

For immediate release



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FORGE FASHION – A new programme to help Waltham Forest’s fashion and textile businesses thrive sustainably during Covid recovery and beyond

Today, a new programme launches which will help 30 of Waltham Forest’s fashion and textile businesses to thrive sustainably.

Delivered by Creative United in partnership with Waltham Forest Council and The Fashion District, Forge Fashion will provide tailored business support through workshops, one-to-one advice and networking.

Waltham Forest has a rich heritage of artisans, craft and manufacture. Inspired by this and the urgent need to reduce the negative environmental impact of fast fashion, Waltham Forest Council and the Fashion District have joined forces to make it a place where fashion businesses can thrive. With supportive networks, affordable workspace and business programmes that build resilience and sustainability, we will encourage a connected, diverse and environmentally conscious fashion and textile business community in the borough.

Forge Fashion forms part of this mission. It will support a mix of new and existing businesses from across the fields of fashion and textiles. Each will gain a better understanding of the strengths in their businesses, the chance to extend their network and create a bespoke action plan for sustainable growth.

Sarah Thirtle, the Director of Business Support Programmes at Creative United, said:

“Building on the successes of our popular business support programme for creative enterprises in Blackhorse Lane – Forge – we are thrilled to be working closely again with Waltham Forest Council on Forge Fashion, and with new partner the Fashion District.

“Enabling businesses to grow, instilling confidence in the people that run them and enhancing the positive social benefits of creative enterprise are at the core of Creative United’s purpose. That’s why, at the heart of Forge Fashion, is the goal to build the skills and capabilities in the borough’s fashion and textile designers and makers so they can become leaders in sustainable business practices.”

Councillor Simon Miller, Member for Economic Growth and Housing Development at Waltham Forest Council said:

“We recognise that our borough is home to a diverse number of creatives and small businesses, and we value their innovative, thoughtful and engaging contributions to our community. It is with great enthusiasm that we are launching the Forge Fashion programme with Creative United and the Fashion District, from London College of Fashion UAL, further strengthening our Borough of Culture legacy.

Our hope is that this initiative will provide local designers with the support needed to thrive, and to shine light on important industry issues such as environmental sustainability. As the programme progresses, we will be eager to see how it inspires and facilitates growth within our local fashion economy.”

Helen Lax, Director of The Fashion District, said:

“Waltham Forest is alive with creative fashion businesses, emerging and established, that together create a unique fashion story for the Borough. Working with Waltham Forest Council and Creative United, Fashion District is committed to supporting their business development and working towards the ambition of building a connected, diverse and resilient fashion sector to bring innovation and sustainable change to the industry.”

The Launch

To celebrate the launch of Forge Fashion, Creative United will be hosting Instagram live events at **7pm** each evening on 20, 22, and 24 July, where they will be joined by special guests from across the industry. Timings below:

20 July How to scale up your business w/ Rosie Wolfenden MBE, Tatty Devine

22 July Fashion business during and post COVID-19 w/ Anna Ellis, Centre for Fashion Enterprise

24 July Using fash-tech innovation to create sustainability w/ Ryan Yasin, Petit Pli

Each event will start promptly at 7pm. There will also be time for our audience to ask questions to the guests in a live Q&A and to find out more about the Forge Fashion programme.

#ForgeFashion Instagram Live will be here: [@CreativeUnitedUK](https://www.instagram.com/CreativeUnitedUK)

How to Apply

More information about Forge Fashion and how to apply is on Creative United's website:

<https://www.creativeunited.org.uk/services/forge-fashion/>

[Click here](#) for a folder of images.

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Notes to editors

About Creative United

Creative United is an entrepreneurial community interest company, and Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) sector support organisation, that strives for economic growth and social impact in the arts, cultural and creative industries.

We provide a range of programmes and business services which enable the development and sustainability of organisations and enterprises operating within these sectors.

Our vision is for artists, creative enterprises and cultural organisations to have access to the specialist skills, professional advice and services they need to achieve their ambitions for growth and impact within their communities.

For more information visit www.creativeunited.org.uk

About Waltham Forest Council

Waltham Forest Council is a local authority in north east London. In 2019, it was the first ever London Borough of Culture - awarded by the Mayor of London - and the recipient of the Municipal Journal's Local Authority of the Year. We are building a legacy on the back of these significant achievements by investing in our heritage buildings, opening new cultural venues and ensuring our borough is an inclusive place for all.

Bursting with energy and opportunity, Waltham Forest is a place changing rapidly with business growth up and employment at its highest rate ever. It is a place people want to live, raise a family and start a business. We are creating liveable neighbourhoods, where people have access to quality housing and the services and facilities that they need, along with vibrant town centres that have thriving shops, restaurants and entertainment.

About Fashion District

The Fashion District brings together fashion, technology, business and education to meet, compete, collaborate and innovate – nurturing talent, generating new jobs and developing new products. The Fashion District will drive economic and social transformation in east/north London, building on the area's heritage of fashion and innovation.

Fashion District is driven by a partnership convened by London College of Fashion, UAL, with the Mayor of London, London Legacy Development Corporation, the British Fashion Council, UK Fashion and Textiles, Unibail Rodamco-Westfield, Lendlease, Poplar HARCA, The Trampery, Fashion Enter, Arbeit, Here East, Newham College and the London Boroughs of Hackney, Haringey, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

It is a key part of East Bank, the Mayor's £1.1bn vision for a new powerhouse of world-class cultural institutions at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. New studio, retail and manufacturing sites are opening soon with business support and training programmes at; The Trampery Fish Island Village, Arbeit Studios Leyton Green, Poplar Works by Poplar Harca, and a Tailoring Academy at Fashion Enter.