

Sustainability Matters

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Why sustainability matters to us



SUSTAINABILITY IS PART OF OUR CULTURE

When we talk about the Howdens culture, we describe it as being “worthwhile for all concerned” and “creating the conditions that allow everyone to succeed”. These are the concepts that our business is built on, and they all lead to sustainable behaviour.

THE BOARD LEADS OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The importance of sustainable behaviour is recognised right through the business. Part of the Board agenda in 2018 involved re-emphasising our commitment to Health & Safety and to Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility. We present our revised Group Statements of Intent on the following two pages.

IT IS PART OF OUR BUSINESS MODEL

Our business model leads naturally to sustainable behaviour. It is part of our competitive advantage.

Lowest cost production in our dedicated UK factories leads naturally to trying to minimise waste and the use of energy and raw materials. It is also one of the reasons why we have developed an award-winning efficient transport fleet that has shown clear leadership in carbon reduction.

Our mission statement aim of “no-call-back quality” means that we strive to produce and source product which is durable and safe.

Being trusted partners to both our suppliers and our customers means that our relationships with them need to work for all parties over the long term.

We have over 700 depots in the UK and Europe, and the relationships that those depots rely on to trade profitably mean that our success relies on us being a good neighbour in each of those communities.

IT MITIGATES OUR RISKS

We discuss our principal risks on pages 32 to 37. Sustainable behaviour helps us to address some of those risks.

For example, we place a great emphasis on looking after our people. We invest in keeping them safe, developing their skills, and offering them rewarding careers and a great place to work. We do this because it’s the right thing to do, but it also mitigates our “Health & Safety” and “Loss of key personnel” risks.

Developing and maintaining sustainable supplier relationships mitigates the “Interruption to continuity of supply” risk, and energy-efficient, safe, tested and durable product mitigates our “Product design relevance” risk.

WHAT ARE THE MATERIAL AREAS FOR US AND OUR STAKEHOLDERS?

The main body of this report is organised in five sections, reflecting the main areas of importance to us and to our stakeholders:

People: keeping them safe, offering rewarding careers.

Sustainable supply chain: sustainable sourcing, shared values throughout the supply chain, active monitoring of suppliers.

Sustainable product: safe, traceable, energy-efficient and durable.

Environment: reducing waste, responsible operations, lowering emissions.

Communities: local community projects, our nationwide work with Leonard Cheshire Disability.

OUR SUSTAINABILITY KPIS

Our sustainability KPIs relate to safety, use of wood from certified sources, recycling of waste and recycled packaging, and can be found on pages 48, 53 and 54.

2018 Group Statements of Intent

Health and Safety

We believe that all employees have a right to work in a safe and healthy environment and we intend to carry out our business without putting employees, or others, health or physical wellbeing at risk.

The Board of Directors



The directors recognise their commitment and responsibility to ensure adequate health and safety provision for all staff, customers and contractors.

The central idea of Howdens is that it should be worthwhile for all concerned. Putting this into practice – wanting others to do well, not just ourselves – is what sets Howdens apart, and what will guarantee its future.

Fundamental to this idea is that we keep our employees safe at work. We've got around 9,600 employees in the UK and Europe (and counting) and we need to keep them all safe. **There should be no compromise on health and safety.**

Our two operational divisions and central functions whilst different operationally and in their deployment methodologies, share the same intent and purpose:

- ✓ To provide a safe and healthy working environment
- ✓ To prevent workplace accidents and reduce the risk of potential long-term health effects
- ✓ Where incidents occur, to learn from those instances by improving awareness and processes
- ✓ To ensure performance metrics and near miss reporting are continually reviewed to identify risk and improvement opportunities
- ✓ To make our safety messages engaging and accessible
- ✓ To foster a positive Health and Safety culture amongst our workforce by ensuring engagement and positive challenge

We will continue to share best demonstrated practice across the divisions. This will ensure performance improvements beyond compliance to legislation, codes and standards and will

complement the cultural variances across the Group. Each division should also engage external partners and undertake appropriate benchmarking to ensure that there are no skills or knowledge gaps.

We have made good progress on health and safety to date but the next step of our journey is to strengthen the effectiveness of our existing processes with increased emphasis on a safety culture.

**The Board of Directors,
Howden Joinery Group Plc**



Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility

We intend to match our commitment to growth and development with a continued focus on being a responsible company. We are committed to ensuring that our business remains worthwhile for all concerned.

The Board of Directors



We are mindful of Howdens' responsibilities concerning energy use, waste reduction, ethical and sustainable sourcing of materials, and support and enrichment of the local communities in which we operate, even in the face of increasing demands on our resources.

With over 690 depots throughout the UK, we are a local business with national scale and therefore have unique responsibilities to all of the communities in which we operate.

Regardless of what part of the business they operate, we expect all our employees to share the same intent and purpose;

- ✓ To reduce our impact on our environment wherever possible by reducing energy use and waste production relative to revenue
- ✓ Where we source products from third parties, to ensure that we undertake due diligence to ensure that they conduct their business in an ethical way
- ✓ To ensure that we minimise as far as possible the risk of Modern Slavery in either our own business or those in our supply chain
- ✓ To support and encourage our staff to help local charities and community organisations
- ✓ To offer rewarding careers and create an environment to attract, develop, motivate and reward employees of high calibre
- ✓ To support the training of apprentices where this is appropriate in the business

We will continue to focus on the main areas of importance to us and to our stakeholders.

