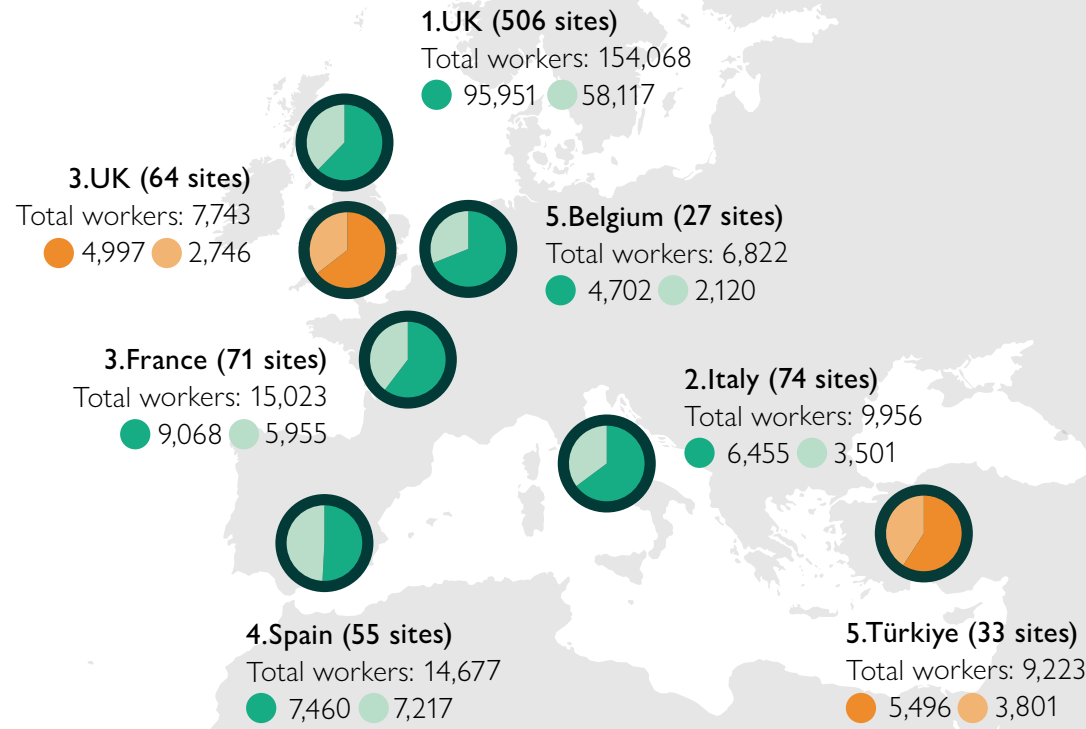
Our Partnership is built on democratic principles. We share the responsibilities and rewards of ownership: knowledge, power and profit.

Partner opinion is crucial in driving the actions of our governing authorities: the Partnership Council, the Partnership Board and the Chairman.

Happier World

We champion the role our Partnership can play in advancing the happiness of the communities we work with and the wellbeing of society.

We build trusted business relationships, acting with integrity and doing what's right. We take responsibility for our impact on the planet and work tirelessly to protect and restore nature, creating a more sustainable future for generations to come.



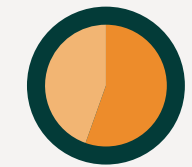
Our Own Brand Supply Chain

Our businesses source a wide variety of products globally through an extensive network of direct and indirect suppliers. This network is made up of thousands of sites, large and small, who specialise in activities which range from manufacturing and craftsmanship to farming.

Transparency of our supply chains is important to the Partnership and we continue to work on increasing visibility. An updated list of our Tier 1 sites has been uploaded to the Open Supply Hub and [our website](#). This list is refreshed biannually. This map reflects our top sourcing countries by number of tier one goods for resale sites (i.e. primary production site) for Waitrose and John Lewis.

* Tier 1 is the final processing, point of assembly and key manufacture before delivery to John Lewis Partnership

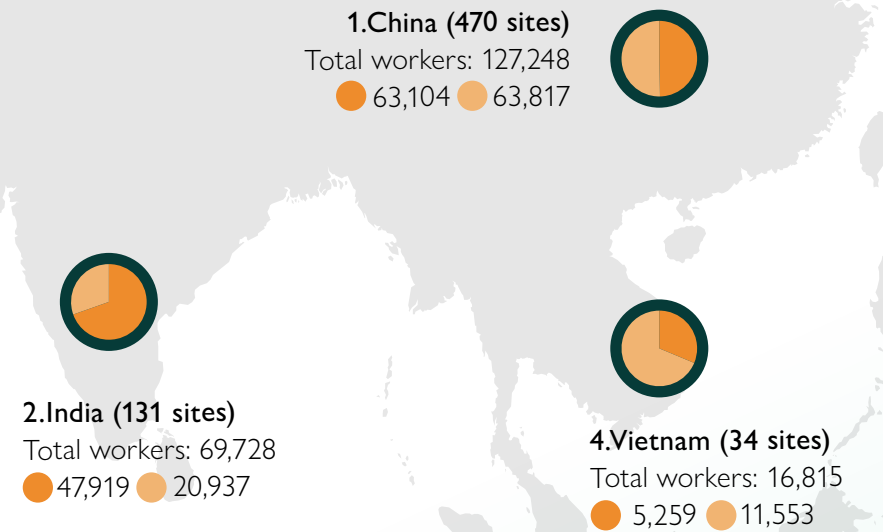
Top five Tier 1* (T1) sourcing countries



John Lewis
 Total sourcing countries: (T1) 37
 Total T1 sites: 912
 Total workers: (T1) 327,865
 M: 181,264 F: 145,697



Waitrose
 Total sourcing countries: (T1) 55
 Total T1 sites: 950
 Total workers: (T1) 291,791
 M: 167,413 F: 124,378
 figures up to Jan 2025



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Governance of human rights in the Partnership is part of our wider ethics and sustainability governance and is overseen by the Partnership's Ethics & Sustainability Committee (ESC). The terms of reference for the Committee state that its purpose is to "assist the Partnership Board in fulfilling its responsibilities for setting the Ethics & Sustainability (E&S) strategy in accordance with the Partnership's Purpose and Values and ensuring that E&S strategy is embedded into the Partnership's operations".

The ESC comprises the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman (who is the Chair of the Committee and a Non-Executive Director), an additional Non-Executive Director, an Elected Director, two External Independent Members and the Chief Financial Officer. The Managing Directors who are responsible for John Lewis, Waitrose and New Businesses, and the Director of Ethics and Sustainability, also attend meetings. The two External Independent Members assist the Committee to ensure that an external perspective is maintained, and that the Partnership's approach remains relevant and stretching. In the area of human rights in particular, John Morrison - Chief Executive at the Institute for Human Rights and Business - brings a wealth of experience to the Partnership.

Nina Bhatia, Managing Director of New Businesses, has accountability for human rights and responsible sourcing across our Partnership. A half-yearly ethical compliance update is provided to the ESC, with the Committee holding to account those responsible for delivery in operational teams. Ethical sourcing performance is also monitored via our risk management framework, for further information on this framework, please refer to our [Annual Report and Accounts 2025](#).

Reflections from our Director of Ethics & Sustainability

We remain dedicated to upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and making sure our purpose, "Working in Partnership for a happier world" is at the heart of everything we do. In the face of continued global volatility, making progress can have its own challenges, yet our unwavering commitment and tangible actions are illustrated in the pages that follow.

I'm especially pleased with the progress made in strengthening our due diligence processes. In part this has involved broadening the scope of our Ethical Compliance Policy, representing a substantial step forward in our ethical coverage. Our internal Human Rights Framework was also refreshed to help guide our Partners in making business decisions based on the human rights risks in the supply chains.

We continue to benefit from the valuable expertise of John Morrison, CEO at the Institute for Human Rights and Business, who is an External Independent Member of our Ethics & Sustainability Committee. His insights and guidance have been key in facilitating more challenging and productive discussions regarding human rights within our supply chains.

