

Forced Labour in Solar Industry Supply Chains



Orchard Community Energy condemns and opposes any abuse of human rights, including forced labour, anywhere in the global solar industry supply chain.

We are concerned by the evidence in the May 2021 report [“In Broad Daylight: Uyghur Forced Labour and Global Solar Supply Chains”](#), written by the Sheffield Hallam University Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, which identified companies implicated or whose supply was implicated in the use of forced labour in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China for the manufacture of solar-grade polysilicon.

We currently own two solar arrays and have investigated whether they have used companies identified in the Sheffield Hallam report. This investigation has found that:

- Orchard Farm solar array, which was constructed in early 2016, did not use solar panels from companies implicated in the report.
- Our roof-top array at The COOK Classics Kitchen, which was installed in early 2021 prior to the publication of the report, used monosilicon solar panels manufactured by JA Solar, a Chinese manufacturer included in the report. The Sheffield Hallam report, which covered polysilicon rather than monosilicon, found no evidence of the direct use of forced labour in the Uyghur region by JA Solar itself but did conclude that some of its polysilicon suppliers were implicated. JA Solar has stated its commitment not to use forced labour and that it requires its supply chain to adhere to its Supplier’s Code of Conduct “which explicitly prohibits them to engage in any form of forced labour, modern slavery or human trafficking”, although we have seen no evidence of independent audit or certification of this.

We are committed to supporting the improvement of standards and transparency in the solar industry supply chain. We and Bright Renewables, which manages our sites and which we co-own with other community energy societies, have signed the [UK solar industry supply chain statement](#) on improving traceability, sustainability and human rights within the supply chain.

We will explore the use of solar panels from other sources for our future solar installations and hope that there will be more developed initiatives or standards that we might align with then. We have reported on this issue to our members at our 2021 AGM and will maintain our dialogue with them.

Approved by the Orchard Community Energy Limited Board, January 2022.