CIWM

CIWM Report | September 2016

# Reuse in the UK and Ireland –
## a 'State of the Nations' report for the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management








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# Executive Summary

Reuse has for many years been the 'neglected child' of the Waste Hierarchy. Despite many reports and initiatives to analyse the barriers to and opportunities for greater reuse, it remains an underutilised element of our resource management mix and one which deserves more attention from both policy makers and the waste and resource management industry itself.

Partly as a consequence of this policy vacuum and despite the legal requirement in the EU Waste Framework Directive to observe the Waste Hierarchy, there is a lack of comprehensive mapping and analysis of reuse in the UK and Ireland and its potential. Despite this, however, there are clear indications of the potential for greater reuse and the positive environmental, economic and social impacts that could accrue. In 2013, the Local Government Association (LGA) estimated that reusing an additional 660,000 tonnes of goods and materials could save councils more than £60 million a year in Landfill Tax as well as realise an economic value of around £375 million – a total of up to £435 million of value available each year from diverting this tonnage to reuse[1].

Further illustration of the economic and social impact of reuse is evidenced in Scotland. A mapping exercise[2] by Zero Waste Scotland to quantify the size and scope of the reuse sector in Scotland estimated that around 89,000 tonnes of material, including 12,000 tonnes of furniture, 9,500 tonnes of electrical items and 66,000 tonnes of textiles were being reused with turnover of approximately £244 million. In terms of employment, the study estimated that over 6,000 (full time equivalent) people were employed in reuse, with an additional 3,000 full time equivalent volunteering positions, and a total of over 13,000 people involved in volunteering in some capacity. While a similar mapping exercise for the UK and Ireland has not been done, the Scottish study provides a clear marker as to the reach of the existing reuse sector that points to the potential highlighted in the LGA report.

There is a broad consensus that more could and should be done to promote and boost reuse, but a comprehensive picture of the current state of reuse and examination of the potential has been lacking. This is why the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management commissioned this report. The report provides a contemporary snapshot of reuse in the UK and Ireland. Through a series of interviews with key stakeholders and industry leaders, online surveys, a comprehensive literature review, and our own assessment of the findings gathered, we have sought to produce a 'State of the Nations'-style analysis of the current situation.

The picture we present is one of a resilient sector, primarily driven by a desire to deliver on an anti-poverty and social need agenda to provide good quality reused items for households that need support. This key element of the reuse sector thrives on the commitment of many third sector bodies and their volunteers that remain determined to gather the resources they need to support their charitable and social aims.

Local government remains a vital element in the development of reuse. The relationships between local authorities and third sector organisations are variable; where they work well, they really deliver on the reuse agenda, where they don't, they can hold back progress. Procurement rules often hinder effective reuse strategies and there is work to be done here with a view to enabling and unlocking more of the potential. The same applies to the implementation of the Social Value Act 2012 (under which public bodies are meant to take social value into consideration in procurements), which remains a useful enabling measure but a sleeping giant in terms of actual implementation.

Increasingly, private sector interventions into reuse are focused on single stream, compliance regimes and the commercial realities of seeking to realise a profit on challenging materials streams. Partnerships between the private sector and the third sector do sometimes feature, combining Corporate Social Responsibility, legislative compliance and cost savings; This has been a positive development in recent years.

The interaction between public, private and third sector stakeholders in reuse can often be ad hoc and informal, and success is often dependent on the input of key individuals who take a strategic approach to reuse, strong partnerships where trust has built, and a mutually determined and shared set of outcomes. The case studies included in this report illustrate these characteristics of successful reuse initiatives and can be replicated in the right circumstances.

In addition to more widespread adoption of the good practice showcased here, the long term outlook for reuse would also be improved by a stronger policy framework, and a legislative and fiscal landscape that is more conducive to investment in, and development of, reuse. This has emerged as a common theme in many of the interviews and conversations that have informed this report. In short, the reuse sector survives and thrives despite the shortcomings of current government policy and strategy, but so much more could be achieved in a more enabling policy environment.

That said, the aim of this report is not to produce yet another wish list of things that UK governments should do; there is a lot that the industry in its widest sense can and should do for itself – particularly so because of the extended period of the policy uncertainty that we can anticipate as a result of the Brexit process.

With these considerations in mind we make several recommendations for consideration by CIWM, wider industry and Government. These recommendations are split into four key categories: strategic delivery, communications and engagement, capacity building, and policy development. In summary, the headline recommendations are:

## Strategic delivery

1. Co-ordination with emerging EU Circular Economy policy
   - ➢ Recommendation: Given the work already underway in the European Commission and the international nature of product supply chains, future UK policy on reuse must be developed broadly in line with EU Circular Economy policy.

