



## NEWS RELEASE

### **New research reveals that mechanically recycled polyester is no more likely than virgin polyester to lead to fibre fragmentation from apparel**

The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) has published a new research report into recycled polyester (rPET) in apparel, in the context of fibre fragmentation. TMC set out to determine how the replacement of virgin polyester with recycled polyester affects fibre fragmentation. Following testing of 251 different fabrics using The Microfibre Consortium Test Method, the research found that mechanically recycled polyester does not have a more detrimental effect when compared to virgin polyester.

Launched in 2021, The Microfibre Consortium Test Method is a globally aligned and standard test method to determine the quantity of fibres that fragment from finished fabrics during simulated domestic laundering. The new research was undertaken with support from signatories to [The Microfibre 2030 Commitment](#). Data shows that, overall, mechanically recycled polyester fabrics fragmented to the same extent as those made from virgin polyester (vPET). However, TMC cannot currently comment on chemically recycled polyester, due to the lack of data, and has called on the industry to increase the volume and detail of testing, so that further analysis can be undertaken.

Fibre fragmentation remains a concern for all textiles, including polyester materials, whether virgin or recycled. While isolated studies of limited samples may indicate differences between variables (e.g. rPET versus vPET), those effects did not translate across a large data set containing a multitude of different fabric specifications such as yarn size, fabric construction, and weight. This reinforces the importance of obtaining a substantive dataset.

Dr Kelly Sheridan, research director at The Microfibre Consortium, comments: “This report showcases the value of both having a globally aligned test method in place, and a large and growing list of signatories to the Microfibre 2030 Commitment. We have been able to analyse thousands of individual data points to reach these important conclusions about recycled polyester and fibre fragmentation. The findings demonstrate that fibre fragmentation is no worse for fabrics made with mechanically recycled material compared with those made from virgin polyester, and we have substantial data to back up that conclusion.”



“However, this research project has also highlighted where we need to focus next. We don’t have enough data about chemically recycled polyester, so we are calling on the industry to work with us to explore this issue too. Crucially, in publishing this research report, we have demonstrated the power of the collective and what we can achieve when we work collaboratively towards one common goal. The research, made possible through our signatories’ commitment to test their fabrics, has delivered valuable insights and I hope that its publication will encourage more contributors to come forward and work with The Microfibre Consortium to significantly increase the volume of data that is tested.”

TMC’s ‘Technical Research Report: Recycled Polyester within the context of Fibre Fragmentation’ is available now on The Microfibre Consortium website [here](#).

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#### **NOTE TO EDITORS**

#### ***About The Microfibre Consortium***

The Microfibre Consortium (TMC) is a research-led sustainable textiles NGO, working to convene the global textiles sector through [The Microfibre 2030 Commitment and Roadmap](#). It is the first and only organisation whole-heartedly focused on this topic and works on behalf of its signatories which comprises of brands and retailers, researchers and affiliated organisations. TMC’s signatory base represents the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, amongst others. Its global remit ensures that the clothing industry delivering to a wide and diverse consumer base, can be consistent with its implementation of mitigation measures relating to unintentional fibre fragmentation and microfibre pollution (both synthetic and natural) through actions such as:

- developing root cause understanding and solutions
- driving an aligned commitment
- delivering sustained action and measurable impact.

Its work is managed by a dedicated UK based team that is led by founding director Sophie Mather.

The full list of TMC signatories to the Microfibre 2030 Commitment are listed at <https://www.microfibreconsortium.com/signatories>.