

PRIMARK

**Primark  
Circular Product  
Standard 2.0**



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# Foreword



When we launched the Primark Cares strategy in 2021, our ambition was to transition into a more circular business. At the same time, we recognised that there's no instant switch – progress in sustainability is a marathon, not a sprint, and the journey is rarely straightforward.

Circular design quickly emerged as one of the first and most important steps where we could act sooner rather than later. Inspired by the foundations laid through the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's [Jeans Redesign project](#), we set out to create a simple, practical framework that could support our teams in making better, more circular design choices across all types of clothing.

That became our first Circular Product Standard: a clear and (we hope) easy-to-use set of guidelines to help embed durability, recyclability and the increased use of recycled and more sustainably sourced materials into everyday product design decisions.

## Progress over perfection

As we relaunch and update our Circular Product Standard, we do so with the benefit of having learned so much over the past three years. We know that we haven't solved every challenge or answered every question – far from it. Instead, we hope this updated Circular Product Standard reflects our commitment to learn and continue to achieve progress (not perfection) in collaboration with our partners, suppliers and colleagues.

Why update now? Critically, inbound regulation and legislation is changing and challenging our (and the industry's) understanding of what circular design actually means. Meanwhile, emerging textile-to-textile innovation is redefining our understanding of which fibres, materials and items of clothing can be more easily recycled now and in the coming years. Having spent three years working on putting circular design theory into practice, we wanted to share our experiences, as well as the challenges and opportunities we see.

We're proud of the progress made over the past three years. The fact that 5%<sup>1</sup> of our clothing is circular by design within the space of three years reflects the huge collective effort of many colleagues and suppliers. We continue to firmly believe that more sustainable and circular fashion should be affordable for all – and we hope that this updated Circular Product Standard will support that ambition.

### Nicholas Lambert

Head of Circularity & Materials, Primark



Circularity isn't a trend – it's a necessary shift in how we design, produce and think about clothing. Designing for recyclability works to embed recyclability at design phase. The revised Circular Product Standard marks a critical step in making that shift practical, scalable and industry-ready.

Through the training and collaborative learning we've led, from Primark design and print workshops and sprints, we've seen first-hand how knowledge unlocks

action. When teams understand the 'why' behind designing for recyclability, they start designing with the 'how' in mind.

The recycling landscape itself is evolving. With fibre-to-fibre mechanical polyester recycling now at scale in the UK, we are able to expand the parameters in the revised Circular Product Standard to look at Design for Recyclability in polyester clothing. These breakthroughs make recyclability not just aspirational but achievable.

For brands, Design for Recyclability isn't just a technical feature. It's a signal of responsibility, readiness and relevance. It means products are designed with an end-of-life solution – and that's where real transformation begins."

### Tim Cross

Founder, The Circular Textiles Foundation

1. As of 2024/25 and meeting the Foundational level criteria of the CPS.

# The Circular Ecosystem

Circular product design is just one part of a much bigger picture. We want to help shape a ‘circular ecosystem’ in which designers, suppliers, manufacturers, retailers, consumers, repair specialists, resellers, recyclers, policymakers and others all work together to help keep resources in circulation.

Transitioning to a circular ecosystem requires the entire industry to move together within a complex, interconnected network, where every decision – from fibre choice to recycling technology – affects the others.

Today, only around 1% of clothes in the European Union are recycled<sup>1</sup>, and roughly 80% of a product’s environmental impact<sup>2</sup> is determined at the design stage. That’s why the Circular Product Standard focuses on applying circular principles to product design.

- Customer education
- Circular business models
- Product design
- Product manufacturing



