



## Media Release

10<sup>th</sup> January 2011

### ***Christmas cheer continues to boost online growth for Shop Direct*** ***Success of Very Prompts Launch of New Mature Brand isme***

Shop Direct Group, the UK's largest online and home shopping retailer, today reported another strong trading performance for the six-week Christmas period up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

#### **Trading Highlights:**

- Total sales for the period were up 5.0% against last year, exc VAT
- Strong margin growth, ahead of sales growth
- Double-digit online growth, with 70% of the business transacted online
- The first week of December was a record online trading week for the business
- The busiest shopping day of the period was 6<sup>th</sup> December when orders peaked at 8k in one hour

#### **Product Highlights:**

- Exceptional double-digit sales growth seen in clothing and footwear, driven by outerwear and knitwear on the back of the cold weather
- Strong momentum in party-wear sales over the season, with 250k dresses sold, including the 'must have' red pencil dress by Holly Willoughby (see photo)
- Significant growth at 20% reported in consoles, driven by Xbox Kinect
- Shop Direct delivered one million toys over the festive season, with this year's top five best-seller positions taken by traditional family games

#### **Sale Highlights:**

- Strong Christmas performance continued into the first week of sale
- Shop Direct saw total sales on Christmas Day and Boxing Day up 10% against last year
- The Group's stock clearance rates are ahead of last year

#### **Brand growth and launch of *isme***

Very.co.uk has delivered an exceptional performance over the peak trading period with sales up 36% and customer growth of 40%. There has been growth in sales at Littlewoods supported by Coleen Rooney's TV advertising campaign. This has given the Group confidence to launch a new brand, ***isme***, which is designed for the fashion-conscious mature customer. TV's Loose Women regular, actress Lynda Bellingham, is the latest celebrity to join forces with Shop Direct and will be the face of ***isme*** (see photo). Available online and in catalogues from today, ***isme*** will be the lead sponsor of ITV's Loose Women.

#### **Commenting on trading and the launch of *isme*, Group Chief Executive Mark Newton-Jones said:**

"This is another strong peak trading performance for Shop Direct demonstrating the increasing confidence customers have to do more of their Christmas shopping online. All of our key brands delivered a fantastic performance over the peak trading period, with clothing and footwear, as well as toys significantly exceeding last year's sales.

“In addition, 2010 was another year of innovation for the Group and I am delighted to see this continue by starting the New Year with the launch of our exciting new mature brand - **isme**. As the UK’s largest online and home shopping retailer, our scale, strong portfolio of brands and wide range of products means we are in good shape and are well placed to face what we expect will be another challenging year.”

- ENDS -

For enquiries please call Ann Bryon / Gill Hart / Cara Newton at Shop Direct Group, 0844 292 4799 or Charlotte Kenyon / Natalia Marisova at Brunswick on 020 7404 5959.

**Notes to editors:**

- Shop Direct Group is the UK’s largest online and home shopping retailer with sales of circa £1.7 billion
- The Group has 5m active customers across the business
- Shop Direct employs around 9000 people
- Brands include Littlewoods, very.co.uk, **isme**, Woolworths.co.uk, Littlewoods Ireland, Littlewoods Europe, Additions, Choice and K&Co
- We are the largest full price branded clothing and footwear retailer in the UK
- We are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest online clothing retailer in the UK
- We are the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest bed and mattress retailer in the UK
- We are the 4<sup>th</sup> largest sportswear retailer in the UK
- We are the 5<sup>th</sup> largest electrical retailer in the UK
- Shop online at [www.littlewoods.com](http://www.littlewoods.com), [www.very.co.uk](http://www.very.co.uk), [www.isme.com](http://www.isme.com) or [www.woolworths.co.uk](http://www.woolworths.co.uk)