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Press Release

MODEL HEALTH INQUIRY PUBLISHES FINAL REPORT FOR THE BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL

The Model Health Inquiry has today published its Final Report containing recommendations for the British Fashion Council on ways of improving the working lives of models employed on the catwalks of London Fashion Week. The Inquiry commissioned by the British Fashion Council and funded by the London Development Agency was established in March this year to examine the extent of any health related issues and to provide guidelines for practical action which may be taken to address them. The Report includes fourteen recommendations following the most extensive study ever to have been carried out into the health of catwalk models.

Commenting on the Final Report Baroness Kingsmill, Chair of the Model Health Inquiry, said:

“During the investigation, evidence of the vulnerability of women in the modelling profession was startling and models are at high risk of eating disorders. However, there is a deep lack of knowledge about eating disorders in the fashion industry and a widespread desire amongst many of its constituents to radically improve the current situation by banning the under 16’s, introducing health certification and ensuring professional standards of education and research.

“Our recommendations aim to safeguard the economic benefit which London fashion confers on the UK economy by recognising the important role which modelling plays in British fashion.

“I am pleased that many of our recommendations are already being adopted by the British Fashion Council and that the Inquiry process has begun to change behaviour and not just perceptions.”

Hilary Riva, Chief Executive of the British Fashion Council said:

“The British Fashion Council would like to thank the Inquiry team for their report. We now have a broad range of recommendations to consider. Some of these have already been adopted and others will take time, and further funding, to develop. We look forward to building upon the work completed to date to bring about further positive change.”

The Final Report by the Model Health Inquiry can be found at www.modelhealthinquiry.com and the recommendations contained in the report are as follows:

Recommendation One: Models under the age of 16 should be banned from the catwalks at London Fashion Week and the ban should be rigorously enforced. Models would need to demonstrate proof of age through passports or birth certificates. The British Fashion Council should also identify as a matter of urgency additional support for models aged 16-18 including provision of chaperones where appropriate.

Recommendation Two: The fashion industry should be in line with other sectors working with children. Criminal Record Bureau checks should be mandatory for those working with models below 16 years of age. These should include model agents, designers, photographers and casting directors.

Recommendation Three: From September 2008 models participating in LFW should provide a medical certificate attesting their good health from doctors with expertise in recognising eating disorders. Models will be responsible for organising and paying for the necessary medical assessments but agencies would be required to check certificates before taking individuals on to their books. The experience of Milan in introducing medical tests for catwalk models starting his autumn should be carefully monitored in order to develop effective procedures for London. Issues that will need to be considered in light of Milan's experience include the establishment of an accredited list of medical experts, including international experts, the checking and monitoring of certificates and the organisation of assessments for international models who arrive with very short notice ahead of the shows.

Recommendation Four: Models participating in London Fashion Week must be engaged through UK-based model agencies in order to ensure passport and medical checks are effectively enforced.

Recommendation Five: A models' health education and awareness programme should be established as a matter of urgency. The programme would include:

- a) Holding workshops to teach industry partners how to identify and advise models with eating disorders;
- b) Recruiting experienced models to host peer workshops to provide practical advice to younger models;

- c) Developing an advice and support website for models, parents, agencies and casting directors supplemented by a telephone helpline;
- d) Production and distribution of an eating disorder awareness DVD throughout the industry, featuring expert members from the Panel.

Recommendation Six: Establishing a healthy backstage environment at this September's London Fashion Week is a priority. Venues should be demonstrably drug free – possibly including the use of random drug tests - and the British Fashion Council should ensure the rigorous enforcement of smoke-free working environments. Good quality food should be provided for models and others working backstage.

Recommendation Seven: The panel supports the establishment of a self-funded representative body for the modeling profession with initial activity to include a 'foundation room' which the British Fashion Council has agreed to provide during London Fashion Week to reach out to catwalk models and offer access to nutritional advice and other support.

Recommendation Eight: Digital manipulation is outside our remit but we believe it forms part of the wider issue of model health. We are aware that digitally manipulating body shape can perpetuate an unachievable aesthetic and think the industry should give consideration to a voluntary code governing its use.