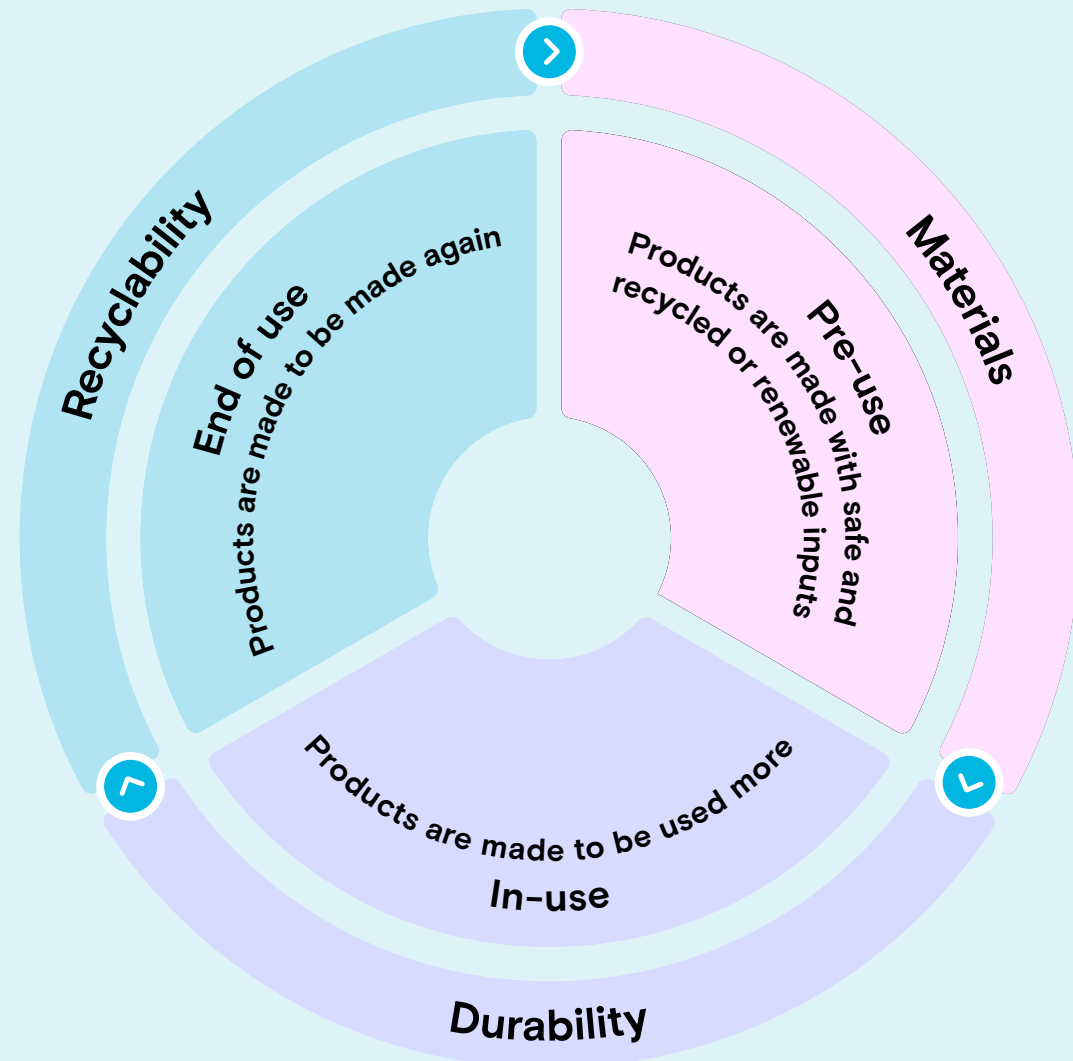
1. European Parliamentary Research Service, [Environmental impact of the textile and clothing industry](#) (2019)  
2. <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/the-jeans-redesign/overview>

**We have developed and launched our own **Circular Product Standard.** Using a definition inspired by our partner, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, circular products at Primark are defined as made from recycled or more sustainably sourced materials and **designed with the future in mind** – meaning they have a longer lifespan when in use and , where possible, can be **recycled into new materials.****

# What is a circular product at Primark?

The Circular Product Standard (CPS) is a framework that outlines what constitutes a 'circular' product at Primark. Since we launched the first iteration, the framework has remained inspired by the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation vision of a circular economy for fashion](#). In simple terms, this means that a product should satisfy three core criteria to be deemed circular: it should be designed for physical durability, designed to be commercially recyclable and made using recycled or more sustainably sourced fibres.

In essence, circularity means designing and creating our clothes with the future in mind, so that they can be given a new life either as new clothes or recycled materials once our customers are finished with them.



Read more about our progress in sustainability in our latest report.

<https://sr.primark.com/>

# What have we learned so far?

Becoming a more circular business is not a simple, straightforward journey. We're constantly learning and exploring different design solutions. In collaboration with our suppliers and other partners, we're trying to find pragmatic ways to scale circular design while keeping products functional and desirable for consumers. Here are some of our key learnings so far.

## Scaling circular design remains challenging

Many of our key clothing categories are reliant on the use of blended fibres, or on synthetic elements like elastane, to perform and function as our customers would expect. These fibres are more challenging to recycle with the technologies currently available, as are decorative embellishments like sequins. While simplicity is one of the core principles of circular design, realistically not every item of clothing can be inherently 'plain and simple'. Every category and style is unique and will require different strategies to achieve circular design.

## Innovation and iteration need to go hand in hand

Although we have focused our efforts on scaling circular design on cotton-rich categories like denim and jersey to date, we continue to explore, test and trial circular design concepts in other categories, such as knitwear and shirts. This is supported by our partnership with [The Circular Textiles Foundation](#). We are working to shift and change our product design in a pragmatic and iterative way, finding the right solutions for each product area while creating space for our product teams to test, trial and innovate via training with [The Circular Textiles Foundation](#).

## Supplier expertise is invaluable

In many cases, our learnings have been very much driven by our partnerships with our suppliers. The requirements of circular design need to be balanced with technical and performance requirements. Commercial objectives must also be considered. Involving our suppliers throughout this process has been invaluable. They are the experts, and we rely on their practical advice to make sure that we remain pragmatic and realistic in the pursuit of circular design.

