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Modern Slavery Statement
2024/2025

The Wourth Group

Modern Slavery Statement

The Wourth Group, formally the WoolOvers Group, publishes its yearly Modern Slavery Statement in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and in conjunction with the Home Office Statutory Guidance from 2019. We continue to work hard across our business to beat human trafficking and modern slavery and this statement covers our financial year ending 30th March 2024, capturing the progress we have made.

What Is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is the antithesis of social justice and is a crime that violates human rights. It is the exploitation of vulnerable people for personal or commercial gain; it is when an individual deprives another of their freedom of choice and liberty. People are tricked and/or trapped into modern slavery, often due to poverty and exclusion, making them vulnerable to being exploited.

Sadly, the Modern slavery situation appears to be growing, driven by successive world crises such as covid, wars and climate change which have disrupted employment and deepened the tragic entrapment that is all around us but often just out of sight. There are an estimated 27.6 million people in forced labour conditions. (source ILO). That equates to 3.5 people in every thousand and it's happening all over the world, in rich and poor countries alike.

Modern slavery takes many forms. The most common are human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage/ bonded labour, descent- based slavery and forced and early marriage.

In terms of profit, human trafficking is ranked as the 3rd largest international crime industry – just behind drugs and arms trafficking. An estimated number of 800,000 people are illegally trafficked across international borders every year. There are 161 countries affected by human trafficking. (source: www.ecpat.org).



Modern Slavery Statement from the Chief Executive

Our business started with WoolOvers Limited which has been an all-natural brand since 1989, when environmentalism was scarcely talked about. We have been caring passionately about the environment, our worker's welfare and our customers for 35 years. A focus on ethics is at the heart of our operations and in all our endeavours, we aim to be honest and transparent.

As we grow as a business and as a much larger group, we remain committed to preventing modern slavery in our name. We acknowledge the inherent compliance risks of extended supply chains and we know there is still more we can do. With continued socio and economic shock waves, there has been no getting back to "normality" in a post- pandemic world, but we will continue to assess and reassess our policies so that they are best placed to ensure there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains, or in any part of the Wourth Group. Our customer trusts us to be ethical and expects us to get this important issue right..

Signed:



Mike Lester - CEO

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes our Group's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 30 March 2024.



The Wourth Group

Structure

Wourth Group is the ultimate holding company of a group of companies, the main trading subsidiaries are WoolOvers Limited, Pure Collection Cashmere Limited, Scotts 2023 Limited; Hotter Shoes Limited and Chester Berry Limited..

- WoolOvers Limited is an international direct-to-consumer clothing retailer, specialising in all-natural clothing.
- Pure Collection is a direct-to-consumer retailer trading in the UK and the US, specialising in sustainable cashmere and more.
- Scotts (2023) Limited houses the Scotts of Stow; Expert Verdict & Bloom brands, which are all UK direct to consumer brands which focus on selling homewear, gardenwear and faux flowers to the older demographic.
- Hotter Shoes Limited is a direct to consumer footwear retailer trading in the UK & US, as well as through partners such as Next & John Lewis, which manufactures a large element of the range in the UK.

For the financial year ended 30th March 2024, the Group has a global annual turnover of approximately £84m.

Our Business

The Wourth Group is organised into a number of business units: Finance, Buying and Marketing, Creative, Logistics and Customer Care.

The Group has over 530 employees based in the UK between our

WoolOvers head office in Burgess Hill premises at RH15 9NB;

our Hotter office in Skelmersdale, at WN8 9PT;

our Scotts head office in Swindon at SN25 5AW;

as well as at UK based retail sites.





Founded in 1989, WoolOvers is a British lifestyle brand that has been championing the use of natural fibres from the very beginning. Our founders loved and lived in the country and were inspired by nature. They believed in the virtue of nature's finest fibres such as cashmere, merino and lambswool .

Working quietly from our home in Burgess Hill in the beautiful Sussex South Downs, we have continued designing and selling sustainable knitwear, clothing and accessories to our customers who appreciate looking good but also knowing they are shopping with an environmentally conscious business.

