

## News release

### **The John Lewis Partnership reveals finalists for the first retail tech innovation programme of 2018 and launches next challenge**

The John Lewis Partnership today announced that it has selected three finalists to join its unique retail tech innovation programme - JLAB, following a competitive pitch day.

The first JLAB pitch day of 2018 based on a health and wellbeing theme, whittled down over 100 start-ups and established businesses to a shortlist of 11, who then [pitched](#) to a panel of six senior leaders from across the John Lewis Partnership.

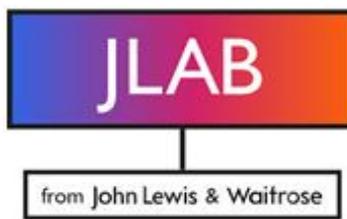
Businesses were invited to pitch customer facing, digital propositions which could provide Waitrose customers with advice and inspiration that makes it easier for them to lead healthy lifestyles and eat more healthily. The three businesses selected to now enter the JLAB programme are:

- **Kafoodle** - a food tech business that combines personalised meal planning with dietician dashboards to monitor nutritional needs
- **OME Health** - offers personalised, science based health plans built on a person's gut microbiome, genetics blood markers and other health data
- **Best in Bag** - an app that helps customers with unique dietary needs to make the right food choices by giving personalised nutritional advice

The three finalists will now have access to expert advice from Waitrose senior leaders as well as product validation from retail experts and customers and possible financial investment.

John Vary, Futurologist at the John Lewis Partnership and one of the pitch day judges, said: "We were extremely impressed with the entries we had and the participants who attended our first pitch day of 2018. The businesses we've selected in the health and wellbeing space are truly innovative and we're looking forward to helping them make their ideas part of our customers' experiences. We're passionate about exploring new concepts that will transform retail and drive creativity."

As JLAB is now running throughout the year rather than as a one-off 12-week innovation programme, the next challenge launches today via [jlab.co.uk](http://jlab.co.uk). Start-ups and established businesses are encouraged to submit innovative concepts which could significantly reduce the impact of plastic waste in both John Lewis and Waitrose and help the Partnership make a significant contribution towards the UK Plastics Pact targets.



Waitrose and John Lewis already have a commitment that all own brand packaging and consumables will be widely recycled, re-usable or home compostable by 2025 and this new JLAB challenge which closes on 5 August, complements this ongoing work.

**-ENDS-**

**For more information please contact Donna Airey or Sam Clayton, Capella PR, [JLAB@capellapr.com](mailto:JLAB@capellapr.com), 0207 924 565 or Sarah Henderson, John Lewis Partnership, [sarah.henderson@johnlewis.co.uk](mailto:sarah.henderson@johnlewis.co.uk), 07764 676036**

**Notes to editors:**

**UK Plastics Pact targets:**

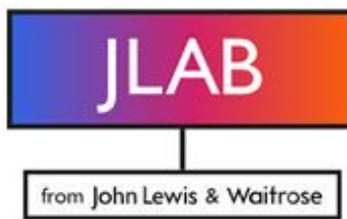
- 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable
- 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted
- 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging
- Take actions to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging items through redesign, innovation or alternative delivery methods.

For more information visit [www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact)

**The John Lewis Partnership** operates 50 John Lewis shops across the UK, [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com), 353 Waitrose shops, [waitrose.com](http://waitrose.com) and business to business contracts in the UK and abroad. The business has annual gross sales of over £11.5bn. It is the UK's largest example of an employee-owned business where all 85,500 staff are Partners in the business.

**Waitrose** has 353 shops in England, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands, including 65 convenience branches, and another 27 shops at Welcome Break locations. It combines the convenience of a supermarket with the expertise and service of a specialist shop - dedicated to offering quality food that has been responsibly sourced, combined with high standards of customer service. Waitrose also exports its products to more than 50 countries worldwide and has nine shops which operate under licence in the Middle East.

Waitrose's omnichannel business includes the online grocery service [Waitrose.com](http://Waitrose.com), as well as specialist online shops including [waitrosecellar.com](http://waitrosecellar.com) for wine and [waitroseflorist.com](http://waitroseflorist.com) for plants and flowers and [waitrosegifts.com](http://waitrosegifts.com) for gifts. In recent months, Waitrose has been awarded the much-coveted



European-wide Compassion in World Farming 'Best Retailer Award', Soil Association's 'Best Organic Supermarket Award 2017' and The Drinks Business' 'Retail Buying Team of the Year Award'.

**John Lewis** - John Lewis operates 50 John Lewis shops across the UK (36 department stores, 12 John Lewis at home and shops at St Pancras International and Heathrow Terminal 2) as well as [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com). John Lewis, 'Best In-Store Experience 2017', 'Best Furniture Retailer 2017', 'Best Homewares Retailer 2017'\* stocks around 350,000 separate lines in its department stores and [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com) across fashion, home and technology. Johnlewis.com is consistently ranked one of the top online shopping destinations in the UK. John Lewis Insurance offers a range of comprehensive insurance products - home, car, wedding and event, travel and pet insurance and life cover - delivering the values of expertise, trust and customer service expected from the John Lewis brand.

**True** - True ([www.true.global](http://www.true.global)), is Europe's only retail and consumer sector specialist that operates across the entire investment vertical. True has total funds under management of £200m and invests in retail and consumer sector business models which represent the future of the industry. True's Live Network model brings together its private equity companies, startup innovators, investors and leading industry partners to add value, both strategically and operationally, across the retail and consumer spectrum.