**The Board of Directors,
Howden Joinery Group Plc**

Our impact on our stakeholders

9,600

full-time jobs with prospects in UK manufacturing, in our local trade depots and in distribution, systems and support

400

apprentices currently in training tailored apprentice programmes across the Group

£320m

of tax generated or collected Corporation Tax, NI, PAYE, and VAT

£420m

of wages, salaries and benefits paid to employees

£260m

of working capital extended to over

410,000

small businesses in our peak trading period

No fees, up to 8 weeks to pay

Responsible for all or part of the pensions of over

17,000 people

£260m cash contributed to pension funds in last 5 years

Employing people in

over 700

communities


£44m

of capital investment in the year Investing in UK manufacturing, and expanding our depot network

£131m

returned to shareholders in dividends and buybacks

100% of UK employees in share ownership schemes

Significant support for a sustainable UK forestry industry

240,000m³

of chipboard from managed forests in the UK

98.5%

of manufacturing waste recycled or reused

12,000 tonnes of sawdust converted to energy to heat our factories

14th

anniversary of partnership with Leonard Cheshire Disability £0.75m donated in 2018

Supporting young, disabled adults to find valuable roles within their communities

3,600

other charity donations, £1.4m given to local charities and community activities

Over £65m

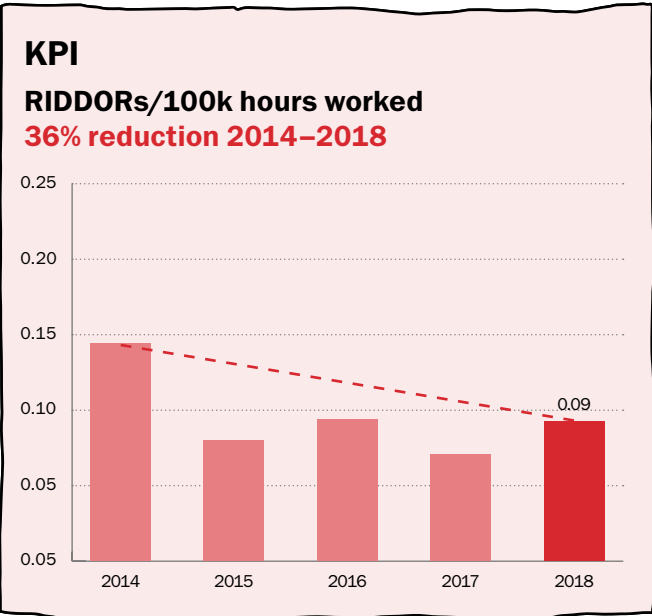
of rent paid to around 650 commercial landlords

Our people

Keeping them safe, offering them rewarding careers

Keeping our people safe

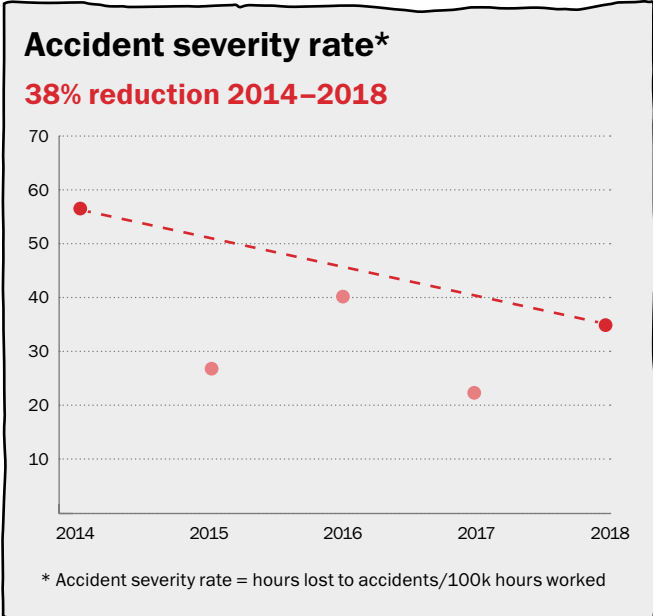
Focusing on a safety culture, making safety messages more accessible



We have got around 9,600 employees and we need to keep them all safe at work. We continue to invest in safe processes, safe plant and machinery and whilst our Reportable Injury Rate shows a slight increase in 2018, we are still performing significantly better than the UK national average for workplace accidents.

We have always committed to developing, implementing and improving safe systems of work, and this has continued during 2018. The focus on the next leg of our journey is to strengthen this with an increased emphasis on a safety culture where we support and empower employees to share our aims.

2018 marked a milestone in the way we implement and manage safety across our depot network, with the roll out of our unique “Safe to Trade” toolkit and software. All of our depot staff have been retrained using this new model which has empowered them to ask



“Am I safe to trade today – Are WE safe to trade today?” This is featured in a case study on pages 50 and 51.

In our factories and logistics operations, we have launched a behavioural safety commitment programme, “Safe to Supply”, which has seen 1,500 people briefed this year. The briefings emphasised that the Howdens culture is committed to safety, and encouraged all employees to feel empowered to take responsibility for themselves and their team. One simple but effective 2018 initiative is to encourage staff to “Press Pause for Safety”, and take the time to ask “Am I safe, and are my workmates safe?” before starting work.

