



**N Brown Group plc**  
("N Brown" or "the Group")

## **Just half of UK adults say their clothes make them feel good about themselves**

- Negative feelings about clothes have stopped a quarter (26%) of people from trying new fashion trends, led one in five (20%) to miss a birthday party or special event and made one in ten (11%) avoid going in to work
- Fewer than half of people who wear the UK average size (16) and above (47%) say it's easy for them to find clothes that fit well
- N Brown's Fashion for All campaign encompasses its three strategic retail brands, Jacamo, Simply Be and JD Williams, and has been developed to tackle the barriers of size, shape, age and background - which can prevent people from enjoying fashion and the confidence and wellbeing boost it can bring

12:01 AM, LONDON TUESDAY 16 JULY 2024 – Fewer than half (48%) of people say the clothes available to them have a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem, and an even smaller proportion (41%) think their clothes positively impact their body image and perception of self. A quarter (24%) say that retailers don't promote messaging that is inclusive or affirming for people like them, and one in three (32%) people say they have nothing in their wardrobe that feels fashionable.

The new research, conducted by inclusive fashion retail platform N Brown to launch its Fashion for All campaign, demonstrates how the broader fashion industry's failure to ensure everyone is able to access clothing that makes them feel good is having a significant impact on the confidence and wellbeing of their customers.

The Fashion for All campaign has identified age, size, fit and socio-economic status as the biggest barriers to accessing confidence-boosting clothing and is calling on fashion retailers to do more to ensure that their fashion is made with everyone in mind.

### **Impact beyond fashion**

Being persistently excluded from accessing fashion that looks good and fits well has an impact beyond just clothes. The Fashion for All research shows that once negative feelings around clothes set in people begin to change how they interact with the world around them. A quarter (26%) of people say they've avoided trying new fashion trends, one in five (20%) have missed a birthday party or special event and one in ten (11%) have chosen not to go into work because of how their clothes make them feel.

Older people were the least likely of all age groups to say that their clothing positively impacted their confidence and self-esteem<sup>1</sup>, and considerably less likely than other age groups to say their clothes have a positive impact on their mental health<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 42% of respondents aged 55+ said their clothing had a positive impact on their confidence and self esteem, compared with 55% of 18-30 year olds and 50% of 35-54 year olds

<sup>2</sup> 29% of respondents aged 55+ said their clothing had a positive impact on their mental health, compared with 47% of 18-30 year olds and 43% of 35-54 year olds

This issue is even more significant for people who wear larger sizes, with one in three (31%) people size 22+ saying they've avoided exercising because of their negative feelings about clothes, compared to just 12% of those who wear sizes 12 and 14.

**Sarah Welsh, CEO of Retail at N Brown Group said** *"Fashion should be for everyone, but it's clear that inclusivity is not being made a priority by the clothing industry. Our number one concern is ensuring that every one of our customers is able to access our clothes and feel incredible in them, regardless of their age, their size or their income level."*

*"We believe in democratising fashion and pride ourselves in providing feel good fashion for everybody. Whether that's considering how a person's body changes as they age, being mindful of how clothes fit at different sizes, or considering whether confidence-boosting fashion is available to people at every income level, we strive to provide our customers with the best possible product."*

*"By failing to be inclusive, retailers are not only letting down their customer base, but also limiting their opportunity for growth in a crowded and competitive market."*

### **Not all clothes are made equal**

In a world where most fashion isn't designed to be truly inclusive, some struggle more than others to find clothes that look good, fit them well, and are affordable.

Midlife and older people, for example, have a harder time accessing fashion in a landscape of garments that aren't designed with them in mind. A third (33%) of people aged 55+ say well-fitting clothes are not made easily accessible to them by fashion retailers which is significantly lower than for younger shoppers, with fewer than a quarter (22%) of those aged 18 – 30 saying they find it hard to access well-fitting clothing.

**N Brown's Product Innovation Manager Carole Wilson said** *"Some retailers fall into the trap of thinking that creating inclusive fashion is as simple as making clothes with the same fit in multiple sizes. In reality, this approach does not reflect real bodies and will never lead to fashion that works for people of all shapes."*

*"It's also important to consider how a person's body changes as they age, so we make sure to consider how the same size might fit someone in their 20s or someone in their 60s and design our products appropriately. We use a range of tools, including body scanning and 3D design technology, to ensure we know every garment we produce will look good and feel amazing on everyone."*

### **Access to fashion**

Even the act of shopping for clothes can be a negative experience. More than two-fifths (43%) of UK men and more than half (52%) of UK women saying they find buying clothes in-store to be stressful, and fewer than two in five (38%) people say shopping for clothes makes them feel good about themselves.

A third (31%) of people say that they would feel more comfortable shopping for clothes if they had been specifically designed for different body shapes, a quarter (24%) said more information about sizing and fit would help, and one in five (19%) said they would benefit from in-store and online tools to help customers of all sizes.

**Sarah Welsh concludes:** *"The retail industry must work harder to make fashion for all, not just a lucky few. At N Brown, we are proud to serve the underserved, as we have done for over 160 years. From our early days of home catalogues to today's online channels, we're delivering the styles, fit and finance options to help our customers enjoy fashion."*

**- ENDS -**

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### **About the research**

The research was conducted by Opinium between 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024, among a representative sample of 2,000 UK adults.

### **About N Brown Group**

N Brown is a top 10 UK clothing and footwear digital retail platform, with a home proposition, headquartered in Manchester and employs around 1,700 people nationwide. Through our strategic retail brands including JD Williams, Simply Be and Jacamo, we exist to make our customers look and feel amazing and take great pride in passionately championing inclusion and serving the under-served. Our customer-first shopping experience, supported by our innovative financial services proposition, is designed to deliver choice, affordability, and value to our customers, and allows us to be truly inclusive and accessible.