2. Delivering progress at a UK level
   - ➢ Recommendation: Identify or create a co-ordinating group to take forward this report's recommendations; CIWM's Waste Prevention Special Interest Group may be well placed to fulfil this role.

## Communications and engagement

3. Consumer communications and awareness raising
   - ➢ Recommendation: An initial mapping exercise should be undertaken to collate current communications and engagement activities, with a view to developing a Communications Action Plan to present to the wider reuse community for consultation.

4. Wider promotion of existing good practice and guidance
   - ➢ Recommendation: Collaborative working to explore the best routes to signpost and promote existing guidance and support to smaller independent reuse organisations, including the viability of delivering low cost local and regional workshops through their respective networks.

## Capacity building

5. Improve cross-sector engagement and understanding
   - ➢ Recommendation: Assess the opportunity to host collaborative network events or roadshows to encourage better engagement between reuse organisations, different local authority functions (e.g. procurement and social care) and other 'end users' such as housing associations and shelters for the homeless. As appropriate, these events could address key barriers and specific issues, for example maximising the social value of local authority reuse activities, understanding end user needs, operating Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) reuse shops, etc.

6. Support packages for reuse organisations
   - ➢ Recommendation: Explore the opportunity to develop additional practical support for reuse micro-enterprises. Areas for consideration could include policy and procedures, monitoring and evaluation, and health and safety. The viability of providing other support mechanisms such as membership offers, mentoring schemes for practical sharing of management ideas (data, systems etc.) and training or coaching to assist individuals to improve partnership working skills, should also be considered.

## Policy development

7. Review current UK-wide policy framework
   - ➢ Recommendation: Undertake a comparative assessment of the current policy landscape in order to identify good practice and also establish where the policy gaps are that would need to be addressed.

8. Optimising reuse in Extended Producer Responsibility frameworks
   - ➢ Recommendation: Establish a cross-sector stakeholder dialogue to assess the opportunities and mechanisms to incentivise reuse through EPR schemes and present these to national UK governments to form part of the wider discussion on EPR.

9. Assessment of the viability of reuse targets in future UK waste policy
   - ➢ Recommendation: Linked to Recommendation 8, initiate a cross-sector stakeholder dialogue to assess the viability of and scope for a future reuse target, including consideration of single collective targets against material or product specific targets, and the potential to use carbon metrics as the basis for target setting.

10. Improving data and metrics
    - ➢ Recommendation: Linked to Recommendations 8 and 9, initiate a cross-sector stakeholder dialogue to assess how reuse data and metrics can be improved and whether further research on standardised data collection methods and benchmarking would be valuable. In addition, Defra's progress on metrics should be clarified to avoid duplicated effort.

We believe that CIWM has the potential to play an important facilitating and researching role in shaping these recommendations and making an important contribution to future policy and performance in reuse and acknowledge the leadership shown by CIWM in taking forward this work as a contribution to this important part of the circular economy agenda.

# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Project scope

The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) has commissioned this project to look at the challenges and barriers to reuse and consider the wide range of opportunities that reuse presents. Supported by a Project Steering Committee consisting of Professor Margaret Bates (University of Northampton), Craig Anderson (Furniture Reuse Network), and David Roman (British Heart Foundation) the project is focused on the UK and Ireland and is designed, through analysis and evaluation of a wide range of data and information, to consider the following questions in relation to reuse:

- How could we change the way local authority and other organisations deal with functional or repairable items to increase the supply of goods for reuse?
- What are the examples of good practice and how replicable are they?
- What is preventing a better link between waste / reuse and social care?
- What are the potential impacts of reuse in financial and environmental terms?
- Can we give an indication of the potential scale of the demand for reused items?
- What are the most reused product types and why is this the case?
- Can we give an indication of the product types with the most potential for growth?
- Can we provide case studies of successful partnerships and lessons to be learned, and also where possible generate lessons learnt from partnerships that may have not met the expectations intended for whatever reason?

## 1.2 Project rationale

Reuse, despite its prominent position near the top of the Waste Hierarchy, has consistently played second fiddle to recycling. Social enterprises, charities and reuse organisations have not been viewed as mainstream to the sector (despite their often pioneering role in recycling and reuse), and the level of engagement by local government with the sector has been very variable. Attempts to formalise and benefit from the work of social enterprises, specifically with regard to reuse, were made with the introduction of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. However, progress has been at best sporadic and relied more or less on committed individuals within local authorities to drive the agenda forward.