We continue to work with other leading companies and external consultants to share best practice, to help us benchmark and to learn and challenge ourselves. We hope that these actions will improve our safety record even further in the future.

Offering rewarding careers

Great rewards, great opportunities to develop, pioneering apprentice schemes

We pay a good basic salary: all of our pay rates are above living wage and most of them are well above it. We also offer a range of benefits, including pension schemes which we contributed £50m to in 2018, for the benefit of our 17,000 current and past employee members. We give free shares to all our people who stay with the company for at least three years so that they can share in our growth.

Part of our culture and our business model is that we offer staff the chance to get significant bonuses for exceptional performance and that we invest in our staff to offer them opportunities to develop and progress with us. We want our best people to stay with us and help grow the business, and we also want to recruit the best people.

One of the larger programmes we’ve been delivering in 2018 has been to support and increase the skills of our kitchen sales designers. Incorporating input from the most successful designers in our depot network, we developed a 5 day tailored programme focused on customer service and selling skills. So far we’ve delivered this training to over 500 designers and we hope to see the results in increased sales, which should lead to increased employee bonuses.

We employ 400 apprentices throughout the business, offering a range of worthwhile futures and high-quality nationally-recognised qualifications to people across the country. We work with local

colleges to develop bespoke apprentice programmes, tailored to the specific skills and development needs of our apprentices, and which also fit the needs and demands of a growing modern business.

We’ve increased the number of apprentices in the business in 2018 and we currently have apprentices working and learning skills in areas such as sales, customer service, warehouse work, business admin, HR, manufacturing, engineering, IT, design, truck driving and business improvement techniques. See below for a case study on our truck driving apprentice scheme.

Find out more about working with Howdens, and see our current vacancies on our careers website at <https://careers.howdens.com/>.

Case Study: truck driving apprenticeships

We’ve invested a lot of money in our truck fleet, aimed at making it as safe and energy-efficient as possible, as we explained in a detailed feature in our 2017 Sustainability Report.

One of the main things that can affect safety and efficiency is the skills and behaviour of our drivers. We make use of advanced in-cab driver monitoring software in conjunction with daily driver debriefs so that we can support and reward good driving habits.

Good drivers are hard to come by, so we’ve invested in developing the new generation of drivers by training our own from scratch. We’ve recruited staff who don’t have a heavy goods driving licence and, together with a third party driver training agency, we’ve put them through a structured apprentice programme so that they gain their driving qualification and also learn the high standards that we expect from a Howdens driver.

The apprenticeship is a pioneering initiative in the fleet industry and we were very proud this year when 3 of our employees became the first people in the UK to complete it. The 12-month programme consists of both practical and theory elements, and throughout their training each of the apprentices has the benefit of working with an existing driver “buddy” as well as ongoing feedback and mentoring from our fleet management team.

Apprentices spend a block of time at our warehouse, doing their initial training. Before they take their test they spend 6–8 weeks shadowing an existing driver out on the roads, seeing how it’s done the Howdens way. After passing the test, they spend a further 4–8 weeks being shadowed and mentored by an experienced driver before finally taking to the roads on their own.



Our people continued

Case Study: Safe to Trade

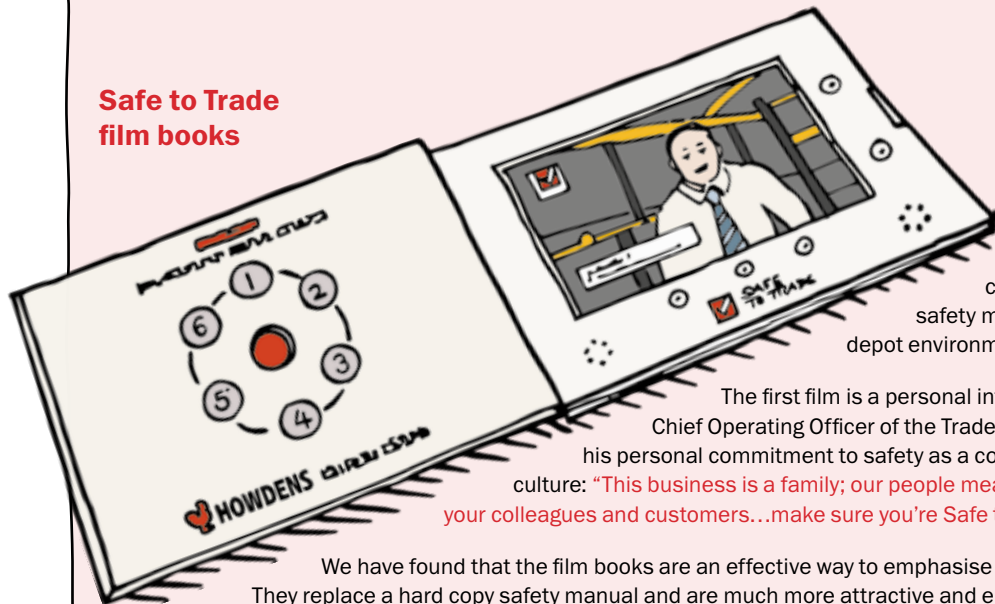
Simple, scalable, effective, engaging

Introduction – “Safe to Work, Safe to Trade, Safe Home”

We've got nearly 700 depots across the UK, and we continue to open new ones. Our depots are busy hubs of activity. Some staff might be working at the trade counter or in the offices, and warehouse staff will be picking orders ready for despatch. Product is being delivered by lorry and unloaded by fork lift truck, builders are buying and loading into their vans, and end users are visiting to see product, talk to our designers and discuss kitchen plans. We need to make and maintain an environment that keeps all these people safe.

