

Consumer Engagement: Tailoring and Dry Cleaning

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Stella McCartney Ltd (SMC) is a signatory of the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP) 2020 Commitment. This Commitment, managed by WRAP, seeks to significantly reduce the environmental impacts of clothing across its lifecycle.

As part of this commitment, SMC are exploring opportunities to build upon their existing work to extend the life of garments by providing a service to their customers.

Key Facts

- **Existing initiatives** - are in place for garment durability, including a communication campaign that was launched in 2014 (Clevercare).
- **Digital communications** have been reviewed to find ways to add messaging about durability to align with the Love Your Clothes (LYC) campaign.
- **Dry cleaning** – a significant number of garments are dry-clean-only . SMC were interested in gaining a better understanding of the potential environmental issues associated with dry-cleaning.
- **High quality garments** - the dry cleaners and tailors interviewed found SMC garments were high quality and only had issues with invisible zippers breaking and heavy make-up stains from SMC customers.

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Case Study

Existing initiatives

Existing initiatives by SMC include:

- Materials testing with suppliers and during production;
- Rectifying potential fabric and manufacturing issues before garments get to market;
- Providing tailoring services at point of sale;
- Launching and supporting the Clevercare initiative – a symbol added to all SMC care-labels that serves as a simple reminder to consider the environment when washing and caring for your garments;
- Developing relationships with preferred tailors and dry cleaners in the locality of a store; and
- Providing customers with information on appropriate care and cleaning of garments on swing tags.

Stella's World

The SMC website already provides customers with information on [sustainability](#) through the Stella's World section of the website.

In relation to maintaining or extending the life of clothing, Stella's World provides information on mending clothes, caring for clothes - less washing, tumble drying, ironing and dry cleaning protects garments - and donating unwanted clothes.

This messaging was cross referenced with WRAP's consumer focused Love Your Clothes (LYC) campaign to see if there were any additional messages that SMC could provide their customers.

Opportunities to add messaging on stain removal, accessorising and planning wardrobes were identified. SMC are considering LYC messaging as part of their website update in Autumn.

The [LYC website](#) is designed to raise awareness of the value of clothes with consumers and help make the most of the clothes they already have.

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Environmental profiling of dry cleaning

SMC sell a significant number of dry clean only garments. These garments are too delicate to be cleaned via a wet laundering process that may damage the clothing.

SMC wanted to understand what the environmental profile of dry cleaning was to understand the impact of these types of garments.

The research found that very little has been published about the relative impacts of dry cleaning as an alternative cleaning option to domestic wet laundering.

While domestic laundering is the predominant cleaning method, dry cleaning is necessary for some delicate clothing that would be damaged by wet laundering.

Most dry cleaning processes involve the use of chemical solvents as the prime means of removing dirt and stains, in contrast to the wet laundering combination of detergent, water and (significant) mechanical action.

The dry cleaning process

The predominant solvent used in the UK is perchloroethylene or “PERC” (Defra 2014).

It is used by most dry cleaners because it removes stains and dirt effectively from all common types of fabric, but is a toxic chemical with human health and environmental concerns.

Because of the risks associated with solvent use, dry cleaners in the UK are regulated by local authorities and must apply for a permit to operate.

There is hydrocarbon solvent, siloxane and carbon alternatives to PERC. Unfortunately, there is currently insufficient evidence to be conclusive about whether the alternatives are better or worse than PERC from an environmental perspective.

It is therefore likely that electricity use for dry cleaning will be significant to the overall footprint of dry-cleaned clothes. Maximising and improving energy efficiency in the dry cleaning process is therefore likely to be important to reduce overall environmental impacts.

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The dry cleaning process (contd)

Any business models that can reduce transport emissions in collecting and returning clothes for dry cleaning may also provide an important improvement.

The full [Environmental Profile of Dry Cleaning report](#) can be found on the WRAP website.

Consumer engagement: Dry cleaners & tailors

Interviews with SMC dry cleaning and tailoring partners sought to obtain insight into the types and performance of SMC garments received.

It also provided visibility on the guidance and aftercare instructions being communicated to SMC customers.

The diagram on the following page illustrates the results of the interviews.

These results demonstrate that quality was high and the main issues experienced related to breaking invisible zippers and make up stains.

