



PRESS RELEASE

Breaking down barriers with gender free business

May 2016

Brighton based start-up Gender Free World (GFW) are on a mission to dispel the outdated tradition of gender identity by providing clothing without labels for individuals regardless of their gender. The company was founded in 2015 by 4 award winning and honoured entrepreneurs from different sectors who passionately believe that gender is restricting choice in high street shops and online marketplaces, so they have set out to do something about it.

The GFW team have over 60 years of combined experience across a variety of industries including pioneering internet start-ups, internationally renowned videoconferencing companies and one of the UK's largest websites for parents. This experience has all fed into their bold business plan for their '**Clothing Without Labels**' brand as well as a number of innovative ventures in the future which aim to stop 'what we have in our pants disproportionately restricting the access to choice on the high street and online'.

The clothes are unique in that they are devised, designed, and manufactured in the UK with the consortium working hard to ensure that their products aren't defined by gender and allow everyone to buy what they want regardless.

Lisa Honan is the Co-Founder and Director of Gender Free World Ltd and started the company after spending hours trawling through high street fashion stores trying to find (and failing) a shirt which appealed to her sense of style and fitted her body shape.

Lisa explained: ***"I believe that there is room for everybody to enjoy their style choices - without the restriction of gender assumption. We know there is a huge demand from the survey we did which showed that of the 173 people we talked to, over 80 per cent felt that they would welcome stylish, fitted shirts which suited them regardless of sex or gender."***

Lisa, graduated with a BA Hons in Communication Studies from Nottingham Trent University. She spent her early career working in the TV and film industry before becoming account manager at Wace Group where she was responsible for client relationships with major magazine accounts such as The Sunday Times Magazine. After establishing herself as an essential individual at Wace and getting promoted to Office Manager in just a few years, Lisa left to establish the Videoconference Bureau Ltd (EyeNetwork) in 1996 where she was Managing Director for over 19 years.

Lisa added: ***"At Gender Free World, we believe that there is room for everybody to enjoy their style choices - without the restriction of gender assumption. We decided to make a range of shirts***

where gender is irrelevant. But one size will not fit all - male and female shapes are different so we have designed around body shape. Our shirts are about a style, a fabric, a cut that you like - not what you are being told to wear because of your gender. Mainly this is about increasing choice, if the high street caters for your shape and your style, that's great. If you find that what you are looking for is not there then perhaps our website is what you need."

Sally Russell OBE, FRSA, is a key investor for Gender Free World and believes that their gender neutral clothing range is taking the first important steps which will have a major impact on how people shop and what they demand from high street shops in the future.

She co-founded Netmums a community-based network for parents, and remained as Director for 14 years, being responsible for financial management, technical development, editorial content and external engagement. During this time it became the biggest website for women in the UK with over 1.2 million members and 1 million visitors a week offering information to both mothers and fathers about parenting on a national level across topics as diverse as child welfare, maternity, playgroups, child health and child safety. In 2014 she was awarded an OBE for services to families.

Her younger son is transgender and has an unusual form of autism called Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA). After a couple of years as a full-time carer, she is now leading a campaign to raise awareness of PDA and to find new ways to support young people and their families who experience identity dysphoria.

Sally explained about the future plans for Gender Free World: ***"We will source and sell manual workwear for smaller people and gender neutral kids clothes. We will also sell gender neutral toys and other goods as appropriate."***

Nel Margerison is the Creative Director at Gender Free World as well as being the chief designer and tailor behind the unique designs of the shirts which have been created specifically to provide the best fit for people regardless of their gender. She has experience of retail, as area manager of House of Fraser accounts department but more recently working in education with a close interest in inclusion, allowing her commitment to equality and diversity to effect significant change. With a degree in Cultural Studies, Nel has a particular interest in gender mainstreaming and recognises the power of retail and its place in subverting stereotypes. With three children of her own she has long questioned the early introduction of gender stereotypes and the binaries that exist within both objects and activities.

Nel explained: ***"We're at a point where we can provide people with stylish shirts that really fit people's bodies. We created our Charlie range for classic fits and then Billy which really caters to those with larger busts. I noticed that often on women with larger breasts that shirts could really gape around the bust so you lose the fit or expose your boobs to everyone, so, we came up with the hidden-reverse button to stop that from happening. We've had such a positive response to this so far, it was obviously an issue for a lot of people and we're proud to be the ones to do something about it!"***

Paul Dickinson is the co-founder of Gender Free World and is proud to be working on Gender Free World as he believes the need for companies to provide products which cater to everyone's personal choice is essential in the 21st Century. He has also ensured that Gender Free World work to live by their own missions by undertaking intense market research, including their customers in decisions and keeping everything within the UK.

“I have always believed passionately in equality of opportunity. GFW is undertaking vital work extending this principle to support citizen's choices.”

His defining achievement in his diverse business career was creating the world's largest business collaboration on climate change, the not-for-profit global charity www.cdp.net.

Paul is also now a trustee of the NGO www.ShareAction.org which pioneers citizen action on climate change and other important issues through institutional investors and a Trustee of the Friends Provident Foundation which makes grants of around €1.4 million per year to NGOs working on social and environmental sustainability.

Alongside his work with Gender Free World, Paul has a strong experiential interest in low carbon businesses. In 1997 he co-founded Eynetwork with Lisa Honan and is co-founder of the CosyHome Company providing insulation solutions for historically important properties and from 2001 to 2004 I was a director of the Social Venture Network Europe. From 1988 to 1990 Paul volunteered supporting communications throughout the formation of the Stonewall Lobby Group that campaigned and achieved legal equality for lesbian and gay people.

The team behind GFW revealed their first three new ranges of shirts on Wednesday 16th of March 2016 in Brighton, and in order to make sizing simple for all body types they have created an easy to use sizing chart which customers can use. They also send out a bespoke tape measure with every order to help customers who may not be too comfortable with gender-specific sizes in various regions around the world. The tape measure and sizing guide ensures that everyone who buys from GFW will find stylish shirts in the colours they want and fitted to whatever body shape they desire.

To pre-order any of the new ranges, find more information about sizing and body shapes or for terms and conditions, visit www.genderfreeworld.com

ENDS

Images as follows:

- 1. Lisa Honan, Co-founder and Director of Gender Free World**
- 2. Sally Russell OBE –Investor – Founder of Netmums**
- 3. Paul Dickinson – Co-Founder. Trustee of NGO Share Action**
- 4. Nel Margerison – Creative Director**

Notes to the Editor



Gender Free World – aka Gender Neutral Clothing

Gender Free World founded in 2015 by a consortium of like-minded individuals who passionately believe that what we have in our pants has disproportionately restricted the access to choice of clothing on the high street and online. What started as conversation about buying shirts that were essentially less feminine in

their cut and colours, became an obsession with the highly gendered world of retail across the board. From clothing to gifts, toys and toiletries, we are forced to define a gender before making purchases. The more apparent this became, the more bizarre but prolific it seemed.

We will source and sell manual workwear for smaller people and gender neutral kids clothes. We will also sell gender neutral toys and other goods as appropriate.

Manufactured in the UK - we are proud to be offering you British produced quality shirts.

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