

NONPROFITS

BFC launches DEI audit aimed at fashion industry

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The survey aims to investigate the state of the sector's corporate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs. Image credit: British Fashion Council

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The British Fashion Council (BFC) is taking a comprehensive look at the United Kingdom's approach to inclusivity.

The organization is working with The Outsiders Perspective, a nonprofit incubation platform for people of color, and The (Fashion) Minority Report, a career development resource for underrepresented talent, to investigate the state of style industry corporate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs within the country. Launching "The Fashion DEI Census," BFC's latest release is both a survey and a call to action intended to audit the sector's standing, in the interest of eventual improvement.

"The last few years have been a wake-up call for the industry to address imbalances in the workforce from Board to entry-level positions," said Caroline Rush, CEO of the [British Fashion Council](#), in a statement.

"While most organizations have taken the time for critical reflection, there is an alarming lack of industry-wide data on the demographics of the U.K. fashion workforce, making it exceedingly difficult to track our progress," Ms. Rush said. "By gaining invaluable data insight into the U.K. fashion industry's key demographics through this audit, we can accelerate tangible change to ensure fair representation and a truly inclusive workforce."

Investigating inclusivity

The survey will capture a large share of the fashion world's demographic reality, looking at any measures taken to diversify and include marginalized groups.

Calling for the participation of those working within the industry, the audit marks the primary move toward measuring the U.K.'s progress. The findings will offer up insights as to whether or not the steps being currently taken are sufficient when it comes to fair representation.

Are you currently working in the UK fashion industry and want to contribute to industry-wide change?

In collaboration with The Outsiders Perspective and Fashion Minority Report we are launching The Fashion DEI Census, a survey aiming to audit the UK fashion industry demographics. pic.twitter.com/X9EUeCmYMJ

BFC (@BFC) August 21, 2023

The BFC shares that, despite the rise of related social justice movements and demands for increased representation in the workplace, DEI data is still scarce. Due to this lack of information, it is difficult to gauge whether fashion players are keeping pace with various commitments to diversity.

Via an anonymous survey, those across the U.K. are invited to help fill the gap and speak to demographic data through a brief series of questions. The organization reminds audiences that personal data will not be collected, as the goal is to look at the industry collectively, rather than at individual organizations' progress.

Once complete, audit results will be integrated into a wider report, set for publication later on this year as part of a pilot program created by the three partners to make DEI measurable in the U.K.

"From retail to the runway, we endeavor for this survey to reinforce a collaborative dialogue across the British fashion industry, about the importance of embedding progressive DEI practices in the workplace," said Daniel Peters, founder of The (Fashion) Minority Report, in a statement.

"It is imperative that we gain this insight from across all levels of seniority, roles and identities, allowing us to build a broad understanding of the identities of our workforce, and the ways that we can collectively drive impactful change for those who remain underrepresented."

Closing on Sept. 18, 2023, fashion workers can take the five-minute survey at <https://www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk/Innovation/The-Fashion-DEI-Census>.

Some luxury labels such as Italian fashion house Gucci are receiving recognition for their own inclusivity strides. After snagging second place on the 2023 Fashion Transparency Index ([see story](#)), the brand recently promoted the expansion of a standing partnership with Aira, an app that offers in-store assistance to blind and low-vision customers ([see story](#)).