

Maternitywear - UK - January 2010

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What is this report about?

The UK maternitywear market has been positively impacted by the increasing birth rate and total fertility rate of women, including an increasing proportion of births to older women (30+) and to women born outside the UK. The market was worth £140 million in 2009, up 1.4% on 2007. This growth has been held back by the negative impact of the recession, including job insecurity: some women have not spent as much on maternitywear as they would otherwise.

Mintel expects the market to show more buoyant growth of 2.1% in 2010 – though there appears to be a growing trend of women swapping their maternitywear with friends/family (perhaps part of the recycling trend) which could mean they buy less new than they would. However, maternity underwear growth will outperform that of outerwear, at 2.6% as it is an 'essential' purchase.

What have we found out?

- The maternitywear market grew just over 1% in the two years to 2009 to reach £140 million. It has not grown as strongly as the larger womenswear market, partly due to perceptions of maternitywear as expensive.
- Four in ten women who have ever bought maternity clothing say it's too expensive, despite the growth of ranges from lower-cost fashion stores such as Peacocks, Dorothy Perkins and H&M.
- The increasing number of older first-time mothers creates a potential market for clothing stores with a similar shopper base (ie over-30yr olds) to launch maternitywear. Gap and Zara are relatively new entrants, for example, helping them to continue catering for existing customers during pregnancy rather than losing them to other stores.
- Trousers are the most popular item of maternitywear bought, followed by tops and jeans. Trousers and jeans are also growing fastest in popularity, along with lingerie.
- The 25-34-yr old age group buys most maternity clothing and under-25yr olds the least: jeans and tops are the must-have buy for the latter group. Expense and unfashionable styling are the key barriers to younger pregnant women buying more clothing.
- A more fashion-oriented positioning is increasingly important amongst those in the maternitywear market. In September 2009, the leader in the maternity market, Mothercare, relaunched its range as M2b, using pregnant TV presenter Kirsty Gallacher to model and promote the range. TV presenter Holly Willoughby has also produced and promoted a maternity range available online from Very.co.uk.

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