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## Hotter steps up its investment in comfort footwear range as it hails promising start to 2021

Hotter Shoes, the UK's biggest footwear manufacturer, has invested more than £750,000 in comfort and stability product technology to develop its latest collection with a comprehensive range tailored to the 'working from home' consumer demands.

The retailer and footwear specialist brand has this month launched its Spring/Summer 2021 collection after developing 63 new styles. More than half of the styles are within the firm's comfort and casual lines, which are suitable for prolonged indoor use, as a direct result of the shift in purchasing decisions as people continue to work from home during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Alongside this, Hotter has introduced several waterproof walking boot designs this season, as the business responds to the drop in formal outdoor wear and upsurge in active footwear. The retailer saw a 64% sales uplift in its Gore-Tex® range in the eight weeks up to 13th December 2020 and a 31% increase across the whole of autumn, when compared to the same periods in 2019. Hotter is the only UK manufacturer incorporating Gore-Tex®, alongside stability technology, into its designs.

The brand's significant investment in product design technological capabilities is in addition to a £250,000 investment in its innovative, industry leading Hotter Footprint™ technology for its Technology Centres to deliver a Precision Fit experience to customers. The 3D scanning technology enables the customer to understand their foot shape, and precisely measures feet length and width so they can enjoy a bespoke shoe fitting experience.

Hotter, an international omnichannel retailer with a clearly defined target audience and growing digital base, has made these significant investments to counterbalance the downward trend in formal outdoor shoe sales, which has seen other major brands collapse. The footwear market has been polarised by the Coronavirus pandemic, with slipper sales surging 46% to £36.8m across the UK in the 12 weeks to September 2020\* as lockdown restrictions kept people indoors.

Ian Watson, CEO at Hotter, said: "Comfortable indoor shoes and practical active footwear designs have become a priority for Hotter. This is both to react to consumer demand and bolster the business for further growth this year. Our Freesole shoes, designed to be comfortable and supportive, have been bestsellers as customers have found them particularly suitable for prolonged indoor use during the lockdown."

Hotter reported a 27% leap in online sales (year on year) in the last six weeks of 2020, successfully navigating the tough retail environment and tapping into the boom in online shopping. Selling over one million pairs of shoes a year, it also hailed a particularly strong Black Friday weekend, up 24% from 2019.

For this reason, Hotter, which has more than 4m customers in the UK and overseas, has reported a strong start to 2021 and is positive that its renewed investment in enhanced product technology builds itself a strong future.

Watson added: "We have built up a reputation for manufacturing extremely high quality shoes for the needs and tastes of our consumers in our 60+ year history. Comfort, stability and fit are at the core of our offering and we are renowned for having all of these features in every shoe."

Hotter's brand proposition has developed significantly over the past 12 months, with clear consumer benefits embedded through product strategy and development. This is demonstrated through Hotter's unique Customised Comfort DNA with the introduction of Freesole, Precision Fit and two comfort families Cushion+ and Stability+ . International ingredient partners include Infinergy®, OrthoLite® and Gore-tex®.



Giles Coulson, the Head of Research and Development at Hotter Shoes, joined the firm 18 months ago and has since been involved with the design and development of more than 150 styles. The latest product range has been in design and pre-production at the firm's Skelmersdale HQ for six months.

Coulson has been instrumental in introducing Infinergy® (BASF) to Hotter's products, the world's leading high performance responsive material. He said: "It is absolutely essential that feet are fully supported by correctly fitted, high quality comfortable footwear; no matter whether that's for indoor or outdoor usage. This is why the development of all our products is based on the science of comfort and fit, as well as design. We pride ourselves on the fact that all Hotter shoes are thoroughly checked against strict scientific guidelines, followed by detailed fitting trials from the Society of Shoe Fitters and consultations with external podiatrists.

"Our recent product ranges have been inspired by athletic footwear. I'm passionate about the benefits that technology can build into footwear design, like a 45% energy return for consumers. The recent investment in cutting-edge technology at Hotter Shoes has been instrumental in enabling us to react strongly to the recent change in consumer trends."

Claire Pearl, Chief Product Officer at Hotter Shoes, said: "We've adapted quickly to the huge shift we've seen in consumer behaviour and I'm incredibly proud to see Hotter's latest collection launch this month. While we know our customers are at home more and have fewer formal occasions to attend, it's been our pleasure to incorporate trends and designs as they seek comfortable, modern and practical footwear more than ever before.

"This season's collection is very targeted, with contrasting materials and 'pops' of colour for interest in our walking boots for example. We've also added to our active footwear range, including a new 'chunky' trainer design. Our collection is built on the foundations of expert shoe-making techniques and fantastic design, while remaining true to our Hotter heritage."

Hotter's Spring/Summer 2021 collection is available at [www.hotter.com](http://www.hotter.com)

**ENDS**

\* Analysis from market intelligence platform Edited

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***For further information or interview requests, please contact Kayley Worsley on 07888708601 or [hello@kayleyworsley.co.uk](mailto:hello@kayleyworsley.co.uk)***

### **Notes to Editors**

Hotter Shoes is the UK's biggest footwear manufacturer. The specialist footwear brand has over four million customers globally, selling over 1.3 million pairs of shoes a year.

Hotter.com is a digitally-led omni channel speciality footwear brand with a clearly defined, large and growing target audience. Its product strategy is driven by its unique proposition of Customised Comfort and Precision Fit.

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Hotter has over 4m customers in the UK and overseas, buying online, through its mail order channel and through 17 targeted Technology Centres in the UK.