With the emergence of the circular economy agenda, it was hoped by many that reuse would get the recognition it deserves and more would be done to enhance its role in a broader setting. It is clear from the way the circular economy concept has been articulated to date, in addition to wider social and economic issues that have come to the fore, that the benefits of reuse extend way beyond the diversion of materials for a second life. Reuse is increasingly being accepted as playing a vital part in addressing a whole range of social challenges related to poverty, health and wellbeing, as well as generating charitable funds for other causes and creating paid and volunteer employment and training opportunities.

There are clear signals from research that there is significant untapped reuse potential in the resource stream which has economic and social value, although comprehensive quantification of this on a UK and Ireland basis has not been completed to date. Even if questions remain about how social value is calculated, the basic recognition of the potential economic impact of greater reuse is important.

The Local Government Association has estimated that reusing an additional 660,000 tonnes of goods and materials could save councils more than £60 million a year in Landfill Tax as well as realise an economic value of around £375 million – a total of up to £435 million of value available each year from diverting this additional material to reuse[3]. Further illustration of the economic and social impact of reuse is evidenced in Scotland. A mapping exercise[4] by Zero Waste Scotland to quantify the size and scope of the reuse sector in Scotland estimated that the reuse economy in Scotland was re-using around 89,000 tonnes of material, including 12,000 tonnes of furniture, 9,500 tonnes of electrical items and 66,000 tonnes of textiles with a turnover of approximately £244 million. In terms of employment, the study estimated that over 6,000 (full time equivalent) people were employed in reuse and in addition reuse projects provided around 3,000 full time equivalent volunteering positions, with more than 13,000 people involved in volunteering. While a similar mapping exercise for the UK and Ireland has not been done, the Scottish study provides a clear marker as to the reach of the existing reuse sector that supports the potential highlighted in the LGA report.

Reuse is not specifically a waste issue, it is an opportunity for goods to have a second life and it makes sense to remind ourselves of what we are talking about when we refer to the reuse sector as this in itself brings both challenges and opportunities. The reuse sector broadly consists of:

- Large scale operations that are very successful at generating funds for their charity or cause. They

operate on a professional level and have the capacity and expertise to engage with local authorities and the waste management sector. Through their operating systems, access to reuse items is extensive and not focused on a specific source or opportunity. Activities are c-oordinated and a strategic approach is taken to maximising value from products. These organisations can be very choosy as to what items they take but are generally flexible and diverse in the range of goods accepted.

- Successful smaller scale operations that have evolved and grown and are happy to work in partnership with others and are therefore well positioned to work collaboratively. They give confidence to the waste management sector and local authorities that they are a sustainable venture. They operate professionally but may be less choosy about stock than large organisations; however, they are also potentially more inventive. Franchises fit within this profile.

- Established small operations that have one or two outlets for sale of items. They perhaps do not have the capacity or experience to venture into partnership arrangements with local authorities or waste management sector.

- Micro-organisation, that have significant capacity issues and limitations on resources. They can often find it a challenge to compete with others and sometimes a degree of tension can be observed between them and larger scale operators (it's worth noting the community recycling sector had similar parallels in its heyday). They can be limited in terms of access to stock and are often very focused on a particular product stream. Their activity is highly localised and tends to deliver reuse on the ground, supplying goods for low cost/no cost to target/vulnerable groups. They may suffer from lack of engagement with any national network or organisation.

One of the common challenges that links all of these different organisations, however, is ensuring that the supply of goods, via the waste chain, is constant and not fragmented and the research has identified and evidenced the challenges to maintaining this supply chain. There are many issues which affect the flow of goods towards reuse including:

- waste policy (lack of targets), guidance, definitions and code of practice;

- access routes to the goods that residents no longer want via local authority and/or private sector;

- local authority budgets and the drive to maximise income from chargeable services[5];

- linking up the demand with the supply chain in a co-ordinated and appropriate fashion;

- maximising the opportunities for and enabling the third sector or social enterprise to operate efficiently; and

- the role and impact of retailers and the lack of obligation on producers in terms of preparing for reuse.

The selection of the case studies is designed to provide replicable examples of good practice where some of these barriers and challenges have been overcome.

