

M&S: Plan A

Sourcing responsibly, reducing waste and helping communities.



2007

Plan A is our way to help protect the planet – by sourcing responsibly, reducing waste and helping communities. We launched Plan A in January 2007, setting out 100 commitments to achieve in 5 years, ‘because when it comes to saving the planet there is no Plan B’.



2008

We launched Shwopping - encouraging customers to donate unwanted clothing in-store. Shwopped items are resold, reused or recycled and allow Oxfam to fund all sorts of vital projects around the world. Incredibly, since 2008 the M&S and Oxfam Shwopping partnership has collected over 20 million items, worth an estimated £16 million for Oxfam’s work.

2009

The Better Cotton Initiative involved working with the WWF and cotton farmers in India to develop more sustainable cotton production.





2010

The 'Way To Health' campaign was specifically targeted at M&S staff, and encouraged them to maintain a healthy life style. It included an interactive employee website, with healthy recipes, forums for discussions and support.

The same year saw the start of M&S's partnership with Butterfly Conservation, including the 'Big Butterfly Count' and the 'Planting for Butterflies' campaign that encouraged people to plant butterfly-friendly plants in their gardens.



2011

Customers are encouraged to leave behind unwanted hangers, which are then reused and recycled. Every box saved helps us raise money for UNICEF allowing them to fund critical new projects.



2011

Working with the Marine Conservation Society we launched the Forever Fish campaign. This included aims such as reducing litter on beaches with the Big Beach Clean Up, promoting sustainable seafood with the Good Fish Guide, and educating the next generation of marine conservationists with Sea Champions volunteers. All fish sold in store comes from either a sustainable source, or a supplier working with the Fishery Improvement Project or WWF.





2011

The opening of sustainable stores; the first UK example opening in April at Ecclesall Road, Sheffield, and the first international model opening just a few months later in July, at Bangalore in India. Sustainable features include LED lighting, harvesting rain water, and green 'living walls' that encourage biodiversity and filter pollution.

2012

The start of two partnerships and campaigns for M&S with Emerging Leader and GeoSansar.

The former is based in Kenya and looks at leader development training and setting up community projects. The latter is based in Hyderabad, India, and focuses on financial literacy and organising bank accounts for cash paid workers.



2012

M&S becomes the first major UK business to become carbon neutral.



2013

The Make Your Mark scheme is launched, focusing on helping young unemployed people by giving them the skills, confidence and training to get them into the job market. We work with the Princes Trust and the programme forms part of a wider campaign called Movement to Work – a collaboration of employers committed to tackling youth unemployment .

2014

Building on the first seven years of Plan A, we introduced Plan A 2020 which consists of 100 new, revised and existing commitments that tackle both today's and tomorrow's sustainable retail challenges. with the ultimate goal of becoming the world's most sustainable major retailer.



2014

We joined a new global movement called Collectively to engage millennial consumers (18-30 year olds) around the world in a new approach to consumption, to find a better way of satisfying the needs of a growing global population



2015

We installed the UK's largest single roof mounted solar panel on our distribution centre at Castle Donington in our move towards increasingly sustainable energy.

2015

2015 saw the launch of Spark Something Good as a way for us all - our people, stores and customers - to make a real difference. SSG gives customers and staff the chance to work on charity projects across 24 towns and cities in 24 months.





2015

We celebrate the tenth anniversary of Marks & Start, our work placement programme which helps people who face barriers getting into work. The programme is aimed at single parents, people with disabilities or health conditions, and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Participants receive coaching and support and then take part in a two or four week placement in an M&S store.

2016

By 2016 all own-brand beauty products were free from plastic microbeads. All toiletries, own-brand and branded, sold in M&S stores will be free from these microbeads by end of 2017.



2016

Since April 2016, all of our owned stores have been set up to redistribute unsold food to their local community. Stores regularly redistribute products to over 500 different charities such as food banks, community centres, community cafés and hospices across the UK. We are able to support them with fruit, vegetables, bakery items and grocery items like pasta, cereal and cooking sauces.



2017

2017 saw the launch of our first range of sustainable denim, not only crafted from eco-friendly material (made with processes that use less water, energy and chemicals), but even using recycled thread and zip tape.

The range included Slim Fit selvedge men's jeans costing £45.

We later launch our Supersoft Demin range, our most sustainable jean yet. 100% of the cotton we use for the collection is sourced sustainably through the Better Cotton Initiative, a global not-for-profit organisation and the largest cotton sustainability programme in the world. The BCI provide training on more sustainable farming practices to more than two million cotton farmers in 21 countries.



2018

As part of our commitment to ensure all edible surplus food is redistributed, we partner with Neighbourly to work with local charities. Since 2015 M&S has donated 2.37 million meals via the scheme. Through Neighbourly, stores are paired with local charities.

Each day unsold food that is going out of date is logged on Neighbourly and then picked up by volunteers from the charity at an agreed time.



Shrewsbury staff greet Food Hub volunteers ahead of the day's collection (M&S World Mag, June 2018)

So far, since the scheme started in 2015,

- 2.37m meals donated by M&S through Neighbourly
- 785 charities across the UK have collected food from M&S
- 4000 tonnes of Co2 emissions prevented by not throwing away this food

2019

In a bid to reduce single use plastic, customers shopping in Market Place are given an incentive to bring their own re-usable containers to take their food away in. This was implemented through the 'Suggest to Steve' campaign after a colleague from Leeds Moortown store's suggestion was successfully accepted.



2019

We team up with the Duchess of Sussex along with other high street retailers such as John Lewis and Jigsaw to sell workwear items that help support and contribute to Smart Works, a charity designed to support vulnerable and long-term unemployed women back into work. For a limited time for every one of our Smart Works dresses sold in store or online, one would be donated to Smart Works.



2019

For Christmas 2019 we've removed glitter from our entire Christmas celebration range in a bid to improve recyclability and reduce the impact of microplastics on the environment.