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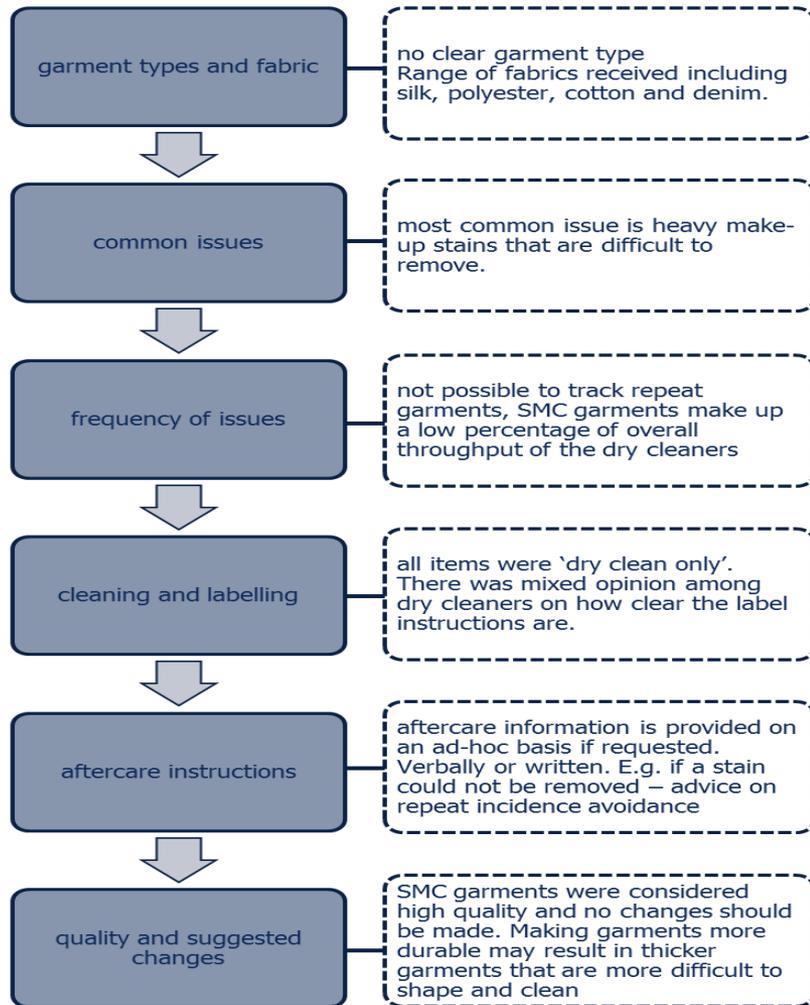
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dry cleaning



tailoring & alterations

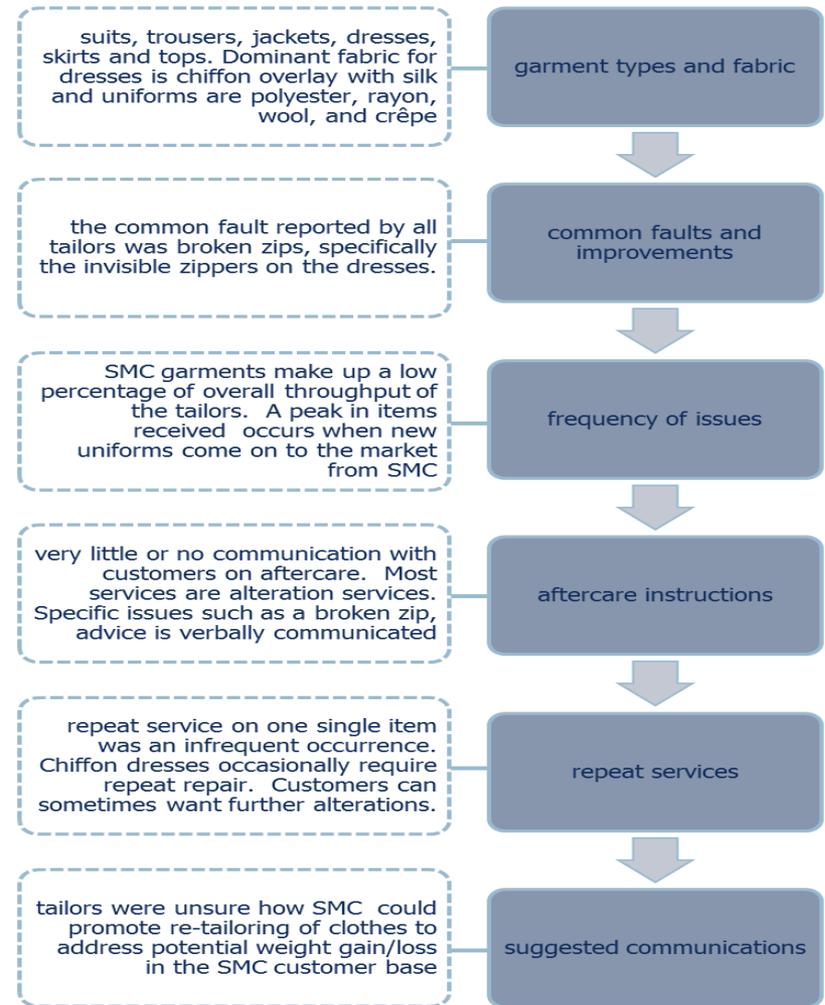


Diagram source: WRAP, 2015

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WRAP's vision is a world where resources are used sustainably. It works in partnership with governments, businesses, trade bodies, local authorities, communities and individuals looking for practical advice to improve resource efficiency that delivers both economic and environmental benefits.

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Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through:

- **re-inventing** how we design, produce and sell products;
- **re-thinking** how we use and consume products; and
- **re-defining** what is possible through recycling and re-use.