The Waitrose Foundation continues to deliver impactful work, as I was fortunate enough to witness for myself in Kenya and South Africa. It was inspirational to see how projects have created a brighter future for families, for example those living in flower farm communities in East Africa. Through our long-term relationships with suppliers and farmers, we're able to support vital projects like maternity clinics, childcare facilities and schools.

We are continually exploring ways to enhance working conditions and improve job quality within our supply chains. Through our Better Jobs initiatives, we are working with suppliers to implement practices that promote safe working environments and respect for workers' rights.

In the sections that follow we describe our participation in initiatives that promote grievance mechanisms and how we seek to strengthen our ability to address and remediate issues raised by workers and communities. These mechanisms are essential for ensuring accountability and fostering a more just and equitable supply chain.



As we look ahead, we recognise that the evolving regulatory environment, particularly the increased focus on human rights due diligence legislation, will continue to influence our efforts as well as our own purpose. We will remain vigilant and proactive in addressing emerging risks, ensuring that human rights remains a core priority across our business.

We can't do this alone and collaboration remains central to our strategy. Our engagement in forums like the Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce illustrates our dedication to working with partners to drive systemic change. I am grateful for the ongoing commitment and support of our Partners, suppliers, and expert partners ([see p.25](#)). We couldn't do this without the help and support of everyone; thank you for all that you do.

Marija Rompani
Director of Ethics & Sustainability

The ambition of our Human Rights Programme is to enable everyone in our supply chain to realise their fundamental human rights. We are committed to respecting the rights of those who grow, pick, pack, make and transport our goods, or provide services into the Partnership. This commitment also extends to the communities in which we operate, in line with John Spedan Lewis's founding vision.

As part of our ongoing governance process, our policies are reviewed on a regular basis and updated where needed. If there have been no interim updates, we have a formal review at least every two years.

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Policy framework

<p>Human Rights Policy</p>	<p>Purpose Sets out our commitment to human rights.</p> <p>Scope Our own operations, our supply chains (goods for resale and goods not for resale) and charity partners from or to whom the Partnership procures services or donates.</p>	<p>The John Lewis Partnership's Human Rights Policy maintains a strong commitment to respecting human rights. This includes promoting safe working conditions, fair treatment for workers, inclusive grievance procedures and promoting a strict prohibition on worker-paid recruitment fees.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Partnership recognises the importance of clean water and sanitation, a healthy environment, and upholding land rights. The ambition extends beyond its own operations, as the Partnership actively works with suppliers to address systemic issues that may exist beyond their production sites. This collaborative approach involves both proactive and reactive measures, demonstrating a dedication to continuous improvement and responsible sourcing practices.</p>
<p>Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice</p>	<p>Purpose To ensure decent working conditions in line with basic human rights.</p> <p>Scope Suppliers of goods and services including branded and own brand suppliers in all sourcing countries.</p>	<p>The John Lewis Partnership's 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).</p>
<p>Ethical Compliance Policy</p>	<p>Purpose To ensure decent working conditions in line with basic human rights.</p> <p>Scope Tier 1 factories supplying John Lewis and Waitrose own brand products. Tier 2 sites supplying Waitrose with fresh produce. Sites supplying Waitrose Foundation products Selected Goods Not For Resale Suppliers</p>	<p>Our Ethical Compliance Policy sets out how in-scope supply chains demonstrate they meet our RSCOP and how we monitor compliance. These sites demonstrate compliance by completing self-assessment questionnaires and, where applicable, undergoing subsequent inspections. The due diligence process surrounding the policy enables us to identify gaps in understanding or application of our RSCOP, and to determine where suppliers and sites will benefit from our support in upskilling and capability building.</p>

Our Human Rights Programme

Our Human Rights Programme sits within the 'People in Supply Chains' area of our Ethics & Sustainability strategy. It takes a three stage approach. Our due diligence work ensures that suppliers adhere to our RSCOP at an absolute minimum.

We support this work through our capacity building programmes which aim to improve understanding and application of our policies. In the third stage, our programmatic activity supports workers and smallholders to improve their livelihoods through sustainable change.

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Our ambition is to enable everyone in our supply chain to realise their fundamental human rights. We believe that championing worker voice and building more resilient and responsible supply chains creates lasting value for the John Lewis Partnership and those we work with.

Ensuring basic working conditions are being met in line with RSCOP

Addressing broader human rights risks

Creating a happier world through improving the livelihoods of people within and communities around our supply chains

Monitoring and due diligence of suppliers against our standards

Capacity and capability building in key supply chains

Partner training in business practices influencing human rights

Industry initiatives and collaborations

Transparency and reporting against targets

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Identify, assess and monitor

Our human rights work is built upon our fundamental monitoring and risk assessment processes. As a minimum, we expect that working conditions for those within supply chains which supply our Partnership comply with our RSCOP. We prioritise risk assessments based on 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 a particular supply chain.

Businesses supplying into John Lewis and Waitrose are required to engage with the Sedex platform for our compliance programme. All sites in scope are required to complete a Self Assessment Questionnaire (Sedex SAQ). This helps us to determine the requirement for and frequency of subsequent SMETA audits.

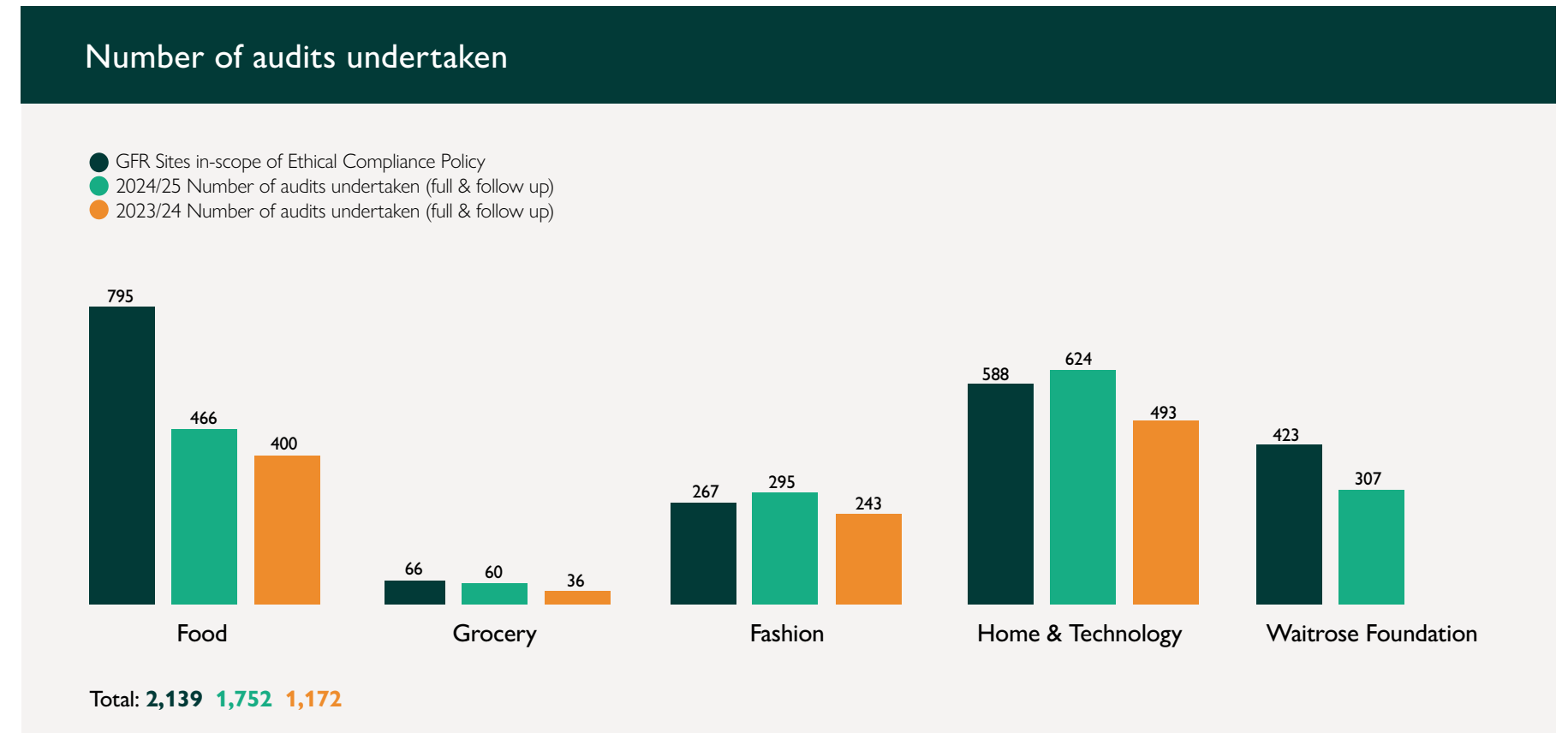
In September 2024, Sedex released an update to their audit methodology, moving from SMETA 6.1 to SMETA 7. The revisions introduced by Sedex include new audit findings that are categorised as ‘Collaborative Action Required’, designed to identify where additional activities are needed to sustain improvements. As could be expected with a significant change, there has been some resistance from some parts of the supply chain to these changes. We are continuing to work with industry peers and suppliers to ensure adequate support for suppliers as the new methodology is implemented.