How do we encourage the same high standards of safety across nearly 700 depots? How do we embed our health & safety culture and standards across the depot network, making it effective, engaging and consistent? 2018 saw us take another big step towards these aims as we rolled out our unique and innovative “Safe to Trade” packs to all the UK depots, and began to roll them out to our European depots. This case study highlights some of the main elements of the packs.

Safe to Trade film books



Our unique film books are a cornerstone of the Safe to Trade programme. The books contain a collection of short films, covering the key safety messages and safe systems of work in a depot environment.

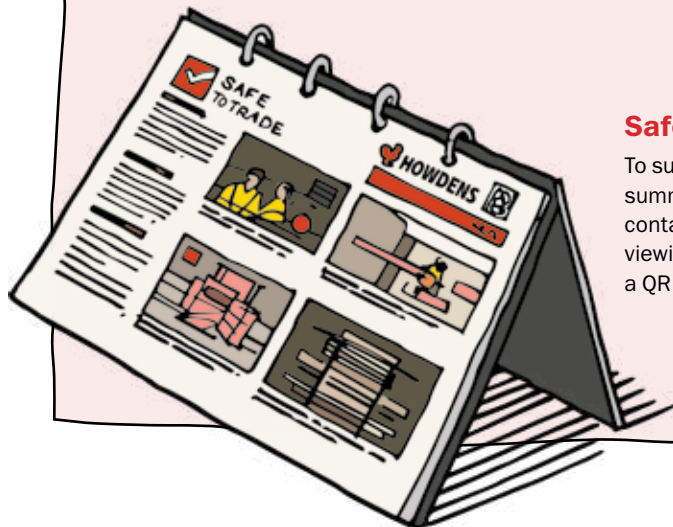
The first film is a personal introduction from Andy Witts, the Chief Operating Officer of the Trade division, where he emphasises his personal commitment to safety as a cornerstone of the depot culture: “This business is a family; our people mean a lot to us...look after your colleagues and customers...make sure you're Safe to Trade”.

We have found that the film books are an effective way to emphasise the safety message. They replace a hard copy safety manual and are much more attractive and engaging. The films are loaded on a memory card so it is easy to update and add to them as needed.

Every new employee works through the film book as part of their induction, and after each film they have to demonstrate their understanding by successfully completing a questionnaire. If existing employees need refresher training, they can easily repeat modules as required. Our insurers were so impressed by the potential of the video books to reduce accidents that they contributed some funding to their development.

Safe Systems of Work folder

To support the film books, we've developed a one page summary of each film for easy reference. The folder containing these summaries is available for ad-hoc viewing or refresher training. Each summary sheet has a QR code that leads to supporting online content.



Safe to Trade Online

Safe to Trade Online is our new safety management software. It has two main functions: it makes managing safety in the depot a lot easier, and it also gives our central and regional safety teams the ability to monitor compliance and to analyse trends and root causes.

For the depot staff, Safe to Trade Online contains all our key safety standards and makes them easily accessible. It also gives reminders of key tasks that need to be done on a recurring basis. It also allows the regional and central teams to monitor what is being done, and to see the findings and any follow-up actions.

Staying Safe to Trade booklet

We give every member of depot staff a summary booklet that includes a safety message from the divisional COO, together with a simple and engaging overview of what being ‘Safe to Trade’ means for every member of staff. The booklet goes on to highlight the most prominent hazards that could be encountered at a trade depot location, and most importantly... how to avoid them!



Risk Assessment and training folder

As well as the risks that are common across the depot network, there will also be things which are specific to individual depots. These risks, together with details of how to mitigate them, will be recorded in the folder, along with details of each individual's training and any safety-related qualifications.

It means that each depot has material that is tailored to their individual risk profile. It also means that when staff transfer between depots they can easily see any additional risks that they need to be aware of at the new depot, and can take their own training records with them.

Sustainable supply chain

Sustainable sourcing, actively monitoring our suppliers

Sustainable sourcing

Timber management and chain of custody, shared values throughout the supply chain

In 2018 we used 239,000 cubic metres of chipboard and 43,000 cubic metres of MDF in our factories – that’s enough to fill the Royal Albert Hall more than three times. All of this came from FSC® (the Forest Stewardship Council®) certified sources and all of the products that we manufacture ourselves hold the FSC chain of custody certification (license code FSC-C019676).

This means that the wood comes from responsibly managed forests and that we have independent documented evidence of an unbroken chain of ownership all the way from the forest to us, via the mill, the importer, and our suppliers.

We are also a member of the Timber Trade Federation which requires our commitment to implementing an environmental due diligence system to fulfil the Federation’s responsible purchasing commitments.

We continually look to improve our processes and our awareness of timber sourcing risks. This includes attending workshops run by The Office for Product Safety and Standards who monitor and enforce the Timber Regulations, so that we can keep up to date with the latest developments.

