

The Plus-Size New Model *Transforming* The Fashion Industry

All hail Tess Holliday, the first size-24 model ever to be signed to a big agency. *Look* meets the woman bringing her body confidence message to the masses...

Instagram went into meltdown last week and for once it wasn't over a nearly naked Kim Kardashian. Instead, the fuss was caused by Tess Holliday (also known as Tess Munster), 29, announcing she'd been signed to Milk Model Management in the UK. Why was this a big deal? Because she's the first model of her size and height (5ft 6in and a dress size 24) to be signed to a major agency ever, and her 406,000 Insta followers couldn't have been happier. 'This is totally insane and I appreciate all of your support. I got this!' she told her 660k Facebook fans.

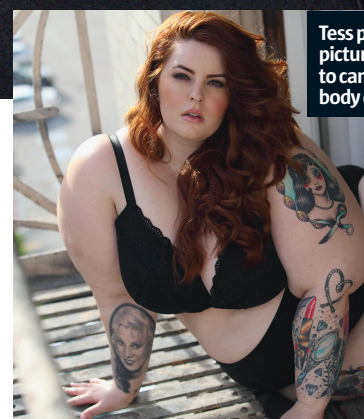
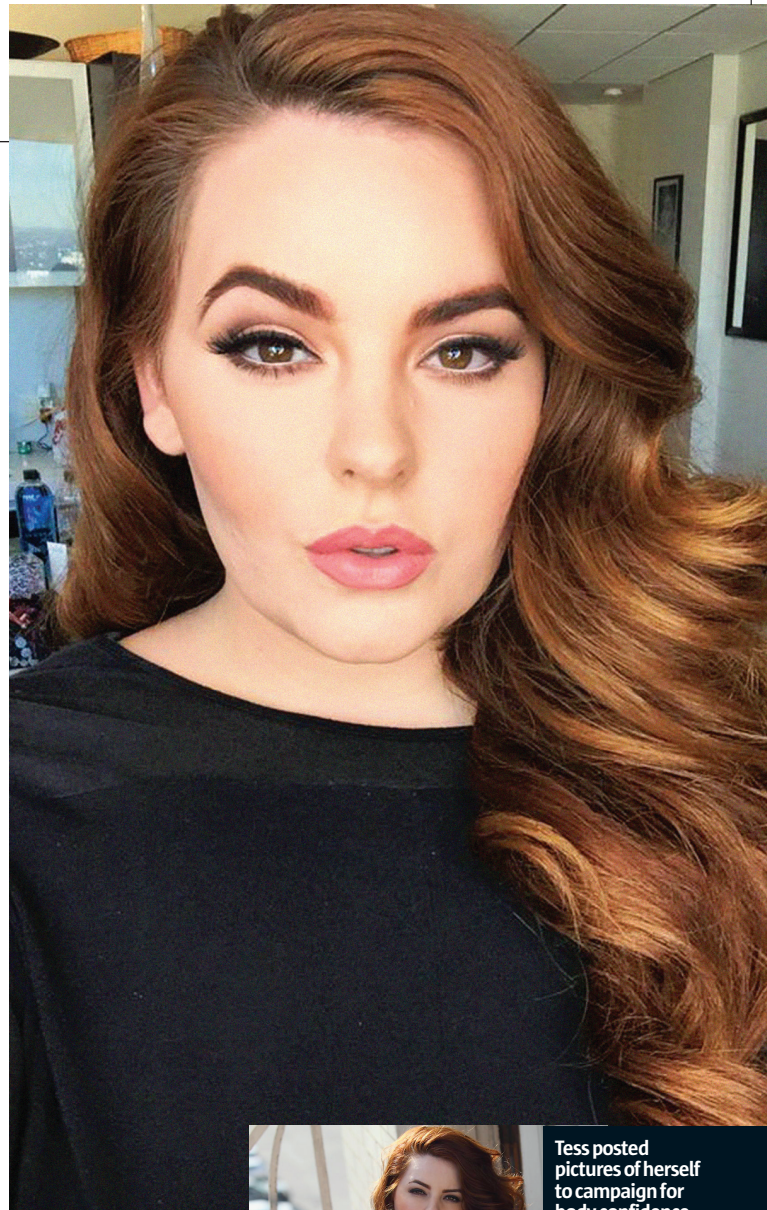
Tess, having been told she was too short and fat to model, started the campaign #EffYourBeautyStandards in 2013 after

reading one too many negative comments. 'I was lying on my bed on a Sunday afternoon reading: "You're too fat to wear that," and thought: "I've

had enough,"' she tells *Look*. 'I took four pics of myself, posted them side by side on Instagram and said: "If you're tired of being told what you can and can't wear because of your size, share this with #EffYourBeautyStandards."' Her body-acceptance message went viral and the pictures she posted of herself in beautiful lingerie and swimwear made her a role model for thousands.

And now Tess's hard work has paid off, with a contract to an agency that represents some of the world's most successful plus-size models, including Robyn Lawley and Candice Huffine. 'The modelling and the online community made me see myself differently,' she tells us. 'I didn't feel alone. I know what it's like to be the ugly duckling, but I learned to love every stretch mark, roll and blemish.'

Her fiancé, Nick Holliday (Tess has taken his name ahead of their marriage), and son, Riley, have supported her all the way. 'Love makes you do crazy things – like love yourself,' she laughs. 'I never would have thought I'd ever post pictures of myself in a bikini online. I never even used to take off my cardigan!'



Tess posted pictures of herself to campaign for body confidence

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And as for the bullies? 'I ignore them and then check my bank account,' she says. 'This isn't about money, but it is amazing to make a living doing something you love,' she adds.

It's this positive attitude that attracted Milk owner and director Anna Shillinglaw. 'I saw how many followers she had. She's such an important role model.'

Now Tess, who was named one of *Vogue Italia*'s top ten curvy models, hopes to one day work with famed photographer Annie Leibovitz and designer Vivienne Westwood. And there's no doubt she's on the right track.

■ Read Tess's blog at Tessmunster.com



Tess with her fiancé, Nick

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