## Principles to practise

As well as refining our overarching approach, we've learned a lot about how to apply circular principles in practice, translating theory to replicable design changes. Some examples are:

### Kidswear waistbands

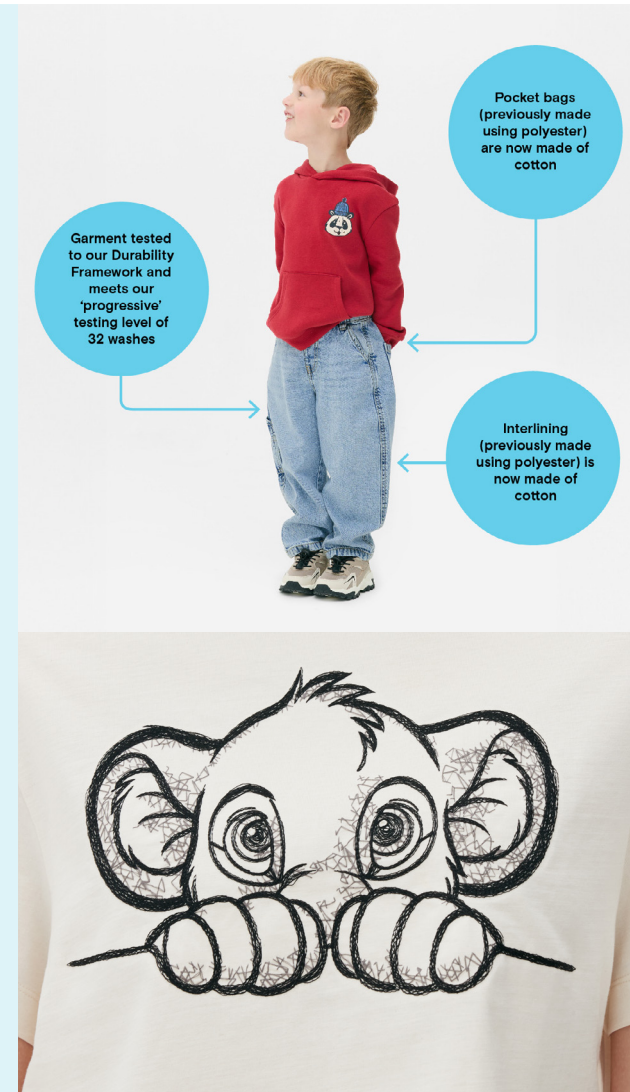
**"In the waistbands of children's clothes, flexibility is essential for comfort and adjustability is essential for fit. But we also know that elastane can be a barrier to recycling. By working closely with Primark's quality teams, we've been able to minimise elastane in the waistband of their circular kidswear denim jeans and joggers – either by reducing the depth of the waistband or by being creative with its placement. This collaboration has enabled us to improve recyclability without compromising on function."**

### Embroidery in cotton

**"With Primark, we've been exploring cotton embroidery as a way to keep products mono-fibre while still offering intricate design. Looser techniques, such as stab stitching, allow us to create detail without relying on print, while still meeting Primark's durability requirements. In some cases, we've even removed the interlining and retained the look and feel of embroidery. These small changes help us make garments for Primark that are both beautiful and recyclable at end of usable life."**

Jenny Valarino

Head of Circular Design, The Circular Textiles Foundation



# What's new in the Circular Product Standard?

**We launched our Circular Product Standard in 2023 with the ambition of setting clear guidelines for circular design at Primark.**

Now we've updated it with some of the lessons we've learned and applied over the last three years. Our goal was to raise the bar, not reinvent the wheel, when it came to circular design.

We want to continue to offer our customers great value products while keeping sustainability at the heart of everything we do. In our updated Circular Product Standard, we propose solutions that are practical, achievable and replicable at scale.

## Our journey

- We worked with The Circular Textiles Foundation through our advanced training programme to conduct a deep dive into different product categories, exploring the opportunities and challenges of different garment types.
- We consulted trusted recyclers through a survey to understand the cotton and polyester recycling technologies currently available at scale.
- We consulted expert suppliers to understand which product design changes were achievable at scale based on our guidelines.



## What is different

**In this updated Circular Product Standard, we have:**

Simplified our structure based on learnings to date, introducing a two-tier framework to guide product teams in more circular design.

Defined our 'Progressive' level to set clear expectations for 'better' design, raising the bar on materials, durability and recyclability requirements.

Tested and trialled the framework across different product categories, carrying out deep dives with buyers, designers, quality teams and trusted suppliers to understand what is technically possible.

Explored printing techniques to identify more recyclable options.

# Our revised framework at a glance

We've evolved our CPS to have two levels to enable and encourage progression over time. These levels are Foundational and Progressive.

→ If you want to reference our previous guidelines, these can be found [here](#)

## What do our levels mean

### Foundational

- Minimum requirement for products to be considered 'circular by design'
- Based on learnings over the the last three years. Considers innovation and inbound legislation.
- Ensures circular design principles are pragmatic and scalable.
- Different product types present different challenges and opportunities, so we will continue to work with our colleagues and trusted suppliers to find solutions.

### Progressive

- Builds on our Foundational level and pushes the boundary of circular design.
- Represents 'better', meaning more stringent requirements that are more closely aligned to best-in-class industry practices or regulation.
- Limited application to specific categories: test and trial approach.

