

Environmental Audit Committee, House of Commons

From the Chair

Dear

RE: Environmental impact of the fashion industry – request for information

The cross-party Environmental Audit Committee is conducting an inquiry into the sustainability of the Fashion Industry, examining how the UK can ensure its clothing industry is both thriving and sustainable. As part of this work, the committee wishes to understand what actions the UK's largest fashion retailers are taking to reduce the environmental impact of their products and operations.

As you will be aware, there are increasing concerns about the social and environmental footprint of the clothing industry. There are also concerns about fair pay for garment workers. Clothing production involves water and energy intensive processes resulting in pollution and greenhouse gases. It uses chemical dyes, finishes and coatings – some of which are toxic. Synthetic fibres used in clothing result in ocean pollution as plastic microfibres are released when washed, entering the ocean and ultimately our food chain.

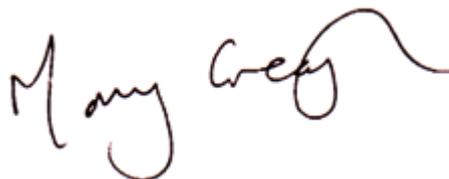
The committee is seeking written evidence to inform recommendations to Government on how to reduce the environmental impact of the fashion industry. We would welcome your response to the following questions:

1. Are all the garment workers producing the clothes you sell paid a living wage? What steps have you taken to ensure that child labour is not used in your supply chain?
2. What is the average life cycle of the garments you sell?
3. What steps are you taking to reduce the environmental and social impact of the products you sell? Do you audit this? How do you measure progress towards reducing the environmental impact of the products you sell?
4. What recycled materials, if any, do you use in your products? What could the Government do to encourage greater use of recycled materials in clothing production?
5. Is your company taking action to reduce the risk of microplastics being washed into the ocean? If so, what actions have you taken?
6. Are you taking any action to encourage reuse, repair and/or recycling of clothing? What do you recommend your customers do to dispose of your products responsibly?
7. Do you incinerate unsold or returned stock? What percentage of your sales are online? What do you do with e-commerce returns?

Thank you for your attention in this matter. We would appreciate a response by Friday 12th October 2018. Please note that the Environmental Audit Committee intends to publish the

responses it receives, including nil returns. Depending on the responses we may subsequently invite selected retailers in to give evidence in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mary Creagh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Mary Creagh MP
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee