

BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL

Press Release
23 March 2007

British Fashion Council establishes Model Health Inquiry chaired by Baroness Kingsmill

The British Fashion Council today announced that it has set up an independent inquiry in response to concerns about the health of models on the catwalks at London Fashion Week.

Chaired by Baroness Kingsmill, the panel members will include individuals representing eating disorder organisations, other health professionals, representatives of model agencies, academics, fashion designers, retail groups and models.

The inquiry, which will be completed in the late summer and before the next London Fashion Week in September, will examine the extent to which models are at risk from working pressures which may be damaging to their health.

A series of recommendations will be made in the concluding report about practical actions and changes to address any significant issues and health concerns which the panel identifies from the evidence presented.

The panel team will engage with a broad range of stakeholders and relevant interested parties, who will be invited to provide written or verbal submissions to the panel over the next three months.

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

"London is a recognised leader in fashion, which is itself one of the UK's most vibrant and influential industries and such a position necessitates a level of responsibility beyond pure creative excellence.

"The British Fashion Council has established this panel to review current practice and issue clear guidance on the important issues of model health and age, so that, as an industry, we can ensure we are behaving responsibly and in the interests of those models who work in this country."

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Commenting on the announcement Baroness Kingsmill, Chairman of the Model Health Inquiry Panel, said:

"I am delighted that the British Fashion Council has instigated an inquiry to look seriously at this area of the industry. The panel aims to investigate the scale and seriousness of any health problems associated with models in the British fashion industry, and separate fact from supposition, and speculation, in this emotive and volatile area.

"The British fashion industry is important to our economy and is a significant leisure activity for many women in the UK. Once the panel is complete, we look forward to rapidly establishing the right framework for gathering the relevant information before analysing it in order that our final report gives the UK fashion industry clear guidance and recommendations."

A further announcement confirming membership of the inquiry panel, methodology and timetable for the inquiry will be made in due course.

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Editors notes:

The 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 British Clothing Industry:

The British clothing industry employs over 85,000 people, produces more than £4 billion worth of goods and generates annual womenswear sales at retail in excess of £21 billion.

Baroness Kingsmill CBE is a former Deputy Chairman of the Competition Commission and conducted market investigations into matters as diverse as Milk Supply, Underwriting, Cars and mergers including those proposed between Lloyds TSB and Abbey National, and P&O Princess and Royal Caribbean. In 2001, she headed an Independent Review of Women's Pay and Employment reporting to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. In 2003 she headed the task force on Human Capital Management - "Accounting for People".

Baroness Kingsmill is a non-executive director of British Airways and senior adviser to the Royal Bank of Scotland as well as a trustee of the Cambridge University Business School and pro-chancellor of Brunel University. She is also a trustee (formerly the deputy chair) of the Design Museum and served for seven years as the chair of Southwark and Lewisham NHS Trust. And she was chair of Sadler's Wells between 2003-2004. A lawyer, specialising in Industrial Relations, Employment Law and Corporate Governance she read Economics and Anthropology at Cambridge before starting her career in marketing with ICI and the International Wool Secretariat.