

## Part A - General Information

### Organisation

Recondition

### Organisation Type/Structure

Company (Limited by Shares)

### Theme/Nature of Project

Disability

### Company/CIC Registration Number (if applicable)

14621476

### Name of Lead Contact

Ellie Brown

### Email

[elliebrown@reconditionmcr.com](mailto:elliebrown@reconditionmcr.com)

### How did you find out about the Awards?

Google/Search Engine Search

### Website

<https://reconditionmcr.com/>

### Social Media Handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

@recondition.mcr

## Part B - Project Proposal

### Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

Recondition is a fashion e-commerce which caters to everyone. We believe in accessibility without the expense of style by designing with disabled bodies in mind. The disabled community is the largest minority worldwide, it is insane that this consumer is so overlooked by the fashion industry. This needs to change.

### Situation (250 words)

Where so much progress has happened for other minorities within the fashion industry, attitudes towards the disabled consumer still remain at an almost stand still. 1 in 4 people worldwide identify as disabled and yet they are so overlooked. It is crazy to me that the only minority which intersects all others and the only one which anyone can (and likely will) join at any stage in their life is the one which remains un-catered to.

In the UK alone the disabled community holds a spending power of 2.4 billion, growing to a 314 billion pound market worldwide. Yet they have the least amount of clothing which is designed for them, therefore physically does not function for them. It is so demoralising to have your independence taken away by something so simple as your clothes.

The affect that personal style can have upon a persons mental health is immense. Access to personal style, in my opinion, is something that everyone has the right to. But currently the disabled consumer are restricted to what they can wear while retaining their independence. In a survey we undertook (consisting of 50 women with varying disabilities) 84% of participants have stated they have an issue with the functionality of their clothing. 60% of those issues were due to the fit or the fastenings of the clothing, both of these being fairly easy fixes.

### Complication (250 words)

The issue isn't only about the physicality of the product but also the feeling of being overlooked. People of disabilities don't see themselves represented in fashion, with the rare 'tick box' wheelchair user and even less often feel consulted on their needs. Authentic representation and inclusion can only be achieved when it is considered throughout the operations of the business. We need to think about not just who's in front of the camera at a campaign shoot but who's behind it too.

A big issue behind why this is the case in the fashion industry, is that the people in the room when product is being designed is not a diverse and true representation of society. When no one in the room is experiencing these ease of wear issues the people behind the scenes remain unaware of the true gravity of the issue.

Although some brands have tried to dabble in adaptive clothing, a true shift in the way the design process

operates is needed to create really meaningful product. In order to design for this demographic, you need to design alongside them, which is why Recondition operates with a user-centred process.

People previously didn't think people with disabilities cared about fashion but they do, and in recent years their has been a real shift with the disabled voice becoming more heard. With this new movement comes a perfect time for a new brand to be born, with the wants and needs of the disabled community embedded at its core.

### **Solution (250 words)**

At Recondition we want to cater to the younger audience by offering them stylish statement pieces that make them feel good and also function for more than just the average consumer. We produce clothes which allow them to express themselves but also provide consumers with an easier dressing experience, giving them back a sense of independence. Key points of difference in terms of our product is we focus on how the form, fit, fabrication, and fastenings can be chose to make ease of dress and wear more important. We are already designing and developing this product alongside Innovate UK.

We envision creating a one of a kind studio space here in Manchester which will act as of base to build a more meaningful connection with our community. There will be two key spaces, the atelier studio and the lounge. The atelier will be where we will design and operate from and the lounge will act as an open social space for our community. The lounge will not only be where we will hold all of our community events going forward, it will accommodate fitting groups and user-feedback sessions and will also act as a safe social space where our consumers can come to browse product, have a coffee and chat to our staff. By having the two spaces alongside each other it will also allow us to run an alteration service so people can have bespoke adjustments made to help their clothes work for them.

### **Part C - Wider Support**

#### **How would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)**

I know personally, I would have had a much harder ride if it hadn't have been for the business support and mentors I have had so far. I know the value of advice from someone who has had years of industry experience and I would really value the support of a mentor through the Stephen Lloyd Award. I think I would really benefit from a personal branding coach and accountability partner which I have not currently got. Every mentor I have had so far has had an amazing network of diverse professionals and each of them has had completely different connections to bring to the table which has helped me with my business journey so far.

I struggle more with the business operations side of Recondition. As someone who does not come from a business background, everything I know so far has been self taught. I would massively benefit from some advice when it comes to the legal and financial side of running a business. Marketing is also an area I would love to demystify, a consultation on how to build a strong marketing strategy for my business would be massively valuable to me.

### **Part D - Financial Justification**

#### **How do you propose to spend the winning funds of £25,000 (50 words max). Please provide a general idea.**

This money would allow Recondition the funds to begin to build a community driven space in Manchester for the disabled community. I envision being able to achieve positive tangible change by having the first fashion shop, housing adaptive product and designed with the disabled community in mind.

### **Part E - Supporting Information**

#### **Team: We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)**

I currently work as a one woman band and have already achieved so much such a small amount of funding. I had a personal experience a few years ago where I became temporarily disabled, this opened my eyes to how inaccessible our world is. Through growing the brand from nothing and being involved deeply in the research I have become so passionate about the need for my business and the positive change it can achieve.

### **YouTube Video**

<https://youtu.be/neGjDUIHROY>