

Cotton



We expect all our suppliers to adhere to our [Ethical Trade Requirements](#). Over and above this we have a number of commitments which we are working collaboratively with our suppliers to achieve. This statement outlines our commitment concerning cotton.

Target

By 2025, all cotton used across our business and in the products we sell will come from certified recycled sources or from certified more sustainable sources. We encourage our brand partners to improve traceability through recognised collaborative platforms.

Deadline

2025

What is cotton?

Cotton, the most widely produced natural fibre on the planet, is the fluffy down that surrounds the seed pods of the cotton plant. It is globally cultivated and harvested to be spun and then woven or knitted into textiles.

What's the problem with cotton?

According to [WWF](#), cotton is the most widespread and profitable non-food crop in the world. Its production provides income for more than 250 million people globally and employs almost 7% of all labour in developing countries. However, conventional methods of cotton cultivation and production are known to have significant environmental impacts. According to Pesticide Action Network, globally, cotton grows on just 2% of the world's cultivated land but uses 6% of the world's pesticides (and 16% of insecticides), more than any other single major crop. Many of these chemicals are known to have significant adverse effects on both human and environmental health. Furthermore, a staggering 20,000 litres of water are needed to produce a single T-shirt and pair of jeans.

Systemic human rights abuses associated with cotton production also persist in a number of countries. A Fairtrade cotton briefing (2015) highlights that, "forced and child labour are major concerns in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan where tens of thousands of children, students and adults are forced out of school, college or workplaces for several weeks a year and mobilised to pick cotton to meet government-imposed production quotas". However, it's important to recognise that human rights issues in the cotton supply chain aren't isolated to these countries. The same report notes that in India over 400,000 child workers have been reported as working in the cotton seed industry. Most recently the [UN](#) identified human rights risk in the Xinjiang province of China where significant quantities of cotton are grown and produced.

What is Selfridges' position on cotton?

Cotton is an important global commodity providing an income to millions of smallholder farmers in the developing world. As a multi-brand retailer we are committed to working with our partners and suppliers to encourage transparency and a transition to more sustainable agricultural and production practices.

In the lead-up to our target deadline of 2025 when the following criteria will become mandatory, we encourage our partners and suppliers to:

- Have a publicly available responsible sourcing policy which includes cotton.
- Avoid sourcing from countries or regions with a high risk of forced labour and in particular Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as defined by the [Responsible Sourcing Network's Cotton Pledge](#).
- Replace virgin cotton with recycled content.
- Engage with and commit to globally recognised certification programmes as defined by the [CottonUP Guide](#).