

Thank you for getting in touch and giving us the chance to explain how we are working with our suppliers during the pandemic.

We know that your focus is on the clothing industry but the information below relates to all of our suppliers.

Having good and close relationships with our suppliers is a priority for us, and we recognise the importance of our ethical commitments to them.

The coronavirus pandemic has hit the global retail industry hard. As a retailer that sells a broad range of products from technology to fashion and home goods - we have seen strong demand from customers for products which improved their lives and those of their families during the lockdown; such as desks, computers, food preparation and exercise equipment.

Understandably, with customers staying at home during lockdown we saw a dramatic drop off in demand for other products; especially some areas of clothing. This sudden change in demand meant we had to make some urgent and difficult decisions.

As we would in all situations, we had collaborative conversations with each of our suppliers to find mutually agreeable solutions to manage revisions in stock requirements. Our approach was to do the best we can for each supplier.

In spring, we either paid in full for any own-brand finished products or committed to pay in full once they were shipped - as is standard industry practice. Where we had no choice but to cancel orders, if work had already begun to produce goods then we have committed to take these orders at a later date (some of which have since been dispatched) or pay in full for raw material costs incurred by our suppliers before 23 March, when the UK went into lockdown. As a member of the Prompt Payment Code we worked with suppliers who had identified a need for an even faster payment period during the first wave of the pandemic and were able to shorten payment terms for some of them.

Where work had not begun we were acutely aware of the need to support vulnerable people who could potentially have been impacted by our cancellations and the overall industry drop in demand. We established a relief fund and have committed to make financial contributions to individuals impacted by the disruption to production and are working with a third party to ensure funds reach those workers most in need.

We have long term relationships with our suppliers and since restrictions were lifted have been placing new orders with the same suppliers who we had to reduce or cancel orders with.

Since the pandemic broke out we have been proactive in collaborating in a number of forums including BRC, ETI, ILO Better Work and we are endorsees of the IOE/ILO garment sector Call to Action to ensure we support suppliers with available aid and guidance as necessary. As countries return to work following lockdown, or where factories have continued production during this period, we have reiterated to our suppliers that it's important to act responsibly in line with the latest government and WHO advice, as well as to observe the John Lewis Partnership Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice (RSCOP), which sets out our commitment to workers' rights and our

very strict expectations of all our suppliers regarding issues of pay, working hours, health and safety and child labour and that all workers, including those most vulnerable, are treated equally.