

# Case Study



**Leicester Fashion  
and Textiles  
Academy Ltd**

Part-funded by:



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund

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Janie Morgan-Wood,  
CEO



## Next size up for growing fashion business

The Leicester Fashion and Textiles Academy Ltd (LFTA) was started in 2015 by fashion designer Janie Morgan-Wood whose experience includes designing for household brands such as Next, Matalan and Marks & Spencer.

For several years, Janie used design rooms owned by other companies at weekends to develop her business. Her core service was supporting manufacturers with their technical skills and she also began helping start-up companies that wanted to get a foothold in the industry. The business was doing well until Covid happened and she lost access to these design rooms.

Janie said: "As I sat at home during lockdown I realised I needed to adapt. I needed my own physical space and machinery."

With the help of the Business Gateway Growth Hub she successfully applied for a Leicestershire Covid Recovery Grant and was awarded £5,500. Together with her own funds, she invested in machinery and premises in Wigston. Also, a Small Business Recovery grant of £3,000, from Leicester City Council meant she was able to set up a design room with new machinery to create premium samples.

This space in Wigston started as a design hub but today her business also manufactures small runs of 100-300 garments for niche, high-end customers. Products include ladieswear such as dresses, T-shirts, hoodies, cycling shorts, swimwear, yoga clothing and lingerie, and latterly dog hoodies. They also make men's leisurewear including sweatshirts.

The business started to build so Janie's husband Roy gave up his lecturing job and joined her full-time. She's also taken on three machinists and a part-time fashion designer. They've outgrown the current location and have now moved to a 3,500 square foot building on Linden Street in Leicester.

Janie adds: "We're helping new brands move forward with quality products made in the UK, and that's something we are very proud of. With more than 35 years of experience, I'm able to support these brands to make better decisions for fabric and trims."

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The business is also making an impact on the environment. Janie explains: "There's a lot of waste in our industry, not so much in our business, but once you get into larger-scale production there's over manufacturing with unused fabrics and trims."

"We work with supplying companies to identify any excess, good quality stock which is offered to our clients. This means they can use better quality fabrics and trims at an affordable price. We're helping these young brands achieve their aims saving them money and diverting unwanted fabrics from landfills."

Janie concludes: "The impact of the support has been invaluable. Without the new machines, we wouldn't have been able to start the business and be growing at this rate. The quality of the liaison with the Business Gateway has been outstanding. Our adviser was amazingly helpful in every way. She was so knowledgeable about what was available and the best route for me. I was also signposted to all the different online tutorials; the marketing one was informative and helped me to focus on an achievable plan and the Health & Safety webinar alerted me to the latest issues."

Contact the Business Gateway for help and support to grow your business.

The Business Gateway Growth Hub is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It is delivered in partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire) and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited (LLEP).

**Support:** Business advice

**Impact:** Increased rate of growth, funding advice

**Area:** Leicester

**Employees:** 5

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