	Materials	Durability	Recyclability
<a href="#">Principle from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's vision</a>	Made from safe and recycled or renewable inputs.	Made to be used more.	Made to be made again.
<a href="#">What this means at Primark</a>	Designed with recycled or more <a href="#">sustainably sourced fibres</a> .	Designed for <a href="#">physical durability</a> .	Designed to be more technically recyclable at commercial scale. More details on the <a href="#">recyclability deep dive page</a> .
<b>Foundational</b>	Cotton and polyester can be included. Main fabric contains recycled or more sustainably sourced fibres from a Primark preferred cotton source.	Product meets the Foundational level of the Primark Durability Framework, meaning it passes all necessary performance requirements after being tested to 23 washes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product must have a mono-material main fabric base – either 100% cotton or 100% polyester as detailed in the Materials requirement.</li> <li>• Product should be at least 95% mono-material by weight for cotton, and at least 97% mono-material by weight for polyester.</li> <li>• Water-based prints can be included. No plastisol, metallised or foil prints can be used.</li> <li>• Remove non-essential metal trims where possible. Functional trims are allowed and must sit within each material tolerance.</li> <li>• Further details on the <a href="#">recyclability deep dive page</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Progressive</b>	In addition to meeting Foundational requirements, main fabric must include fibres from recycled textile-to-textile sources.	Product meets the Progressive level of the Primark Durability Framework, meaning it passes all necessary performance requirements after being tested to 32 washes.	In addition to meeting Foundational requirements, Product should be at least 97% mono-material by weight for cotton, and at least 100% mono-material by weight for polyester.

# Deep dive: Materials

**What goes into our garments is equally as important as how they look. Materials determine not only a garment's functionality and performance, but critically, its environmental impact and recyclability.**

At Primark, we have been working hard to scale both recycled and more sustainably sourced materials within our clothing ranges, with 74% of clothing units sold contained recycled or more sustainably sourced materials in 2024/25.

In our updated CPS, we've introduced more detailed requirements on the types of materials needed to meet our Foundational and Progressive levels. In our first CPS, we focused on cotton because the technology to mechanically recycle cotton was already widely available and scaled. More recently, recycling technologies have emerged that support textile-to-textile (T2T) recycling of polyester. This is a preferable alternative to bottle-to-textile (B2T) recycling as it creates a closed loop within the fashion industry, meaning we're not reliant on external material inputs, and it allows us to move to more circular production models over time as these new systems scale.

We remain committed to pushing for increased use of T2T recycled fibres, always balancing what is technically possible at scale with the need to deliver durable, affordable products. That being said, the reality is that for the time being, both open loop B2T and closed loop T2T recycled polyester will have a role to play in reducing our use of virgin polyester. Over time, we aim to transition to more T2T closed loop solutions as technologies evolve and scale.

We also appreciate that the main fibre in a garment strongly influences its durability as well as its recyclability. Our CPS is designed to help our teams balance these factors while continuing to push for improvements in both.

## Materials

### [Principle from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's vision](#)

Made from safe and recycled or renewable inputs.

### What this means at Primark

Designed with recycled or more sustainably sourced fibres.

### Materials in scope

Cotton.

Polyester.

### Foundational

Main fabric made using cotton from a Primark preferred cotton source.

Main fabric made using recycled polyester from bottle-to-textile sources.

### Progressive

Main fabric must include fibres from textile-to-textile recycled cotton (prioritising post-consumer where viable) and be blended with fibres from a Primark preferred cotton source.

Main fabric must include fibres made from textile-to-textile recycled polyester, and blended with polyester from bottle-to-textile or virgin polyester.



We ensure that all our recycled fibres are validated through recognised third party certifications. More details on this and the sources of all our fibres can be found in our [online fibres glossary](#).

# Spotlight Stories: Scaling use of recycled fibres

Through our sustainability strategy, Primark Cares, we've committed to all our clothes being made from recycled or more sustainably sourced materials by 2030.

Our progress so far owes much to our deepening partnership with Recover™, which specialises in turning textile waste into high-quality recycled cotton fibre and cotton fibre blends.

Designing garments using cotton from the Primark Cotton Project, blended with Recover™ recycled cotton, was a natural step in our journey toward circular fashion. We have significantly increased the use of these fibres in our supply chain, scaling our use of Recover™'s RCotton range across our ranges.

Many of the garments we create with Recover™ recycled cotton – like t-shirts and jeans – are made from 100% cotton, which means they are well-suited for circular design.

## Progress so far

**39%**

of clothing units sold in 2024/25 contained recycled fibres, up from 32% in 2023/24.

**33%**

of our jersey, denim and casual trousers categories include Recover™ RCotton.

**61%**

of clothing units sold in 2024/25 met our CPS foundational level and contained Recover™ recycled cotton.

At the heart of this progress is collaboration. We're grateful not only for the expertise of the Recover™ team – but also to the spinners, fabric mills and garment manufacturers whose skills and dedication are essential to making our circular vision a reality.

“Together with Primark, we've taken a shared journey...”



“Together with Primark, we've taken a shared journey: starting with recycled content, scaling its use across the supply chain, and now embedding circular design principles into every stage of product development. This collaboration shows how ambition, when paired with thoughtful partnerships, can translate into meaningful change for the fashion industry.”

Ana Rodes

Head of Sustainability, Recover™

# Deep dive: Durability

**Circular clothing begins with clothes that stand the test of time. At Primark, we describe clothing as ‘durable’ if it remains functional and wearable without requiring too much maintenance or repair when faced with normal wash and wear over its lifetime. Yet there is currently no agreed industry standard for the physical durability of clothing. This is despite increasing legislation and the impact of textile waste on the environment.**

Our [Primark Durability Framework](#) helps us work towards improving the long-term quality and durability of our products. It gives us a way to talk openly about the challenges we face as well as the progress we’re making. We recognise the importance of ongoing development and adaptation, and we’re committed to continuous improvement in the durability of our products.

