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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 and the second national lockdown on the clothing market.
- How consumers' clothes shopping behaviours and attitudes have changed since COVID-19.
- Where people have bought clothes in the last 12 months in-store and online.
- How consumers have reacted to the reopening of fashion stores following the lockdown.

Appetite for clothing has declined dramatically since the COVID-19 outbreak and fashion has been one of the hardest hit of all retail sectors. During the lockdown, with people working and spending most of their time at home, there was little need for people to update their wardrobes and demand was limited to mainly loungewear, sportswear and casual clothing.

The virus has forced many consumers to reprioritise spending and buying new fashion items has moved down the list of priorities and led people to focus on necessities. Indeed, 34% of clothes shoppers are wearing older items in their wardrobe since the start of COVID-19.

Younger generations are the most likely to have cut back on buying clothes in the last 12 months due to concerns about money. Financial instability created by furloughing schemes and widespread redundancies across different industries have hit young people hardest. Young consumers aged 16–34 have typically been the main clothes buyers, updating their wardrobes frequently due to changing fashion trends. However, around a third of Younger Millennials have become less interested in fashion trends since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A second national lockdown from 5 November 2020 will test the main learnings of the first lockdown, which highlighted the importance for all retailers to invest



"Appetite for clothing has dropped dramatically since the first lockdown and will be dealt a further blow with the second national lockdown during peak trading season, making it one of the hardest-hit retail sectors in 2020."

– Tamara Sender Ceron,
Senior Fashion Analyst

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in their online operations and to truly focus on connecting online and offline in order to create a seamless experience for the customer, giving them more flexibility in how they shop.

As consumers shop more online for fashion, combined with the ongoing closure of fitting rooms even when stores reopened, has accentuated the need for retailers to invest more heavily in more accurate online digital fit technology. This will help reduce the high rate of returns due to sizing issues and to improve the overall online shopping experience.

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NEXT GROUP

- · What we think
- · Location of stores has been key
- · Greater shift towards online
- · Product mix benefited from bias to sports and loungewear
- · Growing focus on beauty
- Next ups its ante on underwear
- Where next
- Company background
- Company performance

Figure 115: Next Group: Group financial performance, 2014/15-2019/20

Figure 116: Next Group: Outlet data, 2014/15-2019/20

Retail offering

PRIMARK/PENNEYS

- What we think
- Missing out on online sales costs the brand millions in lost revenue
- A must-visit destination for consumers shopping for clothes in-store
- Cut-price fashion
- New eco-conscious fashion, homeware and beauty collection
- · First ever sportswear collaboration
- Company background
- Company performance

Figure 117: Primark/Penneys: Group financial performance, 2015/16-2019/20

Figure 118: Primark/Penneys: Outlet data, 2015/16-2019/20

Retail offering

RIVER ISLAND

- What we think
- 'Buy now, pay later' online option
- · Needs to do more to get customers back through the door
- Commits to being more transparent
- Exclusive childrenswear collaboration with TV star and personality Samantha Faiers
- Own-brand beauty offering
- Company background
- Company performance

Figure 119: River Island Holdings Limited: Group financial performance, 2015–19

What's included

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Figure 120: River Island Holdings Limited: Outlet data, 2015-19

Retail offering

TK MAXX UK

- What we think
- A mountain of unsold stock to choose from
- Knockdown prices
- · Giving clothes a second chance
- Company background
- Company performance

Figure 121: TK Maxx UK: Group sales performance, 2015/16-2019/20

Figure 122: TK Maxx UK: Outlet data, 2015/16-2019/20

Retail offering

APPENDIX – DATA SOURCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- Abbreviations
- Consumer research methodology

APPENDIX - MARKET/SECTOR SIZE AND FORECAST

Forecast methodology

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