We only want to work with suppliers who share our ethical values. We are clear about our expectations and we aim to align them through our whole supply chain.

Every year we bring our main suppliers together at a forum to talk about shared issues. This benefits both us and our suppliers, and is an example of the principle that our business needs to be “worthwhile for all concerned”.

The forum gives our suppliers an opportunity to get valuable feedback that’s unique to our trade-only environment. We can pass on comments from over 1,600 trained Howdens kitchen designers, as well as from our builder-customers and end users. Because of the huge scale of our Lamona own-brand appliances, and because we manage any repairs that are needed, we can also pass on comments from the service engineers, allowing our suppliers to quickly make any improvements that might be needed.

As well as talking to our suppliers about product development, we use the supplier forum as an opportunity to repeat and reinforce our expectations for sustainability and ethical behaviour. We tell our suppliers what we need from them and we work together to come up with solutions.

Active monitoring

Supplier assessments, risk-based testing, training our people

We know that there will always be potential ethical, social and environmental risks in our supply chain, and we are committed to understanding, identifying, and minimising them as much as possible. We will only trade with a supplier when we have carried out a thorough risk assessment and are satisfied that we have credible evidence that they meet our high standards.

In 2018 we have continued to strengthen our approach to reducing supply chain risks. We have made our expectations even clearer by modifying our supplier contract terms and conditions to include specific ethics and sustainability clauses. We have also issued a Supplier Code of Conduct where we set out what we expect and how we will monitor that they are complying.

After clearly setting out our standards and expectations, we then work to understand the specific risk profile of each supplier. In 2018, we have started to use Sedex, a leading worldwide platform for sharing responsible sourcing data, to help us assess supplier risk and to verify any specific mitigations which may be in place. Sedex is used by over 50,000 members in over 150 countries. It is a place where suppliers can share a wide range of sustainability data and accreditation information for their companies and their individual operating sites, as well as the results of independent third party sustainability audits.

We encourage all our suppliers to become members of Sedex. For those who are not, we use a combination of specific questionnaires and targeted verification processes – which may include us commissioning an independent sustainability audit.

We need our people to understand and demonstrate best practice and integrity, so we’ve given them training to support them in their dealings with suppliers. All of our buyers and our compliance team have taken and passed the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply’s Ethical Procurement & Supply training, and we have a rolling programme of refresher training on Modern Slavery and Anti-Bribery.

There is more information about the work we do to safeguard against human rights violations, in both our own business and our supply chain, in our modern slavery statement. You can find this in the Sustainability section of our investor relations website.

Sustainable product

Safe and traceable, efficient and durable

Safety and traceability

Safety by design, fire safety, registering products for traceability

We design safety features into the products we make ourselves, we carefully select bought-in product from reputable sources and then we carry out additional safety testing before we sell it to our customers.

As an example of safe bought-in product, our Lamona tumble dryers have always been designed so that the heating element and the main airflow are separated. This is to prevent excess fluff coming into contact with the heating element and potentially catching fire.

Our Lamona fridge-freezers and fridges have also been designed to reduce the risk from fire. The electronic circuit boards are isolated in a fire-retardant, self-extinguishing box. The top, back and base of each unit is enclosed in fire-retardant material, and they use the latest capacitor technology which is designed to remain safe in the event of a failure.

We sell 700,000 fire doors per year, and we recognise that only a correctly fitted fire door offers the protection it is designed for. If it isn’t fitted with the correct hinges, frame, intumescent strip, or door closer, for example, it won’t function properly.

In 2018 we’ve rolled out an initiative to help our builder-customers make sure that they have the right fittings every time they buy a fire door. We have been working with the British Woodworking Federation, whose “Certifire” fire door certification scheme is the leading authority on fire door safety. We have developed guidance for our depots which identifies the six most common situations in which a builder would be fitting a fire door, and which automatically selects the right fittings for each situation.

It’s important to us to do as much as we can to trace the ownership of our appliances, in case we ever have a product recall. We use scanners at all of our depots, so that we know which items have been sold to which builder-customer. We’ve briefed our depot staff on the importance of encouraging product registration and put reminders in our product catalogues.

We’re working hard to encourage the domestic end user to register their products so that we can support them if the need ever arises. Our product website and the document pack that comes with each appliance include links to the “Register my appliance” website. We’ve put a sticker on each instruction manual with the unique serial number of each appliance, so that it’s easier for end users to register them.

Sustainable product

Energy efficiency, durability, FSC® certification

Our appliances are made by third party suppliers to our specifications. We have always worked in partnership with our suppliers to improve the energy performance of our appliances, and each year this brings improvements in different product categories.

One of the highlights in 2018 is that all of our Lamona extractors now use LED lights, which reduces energy consumption by 80%. They also have more efficient motor technology, reducing energy consumption even further.

Offering our customers no-call-back quality kitchen and joinery is part of our mission statement. We manufacture all of our cabinets ourselves, which means that we have direct control of their quality and can be confident in offering a 25 year guarantee on them.

We test the durability of our manufactured products by subjecting them to a range of tests intended to represent the challenges of a real kitchen. For example, we test the durability of their surfaces by covering them with everyday household products, from bleach to curry powder, nail varnish and red wine. We “slam test” doors and drawers up to 10,000 times, and we put half-tonne weights on the shelves of our tall cabinets. We subject products to heat, humidity, ultraviolet light, and steam.