Audits

Our Ethical Compliance Policy requires sites to carry out audits at a frequency determined by their risk rating. Full details of our approach can be seen on the [People in Supply Chains](#) section of our website. These may be unannounced or semi-announced (within a three week window), unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Partnership Human Rights Team.

In 2023, Waitrose expanded its Ethical Compliance Policy to include own-brand fresh produce Tier 2 sites. Waitrose Foundation farms have also been part of this expansion and it is part of Waitrose’s commitment to ensure that suppliers meet our RSCOP requirements. Over the last year we have been working closely with suppliers on the new policy changes and supporting work towards its implementation.

Waitrose has one directly owned farm, Leckford Estate, which has been farmed for over 90 years producing fresh local produce, such as apples and pears, flour, rapeseed and sparkling wine. This year Leckford undertook its first SMETA audit demonstrating our commitment to ethical compliance in our own operations. Results from the audit were compliant with our RSCOP.



GNFR

As previously reported, our risk assessment system (Coupa Risk Assess) was introduced in April 2023 to undertake due diligence on our direct Goods Not for Resale (GNFR) suppliers. To further mitigate risk, this year our Ethical Compliance Policy was broadened to include those in-scope GNFR suppliers who provide Partnership branded goods.

To address risks in our agency labour supply chains, we continue to partner with Slave-Free Alliance. This collaboration focuses on understanding these risks and enhancing our processes. We are developing guidance for managing labour providers within our operations and continuing with our implementation of spot checks, particularly during peak trading periods when temporary and agency labour are more frequently used. As in previous years the checks didn't reveal any signs of modern slavery, we have used them to identify areas for improvement towards greater protection, such as raising awareness of modern slavery risks among agency workers so they too can spot the signs.

Spot checks and visibility checks

In 2024/25, we reduced the number of spot checks across John Lewis and Waitrose UK supply chains as we looked to focus our efforts on visibility checks programme (reported below) and assessment of how we focus on tier 2 sites.

A significant programme of work for our Hong Kong Sourcing Office compliance team has been increasing on the ground visibility checks at tier 1 factories in East and Southeast Asia. These checks allow us to gain assurance that production is taking place at authorised sites, identify any increased ethical risks, and assist factories in their improvement efforts.

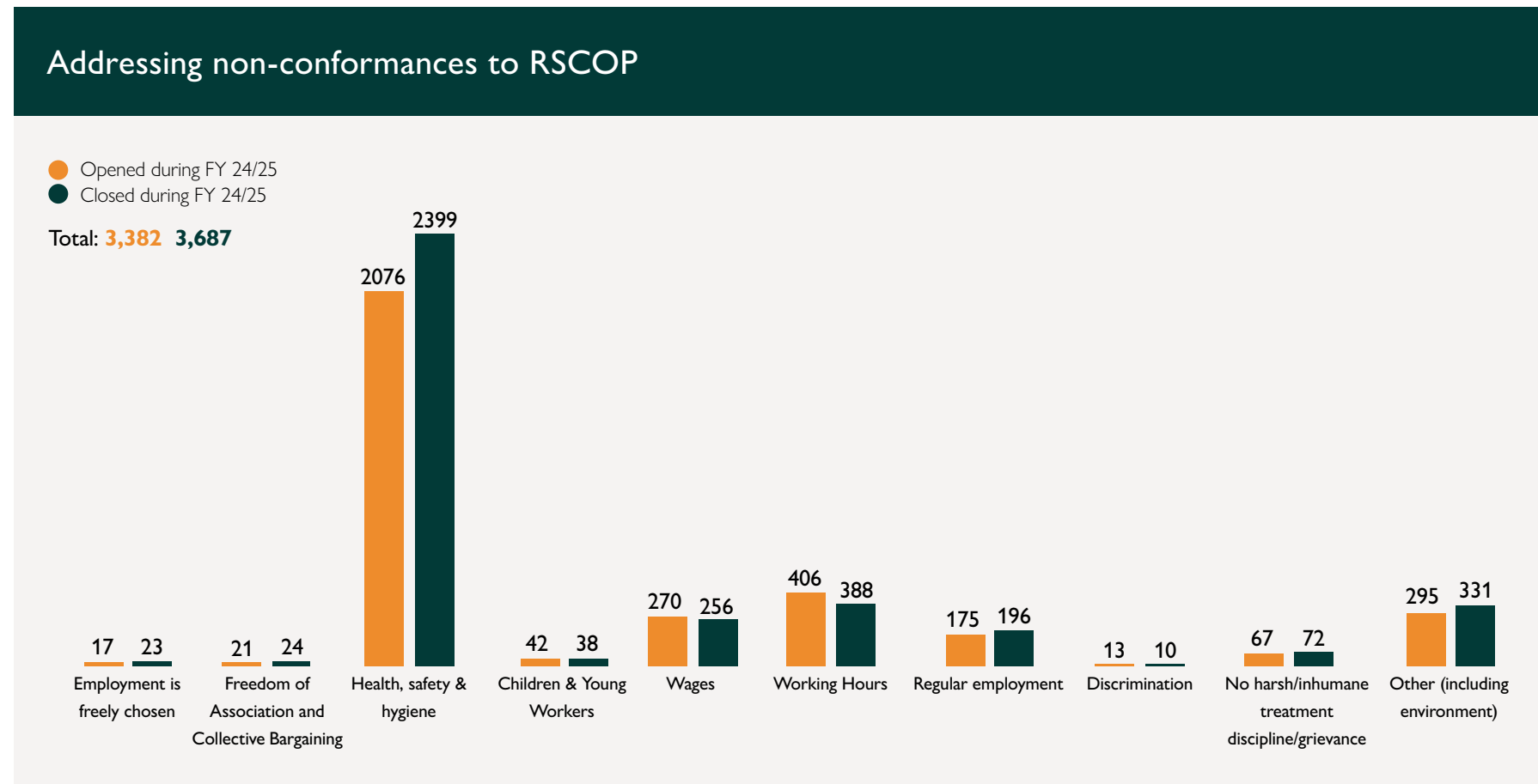
Between autumn 2023 to January 2025, we carried out visibility checks in 462 factories, representing approximately 96% of the current Tier 1 supply base across China, Vietnam and Malaysia. These checks revealed traceability and unauthorised subcontracting issues at some sites, and two instances of child labour which were remedied (see p.15).