While we know that quality and price are the most important factors for customers when choosing new clothes, they are increasingly considering environmental sustainability and product durability too. Research shows that extending the life of clothing by an extra nine months can reduce carbon, waste and water footprints by as much as 20% each<sup>2</sup>.

Garment care is also integral to clothing longevity, which is why we’ve implemented [Clevercare](#) labelling, giving our customers guidance on how best to care for their clothes.

Using the [Primark Durability Framework](#), we put our eligible (machine washable) clothes through pre-wash quality and performance testing, to check how well they perform. This means they are assessed on their physical quality performance (looking at things like pilling and seam strength) after 5, 23, 32 and 45 washes.

77% of denim, 69% of socks and 77% of jersey wear product tested in 2024/25 achieved our ‘Aspirational’ level under our Durability Framework.

To be considered circular by design according to our CPS, products need to meet the Foundational requirements of the Durability Framework outlined below as a minimum. Many of our circular-designed products not only meet this requirement but exceed it, attaining the Durability Framework’s Progressive, or even Aspirational, level.



## Durability

### [Principle from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s vision](#)

Made to be used more.

### What this means at Primark

Designed for physical durability.

### Foundational

Product meets the Foundational level of the Primark Durability Framework, meaning it passes all performance requirements after being tested to 23 washes.

### Progressive

Product meets the Progressive level of the Primark Durability Framework, meaning it passes all performance requirements after being tested to 32 washes.

2. WRAP, Extending Product Lifetimes (2024)

# Deep dive: Recyclability

Today, **less than 1%** of clothing is recycled back into new textiles. That means most garments eventually end up as waste, despite the growing demand for more sustainable options. Designing products that are easier to recycle is one way we can help future-proof the next generation of recycled textiles.

Our ambition is simple: once a product has lived many lives – having been worn, repaired and passed on – it can ultimately be recycled into something new. One day, your old pair of jeans could become a new pair of jeans.

Recyclability is complex and there is no industry definition for what is considered a ‘recyclable’ product. In addition, each recycler and sorter will have a different requirement to get the optimum feedstock for recycling. Through testing and collaboration, we’ve learned that trims, fastenings, selected printing techniques and blends can all disrupt recycling streams. That’s why we’ve been exploring alternative designs, placements and methods to reduce their impact.

Many recyclers value simplicity. Simplicity of design, composition and construction are all critical enablers of easier recycling at the end of a garment’s life. That’s why we’ll keep working closely with our suppliers and product colleagues to find the most practical and suitable solutions, always balancing design, function, durability and recyclability.

We also recognise that trims and components made from different fibres, such as polyester and cotton, can behave slightly differently during recycling. By working closely with recyclers, we’ve been able to optimise our approach and create a single, standardised view for our product teams, helping them make informed design decisions while keeping recyclability in mind.

“Designing for recyclability isn’t just about choosing the right materials – it’s about understanding how every design element relates back to the recycler parameters...”



“From prints and embroideries to stitching threads, labels, and trims, each component can either support or disrupt the recycling process.

Print, for example, is not just about aesthetics. We need to understand the full composition of the print. Plastisol inks, polyurethane-based adhesives and metallic finishes can all interfere with fibre recovery, especially in mechanical recycling. These nuances matter. A print across a tee might not seem much, but if it’s made with incompatible ink and/or adhesives, it can be the difference between a recyclable or non-recyclable garment. Similarly, large areas of

polyester embroidery threads on a cotton garment can contaminate otherwise recyclable garments.

Through our collaboration with Primark, we’ve developed guidelines that help teams assess not just what looks good, but what works within the recycler parameters. Our training sessions have helped teams decode the complexities around Design for Recyclability, translating recycler parameters into design opportunity. We’ve seen how knowledge empowers creativity: when designers understand the ‘why,’ they start asking the right questions and making the right trade-offs.”

Jenny Valarino

Head of Circular Design, The Circular Textiles Foundation

# Deep dive: Recyclability

		Foundational	Progressive
<b>Principle from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's vision</b>		Made to be made again	
<b>What this means at Primark</b>		Designed to be more technically recyclable at commercial scale	
<b>Main fabric</b>		All products' base fabric must be mono-material Either 100% cotton or 100% polyester as per CPS Material requirement	
<b>Weight requirement by composition</b>	<b>Cotton-specific requirement</b>	Products must be minimum of 95% mono-material by total weight (5% allowance for disruptors)	Products must be minimum of 97% mono-material by total weight (3% allowance for disruptors)
	<b>Polyester-specific requirement</b>	Product must be a minimum of 97% mono-material by total weight (3% allowance for disruptors)	Product must be 100% mono-material by total weight
<b>Print requirements</b>	<b>Cotton-specific requirement</b>	Print must use water-soluble ink No polyurethane ink to be used	
	<b>Polyester-specific requirement</b>	Print must use water-soluble ink No polyurethane ink to be used Polyester-based adhesive required	
<b>Trim requirements</b>	<b>Cotton-specific requirement</b>	Remove non-essential metal trims Functional trims allowed e.g zips, buttons Non-cotton trim will be considered as part of disruptors Decorative trims should be cotton e.g cotton embroidery	
	<b>Polyester-specific requirement</b>	Remove non-essential metal trims Functional trims allowed e.g metal zip head & zip pull for durability Non-polyester trims will be considered as part of disruptors Decorative trims should be polyester	

# Turning theory into practice

Creating the Circular Product Standard is one thing; ensuring it leads to products that are circular by design is another. We follow several steps to help our product teams put the CPS into action.