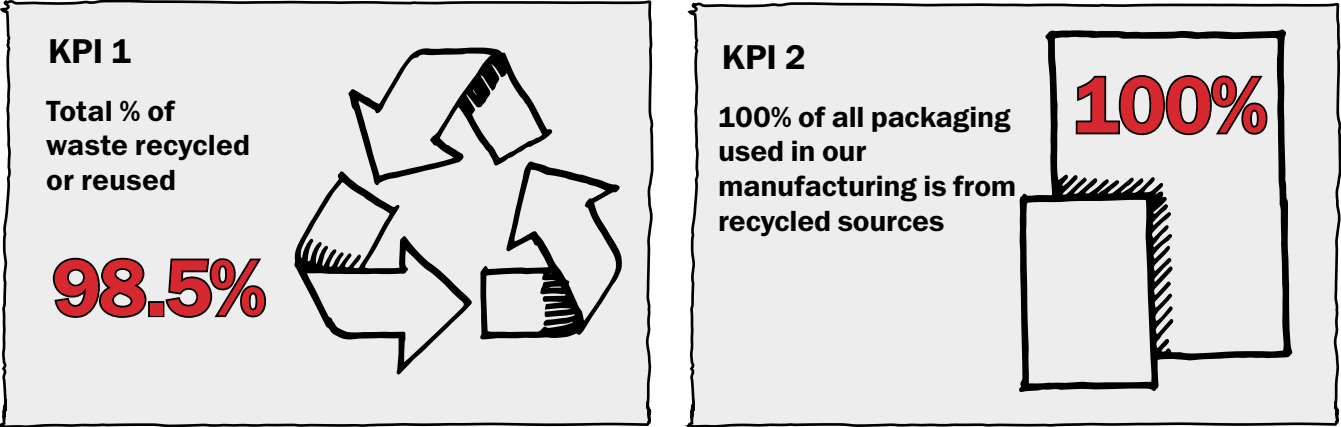
100% of our internally-manufactured timber products are made from FSC certified materials, and we aim to source our bought-in products to the same standards. A typical kitchen range is a combination of items which we have manufactured ourselves and other items which we have bought in. A range is only entirely FSC-compliant if every individual wooden component is FSC certified. Each of the 18 new kitchen ranges that we introduced in 2018 met this standard.

Our environment

Reducing waste, responsible operations, lowering emissions

Reducing waste

Turning production waste into energy, reducing amounts to landfill, reuse/recycle



Highly-efficient production is one of our strategic aims as it gives us a competitive cost advantage. Over the years we've invested in efficient production machinery and in software that takes the constantly-changing production mix, and maximises the number of panels that we can get from each sheet of chipboard. We've also worked with our chipboard supplier to develop a new size of board that allows us to minimise cutting waste even further.

Nevertheless, the sheer scale of our manufacturing operations means that we still generate a lot of sawdust waste. At both of our factories, we have invested in biomass boilers which burn this waste to produce heat. They allow us to reuse waste, they reduce our emissions and they save us the cost of the equivalent bought-in fuel.

In 2018, we converted 12,000 tonnes of sawdust into energy at our Howden and Runcorn sites. This is enough sawdust to fill 15 Olympic swimming pools. Burning it onsite means that it doesn't have to be transported elsewhere to be reused. It also saves us money. We generated 46,000 MWh of energy from our biomass boilers in 2018, equivalent to the average annual electricity consumption of 12,000 households.

Over ten years ago, an employee-led energy efficiency initiative came up with the idea of repairing broken pallets rather than scrapping them. We put these pallets back into use, which cuts down our waste and saves us money. In 2018 we repaired over 160,000 pallets, making a total of 1.6 million since this program started.

Responsible operations

Energy-efficient facilities, efficient transport

All our factories, warehouses and transport sites meet the ISO 14001 standard for Environmental Management. This assures us that we have good processes in place. It also encourages us to look for further improvements in areas such as sustainable energy, waste and material management.

We have invested in a number of energy-saving projects in our production facilities in 2018. The most significant of these involved replacing old compressed air management systems and technology with modern energy-efficient versions. These initiatives should give us an aggregate energy saving of around 2.4 million kWh per year, the equivalent of the annual energy use of 140 average homes.

In the factory where we implemented these energy-saving initiatives, we achieved a 12% year-on-year reduction in the electricity consumed to make one finished product. Despite an increase in production volume, the overall electricity use at that factory reduced by 6% compared to the previous year.

We are very proud of our award-winning sustainable road transport fleet which combines efficient modern trucks with a focus on encouraging and monitoring safe and sustainable driver behaviour. Our fleet drives over 15 million miles per year, so it's very important to us that it's both efficient and safe. For more details of the specific features that help us to achieve these objectives, please see the extended case study on pages 46 and 47 of our 2017 report.