Our experience from these visits underscores the critical importance of close collaboration with suppliers and sites, particularly during the onboarding process, but also through ongoing education about our expectations and policies. We are now looking to roll out a similar programme of visibility checks from our India Sourcing Office and across UK & Europe, whilst following up with monitoring of sites in China, Vietnam and Malaysia.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of our work can be demonstrated through the closure of issues identified in the audit process. A majority of non-conformances identified through audits related to health, safety and hygiene. Wage issues and incidents of overtime were also common. We recognise these issues are easier to assess through audit than issues such as discrimination and forced labour which often require additional efforts, such as investigations or effective grievance mechanisms (see following sections of the report).

One approach to supporting suppliers in their continuous improvement is through the closure of non-conformances. While this can sometimes be relatively straightforward, some cases can require support and guidance from our teams, and occasionally, external expertise to find the best solution for employers and workers. In 2024/25, we recorded a 52% growth in non-conformances opened during the year compared to 2023/24. The increase is largely due to the renewal of a significant portion of sites' three-year audit cycles, which follows our ethical compliance policy change in 2021 and transition to Sedex audits, in addition to the updated audit methodology mentioned earlier. Despite a rise in the number of cases opened, our collaborative efforts with sites remained effective, resulting in only a 4% decrease in the closure of non-conformances during the same timeframe.



Key raw materials

Tea

In our Assamese tea supply chain, we are collaborating with Fairtrade and other industry partners to develop a new sourcing model. Meeting Fairtrade standards in this region presents complexities due to challenging working conditions, low wages, and rising production costs. We maintain our commitment to paying the Fairtrade Minimum Price and an equivalent Fairtrade Premium to support improved working conditions. Over the past year, we have jointly developed a model for inclusive Premium decision-making with industry partners and defined priority activities based on a third-party assessment and mock audit. Future efforts will focus on providing further training to Premium committees and scope additional avenues to address compliance gaps.

Cotton

The Partnership has committed to sourcing 100% of the cotton used in own-brand products from more sustainable or recycled sources by 2025, and we have currently reached 82.4% towards this goal. One way we do this is by being active members of Better Cotton, an initiative that promotes better standards in cotton farming and practices. Within this reporting period we have signed up to traceable Better Cotton, which seeks to trace cotton back to its country of origin, and over the coming years we will be working to integrate this into our supply chain. For more details on our work in cotton [\(See p.12\)](#).

Cocoa

The Partnership is committed to sourcing 100% certified cocoa in our own label products. In 2024, 90.3% of our cocoa was sourced from Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance farms.

In April 2024, we partnered with Tony's Open Chain to launch nine own-brand chocolate bars. Tony's Open Chain, an industry leading initiative, is underpinned by five sourcing principles that aim to create a more sustainable and transparent cocoa supply chain by addressing some of the most salient issues in the sector: child labour, farmer poverty, and deforestation. The Fairtrade cocoa in the products is segregated and fully traceable, and the farmers who have produced it received a Living Income Reference Price that can help them to achieve a living income.

Wild caught fish

The Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS) is a voluntary programme certifying high standards of vessel management and safety systems. The Standard includes expectations around crew safety, rights and wellbeing. Our aim for all British fishing vessels supplying fish and shellfish to Waitrose to be RFVS certified has to date been a challenge to achieve. There has been a limited uptake amongst vessel owners, whose focus has generally been towards sustainability through certifications like MSC. We are now supporting vessels and skippers to increase focus on worker welfare by sponsoring a number of vessels to participate in the RFVS programme. We hope vessel owners will be able to share their experiences of the scheme with others to encourage an increased uptake in the future.



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How we identify salient risks

Given the diversity and global reach of our supply chains, we must consider a broad range of human rights for the many people involved. To prioritise our focus areas, we take a rights-centred risk-based approach to identify our salient human rights issues, which aligns with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). To inform our annual risk assessment and ongoing due diligence we use a range of sources and approaches to help identify current and potential human rights issues. This includes supplier data, desk-based research, human rights impact assessments, enhanced due diligence, participation in industry forums, insights from organisations like the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and Food Network for Ethical Trade (FNET), and engagement with key stakeholders like NGOs, trade unions, other brands and government bodies. These channels help us determine the scale, scope and remediability of human rights risks in our supply chain.

Human Rights Framework

This year we updated our Partnership Human Rights Framework which exists to support our Partners to make business decisions based on the human rights risks in the supply chains of goods or services, and to follow a procedure to ensure these risks are managed appropriately. It equips Partners across the business with a deeper understanding on how to assess and address risk, and guides the business on certain lines of risk that must not be crossed.



Enhanced due diligence & human rights impact assessments

As part of our human rights due diligence approach there are instances in which we choose to undertake a deeper dive into parts of our supply chain where indicators suggest that a more in-depth review may be warranted. This can be done via enhanced due diligence measures that go beyond our typical data gathering or through focused human rights impact assessments. The purpose is to identify, understand, assess and take steps that seek to address any adverse or potential human rights impacts in specific parts of our supply chain. The following highlights some of our most recent work.

Cotton: Egypt & India

Cotton is one of our most commonly used own-brand raw materials, featuring in bedding, furnishings and fashion. We undertook an assessment into our cotton supply chain, focusing particularly on cotton used within our own label John Lewis bedding ranges. The assessment covered from growing processes in Egypt to spinning and manufacturing processes in India. The assessment methodology was aligned with international best practice guidance when undertaking such assessments and was concluded in early 2024. The research findings have shaped the development of an action plan that will be implemented throughout 2025. Follow up action will focus on supporting improved awareness of child labour risks on farms in Egypt.

Tuna: South Korea

In 2024, we began an assessment to understand the working conditions experienced by fishers on board longline tuna vessels within our supply chain. This assessment also examined the impact of the South Korean government's 'Implementation Plan for Migrant Fishers on Distant Water Fishing Vessels' (referred to as 'the Plan').

Due to the extended nature of these fishing voyages, which can last 12-18 months in some instances, the field work process required significant time, but was eventually completed in early 2025. An action plan, in partnership with our supplier, New England Seafood International, and Sainsbury's is being developed to address the findings and drive improvements.

Updates on previous human rights impact assessments

Building upon the findings of our HRIA in Kenyan tea (conducted jointly with M&S) in 2021/22, we continued to advance our action plan throughout the past year.

Our pilot livelihood improvement projects in the East and West Rift regions have been successfully completed, directly benefiting 332 farmers. These projects aimed to improve farmer livelihoods by diversifying income streams and enhancing resilience, such as through livestock rearing, fresh produce cultivation, and vocational skills training. Kenya Tea Development Agency's Factory Board elections held last year resulted in some unavoidable delays in wider project activity. These elections, while a crucial aspect of democratic governance within the supply chain, impacted the pace of progress on certain planned activities.

Looking forward, our priority is to ensure that our action plan aligns closely with the evolving needs of our producer partners. We are currently engaged in collaborative discussions to refine our strategies and ensure that our interventions are both effective and sustainable. We remain committed to our long-term goal of fostering a responsible and equitable tea supply chain in Kenya.



Forced labour

CASE STUDY

Seasonal Workers

The Seasonal Workers Scheme (SWS) came into operation in 2019, and in 2024, 45,000 visas were made available for workers to come to the UK via approved licensed labour operators to work within the fresh produce sector. An additional 2,000 visas were provided for the poultry sector. The scheme continues to receive a number of negative reports of human rights issues related to debt bondage, high fees paid by migrants to access work and poor working conditions.

The Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce, comprising retailers, growers, suppliers, scheme operators, and industry associations, was established to develop practical actions and address these challenges. This year, our Human Rights Manager continued their role on the Governance Committee, helping to drive the Taskforce's progress.

