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**HIGH STREET FASHION BRANDS LEAD THE WAY ON TRANSPARENCY BUT MUST DO MORE**

***MAJORITY OF BIG FASHION BRANDS STILL LACK TRANSPARENCY***

***ON SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES***

High Street brands are leading the way on transparency amongst the world’s largest 250 fashion brands and retailers, Fashion Revolution’s annual [Fashion Transparency Index 2020](https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/) reveals today. H&M is the highest scoring brand with 73% out of 250 possible points as it publishes detailed information about its supply chain and approach to a range of social and environmental issues.

This is the first year since the Fashion Transparency Index’s inception that brands will have scored 70% or higher, showing that progressive brands are taking real, tangible steps to disclose more about their social and environmental policies, practices and impacts. C&A comes in second at 70%, followed by Adidas and Reebok at 69%, Esprit at 64%, Patagonia at 60% and Marks & Spencer at 60%.

Since 2016, Fashion Revolution has tracked major brands and benchmarked their performance against five key areas: policy and commitments, governance, traceability, supplier assessment and remediation, and spotlight issues. The Fashion Transparency Index 2020 comprises 220 indicators covering a wide range of social and environmental topics such as animal welfare, biodiversity, chemicals, climate, due diligence, forced labour, freedom of association, gender equality, living wages, purchasing practices, supplier disclosure, waste and recycling, and working conditions.

This year’s Index included an additional 50 brands and retailers, including Fashion Nova (USA; final score 2%), Koovs (India; final score 2%) and Pretty Little Thing (UK; final score 9%). The average score across the 250 brands reviewed this year was 23%, up 2 percentage points from 2019. Amongst the 98 brands reviewed each year over the past four years, there has been a 12-percentage point increase in their average scores, highlighting how the Index is influencing them to disclose more information. The brands who have seen the highest increase in their scores this year are Monsoon whose score has risen by 23 percentage points, Ermenegildo Zegna by 22 percentage points, Sainsbury’s by 19 percentage points, Dressmann by 17 percentage points and Asics, Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie by 15 percentage points.

Gucci is the highest scoring luxury brand at 48%, up from 40% in 2019, and is the only brand to score 100% in the section on Policy and Commitments, whilst the other Kering Group brands come in just behind Gucci. Ermenegildo Zegna has become the first luxury brand to publish a detailed list of its suppliers.[[1]](#footnote-0)

40% of brands are publishing a list of their first tier manufacturers, up from 35% in 2019. Next year we hope to see the number of brands disclosing their suppliers rise above 50%. This year 24% of brands are publishing some of their processing facilities, an increase from 19% in 2019. Meanwhile, 7% are publishing some of their raw material suppliers, up from 5% last year.

Global Policy Director and report author Sarah Ditty says: “While we are seeing notable progress made on transparency, there is still much more fashion brands can do to provide credible and comprehensive data that enables consumers to make better decisions, unions and NGOs to help brands do better for workers and the living planet, and any other stakeholders to drive further progress.”

More than half of the brands reviewed scored 20% or less, showing that there is still a long way to go towards transparency amongst the world’s largest fashion brands and retailers. The lowest scoring brands, with a score of 0%, are Swiss luxury house Bally, Italian brand Max Mara, denim brand Pepe Jeans, the eponymous brands of Tom Ford, Elie Tahari and Jessica Simpson, Dutch high street brand Mexx and Chinese retailers Belle, Heilan Home and Youngor.

Each year we explore a few key issues in deeper detail. This year we have chosen to focus on Conditions, Consumption, Composition and Climate as our spotlight issues, and the average score in this section is just 15%.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic began we have seen the devastating impact of brands’ buying practices, such as cancelled orders and delayed payments, on some of the most vulnerable workers in the supply chain. The vast majority of these workers lack social protection systems and have no savings to fall back on due to the low wages they continue to earn making clothes for some of the world’s most profitable companies. This pandemic proves exactly why transparency in the fashion industry is so vital and why we cannot afford to return to business as usual. If major brands and retailers publish information about how they do business with their suppliers, then we can hold them to account in situations like this where their buying practices are hitting factories and workers hard.

