

Start up embraces slow fashion

A new Edinburgh fashion start up which launched in March this year is championing the slow fashion concept, encouraging people to buy fewer clothes and keep clothes for longer.

[Polar Bears & Navy](#) founded by Edinburgh-based Gemma Livingstone, 35, who left her job as a digital marketer at Skyscanner to focus on designing clothes from fabrics produced to high environmental and welfare standards. Gemma studied law at the University of Edinburgh, but also worked in marketing with Sainsbury's and Logicalware Ltd. She hopes to increase awareness of the dangers of fast fashion and the benefits of buying garments made to last, and has taken a stand at the UN Climate Change Conference – COP26 – in Glasgow later this year.



The business began by providing two options – a British Wool Coat and a Merino Wool Blazer. To make sure the garments fit and are long lasting they are made in the company's Edinburgh studio where durability lies at the heart of the design.



Every coat comes with a lifetime repair service or the company will help customers find a local professional to help.

The range has now expanded with women's tops, and a blush pink top inspired by the Meadows blossom trees will be available

shortly.

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Gemma said: “People are buying 60% more clothes than they did just 15 years ago. The more clothes we create, the more natural resources we use, whether that is animal fibre, plants, oil or water – it’s not sustainable.

“The biggest change we can make in the fashion industry is to encourage each of us to buy less and to keep what we do buy for longer. By buying clothes that will stand the test of time, we can reduce the pressures the current rate of fashion production puts on worker pay and conditions, animal welfare, natural resources and waste management.

“At Polar Bears & Navy we will always use fabrics and materials that are produced to high environmental and welfare standards, and work closely with fabric producers to ensure traceability. Where possible, we source from local businesses to help them grow with us.

“This is something I have felt passionate about for a while. So while it can be daunting to turn your passion into a start-up, it has been a really rewarding experience, and I’ve been working every available hour to fulfil orders and respond to high levels of enquiries since we launched, so the demand for slow fashion is definitely there.”