In 2024, the Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce actively engaged with stakeholders through a series of grower roadshows held in February and March. These included six in-person and two virtual events, collectively reaching 509 delegates. The roadshows were designed to provide crucial updates before the season commenced. Part one focused on the Seasonal Worker Scheme for the upcoming season, including developments to the UK Grower Seasonal Workers' Toolkit & Checklist and addressing key challenges identified through Defra surveys and other sources. Part two offered seasonal worker supervisor development through a train-the-trainer session, aimed at supporting on-farm, start-of-season training modules with a practical focus on worker interactions in the field.

Furthermore, the Taskforce actively contributed to policy discussions, submitting its collective view to the Labour Market Enforcement Strategy Call for Evidence and sharing key focus areas and policy requests with the new government. Supporting seasonal workers' rights remained a priority. Over the last year we provided funding and sat on the review group for the Just Good Work app which saw significant growth over the last year. In 2024, the app had 60,099 active users, a 77% increase from 2023, and was used by 54% of workers issued a 2024 Seasonal Worker visa (based on the 4 scheme operators who supported the app). The app proved valuable both pre-departure, helping users understand the application process, and while in the UK, providing information on accommodation, pay, transportation, and job changes.

Progress was also made on the Employer Pays Principle Feasibility Study, co-funded by the Taskforce and Defra, with results expected in spring 2025. Additionally, the Taskforce commissioned an independent worker survey, conducted by Ulula, which was launched in January 2025. This ongoing survey aims to gather regular, independent feedback from workers to identify and address human rights challenges.



Responsible recruitment of migrant workers

Our Human Rights Policy prohibits our suppliers charging worker-paid recruitment fees and as previously reported we recognise the importance of working towards the ILO Employer Pays Principles, which states no worker should pay to secure a job. Unfortunately through our due diligence we know that globally there are too many instances where workers can pay high recruitment fees, and often migrant workers are most commonly affected.

Migrant labour recruitment - Thailand

To address the risk of migrant workers in our supply chains paying high recruitment fees, we collaborated with another retailer; World Wise Foods, and Thai suppliers to look into responsible recruitment practices in Thailand. The project has three key objectives: ensure all workers are recruited in a fair and transparent manner that respects and protects their rights, including adoption of the Employer Pays Principle; establish gender-sensitive employment practices to ensure workers' access to rights and opportunities is not affected by their gender; and amplify worker voice to identify and address workplace challenges.

In alignment with these objectives, over the past 12 months the project has conducted worker interviews with 49 migrant workers to further understand their experiences during the recruitment process and in the workplace. The work also drafted, consulted on and launched guidelines for effectively managing walk-in recruitment at sites in Thailand. To understand and respond to the different gender dynamics, gender focus groups were conducted with 96 workers and subsequent gender equality training with 174 workers, including a focus on the specific vulnerabilities of female migrant workers. Finally, in partnership with Labor Solutions, worker surveys were conducted with 218 workers. Collaboratively, we will use the evidence gathered to work on action plans over the next year.

Fishing

Our previous Human Rights Reports have highlighted the challenging conditions faced by workers in the fishing industry. In particular, there are industry concerns about forced labour in the fish processing sector, debt bondage, and poor treatment of migrant fishers. Fish is an important category for Waitrose, and we have continued to focus our attention on driving improvements in this sector, especially in the UK. The series of films we developed in 2022/23 to educate migrant fishers on their rights in the UK continues to be well-received. This work has led to a collaboration with Just Good Work to introduce the Just Good Work app into the fishing sector, and we have started by piloting the approach with Filipino migrants. As detailed in the seasonal worker case study (see p.13), the app provides accessible information to workers about working in the UK, what to expect, and where they can go for support.

Manufacturing in Malaysia

Recognising the reliance of many Malaysian manufacturers on a mixed workforce of local and foreign migrant labourers, often recruited through third-party agencies, and the associated risks of workers paying high recruitment fees, we partnered with Impactt in 2024 to conduct targeted training with a Malaysian supplier. This initiative aimed to enhance the manufacturer's management systems for responsible recruitment and ensure a due diligence approach when engaging with recruitment agencies.

The training focused on critical aspects of responsible recruitment and the Employer Pays Principle. Key areas included understanding human rights risks in cross-border recruitment, establishing protocols to prevent recruitment fees, selecting and managing recruitment agencies and sub-agencies effectively, communicating responsible recruitment policies to workers, implementing fee payment verification and remediation, and building skills to apply the Employer Pays Principle in challenging market conditions. We will take the learning from this for application in other areas.

Wages

Living wage commitment in bananas

In addition to our work in Kenya and Assam to improve tea workers' wages (see p.10), we have continued working towards our commitment to close the living wage gap in our banana supply chains by 2027. This is as part of the IDH Banana Retail Commitment on Living Wage.

Bananas remain a top-selling product but are a high-risk product from ethical and environmental perspectives. Wages in the banana sector are low, and farmers and workers are increasingly affected by changing climate and weather patterns. With support from IDH, our growers have continued to submit annual data to the IDH Salary Matrix, which allows us to monitor wages across our supply chain. Data from the latest 2023 report, which covered 94% of our supply chain, showed an average 21% living wage gap for workers. We will be working to reduce this gap through 2025.

We recognise that responsible purchasing practices play a crucial role in improving wages, and as a result, we participated in an IDH responsible purchasing practices survey.

CASE STUDY

Flowers, Türkiye

In 2023, a supplier raised concerns regarding the safety and presence of children on three farms within our supply chain. Delivering on our commitment to address such issues we promptly took collective action. Coordinated through Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), and collaborating with other retailers, suppliers and experts, a group was convened to investigate these concerns and develop strategies for improvement.

To gain a deeper understanding of the situation, The Centre and Ethica, a Turkish based expert on supply chain standards, supported an assessment and follow up. The Centre conducted on-site visits, facilitated focus group discussions, and reviewed existing policies at the farms. This comprehensive review informed a tailored intervention that ran from March to December 2024 aimed at building the farms' capacity to create family- and child-friendly environments that respect workers' rights and protect children, aligning with our commitment to upholding these principles.

A key component of this programme was capacity-building training. Child labour prevention and remediation training was delivered to 24 management team members across the three farms. Furthermore, farms were supported in the development and improvement of policies and each farm site created individualised action plans. These plans focused on addressing child labour prevention, establishing effective remediation processes, improving access to basic services, and strengthening worker-employer dialogue.

The success of these interventions will be closely monitored throughout 2025, as we remain committed to the long-term sustainability of these improvements.



Child labour is forbidden by law in most countries, however, risk still remains across many supply chains where social or economic factors may drive children into work. Where issues are identified we aim to work collaboratively with our supply chain partners to address this following our [Child Labour Remediation Best Practice](#) guidance.

In 2023, we became members of The Centre for Child Rights and Business (The Centre) to support our work in this area. Over the past two years The Centre has provided us with an annual feedback report which outlines our efforts and progress. It assesses areas such child labour remediation policy and procedure, detection, and accountability. Our score has improved this year, going from 39 out of 50 in 2023 to 42 out of 50 in 2024, reflecting our continuous improvement and commitment to safeguarding.

Over the last year we have also worked with The Centre to address one identified case of child labour in China, whilst also working on the follow-up to the case in Türkiye flowers as reported here.

Health and safety

Building structural safety - Türkiye

In 2024, we joined a voluntary group of brands sourcing from Türkiye to address critical concerns regarding factory building safety and structural integrity. Recognising the region's vulnerability to earthquakes, we understand the urgent need for stringent guidelines to protect the well-being of all workers. The group has established key principles for assessing existing building safety and defining necessary enhanced actions. We will continue to collaborate with our suppliers in this area.