This year’s Index reveals that only 6% of brands disclose a policy to pay suppliers within a maximum of 60 days and just 2% publish the percentage of orders with on-time payment to suppliers, according to agreed terms. Only 15% of brands publish a responsible exit strategy which details the progressive steps they take when they stop working with a supplier, rather than taking a cut-and-run approach. Just 2% of brands disclose the percentage above the minimum wage which workers are paid within their supply chain and only Patagonia reveals data on the number of workers in their supply chain who receive a living wage. In order to build a more responsible fashion industry as we come out of the other side of this global crisis, brands and retailers must disclose much more information about their purchasing practices, their pricing model and how they work with their suppliers.

Sarah Ditty concludes: “The Fashion Transparency Index has enabled us to have constructive conversations with major brands about what they can do to be more transparent. We believe transparency is the first step in holding them to account for the impacts of their business practices. We will continue to use the Index to measure brands’ annual progress on transparency and to push them harder and faster towards taking greater responsibility for their policies and actions on social and environmental issues.”

For more information, visit [www.fashionrevolution.org/transparency](http://www.fashionrevolution.org/transparency)

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**Notes to Editors**

**About Fashion Revolution**

Fashion Revolution is the world’s largest fashion activism movement, formed after the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 which killed over 1100 people. Fashion Revolution believes in a global fashion industry that conserves and restores the environment and values people over growth and profit. In order to achieve this goal, the organisation conducts research that shines a light on the fashion industry’s practices and impacts, highlights where brands and retailers are moving too slowly and incentivises and promotes transparency and accountability across the supply chain. The annual Fashion Revolution Week takes place 20th - 26th April 2020.

**How brands were selected**

The 250 brands and retailers have been chosen on the basis of their annual turnover, over $400 million USD, and representing a spread of market segments including high street, luxury, sportswear, accessories, footwear and denim from across Europe, North America, South America, Asia and Africa.

We relied upon publicly available financial information to research brands and retailers. Some companies are privately held and do not publish financial records. This means that some very large brands are not on our radar. When several brands are owned by a large parent company and they do not disclose turnover by brand, we make an educated guess as to the biggest selling brand(s) in the group to include in our research. We have chosen to list brand names in this report rather than by parent company or group because consumers will be most familiar with brand names.

**About the methodology**

In the 2020 methodology, there are 220 indicators. Across 250 brands, this means we have researched and analysed 55,000 individual data points. The weighting of the scores is intended to emphasise increasing levels of detailed and granular disclosure. In other words, we reward disclosure that enables external stakeholders to meaningfully use that information to hold brands to account; for example, supplier lists, audit findings, wage data, etc.

Our researchers review each brand and pre-populate their questionnaires with evidence of the relevant public disclosure and award them preliminary points. At this time, brands are notified of their inclusion in this year’s Index and invited to participate. Brands that participated in the Fashion Transparency Index 2020 by completing our questionnaire have achieved an overall average score of 35% compared to 23% overall average among all 250 brands. Non-participating brands achieved an overall average score of 11%.  Every brand in the top 20% of scores in 2020 and all brands scoring above 40% participated in the Fashion Transparency Index this year. Brands who complete the questionnaire frequently take the opportunity to publish further information which, in turn, improves their transparency and increases their scores.

The Fashion Transparency Index is not a shopping guide and does not give an indication of whether particular brands are behaving ethically and sustainably. The purpose is to understand how much social and environmental information the world’s largest brands and retailers share, as well as drive greater transparency from these brands and use this information to hold them to account when needed.

1. Hermès has disclosed the production sites it operates for many years and Kering Group also starting disclosing a small number of its raw materials suppliers. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)