



# UniformReuse.co.uk Case Study

Dress for Success (Registered Charity Number 1080609)

## Key facts:

- Dress for Success London is a not-for-profit organisation promoting the economic independence of disadvantaged women.
- As well as attire, Dress for Success provides career tool, advice, one-to-one training for CV skills and a variety of other mentoring programmes.
- It is a Registered Charity working with a diverse range of groups of women, including job centres, prison groups, homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters.
- High quality corporate clothing can be ideal for reuse, particularly suits and blouses if logos are subtle and tax tabs can be removed.

## Background

Dress for Success London was founded in 2000, and aims to help disadvantaged women to a state of economic independence. By providing smart, interview-quality clothing, plus support and advice, Dress for Success are able to help women get into the workforce, and gain means to provide for themselves. Clients are only placed in the suiting programme through referral by a partner organisation, such as job centres, prisons and homeless shelters.

The organisation is reliant on support itself, from both individuals and corporations. Whilst clothing has to be of high standard and, if logoed, of a wearable design, corporate wear is of great benefit to the charity, particularly if tax tabs can be easily removed beforehand. Nationwide is one such donor company that has been involved. Donations of shirts, skirts and blouses with tax tabs (made of excess material) removed, and of business suits with very subtle, almost un-recognisable emblems were presented, and said to be a huge success.

Garments donated are stored at the London office, where they are displayed on racks for clients. Stylists are employed to select the best outfits on a client-by-client basis, giving the women a chance to obtain the most suitable selection for their personal needs. Women viewing these items are made welcome, with refreshments provided and ample time and space given for the selection of an outfit they feel truly happy with. To round off the 'look', accessories such as hand bags, jewellery and shoes are offered also, leaving the client feeling completely prepared and professional.

"My time at Dress for Success London was a really uplifting experience. You taught me how to make the most of myself and now I feel I might even enjoy my interview! I

had no idea about clothes before and the advice about my hair was invaluable too. I'm so much more optimistic and feeling more positive about myself".

Dress for Success London client

Any items that are deemed unsuitable for interview wear are still made use of: all excess stock is given to Cancer Research for either sale in their charity shops, or textile recycling for those which are unusable. No clothing gets disposed of to landfill.

## Initiatives

Simply Suiting is the original Dress for Success programme, providing women with professional attire for interview purposes, but it is only one of a number of initiatives that Dress for Success offer. Workshops available through the organisation cover a variety of topics to aid the transition back into the workforce. As well as business-minded themes (such as presentation skills and interview techniques), 'softer' personal development skills such as motivation and self esteem are offered.

Dress for Success also provides outreach programmes, with mentoring available for the newly employed, and a Young Persons Programme, visiting schools and youth organisations.

## Additional Information

Dress for Success

[www.dressforsuccess.org](http://www.dressforsuccess.org)

For contact information please search the Directory on [www.uniformreuse.co.uk/directory](http://www.uniformreuse.co.uk/directory)

Uniformreuse is run by the CRR