In a topsy- turvy world that thinks manmade fibres are sustainable, we always prefer to tread as lightly on the planet as we can, keeping it natural, knowing that in a hundred years our product will not have contributed to the eco pollution we now all witness. We are all part of nature and true sustainability is our standard. In performance terms, there is no substitute for natural fibres, they are durable, hypoallergenic, heat regulating and above all, naturally biodegradable.

Our Supply Chains

Across all three apparel brands, WoolOvers Limited works with 54 suppliers in 12 countries - UK, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Greece, Bali, Nepal, Philippines, China, Cambodia, Lithuania & India.

We are proud to have really close working relations with all our factories and have been producing our ethical and natural product with some for well over 17 years. In a world full of man-made fibres, not all suppliers are capable of meeting our precise product needs, therefore these mutually strong relationships are vital. The longevity of these partnerships enables us to support our sustainability goals and improve compliance year on year and regular trips to see suppliers helps too.

Post- pandemic, we have emerged stronger and more focused on the need for transparent and mutual supply chain set ups.

We continue to see annual audits for all of our factories and all their locations but now we are really pushing beyond the conventional audit trail.

We carry out an annual modern slavery reviews with all suppliers and this supports us being able to understand what is going on for them , where improvements are being made and to identify areas of change or risk. Supply chains are long, complex and forever changing, involving many organisations and individuals from the extraction of the raw materials and the dying of yarns, down to final production.

To aid transparency and reduce risks, we are mapping our supplier base and having already mapped our tier 1 suppliers in 2021/ 22, we are still focused on mapping our top ranked suppliers down to level 2, for all of our apparel ranges, in all brands. This is not a quick task but so important ethically.



Our Wourth Group Supply Chain & Internal Policies

Our Code of Conduct (CoC)

All suppliers must agree to meet the standards set out in our Code of Conduct, our Terms and Conditions and our supplier manual, before they become a Wourth Group partner. These documents all include points that cover key issues surrounding modern slavery.

The Wourth Group has developed a CoC that follows the Ethical Trading Initiative's (ETI) base code and outlines standards that all our suppliers must adhere to. Our suppliers must agree to adopt and follow the ETI base code.

Founded on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the ETI's base code is an internationally recognised code-of-labour practice used by both large and small companies across the UK.

The core principles of the ETI base code are:

1. Employment is freely chosen
2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected
3. Working conditions are safe and hygienic
4. Child labour must not be used
5. Living wages are paid
6. Working hours are not excessive
7. No discrimination is practised
8. Regular employment is provided
9. No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed

Without exception, we always set up partnerships with suppliers and factories that meet the high quality and ethical standards we set. Non compliance would lead to an automatic cessation of business.

Our on- boarding process is stringent and requires all suppliers to complete and sign our Modern Slavery Policy, Code of Conduct and Terms and Conditions, as well as other ethical compliance documentation.



HR Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Group recognises the importance of creating a working environment where diversity and inclusion are recognised, valued and promoted because we know it is in the best interests of our business, our people and community. We want all current, former and potential employees to feel they are valued and treated equally and fairly.

Whistleblowing Policy

We have established a policy to ensure that where an individual employee feels they need to raise a concern or an issue in a confidential way or if they witness any suspicious activity, they may do so without feeling they may suffer consequences. The whistle blowing policy also helps mitigate issues that can promote modern slavery within our head office.

Further Due Diligence Actions

Further to completing our Tier 1 mapping, we have made some progress in mapping our largest suppliers at Tier 2 level but due to economic headwind this is still unfinished and we have work to do . Our goal is to roll this out to all key suppliers in all apparel brands later this year.

- We continue to carry out our annual modern slavery survey each year with all our suppliers to maintain the momentum and focus on this matter and to track progress in our suppliers' practices and to highlight risks.
- We are working to ensure that all of our factories who have Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) as a result of their annual audit, are supported to achieve any improvements needed within the annual audit window timeframe.
- We have conducted in house modern slavery training to create awareness within all teams and to help educate them on how to identify such practices. We are well aware that modern slavery can also occur in the UK, so it is important that teams who do not work directly with our suppliers, are also aware of the risks.
- We have included modern slavery awareness training in our company's induction programme.

For the Wourth Group non apparel brands, please see the Modern Slavery Statement links below

<https://www.hotter.com/page/modern-slavery>
<https://www.scottsofstow.co.uk/modern-slavery-policy>

