

BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL

Review of Model Health Inquiry Recommendations and Opportunities

February 2016

1. Model Age for Fashion Shows to be 16 or Over

- a. This continues to be a contractual requirement for all designers showing at London Fashion Week
- b. Chaperoning models aged 16-18 to castings should be adopted as best practice

2. CRB checks should be mandatory for all those in the fashion industry working with girls under the age of 16.

- a. Model Programme supports the introduction of legislation for DBS checks for anyone in industry working with models below the age of 16

3. The introduction of Health Certificates for models.

- a. The Health Certificate pilot from 2008 was re-reviewed and it was agreed that a framework for implementing health certificates piloted couldn't be supported. Most models resisted participation in voluntary pilot despite medical assessment being confidential and funded by the BFC. It was generally felt to be an intrusion by the models who felt they were being singled out for unreasonable scrutiny. So counter to the 'model centred' ethos of the programme. Other practical barriers were no international application, time required to book appointments and certify and costs were also prohibitive

- b. BMI was again discussed as an inaccurate measure of health
- c. A height to weight ratio, recently raised as an alternative to BMI to be explored with a GP, with regards to accuracy and fit for purpose
- d. French legislation has introduced a 'health certificate' which means models are responsible for providing their agencies with a letter from their GP stating;

'Dear [Agent]

{model name} shows no contraindication to work as a model'

This approach is not uniform and does not include a thorough health assessment so is not an effective tool for the UK.

4. Models participating in LFW to be employed by UK based model agencies in order to ensure passport and medical checks.

- a. This is difficult to implement as there are no international norms
- b. As per point 3, health certificates are not considered to be a practical or effective solution.

5. A Model Health Education Programme should be established as a matter of urgency

- a. BEAT workshops should be annual and aimed at a wider industry. These should be managed by the AMA
- b. Agencies should provide health and nutritional advice for models
- c. Agencies should run peer-to-peer workshops for established models to speak to the new faces
- d. The BFC to refresh website, add back in links to the MHI as well as publishing best practice guides, an email and telephone helpline linked to the model zone experience (a space for models to relax, get advice during LFW)

6. Healthy Backstage Environment

- a. This is now a contractual agreement between designers and the BFC. This measure and the enforcement of age limit have had the largest impact on casting and model welfare at LFW

7. The Establishment of a Self-Funded Representative Body

- a. Equity took on this role. The effectiveness of Equity was discussed and it was agreed that it is a great opportunity for models who feel they need an independent voice.
- b. Due to the international nature of the work undertaken by models and the representation across numerous territories, a helpline/e-mail has been provided by the BFC as a good first point of engagement for models unhappy with the way they are treated.

8. Digital Manipulation of Images

- a. The MHI felt this to be out of its remit but suggested the industry give consideration to a voluntary code governing its use.
- b. The Model Programme would like to see this on the agenda for schools to educate young people about image manipulation v reality, particularly in light of social media and images manipulated and shared by individuals.

9. The BFC should establish partnership with equivalent organisations in Milan, Paris and NY.

- a. The BFC now has a close working relationship with these bodies.

10. The BFC should work with the AMA to develop minimum requirements and best practice standards.

- a. The BFC to work with the AMA on this and make available on the BFC website as well as sharing with agencies outside of the AMA

11. Funding for a Rigorous Scientific Study to be Found

- a. Funding not available to implement. In the event funding is secured this should be an international partnership.

12. Support of a detailed investigation into the working conditions of models along the lines of research being carried out by the Work Foundation into 21st Century employment.

- a. This was a direct suggestion by Baroness Kingsmill. No funding was available to undertake such a significant piece of work.

13. Funding and support for BFC to sustain the wider role was proposed

- a. No specific funding was allocated by Government, however the BFC continue to take an active role in this issue

14. A Permanent Model Health Panel should be established

- a. Going forward these meetings to be more regular and new members invited

Additional suggestions to come from the review

1. Re-engage with All Walks regarding work with Colleges
2. Review how the morphology of models has changed in the last decade
3. Develop a Best Practice Guide for Agencies.

Summary of Main Achievements to Date

1. Model Age: All designers showing at London Fashion Week are contractually required to only employ models age 16 and over.
2. Model Welfare Backstage: a contractual agreement between designers and the BFC ensures healthy food and drink backstage.
3. Model representation: dedicated model section established by the union Equity.
4. Model Health Certificate Pilot: completed in 2008
5. Helpline for Models: established by the BFC for advice and help on issues.
6. International Collaboration: close working relationship established with counterparts in New York and Milan on the issue of model wellbeing
7. Advice and Guidance: annual workshops for model agency teams, hosted by BEAT, the eating disorder charity

8. Dedicated Model Zone: private space for models taking part in the catwalk shows and presentations during London Fashion Week provides advice, nourishment and space for relaxation.
9. Best Practice Guide for model agencies agreed with AMA and published
10. Model Programme Annual Review: established to review progress standards and activity.