John Lewis champions local UK suppliers and manufacturing in new 'Locally Made' collaborations

Monday 15 August, 2016

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John Lewis has today announced 'Locally Made', a new initiative to enhance its support of local UK suppliers and manufacturers. The project will see the retailer bring together locally designed and made products from across the country in a dedicated area in its shops.

The project will kick-start in John Lewis Leeds (opening 20 October 2016) which will stock over 120 products from 11 local Yorkshire suppliers including Masons Yorkshire Gin and the Harrogate Candle Company. All of the suppliers are based within a 30 mile radius of Leeds. The products will also be available on the John Lewis website, broadening their exposure and making them available to shoppers across the country.

Over the next few months, John Lewis shops in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Cardiff will also increase their range of locally made products, followed by new shops opening next year in Oxford and Westfield London.

The project is in partnership with Harrogate-based The Great British Exchange (GBE) which launched in 2014 and sources artisanal products from new designers, established makers, independent businesses and British-based factories from across the UK. It provides direct support for independent suppliers, making their products available in national retailers and easily accessible for shoppers.

Anna Rigby, Head of Buying for Home Accessories and Gifts at John Lewis, said: 'We know that our customers are interested in the provenance of products and as a British retailer, we're proud to support British design and quality by sourcing locally. Our Made Locally campaign, in partnership with The Great British Exchange, will help us strengthen our existing local supplier base and inevitably champion more British designers and manufacturers.'

Matthew Hopkins, Managing Director at The Great British Exchange, said: 'The essence of The Great British Exchange is to provide a stepping stone into retail for British manufacturers and it's a one-stop-shop for retailers looking for British made products. We work hard to provide a route to market for new British manufacturers and designers. I'm very proud of our partnership with John Lewis, which creates fantastic ongoing opportunities for more locally sourced products to be sold in one of the UK's most prestigious retailers.'

John Lewis has a rich heritage when it comes to working with British manufacturers. The retailer has already established relationships with local suppliers at several of its existing shops, including John Lewis Cardiff which has 80 Welsh product lines and its shop in Birmingham which has several 'Made in the Midlands' products including suppliers from the city's famous Jewellery Quarter.

John Lewis own-brand furnishing fabrics, duvets and pillows are also manufactured at its own textiles mill, Herbert Parkinson, founded in 1934 in Lancashire. Its own-brand mattresses are produced by Spink & Edgar, a family-owned business based in Yorkshire.

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