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Gender and discrimination

Gender-based violence and harassment - various sectors

Evidence suggests that gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) is one of the most prevalent human rights violations and business-related risks in almost all supply chains. It is also well established that GBVH is notoriously hard to trace and evidence. This has led us to collaborate with ETI and other members on two key streams of work focusing on GBVH. The first is a community of practice with other apparel and textile members looking to build and apply core principles of gender responsive human rights due diligence. The group will explore ways in which to improve policies and processes to ensure gender is adequately considered and be better equipped to identify, mitigate, and provide remedy to GBVH issues affecting women and girls in apparel supply chains. The second joint initiative is to address GBVH risks in commercial agriculture supply chains through collective action. The initiative will focus on Kenya (flowers, tea) and South Africa (citrus) and look to co-create a set of principles to address GBVH risks. By engaging a wide set of stakeholders it will explore the respective roles and responsibilities of each group to reduce and eliminate GBVH from the workplace. We will report on progress next year.

Gender equality in agriculture

In previous reports, we highlighted our collaboration with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's (FCDO) Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme, which aimed to strengthen the Waitrose Foundation's Climate Resilience programme in Kenya. Building upon the initial project, during 2024 the WOW partnership provided critical support to address the specific barriers women face in adopting climate-smart practices. These barriers included time constraints due to domestic chores, the dominance of men in farming leadership roles, and limited access to essential inputs and land.

To improve health outcomes and reduce the time women spent collecting firewood, the WOW partnership implemented energy-efficient initiatives. This included training 5,390 farmers and workers on climate-smart practices, which promoted the leadership roles that women could play in their communities, as well as distributing over 1,500 additional energy-efficient cookstoves to women workers. To foster sustainable alternative livelihoods, the WOW partnership trained 25 Village Based Advisors (community members who are trained to provide advice, support and resources) on cookstove installation for income generation. They also provided step-down training to 10 groups on tree nursery management, including establishing three women-led tree and fruit nurseries, and distributed over 300 additional avocado seedlings to women farmers to enhance nutrition and provide additional sources of income.

Finally, acknowledging the need to improve access to finance for women and youth, the WOW partnership provided financial literacy training to the 25 women VBAs and over 100 Village Savings and Loans Associations. More details on the WOW partnership can be found in the Waitrose Foundation report.

Details about our gender initiatives in other areas can be found on the Better Jobs pages of this report ([see p.20](#)) and on [our website](#).



CASE STUDY

Access to grievance mechanisms

Effective grievance mechanisms are crucial for upholding human rights in global supply chains. We have worked on a number of approaches over the years by introducing or strengthening existing mechanisms. Here we reflect on recent initiatives and highlight key learnings to inform future endeavours.

Too often, workers in supply chains lack accessible avenues to raise concerns. Grievance mechanisms provide a channel for workers and communities to seek remedies for adverse impacts and serve as an early warning system, enabling proactive risk management

We recognise that diverse channels and methods are needed, that can be adapted to the local context and to specific risks and vulnerabilities. These can include third party digital tools and hotlines, suggestion boxes, worker representation via workplace committees and trade unions, and industry initiatives like the International Accord. Each has a role, and effectiveness can vary.

Supporting site-level grievance mechanisms has been a focus of ours. Two areas we have sought to do this is through our Better Jobs project in India ([see p.20](#)), as well as through our grievance mechanism initiative

in the Italian tomato sector with Oxfam Business Advisory Service (OBAS). As reported last year, this work in Italy sought to implement an effective grievance mechanism by focusing on a communications committee, elected representatives and enhanced grievance raising procedures. Since the project's closure, we have followed up with the supplier to work through ongoing recommendations from OBAS, and continue to collaborate with other industry peers and share our learnings.

To address the particular vulnerabilities of migrant workers, we have also supported grievance mechanisms in Spain and Italy through the ETI Grievance Mechanisms in Agriculture project (multi-country) and Spanish Ethical Trade Forums pilot project, [Canal Foros](#). The latter, a confidential, free and anonymous grievance mechanism, was implemented at seven Waitrose supplier sites in Spain, covering 3,918 workers. In addition to receiving cases, Canal Foros supports the review, investigation and joint remediation of cases where required. We will continue to support this initiative over the next year.

In India, we have worked closely with some of our handwoven rugs suppliers. Early on in the initiative factory assessments identified risks

that included a lack of effective worker committees and gaps in health and safety practices. Through our local partner, ASK India, factories and their workers were supported to strengthen worker committees, as well as strengthening grievance systems by relaunching grievance policies and upskilling worker representatives so they were able to record and mediate grievances. Read a case study of this initiative on [our website](#).

Ensuring effective and accessible grievance mechanisms remains a priority for the Partnership. We recognise that multiple approaches are necessary to accommodate diverse contexts and worker vulnerabilities. Moving forward, we will continue to strengthen existing mechanisms, explore innovative solutions, and collaborate with partners to address systemic barriers. Our ambition is to contribute to an environment where workers feel able to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.



Grievance mechanisms and whistleblowing

Workers in our supply chains are encouraged to raise any workplace issues they have via site-based grievance mechanisms, or alternatively to use external resources such as hotlines hosted by Stronger Together and Unseen’s Modern Slavery Helpline. Many of the collaborations named in this report also enable us to receive information on any grievances raised in our supply chain and cases are managed in line with our internal whistleblowing process.

Where cases are reported, we work collaboratively, with other brands and retailers where possible, as well as other stakeholders, to understand more about the issue and reach a resolution that works for all parties.

As can be seen from the table in 2024/25 there were 26 reports from whistleblowers at sites from which we source products, a decrease from the 79 cases reported the year before. The decrease is attributed to us moving away from Issara in December 2023 as our supply base no longer aligned with the countries in which Issara operated.

This year we will be working on rolling out our own third-party supported whistleblowing mechanism across our operations and supply base.

Grievance mechanisms and whistleblowing

Contact method	2024/25		2023/24		2022/23	
	Cases	Countries	Cases	Countries	Cases	Countries
UNSEEN business portal	5	UK	5	UK	2	UK
Media	4	UK, Jordan	2	UK	3	UK, Greece
Trade unions/Industry bodies	1	UK	0	N/A	0	N/A
Issara	0	N/A	47	Malaysia, Thailand	25	Thailand
Sedex/Audit company	0	N/A	0	N/A	1	China
Direct letter from a whistleblower	2	Bangladesh	0	N/A	0	N/A
ETI / Other NGO	2	UK, Pakistan	5	China, Kenya, Thailand, Turkey	4	UK, Sri Lanka
Direct from tier 1 supplier	2	UK, Maldives	6	Ireland, Kenya, UK	6	UK, China, Thailand
Direct from authorities	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A
International Accord	8	Bangladesh	13	Bangladesh	6	Bangladesh
Alerted by other retailers	2	UK	1	UK	0	N/A
TOTAL	26		79		47	



Collaborations

ETI

As members of the Ethical Training Initiative (ETI) since 2011, we remain active contributing members, finding new opportunities for collaboration each year. Our Responsible Sourcing Lead has also been a non-Executive Board Member as one of four corporate representatives since December 2023.

Over the last year, we participated in four ETI initiatives across its membership convening groups, namely its **Grievance Mechanism in Agriculture, Responsible Purchasing Practices in Manufacturing**, and its two gender-based violence and harassment and gender-responsive HRDD project (see p.16). Such industry initiatives are important opportunities to develop and promote best practice approaches in collaboration with peers and sector experts.

Our factory Herbert Parkinson participated in the ETI Responsible Purchasing Practices Initiative for Manufacturers, which concluded in February 2025. **The Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices**, developed by ETI and partnering organisations, was used to structure a series of practical workshops for participating companies. Based on the advice and tools, Herbert Parkinson applied the learning and made adjustments to their own practices. For example, suppliers were invited to engage in an anonymous purchasing practices survey facilitated by ETI; adjustments were made to critical path processes in certain product lines recognising how commercial pressures can impact producers and working conditions negatively; plus new supplier feedback and scorecard mechanism were introduced.

