

John Lewis returns to profit but staff miss out on bonus again and job cuts loom

John Lewis has returned to profit for the first time in three years but staff face another year with no bonus and the threat of job cuts.

The company behind Waitrose grocery shops and the John Lewis department stores recorded a profit of £56m, after a [loss of £234m](#) in the previous financial year.

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The [John Lewis](#) Partnership is employee-owned by permanent staff, known as partners. Those 76,000 workers typically get an annual bonus payment but were disappointed again this year.

This marks only the third time since 1953 that the group has not paid out an annual staff bonus.

But the firm said it was investing in its retail businesses and in staff base pay.

Pay could be increased by a record £116m this year, the company says, with two-thirds of staff getting a 10% uplift.

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No mention was made in the company's annual results of news reports that 11,000 jobs are to go over the next five years in a bid to save £900m.

But John Lewis chair Dame Sharon White said that a simpler business will inevitably mean less need for some roles.

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Dame Sharon declined to say what roles or which parts of the company would be impacted.

There is no target reduction in staff numbers, she said.

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The return to profit was largely driven through Waitrose, after a million more customers shopped with the partnership through the last year, totalling 22.6 million shoppers.

Waitrose profits grew by 19%, while at John Lewis profits were up by just 2%.

Similarly, at Waitrose sales were up 5% on the year before, while John Lewis department store sales dropped 4%.

The profit figures were due to selling more items, better margins and “sustainable productivity improvements”.

Cost savings worth £88m have already been made, with changes to staff hours and “simplified ways of working”.

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Profit is expected to rise again this year, the partnership said, as it overhauls its business strategy.

John Lewis is aiming to open new Waitrose shops and refurbish 80 of the existing grocery outlets, and add around 80 new brands to its department stores.

Sales were up in a number of areas over the last year, including men's tailoring, which saw growth of 48%. Sales of beauty products were also up by 4%.

The retailer said one Stanley cup – a travel mug brand widely supported by influencers – was sold every 20 minutes.

A £5 lunch deal brought an extra 22,000 customers into Waitrose shops, the company added.