## Circularity training: Foundational

Our Foundational circularity training programme is mandatory for all current and new product team members at Primark. We worked with [Circle Economy](#) and the [Sustainable Fashion Academy](#) to create the training modules, which live on our digital learning platform. These training modules represent 'circularity 101' and help upskill our product colleagues on core circular economy principles.

## Circularity training: Expert

In 2024, we advanced our circularity training programme in collaboration with The Circular Textiles Foundation. The programme supports teams across buying, design and quality, as well as key suppliers, to apply circular design principles to more clothing categories such as knitwear and shirts. Our training consists of a series of workshops to help put the theory of circular design into practice and show colleagues ways to embed this into their everyday work, with a category-by-category approach.

## Circular design guidelines

The ultimate output of our advanced training is circular design guidelines specific to each product category. So far, we have completed guidelines for nine product categories: denim, jersey, knitwear, nightwear, shirts, skirts, blouses, dresses and leisurewear.

## Developing with circular design in mind

We're always learning, testing and trialling our approach, and considering how to continue to embed circular design principles. With that in mind, we are in the process of refreshing our approach to training our colleagues and our suppliers, based on the learnings from our three years. We will continue to encourage our teams to rethink ranges with circular design in mind and work closely with product teams and many of our key suppliers to support the development of circular products each season, using a two-pillar approach:

1. **Conversion** – taking products naturally aligned to the principles of the CPS, such as plain t-shirts or non-stretch jeans, and making small tweaks that allow the products to meet our CPS criteria.

2. **Creation** – encouraging our teams to use the CPS to completely rethink how a garment is made and create something new. It's here where we have been constantly learning and debating what 'good' looks like in practice. Where we can't entirely eliminate design elements that pose a challenge to recyclability, we're thinking about how we can reverse engineer a 'better' version.

# Embedding our circular design principles



**“Embedding circular design has been a learning journey for us. Every style that goes through the circular by design process is a learning moment, helping us to refine and**

**improve. We work closely with our buying teams to support their journey too, with the ultimate ambition that circular design becomes business as usual – fully integrated into our existing systems and critical path.”**

**Paola Weir**

Project & Solutions Manager – Circular Products, Primark

## A pragmatic approach

Our journey to embedding circular design at Primark began with a focus on denim and jersey as these cotton-rich product categories are already closely aligned to CPS principles. In the case of denim, we could build on the well-established learnings of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s project, The Jeans Redesign. In the case of jersey, a lot of our t-shirts were already plain and 100% cotton, so these were natural candidates to meet our CPS.

However, a lot of our products naturally feature design elements, such as prints, embroidery and elastication, that don’t lend themselves to recyclability. We’ve therefore tried to take a pragmatic approach. Where we can’t completely eliminate an element that poses a challenge to recyclability, we think about what ‘better’ might look like and then attempt to reverse engineer the garment to achieve this.

## Progress so far

**5% of all of our clothing units sold were circular by design as of 2024/25<sup>1</sup>**, meeting the ‘Foundational’ level criteria set out in our CPS.

	Last Year	This Year
Total Clothing Units	3%	<b>5%</b>
Denim	5%	<b>8%</b>
Jersey	11%	<b>20%</b>

We’ve also developed circular design guidelines for nine product categories (denim, jersey, knitwear, nightwear, shirts, blouses, skirts, dresses and leisurewear) and have tested and trialed in these categories, with the intention to scale in coming seasons where feasible.

1. As of July 2025

## What’s working well:

### Clearer design guidance

We’ve equipped product teams and key suppliers with practical, category-specific circular design guidance, supported by tangible, real-world examples that show how circular principles can be applied in practice.

### Strong Collaboration

By bringing suppliers and internal teams together earlier in the process, we’re creating space to solve design challenges collaboratively, while enabling teams to share feedback, successes and learnings.

### Testing at scale

Circular design is now being piloted across nine product categories, with clear learnings and next steps to support wider rollout.

### Embedding circularity into development

More teams are embedding circular principles into their everyday development cycles, helping to move circular design from concept to standard practice.

# Validating our circular by design products

**It's important that Primark's circular by design products stand up to scrutiny so that customers can be confident buying them.**

That's why our CPS is underpinned, wherever possible, by industry-recognised tests and tools, and validated by third-party experts.

Validation helps us understand where we are today, and gives us the confidence to keep improving tomorrow.

## Materials

We validate our use of recycled and more sustainably sourced cotton and polyester fibres from our preferred sources through recognised third-party certifications. You can read more about our preferred fibres in our [online fibres glossary](#).

## Durability

We validate durability with approved third-party testing. Products are tested against industry-recognised appearance and performance standards, in conditions designed to reflect how customers wash their clothes. Our approach is guided by Primark's Durability Framework, which is inspired by WRAP's Clothing Longevity Protocol. Read more about our [Durability Framework](#) here.

## Recyclability

We validate recyclability using our Bill of Materials (BOM) tool, a self-assessed document that is completed by the supplier and is validated with our internal team to make sure it meets our requirements. This calculates the weight of all components and the percentage of fibre content within a product. We use this assessment to check whether a product meets the Foundational or Progressive criteria of our CPS.

