

# Fashion & Sustainability - UK - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the sustainable fashion market.
- How consumers define sustainable fashion.
- How sustainable perceptions of different types of fashion retailers differ.
- What retailers need to prioritise to become more sustainable.
- Interest in the latest sustainable initiatives.

While initially during the start of the pandemic the environment became a secondary consideration for many, changes in lifestyles during the lockdowns led many consumers to stop buying new clothes and instead wear older items in their wardrobes. This has resulted in more conscious consumerism, with a boom in second-hand fashion purchases and people reselling unwanted items. In the last year, 66% of all British consumers have either bought or are interested in buying second-hand fashion items and 69% have either sold or are interested in selling unwanted fashion items.

Over the next few years the environment will become a key priority for many consumers, leading them to scrutinise their purchasing habits and become more informed about corporate behaviour. Fashion retailers and brands will need to be transparent and ensure that their approach to sustainability covers all elements of their business and that they communicate this with their customers.

While the youngest consumers who fall into the Gen Z generation continue to show a high level of concern about sustainability when buying fashion items, it is now Younger Millennials who care the most. Gen Z have been disproportionately affected by job losses over the last year and are the generation most worried about their finances, meaning some of these consumers may be less likely to prioritise concerns about sustainability when buying fashion if it requires increased spending.



“As protecting the environment becomes more of a priority and awareness of the importance of sustainability in fashion grows, retailers and brands will need to be transparent and ensure that their approach to sustainability covers all elements of their business, and that they effectively communicate this.”

– **Tamara Sender, Senior Fashion Analyst**

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There are huge opportunities for retailers and brands to shift towards using more sustainable materials for clothes and footwear that are less damaging for the environment. This will require retailers to invest in the latest innovations and in long-term partnerships with companies creating next-generation materials made from plants and textile waste. In response to the growth of veganism, several fashion retailers have added vegan beauty to their offering and notable launches in 2021 include the Zara Beauty range, and there is scope for this to be extended to other product categories such as accessories, footwear and clothing ranges made from plant-based materials.



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