



RESPONSIBLE RETAIL

The BRC's purpose is to make a positive difference to the retail industry and the customers it serves, today and in the future.

Our [Better Retail Better World](#) strategy is mobilising the UK retail industry to meet some of the biggest global challenges of the coming decades highlighted by the UN, including modern slavery and decent work, sustainable economic growth, inequalities, climate change and responsible consumption and production.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Since 2005 our leading members have reduced their carbon emissions by 36% in absolute terms, far surpassing a 2020 target of 25%. Relative to shop floorspace, carbon emissions from stores, and energy-related carbon emissions from store deliveries were down 67% and 47% respectively. Efforts to tackle carbon reduction include the use of biofuels and renewable energy across the supply chain. Many retailers have set their own strict targets to bring down their carbon use.

We now want to work with Government on a decarbonisation roadmap for the retail industry.

PLASTICS & FOOD WASTE

We all want to see a world with no plastic pollution and high levels of recycling. Retailers are already making good progress towards this by removing, reducing and improving packaging. It is therefore vital that efforts to address plastic packaging do not lead to unintended environmental impacts such as greater food waste or substitution to alternative materials with greater environmental concerns.

Through voluntary action by our members along with supply chain partners we have together already prevented billions of tonnes of packaging and food waste from arising over the last two decades through the **WRAP Courtauld Commitments** which supports the UK governments' policy goal of a 'zero waste economy' and climate change objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The industry is also on track to achieving less than 1% of waste going to landfill by 2020¹.

COURTAULD COMMITMENT

1. **Phase 1 (2005-2009):** Over the four-year period of Phase 1, **1.2 million tonnes** of food and packaging waste was prevented, with a monetary value of £1.8 billion, and a saving of **3.3 million tonnes of CO₂e**, which is equivalent to the emissions from 500,000 round-the-world flights.
2. **Phase 2 (2010-2012):** A total of **1.7 million tonnes** of waste was reduced. This impact has a monetary value of £3.1 billion and equates to a reduction of **4.8 million tonnes of CO₂e**.
3. **Phase 3 (2013-2015):** Product and **packaging waste reduced by 3%**; Recovery and recycling rate grew from **95% in 2012 to 99% in 2015**; 7% reduction in carbon impact of food and drink packaging; A notable increase in surplus food and drink redistributed for human consumption.

¹ Less than 2% of retail waste went to landfill in 2018: <https://brc.org.uk/news/2019/2019-aug-02-carbon-data>

4. **Phase 4 - The Courtauld Commitment 2025:** A ten-year commitment to identify priorities, develop solutions and implement changes to cut the carbon, water and waste associated with food & drink by at least one-fifth in 10 years.

UK PLASTICS PACT

Through the UK Plastics Pact, our members have committed to, by 2025 at the latest:

- 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable
- Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging items
- 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted
- 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging

FASHION SUSTAINABILITY

BRC was a founding partner to Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP), set up by WRAP, and many retailers are signatories. In 2017, SCAP signatories have:

- Cut water impacts by 13.5%
- Carbon impacts by 10.6%
- Waste impacts arising across the product life cycle by 0.8%
- Reduced household residual waste by 14%, per tonne of clothing

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING: PALM OIL

Leading BRC members have already achieved an ambitious voluntary target to source 100% certified sustainable palm oil and signatories to our Better Retail Better World campaign have committed to halt deforestation and publicly disclose responsible sourcing practices. As an industry, we are very proud of the leadership we have shown in sourcing sustainable palm oil and will continually support RSPO as the international and multi-stakeholder platform to deliver positive change.

MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN RIGHTS

Respecting human rights, supporting sustainable markets and developing skills are fundamental to our members. As the UK's largest private sector employer, we recognise our responsibility, with supply chains impacting millions of people around the world, and we have therefore pioneered responsible sourcing practices through establishing standards, supporting suppliers and encouraging governments to ensure their laws support decent working practices.

Improving equality is integral to our [Better Retail Better World](#) campaign and our members have made a number of commitments to improve the livelihoods of people working in our supply chains and to increase the transparency of those efforts, for example:

- Embedding a policy in the supply chain that no worker should pay for a job, to prevent workers becoming indebted and vulnerable to exploitation.
- To work through the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to identify potential human rights issues in their supply chains.

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As Oxfam's Behind the Barcode's research indicates, the UK retail industry is one of the most progressive in this area globally.

We are founding partners of Stronger Together, a multi-stakeholder business-led initiative aiming to reduce modern slavery through provision of guidance, training, and resources.

We've developed Protocols with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and Stronger Together on how to handle reported cases of modern slavery (attached), and how to more effectively share intelligence to support the work of enforcement bodies (which the [PM's Office published](#)).

And many of our members are involved a range of initiatives and collaborations, such as the [Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment](#), [Ethical Trade Initiative](#), [Consumer Goods Forum Forced Labour Resolution](#), and the [Seafood Task Force](#), to name a few.

Government policy has a crucial role to play:

- We called for Government to introduce a requirement that all companies should make a statement on their actions to tackle modern slavery, when there was an absence of business regulation in the Modern Slavery Bill. This became the Transparency in Supply Chains clause of the Modern Slavery Act.
- We also helped to establish what is now the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), and its licensing scheme, to take action on exploitative labour providers. We work closely with them to expose worker exploitation.
- And we need Government to better support labour enforcement bodies, such as the GLAA, and strengthen enforcement of labour laws in high-risk sectors in the UK.