## Data Validation

Our circularity data is validated for reporting purposes. Please see our most recent [Primark Sustainability and Ethics report](#) for further information.



# Circularity legislation landscape in the EU

The regulatory landscape for circularity is evolving rapidly, with governments and the EU introducing new requirements on product design, the use of recycled materials, durability, traceability and end-of-life responsibility. This growing focus is moving the industry from voluntary action to mandatory change, setting clearer expectations for how clothes are made and kept in use for longer.

In March 2022 the European Commission published the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, with the aim of creating a more sustainable and circular textile economy.

It looked at how textile products are designed, made and consumed, with an important element being how textile products can be more circular.

The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation came into force in July 2024 across the EU, introducing new ecodesign requirements for products including clothing, footwear and home textiles.

While this is something we have been working on for some time now, we welcome the introduction of standardised and harmonised regulatory requirements that put everyone on a level playing field and that have the potential to drive meaningful progress across the value chain.

We continue to monitor these regulatory developments as we further explore how to make our clothes more circular by design. Our focus is on aligning our approach to design and product data with evolving policy requirements, while continuing to make circular design practical and scalable.

Through our Circular Product Standard, we aim to continue to embed the principles of durability, recyclability and the use of more sustainably sourced materials into how we design and make our clothes – ensuring we are ready for the systems that will define the future of circular fashion.

“With increasing regulatory requirements and growing expectations around circularity, the challenge – and opportunity – is translating complex policy requirements into design and product decisions that can be applied consistently and at scale.”

**Lynne Walker**  
Director of Primark Cares



“To truly challenge conventional linear models at scale – and for a circular economy for fashion to become the norm – we must accelerate efforts that not only redesign the products of the future, but also the services and business models that deliver them and keep them in use.

Through their participation in The Fashion ReModel, organisations such as Primark are taking further steps on their long-term circular economy journey. We encourage others to join these frontrunners.”

**Jules Lennon**  
Fashion Initiative Lead, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

# Bringing circular design to our customers

**Over the past few years, we've learned that if you want to see products designed with circularity in mind on the shop floor, you have to make it part of the brief – not an add on, and then give people the tools and support to deliver it. That's been the key to building momentum inside our business.**

We have worked with our product colleagues and suppliers to embed and scale circular design, and we're focused on scaling this significantly across our ranges – from trending collections to everyday essentials. We've developed this Circular Product Standard specifically to embed circularity into the design process – from fibre and fabric choices to trims and stitching.

Each circular product is part of our ongoing journey to make clothing that lasts longer, uses recycled or more sustainably sourced materials and can be given a second life. We're proud of the progress so far, and inspired to keep improving year on year.



# Spotlight Stories: Circular basics

We believe circular design should apply not only to the latest fashion, but also to the timeless everyday essentials found in every wardrobe.

Since launching our first CPS, we've incorporated these principles into some of our core staples, blending style with durability. This also supports the ambition that sustainability should be affordable for all.

## Womenswear Oversize Tee



**Materials**  
100% cotton from the Primark Cotton Project.

**Durability**  
Item was tested and passed to 45 washes in line with our Durability Framework.

**Recyclability**

- Main fabric is 100% cotton.
- Total estimated product composition is a minimum of 95% cotton (inclusive of decorative trims and components).
- Rib is 100% cotton.
- Stitching thread is polyester.
- Care label is polyester.

## Hoodie and Joggers set



**Materials**  
100% cotton from the Primark Cotton Project. Moved from polyester blend to mono-material.

**Durability**  
Item was tested and passed to 45 washes in line with our Durability Framework.

**Recyclability**

- Main fabric is 100% cotton.
- Total estimated product composition is a minimum of 95% cotton (inclusive of decorative trims and components).
- Cuffs are 100% cotton on the hoodie.
- Stitching thread is 100% polyester.
- Care label is 100% polyester.
- Worked with the supplier to make the elasticated waistband shallower, to meet our recyclability threshold but still keep the function of the garment.

# Spotlight Stories: Progressive Denim

Denim has been a focus area for scaling circular design since we launched the CPS in 2023. Jeans are typically cotton-rich, making them well-suited to mechanical recycling. Denim also tends to be inherently durable and hard-wearing, lending itself naturally to longer life and reuse. Denim brands, mills and garment makers have long been among the most active in driving innovation on sustainability. This made denim an ideal starting point for us to explore what 'better' looks like and trialling the 'Progressive' level of our CPS, a small-scale proof of concept.

Working closely with our supplier, we developed higher-level circular design requirements across materials, durability and recyclability. Central to this project is post consumer denim-to-denim recycled cotton made from discarded jeans and post-industrial cutting waste. By incorporating post-consumer fibre, we aim to help build demand for recycled content at scale – a critical step towards a circular system for cotton.

This all led to the development of our first-ever progressive denim range: a five-piece collection made using post consumer waste. All products in the range are made from 100% cotton main fabric, containing a minimum of 20% post-consumer recycled cotton, and the remainder made using cotton from our Primark Cotton Project, our unique training programme for cotton farmers in our supply chain, to support future recyclability. Each garment was tested against our highest durability standard, achieving up to 45 washes under the Primark Durability Framework.


While our original goal was to use fully cellulosic stitching to maximise recyclability, testing showed polyester performed better for longevity. We therefore used recycled polyester thread to balance durability with lower impact.