Food Network for Ethical Trade

Over the course of the last year, we continue to be active members of the Food Network for Ethical Trade, which brings together food suppliers and retailers to tackle common supply chain challenges and reduce collective burden on suppliers. As well as being engaged in several FNET working groups and having representation on the FNET Board, this year there has been a particular focus on the changes introduced to Sedex SMETA 7 methodology (see p.8). In particular, FNET collaboration has enabled us to align feedback to Sedex, seek collective agreement on how findings raised under 'Collaborative Action Required' will be approached, and jointly coordinate on serious incident management and protocols.

International Accord

John Lewis has been a signatory of the International Accord since its inception in 2013 to improve factory building safety in Bangladesh. In January 2023, we also became a signatory of the Pakistan Accord to ensure worker health and safety standards in our garment and textile supply chains in Pakistan. At the end of 2024/25, we had 37 active apparel factories in Bangladesh, all of which were registered on the International Accord programme and who actively participated in their site audits and any follow-up action plans. There are 10 sites in Pakistan who have registered on the Accord programme.

Modern Slavery Intelligence Network (MSIN)

The Partnership was one of the founding members of MSIN, a non-profit group established in 2020 in response to Operation Fort, one of the UK's largest modern slavery investigations. MSIN's goal is to share information within the UK food industry to identify patterns and trends of modern slavery and use this knowledge to disrupt traffickers. Stop the Traffik operates the intelligence-sharing platform, which assists in identifying trends that can be used to inform member actions. MSIN continues to focus on improving both the quality and quantity of intelligence processed.

Spanish Ethical Trade Forums (Asociación Foros De Comercio Ético)

In 2024, our partnership with the Ethical Trade Forums Association (ETFA) continued to support the piloting of a grievance mechanism project called Canal Foros (see p.17). Beyond Canal Foros, ETFA continued to hold events and seminars for growers in Spain. 530 attendees from 384 companies attended ETFA's events in 2024; topics ranged from Sedex SMETA 7 audit changes, responsible purchasing practices and promotion of Canal Foros.

Seafood Ethics Action Alliance (SEAA)

We continue to participate in the Seafood Ethics Action Alliance (SEAA), a forum for collaboration of retailers and seafood businesses aiming to strengthen human rights due diligence in the global seafood supply chains. This past year we have collaborated with other industry partners when issues have been raised. We have also supported a joint study by Impactt looking at responsible recruitment in the tuna sector which is due for release soon.

The Centre for Child Rights and Business (The Centre)

The Centre helps companies navigate child rights and human rights due diligence in over 30 countries. The Centre has been an invaluable partner in our child labour remediation efforts (see p.15 on Child Labour). This year, The Centre has also worked with us to refresh our Homeworkers Policy and develop a new guidance document for suppliers.

Unseen

We joined Unseen as a business member in 2019. As an organisation that specialises in support to victims of human trafficking and forced labour, their UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline is one of the channels in which labour abuse cases can be brought to our attention. Unseen Business Hub enables cases to be raised anonymously and facilitates joint action with other industry stakeholders where investigation and remediation is required.

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Our human rights programmes aim to improve the livelihoods of workers in our supply chains. We have a target to improve the livelihoods of more than 200,000 workers by the end of 2025.

A key part of how we have been working to achieve this goal is to ensure that workers have a voice within our supply chain. We work on a number of initiatives across our John Lewis and Waitrose brands to promote worker voice and use learnings to drive improvements to worker livelihoods.

We are delighted that, through interventions such as the Waitrose Foundation, Fairtrade, Tony's Open Chain, and Better Jobs projects in China and India, we have made good progress towards this target and look forward to reporting full results next year.

Better Jobs

In 2019, we launched our Better Jobs survey to gain a deeper understanding of the worker experience within key supply chains. The survey insights were used to develop action plans that drive

improvements for both workers and their employers. We continue to build on the early projects in India and China, along with launching a workshop series with UK suppliers in 2024. For more details on the earlier phases of the Better Jobs programme, see our [website page](#).

India

Advancing female worker wellbeing project

In response to Better Jobs survey findings, we partnered with three key Indian suppliers and our local implementing partner, Society for Labour and Development (SLD), to understand the factors affecting women workers' well-being and explore how workplace improvements can be co-created between management and workers.

In 2024, the project's baseline study, involving 104 workers (95% female) and 21 managerial employees, identified key areas for improvement, such as tackling workplace harassment and ensuring functional remediation mechanisms are in place. The study provided valuable insights on grievance mechanisms and worker perceptions, revealing that while workers are aware of grievance mechanisms, they are rarely utilised due to fear of reprisal, lack of confidentiality, and a perception that they are ineffective. These findings have informed subsequent project activities,

including worker and management training to enhance workplace culture, and knowledge of gender-based violence and harassment and workers' rights. The project will then focus on enhancing social dialogue processes to ensure implementation of the outcomes can be sustained.

UK

In 2024, we relaunched our engagement with a cohort of John Lewis suppliers, following a pause in UK activities. Based on learnings from previous Better Jobs survey responses from employers and workers, and considering current legislative and economic changes in the UK, we planned a series of practical workshops for UK suppliers. The first workshop, to take place in 2025, will focus on the opportunities and challenges of applying flexible working in manufacturing, following the introduction of the UK Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2024.





China

In China we have delivered two project streams, one focused on improved worker resilience and the second on gender equality and diversity:



1. Resilience Building Project

Launched in 2022, our pilot Resilience Building Project addressed work-related stress among supply chain workers in five Chinese factories. Due to its success with workers and management, the pilot expanded to a second phase, reaching 400 production workers across six factories. This second phase particularly focused on vulnerable groups with caregiving responsibilities.

Phase two incorporated enhancements based on lessons from the initial pilot. Online sharing sessions were used by factories to share best practice and address challenges. The strengthened train-the-trainer model empowered production managers and unit heads to deliver educational content to workers. Additionally, WeChat livestreams provided accessible and interactive educational content, proving especially engaging for older workers.

Factories implemented a mix of actions to build workers' resilience included a flexible working policy and multi-skill training. We saw examples of workers being supported with hands-on mentoring during onboarding and in their professional development to progress to new roles. Worker benefits were advanced through local labour unions. Family-friendly initiatives included childcare support, child education support, and job support for the families of workers. Finally, worker voice and engagement was enhanced through monthly management meetings, leading to an average of 2-3 improvement projects per factory based on workers' concerns and suggestions.



2. Promoting women's health, wellbeing and diversity project

In some countries and industries women make up a significant proportion of the manufacturing workforce and our Better Jobs survey in 2021/22 identified that specific health concerns and needs were not being adequately recognised by management. A project was established in 2023 to support women by improving management and workers understanding of these needs, sharing knowledge on how to address them and changing behaviours to promote inclusive and supportive working environments.

Following the successful first phase of implementation (reported last year), we identified new opportunities to strengthen diversity and inclusion within the workplace. To sustain and expand on the efforts from the first phase, four participating factories are pioneering initiatives focused on mitigating unconscious bias and promoting inclusive language, establishing family-friendly workplace policies, and encouraging women to recognise their self-worth.

In parallel, we are extending the programme to four new additional factories, aiming to increase health awareness and knowledge among a wider population of female workers. This expansion will deepen their understanding of comprehensive health, encompassing physiological, psychological, and social well-being. These initiatives are ongoing with anticipated completion by the end of 2025.

The Waitrose Foundation

The Waitrose Foundation, our flagship supply chain initiative, seeks to improve the livelihoods of those who grow, pick and pack produce in Waitrose's fresh produce supply chains. Now in its 20th year, the Foundation accrued £2.5m of funding through the sale of 212 Foundation labelled products last year, enabling the delivery of 298 community and worker-led projects across the five Foundation regions. The initiatives benefited 96,480 farmers, workers and community members, as further elaborated in the project descriptions.

The Waitrose Foundation continued its support in Southern Africa, providing improved access to education and supporting on-farm creches and nurseries. The projects supported 87 on-farm nurseries reaching 9,369 children. Our community water programme completed last year in Aussenkehr, established nine piped water points and improved access to water for 17,797 workers and community members, supplying 2.4m litres per month.

