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# With Bricks-And-Mortar Launch, Sons Wants To Be UK's Number-One OTC Hair Loss Brand

by [David Ridley](#)

With the help of Ceuta Healthcare, Irish men's health specialist Careforsons is launching its hair loss treatments in UK Superdrug stores. CEO William Kennedy talks to HBW Insight about the transition from the direct-to-consumer, online, subscription-based model to the bricks-and-mortar channel, and how the company intends to differentiate itself from category incumbents like Kenvue's Regaine and Dr Wolff's Alpecin.

Irish men's health specialist Careforsons Ltd is hoping that the recent launch of its Sons brand into bricks-and-mortar stores will help increase its presence in the UK's OTC hair loss category.

Beginning life as a web-based, direct-to-consumer (DTC) operation, similar to other DTC men's health brands like Numan, Sons has decided to take the leap with a deal with the UK Superdrug chain.

Working with UK distributors Ceuta Healthcare, Sons is starting its retail journey with its OTC minoxidil (5%) topical spray, palmetto and argan oil shampoo and biotin dietary supplement products.

"It's always been our ambition to go multichannel, after building our brand, our community and our proof of concept through digital," commented Careforsons CEO Will Kennedy.



CAREFORSONS CEO WILL KENNEDY  
(SOURCE: SONS)

Speaking exclusively to HBW Insight, Kennedy – who previously worked at Kerry Group and founded the company with Adrian Gilbane – said that the DTC model has “done very well and given us the confidence” to move into physical stores.

Via the sons.co.uk website, the firm also sells prescription finasteride (1mg) tablets with the aid of an online GP consultation, both on its own and as part of subscription “Full Works” or “Duo” packages in combination with its other hair loss solutions.

Sons already claims to hold around 5% market share within the UK OTC hair loss category, in which it competes with brands like Kenvue’s minoxidil-based Regaine and Dr Wolff’s caffeine-based Alpecin.

### **Lifestyle Branding**

The retail opportunity, Kennedy explains, is that these brands appear very “traditional” on shelf, with more of a corporate, medicinal pharma image, whereas Sons looks more like a lifestyle brand.



THE SONS OTC HAIR LOSS TREATMENT RANGE (SOURCE: SONS)

“We’re creating something that you wouldn’t be embarrassed to have in your bathroom, because these are traditionally the kinds of products that you’d scramble to put into a wash bag or hide in a drawer,” he pointed out.

“What we’re trying to do is bring a brand to the shelf that guys can relate to and that normalizes the topic,” he added.

Hopefully, he continued, this will then motivate men to “take action,” unlocking the untapped potential of hair loss, which Kennedy estimated could be

worth much more than the roughly £170m (\$212m) today, based on only 30% of the population that may have male pattern hair loss.

“There’s an opportunity to significantly grow over the next years, and we think that our brand can help retailers do that,” he said.

## Marketing Push

To help make its retail launch a success, Sons is investing significantly in marketing, especially in TV advertising, Kennedy explained.

To support in-store sales specifically, Sons is looking to tailor this TV advertising to local contexts where appropriate, and add out-of-home, influencer and point-of-sale marketing.

In-store marketing will also try and capture the men’s health secondary shopper: “50% of guy’s personal care is bought by the other half, so there’s that angle as well,” Kennedy noted.

“Our ambition is to be a leading hair loss player, the leading consumer brand for hair loss,” Kennedy reiterated. “So we will invest heavily to do that.”

## Future Plans

In the near future, Sons will also look to launch in other chains like Boots and Lloyds Pharmacy, as well as independents, Kennedy said.

Line extensions may also be on the cards, for example, a conditioner and also more hair-boosting dietary supplements.

For now, the focus of Sons is to be “front of mind” for hair loss in the UK. “There’s a massive country here for us to really try and build that awareness,” he said. “And retail is a key part of that.”

“We want to be very focused on that. I think for a business now to exist and be successful, you need that element of focus,” Kennedy concluded.