“Matalan’s response”, 17 August 2026

- I can confirm that Matalan has had production in the past with Apparel 21, who manufactured for us on an indirect basis, via Design Arc, who was the contracted supplier we dealt with them through.
- First orders were placed with Apparel 21 in March 2022.
- We ceased trading with Apparel 21 in 2025. Specifically their last order was received by Matalan in October 2025 and they were deactivated as an authorised manufacturer in December 2025 and no further orders have been placed with them by Matalan, either on a direct or indirect basis since then. Total order volume for 2025 was less than 200,000 units, which in context is a very small level of business on a core product category for Matala
- The request to disengage Apparel 21 as a manufacturer for Matalan originated from Design Arc, as part of a wider supply base rationalisation programme. Simply put our supply base, both in terms of the number of suppliers we dealt with, and the number of manufacturers, had grown too large and relationships were starting to become meaningless. Apparel 21 were never a core supplier to us, and with their tactical disengagement Design Arc have consolidated our business into a reduced number of factories, resulting in a higher level of orders, more consistent levels of business and a more meaningful relationship.
- There were no reported issues with Apparel 21 during that time and we have held an acceptable social audit on file with them for the whole of the trading period, although latterly they were in Stage 1 escalation with The Accord as they had documents outstanding related to remediation which The Accord were chasing for.
- We do not trade with any other manufacturer within The Lithe Group