In Kenya, the microloans programme provided approximately £742,000 worth of loans to 5,333 farmers and workers. We also grew the commercial partnerships with the Foundation; introducing fresh herbs as a new category and increasing our commitments in flowers to include all stems from Kenya.

Elsewhere a new programme to support entrepreneurs is being piloted in Ghana, while multiyear programmes continued in Senegal and Gambia focused on microloans and safety and wellbeing in the community. In Costa Rica, the Foundation focused on healthcare, financial literacy, and scholarships for pineapple growing communities.

Learning and continuous improvement are key to the future success of the Foundation, therefore a study was conducted to assess to what degree the livelihood improvement projects contribute to supply chain resilience. It showed the Foundation has identified and mitigated salient community-based risk (such as employee mental health), working in partnerships with supply chains and with active involvement of all supply chain actors. This approach has contributed to creating an empowered, engaged, and trusted supply chain by growers, suppliers and Waitrose commercial representatives, with a keen sense of collective responsibility.

Last year, the Waitrose Foundation Global Board visited our farm partners in Kenya and South Africa in order to see the impact of the programme, hear feedback from recipients and learn about the opportunities to develop the programme. For further information about the work of the Waitrose Foundation, please visit [our website](#) or consult our annual report.

Waitrose Foundation Global Strategic Fund

The Waitrose Foundation has a commitment to invest the £1m Global Strategic Fund into climate resilience initiatives by 2025, supporting farmers and workers to better adapt to changing climates, thus ensuring the security of their livelihoods.

Last year we reported that £770,000 had been committed to five projects in four countries and we are set to reach £1million in 2025. Over the past year, the delivery of these projects have progressed well.

In Kenya, our improved livelihoods climate resilience programme, in partnership with WOW ([see p.16](#)) reached 5,390 recipients and was completed in 2024. The participants were trained on climate mitigation and adaptation, provided with renewable energy technologies, supported to establish sustainable alternative income opportunities and better enable women to become more financially literate and take on leadership roles in their communities. We continue to support our flower and vegetable farming communities in Kenya with a water security programme, distributing water saving technologies to outgrowers, providing community water infrastructure and building the capacity of water management committees.

Water security remains a key climate resilience priority in South Africa. In the first year of our two-year programme to clear alien invasive tree species from the Boland-Groot Winterhoek Water Source Area over 800 hectares have been cleared and maintained. Clearing invasive trees boosts water availability and restores natural ecosystems, thus improving its resilience to the impacts of climate change and securing a more sustainable water supply for the region. To date, it has broadly benefitted 90 farms and 27,500 farm workers within the catchments. Of these farms, 23 directly had additional direct support through alien invasive tree clearing or river replanting activities on their land. In the second year, a further 80 farms are due to benefit from the project. These water stewardship activities also provide skills development and job creation opportunities in the region; 23 jobs were sustained through the Foundations & WFF partnership small-enterprise supported co-funding.

We are delighted that the Waitrose Foundation's climate resilience ambition was recognised at the edie Net Zero awards 2024, winning the Just Transition to Net Zero Award.



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Training is an important element of our Human Rights Programme. By supporting our Partners (employees) and suppliers with up to date and relevant training we aim to reduce incidences of modern slavery and human rights abuses in our supply chain.

Partner training

We have various routes for Partner training, including our internal bespoke online training and courses provided by expert organisations like Unseen and Stronger Together, which can be accessed in their original format or tailored to our needs. For example, this past year Unseen ran an in-person training on modern slavery for commercial Partners across Quality & Technical and Buying.

In January 2025, we expanded our sponsorship of the Stronger Together Consumer Goods Programme from Waitrose to across the Partnership. Waitrose was a founding sponsor of Stronger Together in 2013 and this expansion now extends the benefits of Stronger Together support to John Lewis suppliers too. With this expansion, we plan to host five John Lewis specific sessions on modern slavery with up to 125 Partners and suppliers in 2025/26.

We will continue to monitor our Partner engagement in these various courses, the benefits and where there is need for additional training support.

Supplier training

As previously reported, we work closely with UK-based sites to encourage their engagement in core Stronger Together and Responsible Recruitment Toolkit training for suppliers. We believe this is an important step in raising awareness of modern slavery risks and mitigation steps within our supply chain. This training cannot just be a one-off as there may be both operational changes and changes in personnel over time, so we request sites to re-complete this training after a three year period.

We have a target for 25% of eligible sites in our supply chain to complete Stronger Together training and 10% of eligible sites to complete Introduction to Responsible Recruitment over the previous three years. Both targets have been achieved this past year. Stronger Together training (Tackling Modern Slavery in UK Business) has been completed by 52.36% of eligible sites (up from 26.4% in 2023/24), and Introduction to Responsible Recruitment has been completed by 26.97% of eligible sites (up from 11.9% in 2023/24).



Looking forward

While we are proud of our progress in driving improvements for workers within our supply chain over the past year, we acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. Risks to workers are constantly evolving, and we must proactively scan the horizon to identify and address these emerging challenges.

Changing regulatory landscape

Over the coming year we will need to adjust and prepare for likely changes to the regulatory landscape. In the UK, it is likely the UK Employment Rights Bill will introduce a number of reforms impacting our supply base at home. In Europe, although discussions under the EU Omnibus are ongoing at the time of publishing this report, the EU Regulation on Prohibiting products made with Forced Labour came into force in December 2024 and has a 3-year grace period until it begins to apply. Ensuring the Partnership and our suppliers are prepared for these changes will be key.

Addressing broader issues

Egyptian cotton

We have a commitment to traceable Egyptian cotton through the Better Cotton Initiative, helping to drive improvements to standards on farms, such as around health and safety. Following our assessment into the Egyptian supply chain which traces our supply via India, we have put together an action plan and are working with industry partners to run a programme of work to drive improvements. As well as focusing work in Egypt on child labour prevention around growing areas, we will be developing an action plan with our Indian supplier to improve working conditions in mills.

Gender based violence and harassment

We have begun work with the ETI on two collaborative projects looking at gender based violence and harassment. One project will focus on food supply chains, and the other on apparel (see p.16). We are looking forward to collaborating with other industry peers on these and hope these projects will provide us with valuable learnings on how to drive progress in addressing these issues.

Homeworking

The Partnership acknowledges and welcomes the presence of homeworkers in the supply chain, but recognises that working conditions in home working situations can be poor. To make improvements for these workers we are working with The Centre for Child Rights and Business. Efforts over the coming year will focus on identifying key homeworking supply chains, launching our supplier guidance developed this year and supporting suppliers through capacity building to implement best practices support for homeworkers.

Responsible Recruitment

In late 2024 we began to map out high risk recruitment corridors within our Partnership supply chains, enabling us to better understand possible fees paid by workers to access jobs. Recognising this is a huge challenge globally we are supporting the development of the Ethical Recruitment Risk Map which aims to share data on recruitment fees, forced labour indicators and worker demographics. The aim of the project is to enable companies to conduct more informed due diligence in relation to recruitment practices.



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This report outlines the steps John Lewis Partnership has taken during the financial year ending 25 January 2025 to protect the rights of workers in our operations and the supply chains of goods and services provided to our business.

Based on the areas recommended by the Home Office, we include disclosures on the following:

- a. Organisation structure and supply chains (see p.3-4)
- b. Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking (see p.6)
- c. Due diligence processes (see p.8-9)
- d. Risk assessment and management (see p.11-12)
- e. Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken (see p.8,9 & 18)
- f. Training on modern slavery and trafficking (see p.23)

This group statement of John Lewis Partnership plc (the parent company) has been published in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the Act), and also covers its subsidiaries John Lewis plc and Waitrose Limited.

This report and statement has been approved by the Board of John Lewis Partnership Plc on 24 July 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Jason Tarry
Chairman

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JOHN LEWIS

WAITROSE