Recommendation Nine: The BFC should actively set out to establish partnerships with equivalent organisations such as Camera della Moda Italiana and the Council of Fashion Designers of America in other international fashion centres in order to achieve best practice in a global industry.

Recommendation Ten: The BFC should work with the AMA to develop minimum requirements and best practice standards for agencies booking models. Agents providing models for London Fashion Week would also be expected to offer:

- Clear contracts for assignments
- Health training for staff
- Mentoring or buddy systems for models
- Access to a counsellor
- Systematic de-briefing systems for past photo-shoots

Recommendation Eleven: Funding must be made available for a rigorous scientific study into the prevalence of eating disorders among fashion models and the identification of vulnerability factors that are associated with them.

Recommendation Twelve: We would support a detailed investigation into the working conditions of the models along the lines of the research being carried out by the Work Foundation into 21st Century employment.

Recommendation Thirteen: We support additional funding for the British Fashion Council to sustain the wider role we have proposed for the organisation in this report. We believe ministers and BFC sponsors should review the level of financial support for the BFC as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation Fourteen: A permanent model health panel should be established under the aegis of the British Fashion Council to monitor the industry's response to this inquiry's recommendations and to make new proposals as necessary. Funding should be made available to support an appropriate Secretariat.

-Ends-

Contacts

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Photo call details

Baroness Kingsmill, the Inquiry Chairman, together with Hilary Riva, Chief Executive of the British Fashion Council, will be present for 15 minutes at a photo call for members of the media at 10:15 a.m. at The Work Foundation, 21 Palmer Street, London, SW1H 0AD. Photo editors should contact James Devas on 0207 321 0000 or email james@aura-financial.com.

Briefing details

A briefing held by the Model Health Inquiry and the British Fashion Council and attended by Baroness Kingsmill, Hilary Riva and members of the Inquiry Panel will be held today at 11 am at the Work Foundation, 21 Palmer Street, London, SW1H 0AD.

Notes to Editors

UK Fashion Industry

The designer fashion industry is an important sector in the UK's increasingly significant knowledge economy. Latest estimates put the industry's Gross Value Added at £384 million in 2004 and it supports 2,400 firms which employ around 9,300 workers. The total value of the men's and women's designer clothing markets in 2005 was estimated at £1,820 million.

Furthermore, it is a dynamic component of the broader apparel, footwear and textiles sector that contributes around £10 billion to the UK economy and employs 380,000 workers.

Scope of Inquiry and Panel Membership

The British Fashion Council established the Model Health Inquiry on March 23 this Year under an expert panel chaired by Baroness Denise Kingsmill. The inquiry's scope is to:

- Establish the extent of any health issues, notably in relation to body size and shape, among catwalk models employed at London Fashion Week
- Look at the casting and selection process of models for work at London Fashion Week
- Establish the approach taken by other fashion capitals, in particular New York, Paris, Milan and Madrid; and evaluate the effectiveness of those actions
- Provide guidelines for effective and practical action which might be taken by employers of catwalk models within the UK fashion industry, in order to address any material size related health concerns which the Inquiry identifies
- Describe how any measures, appropriate to managing the health of London Fashion Week models, would be implemented, enforced and assessed effectively.

Each particular panel member was chosen due to their expertise in health and or fashion industry matters and the combined expertise of the Inquiry panel has been designed to enable a balanced and measured review of the material research, facts and submitted evidence.

Panel members:

Sarah Doukas	Founder of Storm Model agency
Betty Jackson	British fashion designer
Giles Deacon	British fashion designer
Charlotte Clark	Co-Director of Inca Productions
Paula Reed	Style Director of Grazia magazine
Erin O'Connor	English model
Prof Wendy Dagworthy	Head of the School of Fashion and Textiles, Royal College of Art
Dr. Adrienne Key	Clinical Director, Priory Hospital Eating Disorders Unit

British Fashion Council

The British Fashion Council owns and organises London Fashion Week and the British Fashion Awards. It seeks to help British designers to develop their businesses. Created in 1983, the BFC is a non-profit making limited company and is financed by industry sponsors.

The London Development Agency

The London Development Agency works to improve the quality of life for all Londoners and drive sustainable economic growth.

