



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MINISTER JOINS FORCES WITH MR ENGLAND TO CALL ON FASHION INDUSTRY TO DO RIGHT BY DISABLED PEOPLE**

Today the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton, has joined forces with Mr England to call on the fashion industry to reflect wider society.

The current Mr England, Jack Eyers, became an amputee at the age of 16 and has since worked to ensure that industries such as fashion do more to cater to disabled people. He has appeared on catwalks for New York, Milan and London Fashion Weeks.

**The Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Sarah Newton, said:**

“Britain is a world leader in empowering disabled people and I encourage the British fashion industry to follow suit. With the spending power of disabled people totalling a whopping £249 billion, the fashion industry is missing out on a huge opportunity.

“Whether it’s on the catwalk or the high street, we need a culture change in how fashion is represented and marketed so everyone in our society feels included.”

**Mr England, Jack Eyers, said:**

“As an amputee I know and understand the difficulties disabled people can face, and how important it is that the fashion industry includes us. Fashion can play an important role in changing the perception of disabled people so it’s important the industry does more to be inclusive, whether it be on the catwalk or the high street.”

Many fashion brands have already taken steps to be more inclusive, from designers using disabled models in PR campaigns to high street retailers designing products for their disabled customers. But more needs to be done across the industry to continue this momentum.

Last year the Government appointed various sector champions including one for retail, who is working to ensure disabled people are able to enjoy their shopping experiences and encouraging retailers to cater for disabled customers’ needs.

**The Government’s sector champion for retail, Helen Drury, said:**

“Fashion has always celebrated creativity and individuality and is a great way to express ourselves. By making fashion representative of our society we all benefit by enjoying a more diverse canvas to draw inspiration from. With 20 per cent of our population having some form of disability, there is a huge customer base waiting to see themselves in the clothes they want to buy.”

Almost a fifth of the UK population is living with a disability or health condition and there is still a long way to go to ensure that the industry reflects wider society and serves their needs, whether it’s representation, access or the products themselves.

**Notes to Editors:**

- There are currently more than 11 million disabled people in the UK and the spending power of their households – ‘the purple pound’ – is estimated at £249 billion.
- Last month as part of the Disability Confident scheme, the Government launched a specific campaign aimed at supporting disabled people into work in the retail sector.

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