

BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL

THE BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL LAUNCH MODELS FIRST INITIATIVE

LONDON, 13 December 2017 - The British Fashion Council (BFC) today announced they would take a leading role in helping set best practice for the modelling industry and lobbying to remove barriers for models to work in the UK, with a particular focus on visa regulation and Brexit. The British Fashion Model Agency Association (BFMAA), is a newly formed organisation established by leading model agencies in the UK. The BFC will take a secretariat role in the BFMAA, and will chair an independent committee comprising leading individuals from the fashion industry to develop a charter that will protect and give a voice to models.

The BFMAA will take the place of the Association of Model Agencies. The new organisation has been formed as the need to unite the modelling industry to face and tackle industry challenges became more evident. The BFMAA will recognise legitimate model agencies that sign-up to a code of Best Practice. It aims to work with the BFC to promote this best practice to both working models and the general public to help them navigate unacceptable working practices in the industry.

The role of the BFC will be to encourage the fashion industry to sign up to a similar charter of best practice that will be developed by the committee and in consultation with industry. It will also take the role as an independent, confidential contact point for models and model agencies, students and industry to flag poor practice and report abuse. The Models First Initiative forms part of Positive Fashion, a BFC platform designed to celebrate industry best practice and encourage future business decisions to create positive change.

The BFC in partnership with the BFMAA aims to continue the work they have been undertaking to ensure that visa laws enable the industry to function, and for the UK to compete and remain at the forefront of the fashion industry. In light of Brexit, the industry is extremely concerned that it will become harder for international talent, design students and models, who have a freelance work status to work for British based fashion houses and travel to the UK for events such as London Fashion Week. The BFC is committed to developing diversity in the industry. It continues to encourage businesses and brands to consider and celebrate the multi-cultural environment in which we live, as well as the global market, when employing models, talent and design students.

Caroline Rush, CEO, British Fashion Council “The BFMAA approached us to take a more formal role in our engagement with agencies and to help lead the way in setting codes of practice that model agencies and the industry can sign up to. They understood the need to develop an independent committee that will challenge agencies, as well as industry norms to ensure that models are treated with the same respect and care as all employees in the industry. The stories highlighted through #METOO has meant that there is no better time for the industry to work together to stamp out any form of maltreatment or abuse. The fashion industry is also facing challenges as visa regulations come under scrutiny in light of Brexit and we need to ensure access is open and talented individuals from overseas are not excluded from working in the UK, diminishing our opportunity to compete on a global stage.”

BFMAA Chairman John Horner added “As the representative body of Britain’s top fashion model agencies, the BFMAA is delighted to be affiliated with the British Fashion Council. Working together we look forward to improving industry standards and working conditions for models here in the UK, as well as ensuring that the UK remains an accessible and attractive environment for both models and fashion brands.”

– ENDS –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BFMAA Founding Members Models1, Premier, Select, Storm, Boss (Manchester) & Colours (Glasgow)

The British Fashion Council (BFC) was set up in 1983 to promote British fashion internationally and co-ordinate this promotion through fashion weeks, exhibitions and showcasing events. The BFC now supports designers beginning at college level and extending to talent identification, business support and showcasing schemes to help British designer businesses develop their profiles and business globally and promote British fashion and its influential role in Britain and London. The BFC Colleges Council offers support to students through its Foundation, BA and MA scholarships, links with industry through design competitions and Graduate Preview Day. Talent identification and business support schemes include BFC Fashion Film sponsored by River Island; BFC Rock Vault; BFC Headonism; BFC/GQ Designer Menswear Fund; BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund and NEWGEN. The BFC supports Boden's Future British initiative. The BFC also runs and owns charities including the BFC Fashion Arts Foundation, the BFC Fashion Trust and the BFC Education Foundation. Showcasing initiatives and events include London Fashion Week, London Fashion Week Men's, LONDON show ROOMS, International Fashion Showcase, London Fashion Week Festival and the annual celebration of excellence in the fashion industry: The Fashion Awards.

Model Health Inquiry In 2007 the BFC commissioned Baroness Kingsmill to undertake the Model Health Inquiry. Following this report the Model Programme working group was established, which meets at least once a year to review progress on initial Model Health Inquiry recommendations. Following the Model Health Inquiry, Equity opened its membership to models. In 2015 the review of the Inquiry provided recommendations which included limited age ranges for models, the legislation of CRB checks, model welfare backstage and an independent model helpline. In 2017 following recommendation from the Model Programme working group, a Best Practice Guide for model agencies was established to set the bar for British agencies to be leaders in the sector.

The LFW Model Zone Operates throughout London Fashion Week and London Fashion Week Men's. It is a calm and peaceful space for models to rest, eat and drink between castings, shows and presentations. Independent advisors and therapists are available daily and the Model Zone also features sport, health and wellbeing drop in sessions.

Positive Fashion is the BFC's initiative designed to celebrate industry best practice and encourage future business decisions to create positive change. There are three work streams for Positive Fashion in 2017/18 (1) Sustainability : Origins & Ethics, Fairtrade & Environmental Health (2) Model Health & Diversity : Education, Communication & Equality (3) Local Manufacturing & Craftsmanship. The BFC Positive Fashion Committee for 2017/18 is a panel of industry leaders at international fashion businesses who meet quarterly to come together and share intelligence and collectively promote industry change. In September 2017 the BFC announced Adwoa Aboah as their Positive Fashion Ambassador for Model Health and Diversity, appointed to help lead the charge on change and use fashion as a positive platform to inspire future generations.