To assess the footprint of the range, we turned to [Jeanologia's](#) Environmental Impacting Measurement (EIM) software platform. Developed specifically for the garment finishing industry, EIM is a global standardised tool for monitoring the environmental impact of garment finishing processes. It was created to help laundries and garment finishers build more sustainable processes.

All the products in the range achieved a low EIM rating, verifying low impact across water, energy, chemicals and worker impact.

This pilot is intentionally small, but it sets a benchmark for what's possible. Our ambition is to integrate these principles more widely across our denim offer in the coming years –continuing to learn, test and scale circular design in practice.

## Women's Barrel Leg



**Materials**  
Made using a minimum of 20% recycled denim and cotton from our Primark Cotton Project.

**Durability**  
Item was tested and passed to 45 washes.

**Recyclability**

- Main fabric is 100% cotton.
- Pocket bags are 100% cotton.
- Stitching thread is 100% recycled polyester.
- Care label is 100% cotton.
- Total estimated product composition is a minimum of 97% cotton (inclusive of trims and components).

**Environmental impact**

- This pair of jeans achieved a low EIM score of 12, meeting environmental metrics averaged across water, energy, chemical use and worker impact.

# The future is circular

We recognize that circularity is an interconnected system that brings together design, materials, durability, customer behaviour and recycling infrastructure.

Our approach follows a clear hierarchy – prevention first, then reuse, then recycle – recognising that keeping clothes in active use for longer delivers the greatest environmental benefit.



**“Fashion brands truly committed to sustainability and increasing recycled content in their products, must actively**

**engage in overcoming barriers and building circular value chains, Primark exemplifies this approach, viewing textile waste as a valuable secondary resource and leading the way in circular fashion.”**

**Nin Castle**

Co-Founder and Chief Program Officer, Reverse Resources



# Final reflections

**Circular design remains a foundational part of the wider circular ecosystem. There is more to be done, and our goal within circular design guidelines and implementation is to remain pragmatic and realistic in the pursuit of better, more circular outcomes and products.**

We recognise that many product types today remain inherently difficult to recycle because of their properties and characteristics. In the years ahead, we want to take a more nuanced approach to these challenges. For example, if elastane continues to be necessary in certain garments, what other design elements could we focus on to make sure the product is more circular by design? What does 'better' look like if we can't get to 'best'?

Circular design in theory, and circular behaviour in practice, are not the same. We're proud of the work we've done to make circular design more practical, but the next step is ensuring that products designed with circularity in mind also achieve circular outcomes in the real world, where they are being worn and loved for longer, and finding their way back to the right recyclers at the end of their life cycle. We support and welcome inbound legislation as an important driver of these outcomes.

This version of the CPS continues to focus on the product level decisions that determine a product's circular potential, its materials, durability and recyclability, recognising that these choices lock in a significant proportion of a product's environmental impact. At the same time, we recognise that circular outcomes also depend on how products are made. Resource efficient manufacturing that reduces water, energy, and chemical inputs is an important part of the transition to circularity, and we will look more closely to align circular design with these considerations, building on our Supplier Environmental Standards and the practical learnings from these pilots.

Through initiatives like our Progressive Denim collection, which combined circular design principles with lower impact wet processing, low EIM scores, and our scaled partnership with

Recover™, we have already started to understand and prove what is possible within the realm of circular design at scale. A major lever is the integration of more textile-to-textile recycled materials in our products, especially those derived from post-consumer textiles. This is not without its challenges, but the learnings from these pilots continue to shape how we scale this work in ways that respect material characteristics, performance and intended end use.

## Collaborate. Innovate. Enable.

**Circularity requires collective effort. No single company can achieve the scale of change needed – it depends on collaboration across the supply chain, innovation in design and recycling technologies, and enabling policy frameworks that support progress.**

**Alongside us, we invite the industry to:**

- **Collaborate on principles:** Work towards a common understanding of circular design and durability that supports future recycling systems.
- **Engage in dialogue:** Continue exchanging perspectives through industry forums and partnerships to identify barriers and opportunities.
- **Support enabling policy:** Engage policymakers together on practical regulatory requirements to ensure the standards set are achievable in practice through the frameworks and technologies that currently exist.
- **Encourage innovation:** Test and trial new approaches and use the insights to inform next steps across the industry.

Together we can turn collective vision to reality – scaling a circular ecosystem that works for people, planet and industry alike. We welcome and value feedback, ideas, questions and collaboration from across the value chain, including other brands, suppliers, recyclers, sorters, customers and regulators, as we continue to drive progress.



**“80% of a product’s impact is locked in through design. Embedding circular design principles into every product from the outset is essential if the fashion industry is to meet its climate commitments and prepare for a wave of incoming legislation.**

**However, designing for circularity can feel like an abstract ideal, rather than a practical reality. Through the UK Textile Pact, WRAP has been providing tools and guidance – like our Circular Design Toolkit – to create the clarity needed to make circular design scalable and transformative.**

**Primark’s CPS guidelines and standards demonstrate how businesses can turn the vision for circular design into real action to align with policies and to achieve sustainability goals.”**

**Mark Sumner**

Programme Lead for Textiles, WRAP

# With thanks

# PRIMARK

Primark Circular Product Standard 2026  
Version 2

Consultancy and design by Black Sun Global  
[www.blacksun-global.com](http://www.blacksun-global.com)