We agree that transparency in the apparel sector is incredibly important and it’s something we’ve been championing since 2016 when we began publicly disclosing the details of our supplier base.

Like many businesses, we have faced our fair share of challenges in 2020 and while our way of working has changed, what hasn’t changed is our commitment to doing the right thing by our suppliers. We’re incredibly proud of the work we have done to support our partners during COVID-19 and our values and ethical framework continue to guide our decision making every step of the way.

Early on in the pandemic, we made a commitment to honour all existing supplier orders by taking delivery of stock that was already produced as well as goods currently in production. All suppliers were paid on time and in accordance with their agreed payment terms and pricing. We also joined forces with our banking partners to on board more suppliers to our Supplier Finance Program. This program enabled suppliers to access payments within days of an invoice being issued, regardless of the payment terms, providing them greater flexibility to manage their financial commitments including wages. Product volumes with our suppliers have now returned to normal levels and the strength of our partnerships are stronger than ever.

Like us, our suppliers have been working hard to implement new health and safety guidelines on public health, disease prevention and measures to prevent COVID-19 following advice from their local Governments and the World Health Organisation. During this time, we’ve been working closely with them to learn more about the protocols they have in place and what additional support we can provide them during this time. We’ve leveraged technology to conduct virtual audits so we can continue to support our factories to improve through reviewing corrective action needed based on their last audit.

As illustrated on our corporate website, we’ve been working hard to identify and support workers at greatest risk for a long time. We are a proud member of the Action Collaboration Transformation (ACT) as part of our journey of paying living wages. In addition, we have our ongoing partnership with CARE to run our own Women’s Empowerment Program in Bangladesh with 1260 workers completing the training. As part of our Ethical Sourcing Program, we ensure that all suppliers adhere to our 14 Rules To Trade (covering wages, working conditions and environmental practices) and our Supplier Agreement. We have an audit and corrective action program to ensure that minimum wages are paid. We remain close to workers regarding wages and working conditions through managing our confidential hot line and undertaking independent worker interviews.

Our auditing program works in a 12 month cycle of:
1. Audit Factory
2. Corrective Action Plan established with Supplier
3. Training and support to implement best practice
4. Follow up audit to review, including additional training where needed
5. Corrective Action Plan established with Supplier
6. Audit Factory again

This cycle is effective in continuing to improve our factories standards, building capacity with our suppliers to move from a good, better, best standard of facility. Knowledge sharing between our in-region ethical sourcing teams, quality teams, logistics teams, sourcing teams and production teams to support factories and our ethical sourcing program.

Finally, we’re really proud to have traced 100 percent of our direct suppliers and subcontractors and in 2016, we began publically disclosing the details of our supplier base on our corporate website,
reviewing and updating this list twice-yearly. You can find the latest supplier list here which includes all direct suppliers and sub-contractors.

I hope this has answered all of your questions. Please get back in touch if you require any further information.