Lowering emissions

Efficient operations lead to reduced emissions

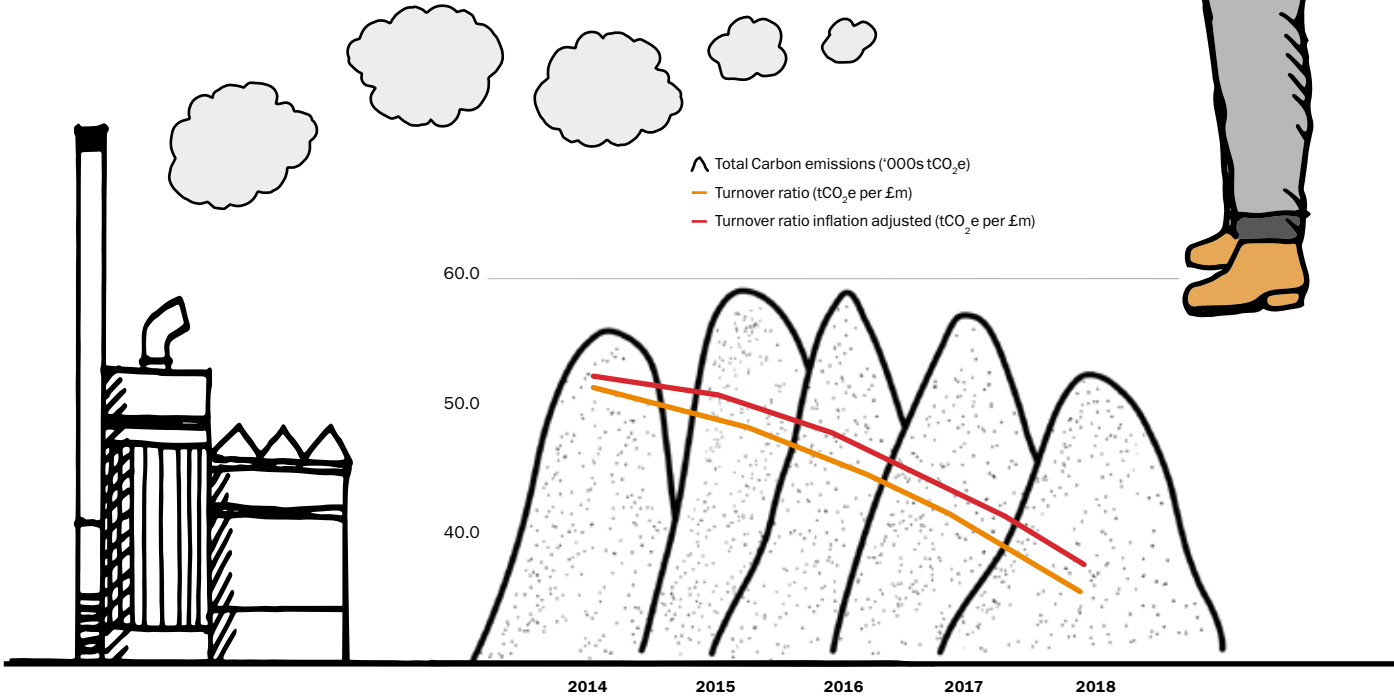
GREENHOUSE GAS AND EMISSIONS REPORTING

	Total CO ₂ Emissions (Tonnes) 2018	Total CO ₂ Emissions (Tonnes) 2017
Scope 1 – Direct: Gas	3,472	3,314
Scope 1 – Direct: Diesel	26,683	26,548
Scope 1 – Direct: Other fuels	898	999
SCOPE 1 – DIRECT: TOTAL	31,053	30,861
Scope 2 – Indirect: Electricity	21,130	25,989
SCOPE 2 – INDIRECT: TOTAL	21,130	25,989
TOTAL (Scope 1 and 2)	52,183	56,850
Turnover (£m)	1,511.3	1,403.8
Turnover ratio (tCO₂e per £m)	34.5	40.5
Inflation adjusted turnover ratio (tCO₂e per £m)	37.0	45.7

We are pleased to report that our total emissions have reduced in 2018 despite an increase in turnover.

Turnover increased by 7.7% in 2018, whilst the turnover ratio decreased by 14.7% and the inflation adjusted turnover ratio decreased by 12.9%. We will continue to look for further improvements. Our record over the past five years is shown on the chart below.

Emission source data is converted to carbon tonnes using the conversion factors published by Defra. Source data includes meter readings for electricity and gas and purchasing records for other fuels.



Our communities

Local community projects, Leonard Cheshire

Local community projects

Local involvement on a nationwide basis, thousands of donations, £1.4m contributed

Each of our depots, and every one of our manufacturing, distribution and support sites, has an important role in the life of its local community. Each site depends on the local community for its success and growth; for customers and staff.

Our culture is based on personal relationships and individual accountability, and we encourage our people to support and engage with local activities and charities.

We make our products, time and cash available for staff to get involved in all sorts of ways. This year we have donated 38 kitchens to local good causes, and paid for them to be fitted. These kitchens go into places like village halls and community centres, as well as to charities which collect surplus food from hotels, restaurants and supermarkets and share it with vulnerable people who need it most. It helps them to continue to serve their neighbourhoods.

We also support thousands of small local projects with cash donations. Typical donations may be just a few hundred pounds, but they will make a big difference. They might cover things like:

- helping local hospices to fund vital care for patients or counselling for bereaved families

- donating cash to local air ambulance charities, helping them to keep on providing essential emergency services
- buying kit for a local children's sports team
- donating cash to a local hospital's appeal for vital equipment
- donating stock to help renovate facilities at a local community centre or scout hut

In 2018, we've made over 3,600 separate donations which have involved us giving cash or products worth £1.4m.

