

Cotton fibre is one of the key raw materials used in the production of our garments, and collectively accounts for more than 50% of all fibre consumption used across our product range. The aim of this policy is to describe how Rowlinson Knitwear Limited will address concerns over forced and child labour in the cotton supply chain. This policy describes our future intentions with regard to alternative and more sustainable cotton sources.



Rowlinson are signed signatories to “The Cotton Pledge” in conjunction with the Responsible Sourcing Network, giving statement to our intent not to use sources of cotton from these two countries. More information available from: www.sourcingnetwork.org/the-cotton-pledge

Cotton Sourced from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan are large exporters of cotton fibre, and the government uses one of the largest state-orchestrated systems of forced labour to produce it, estimated to be in excess of one million workers. In many cases, workers are subjected to inhumane conditions. In the past, children aged 11-15 have been utilised to pick cotton on a mass scale.

In order to harvest cotton in Turkmenistan, the Turkmen government forces tens of thousands of citizens to pick cotton each year. Authorities force public sector workers, including teachers, doctors, nurses, and staff of government offices to pick cotton, pay a bribe, or hire a replacement worker, under threat of losing their job. Officials also force businesses to contribute labour, financially or in-kind, under threat of closing the business. The mobilisation leaves institutions understaffed, which undermines education, health care and municipal services. Children pick cotton for their parents, who are forced by the government to fulfil individual cotton picking quotas under threat of losing their jobs.

Rowlinson Knitwear Limited has banned the use of cotton fibre from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in our products. We will maintain this position until such time as there is clear evidence of a change. We will work with our suppliers to trace sources of cotton fibre. Where appropriate, we will seek documentary evidence to support these investigations, to ensure our position is being met in this regard.

Sustainability

At Rowlinson we are acutely aware of the impact that our products can have on the environment and the sustainability of it. Traditional methods of cotton production can be intensive in water use, and prone to large environmental impacts with pesticides and fertilisers. We are working hard to explore alternatives, and consider such options as organic certified cotton in our future products.

Donald Moore
Managing Director
Rowlinson Knitwear Limited