

Maternitywear - UK - January 2013

Report Price: £1750 | \$2834 | €2204

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– Tamara Sender, Senior Clothing Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How far into their pregnancy do women start buying maternity clothes?
- How price-conscious are pregnant women about spending money on clothes for themselves?
- Who are the main players in the maternitywear market?
- What are the main challenges the specialist maternitywear market faces?

The maternitywear market in the UK remains a relatively small sector relative to the overall womenswear market and in 2012 was only worth an estimated £142 million. Mintel's consumer research highlights that less than three in ten mothers bought specific maternitywear for their pregnancy. Over half of mothers, on the other hand, bought mainly looser-fitting/larger-sized clothes to wear during pregnancy or mixed and matched these garments with some maternitywear. It remains a niche clothing sector and a limited choice of affordable and fashionable maternity clothing means that many women opt for non-pregnancy garments.

Growth in the maternitywear market has also, despite the rising birth rate, remained stunted as a result of the uncertain economic climate, with mothers cautious about spending too much on themselves when faced with the cost implications of having a baby. There has been a trend towards women buying fewer items of maternitywear and delaying purchases until the later stages of their pregnancy, as well as swapping more second-hand garments with friends and family.

A greater choice of stylish, fashionable and well-fitting maternitywear, which is more in line with the prices and trends of the current womenswear offer, could encourage women to buy more specific maternity clothes and underwear during their pregnancy and for nursing and could boost the market.

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