Our culture of giving back to the local community also shows in the actions our people take as individuals. Every year, we support our people as they take the Howdens culture and make it personal. They give up their time and put themselves to the test to raise money for all sorts of local and national causes. We hold the Charities Aid Foundation Gold Award in recognition of the high level of employee participation in payroll giving.

See the case study on the opposite page for details of how four of our employees raised over £20,000 for Leonard Cheshire by successfully completing a 100 mile cycle ride.

Leonard Cheshire

£750,000 donated, 31 inclusive kitchens installed, "Can Do" projects, employability workshops

We've had a successful partnership with Leonard Cheshire since 2004 and we're pleased to say that it continues to grow. In 2018 we have donated cash and goods worth £0.75m.

Leonard Cheshire's aim is to support individuals to live, learn and work as independently as they choose, whatever their ability. They work for a fairer, more inclusive society that recognises the contributions that we all make and where we can all play our part. They support people with a wide range of additional needs, all over the world.

Like Howdens, they value local relationships, and their work supports people to be active and proud members of their local communities.

They support people to live in their own homes and in residential care, as well as providing skills and employment programmes which can help people to develop themselves and take an active role in contributing to their communities.

Our work with Leonard Cheshire is currently focused in three main areas:

- designing and fitting inclusive kitchens in their care homes and day centres so that disabled people can live more independently

- helping young people living with disabilities to play an active role in their communities through Howdens' sponsorship of the "Can Do" volunteering programme
- offering support and skills training through employability workshops and mentoring

Inclusive kitchens

Howdens are experts at designing inclusive and democratic kitchens that can help a wide range of people with different needs. This could range from features that help the youngest and oldest members of multi-generational families, to features that can help people with limited mobility, sight or other additional needs. All of our kitchen ranges are available with a variety of inclusive features such as easy access cabinets, pull-down shelves and pull-out storage, variable-height worktops for sinks and preparation areas, high-contrast work surfaces and cupboards to help with limited sight, and raised plinths to allow wheelchairs to pass below.

There is an obvious fit between our skills in inclusive kitchen design and the needs of Leonard Cheshire's residents. We have pledged to supply and fit inclusive kitchens from our range wherever they are needed in any of Leonard Cheshire's homes across the country, and we have been doing this for some years. In 2018 we fitted a further 31 kitchens nationwide.

Most kitchens are for residents' everyday use, but some are specific training kitchens, used to pass on cooking skills which help people increase their ability to live independently.

Some comments from users of the kitchens have been: *"Now I'll be able to prepare my own meals and eat when I want to", and "The new kitchen will enable me to cook like I did when I was at home before my stroke."*

Can Do

We began to support the Can Do programme in 2010. Can Do is a skills development activity-based programme for young people with additional needs. It gives these young adults the chance to develop important life and work skills, and boost their self-confidence.

It does this by supporting them to devise and take part in a range of projects in their local community. These projects are designed in conjunction with the specific needs and interests of their participants, and they cover a wide range of activities.

In 2018, for example, projects have ranged from gardening to sailing to wildlife projects; from delivering "care and share" bags to homeless people around the UK at Christmas to visiting residents in care homes, and learning woodworking skills. It provides individual mentoring, group support and a social network, as well as an opportunity to gain a City & Guilds qualification.

Howdens support has helped Can Do expand from four locations when we began our involvement to 18 locations in 2018, supporting 2,000 young people per year through meaningful projects in their local community.

Can Do aims to build young people's confidence, so that they can get out and about, learn a range of skills, build their support and friendship networks, and where possible get ready for the world of work.

95% of participants said that they had learnt new skills which would help them in the future. Typical feedback comments were that participation in Can Do *"has been great at supporting me to make some important changes to my life. This experience had really helped me to improve my self-confidence" and "something really great to put on my CV and a huge confidence boost"*.

Employability workshops

In 2018 we have started working with Leonard Cheshire on a programme of employability workshops, designed to equip people with skills that they will need to succeed in the jobs market, such as job search and CV writing skills, interview practice and sessions on different ways of finding employment and an introduction to what the world of work looks like. Feedback from participants was very positive, with 95% of participants saying that they felt more confident about applying for jobs and navigating the recruitment process, and one participant saying that it had *"enabled me to regain the focus that I had lost towards my aspirations"*.

There is more information about Leonard Cheshire at www.leonardcheshire.org/, and information on the Can Do programme here: <https://leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/life-and-work-skills/can-do>.

Case Study: "Ride London" employee fundraising for Leonard Cheshire

In July 2018, a team of four Howdens employees took on the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 mile bike challenge to raise awareness and funds for Leonard Cheshire.

On a rainy and windy day, they completed the course and raised over £20,000 in sponsorship between them. Despite being a little saddle sore, they collected their well-deserved commemorative medals and wore them with the pride of a good job well done.

Howdens was proud to support these exceptional individual efforts in aid of Leonard Cheshire. To prepare them for the tough course, we arranged for them to have professional mentoring and practical training advice from presenter and cycling expert, Rebecca Charlton. We also provided fundraising support by commissioning and publishing a series of video blogs from the riders to showcase their stories and try to help them reach their target.

