



Bensons Workwear was established in 2012 by Fashion Designer, Mr Beni Moussa. Cork-based clothing manufacturer, Bensons Workwear swiftly made a name for its Sportswear, Schoolwear and Workwear for industries across Ireland, France, and the UK. Bensons has a colourful and ever-expanding range of clothing including a bespoke section that deals with private labels.

www.bensonshealthcare.ie

About Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) was established by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health, supported by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to drive collaboration between the health service and enterprise.

We offer companies the opportunity for pilot and clinical validation studies and the health service access to innovative products, services and devices that they may not otherwise be exposed to.

HIHI is built on the recognition that collaboration with enterprise can benefit patient care, patient pathways and outcomes.



The Healthcare Challenge

COVID-19

The availability of approved, quality PPE was one of the most significant product requirements during COVID-19. A worldwide shortage coupled with supply chain issues and travel delays identified an urgent need within Ireland for locally manufactured, certified products.

The HIHI COVID-19 Solutions Portal

To capture and identify solutions that could impact COVID-19 in Ireland, HIHI established a COVID-19 portal. All submissions to the portal were assessed by the HIHI team and those with high potential impact were notified to the HSE and Enterprise Ireland (who were working closely with the HSE to identify Irish products). The aim was to ensure that priority requirements could be addressed locally, reducing the risk and delays involved in importing solutions.



The Healthcare Solution

When the Pandemic hit, Bensons Workwear diversified its product in order to respond to COVID-19 and government requests and began manufacturing high quality Medical Garments. Bensons accelerated production in order to support frontline workers. All fabrics are sourced from a local Irish Manufacturer. Bensons is the **first Irish manufacturer to receive CE Certification for disposable gowns**. Additionally, Bensons was also accredited with ISO 9001:2015 Quality System Certification in 2020, for the design and manufacture of medical, healthcare and workwear textiles. Since March 2020 Bensons has increased its workforce by 28 and has installed 3 new apron manufacturing machines, each capable of outputting 100 aprons per minute. To meet the demand of the healthcare system Bensons increased production from 400 gowns per day to 3000 units daily.



HIHI Role

During COVID-19 HIHI engaged with the HSE and Enterprise Ireland to identify key healthcare requirements, at the same time, HIHI established its COVID-19 Solutions Portal to capture Irish based products and services that could impact COVID-19. In March 2020, Bensons submitted an application to the HIHI COVID-19 Portal. HIHI connected Bensons with the HSE and EI as a provider of quality PPE. HIHI also identified Bensons as a source to address local requests for PPE from Hospital Groups, GPs and Nursing Homes. Once approved as a supplier by the HSE, Bensons immediately halted production of their regular stock and instead focused all efforts on making Surgical Gowns and Scrubs for healthcare.



Outcome Report

Bensons has received CE certification for its disposable gowns, and achieved ISO 9001:2015 quality certification for the design and manufacture of healthcare textiles. Bensons is sourcing all fabrics from Ireland and has increased its workforce by 28 people. Bensons has supplied PPE to frontline staff through the pandemic and has reduced Ireland's reliance on imports for these products.

Bensons Healthcare products include (but not limited to):

- Disposable Surgical Gowns
- Disposable Aprons
- Sterile Surgical Gowns
- Reinforced Sterile Surgical Gowns
- Scrubs (Both Sets and Individual pieces)
- Tunics
- Lab Coats

Testimonial

The pandemic has made us focus on what we do best and has really shown us the ability of the individuals when coming together to serve the community. This has helped us build a strong team that shares the same vision to teach the skill to all ages across Ireland and bring back the textile industry into this country. Textiles is our passion and we are delighted to have the opportunity to put our craft to good use.

In recent years, we were taught how to import goods instead of producing them ourselves, we now feel it is important as a country that we become more self-sufficient and go back to making our own clothing — importing should be our last resort. As businesses, we need to find the

right medium between how much we are importing and how much we are exporting out of Ireland and ensure we are supporting local manufacturing. We want to see the skill being taught to the youth so that this trade will last and Ireland can be known for its textile industry once again. Our clothing factory is expanding to a much bigger space rapidly and we are finding more and more people wanting to get back to creativity, crafts, sewing, and design. Manufacturing clothing competitively in Ireland rather than relying on imported textiles is possible. We are indebted to HIHI for providing introductions to key decision makers in the HSE.

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