One of the key considerations in producing this report has been the extent to which the growth of reuse needs to be intrinsic and commonplace across society. In doing this, the starting point is that the rationale for increasing reuse should not be based on increased poverty and the demand it creates. While this important social need should still be met, reuse can and should be able to deliver on wider environmental objectives at the same time. Beyond this, we have also sought to examine reuse as part of a longer term cultural and behavioural change towards mainstream valuing of second life goods as part of the shaping of the circular economy.

# Section 2: Review of Literature and Research Methodology

## 2.1. Literature review and key findings from previous research

The starting point for the study was to undertake a review of the literature on reuse, in order to establish a base from which to conduct surveys and interviews and provide some assessment of the current situation.

The literature around reuse in the UK context is reasonably contemporary and of value. We undertook various searches using our own networks and resources, third sector sources, internet, academic sources and research derived from government and its agencies.

Several key themes have been identified in the literature, ranging across all literature sources. They include (with key literature references as examples):

- Understanding barriers to reuse - there is considerable focus on the barriers to reuse in a wide range of literature, unsurprising considering the challenge of developing reuse outside of a clear strategic policy framework. Primary barriers identified include a lack of clear targets or legislation to drive reuse (RREUSE 2015; LGA 2014; Oakdene Hollins 2009) and a series of secondary but critical barriers including: public engagement and

negative perception of reused products (London Sustainable Development Commission and GLA 2015; Brook Lyndhurst 2012a; Centre for Reuse and remanufacturing and Sheffield University 2008); the challenge of gleaning economic value from reuse and repair in the face of cheap new product (Gover 2015); and, capacity of all sectors (public, private and third) to build up reuse services (Defra 2009; SITA UK 2012a). In particular, the Defra 2009 research report on barriers and opportunities for the third sector in reuse still provides a comprehensive summary of all major barriers which has remained largely unchanged and unaddressed in the intervening years.

- Social value from reuse – the acknowledgement that much reuse activity has been driven by third sector organisations – whose primary motivation is linked to social, anti-poverty, health and well-being agendas – is a very common theme in the literature. Publications and statements from the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) and sister organisations in Brussels (RREUSE) and Scotland (CRNS) explore this theme extensively. More recently, interest in maximising the social value from reuse has been addressed, identifying the potential added value that can be realised through the procurement of reuse services in partnerships between third sector and waste management companies (SITA UK 2012a).

- Employment potential from reuse – the employment opportunities linked to reuse have become increasingly topical, emerging from under the shadow of recycling in various literature examining the employment potential of the circular economy (Green Alliance and WRAP 2015a; SITA UK 2012b; Tellus Institute and Sound Resource Management 2011; RREUSE 2015; WRAP 2015); the work published most recently by WRAP and Green Alliance (2015b) being the most useful contemporary analysis of employment potential. The limitation of much of this literature, however, is the assumption that many of the barriers also identified can be tackled in order for this employment potential to be realised; the projections are all based on positive policy scenarios. However, the fact remains that the potential is clear and quantified.

- Partnerships and collaboration – as is often the case where a legislative framework may be regarded as limited in its ability to drive an agenda, attention turns to the potential for good partnerships to deliver progress. The reuse arena is no exception to this and the literature features partnership working extensively, whether it be private and third sector collaborations (SITA UK 2012a), or third sector and councils working together (Curran and Williams 2010; Alexander et al 2009; Resource Futures 2016; Zero Waste Scotland 2014 and many more). The analysis of what constitutes a good and successful reuse partnership differs little from the generic understanding of partnership working good practice: clear and simple Memoranda of Understanding and service level agreements as required, building of trust and confidence between partners, identification of mutual interests and complementary benefits, and regular review and revision with willingness to be flexible.

- Extensive case studies and practical guides – there are numerous and wide-ranging case studies of successful reuse initiatives, partnerships and research programmes. The WRAP website carries many and they are easily accessed, as are their extensive range of reports in this area[6]. Zero Waste Scotland can be seen the same way, as a core hub of information and case studies, as can FRN.

To summarise, similar and repeated messages emerge from the current body of literature, focused on the barriers that hold back the serious expansion of reuse. While case studies help greatly to provide inspiration and share genuine good practice, they mask an underlying sense of frustration regarding the lack of a clear policy framework to drive waste up the hierarchy beyond recycling and create an investment climate in which reuse enterprises can thrive. This frustration is heightened by the availability of a growing body of research demonstrating the actual and potential social impact of expanding reuse that is largely being ignored. In short, there is a strong sense that this is an important policy area that requires fresh impetus and attention from UK governments.

## 2.2 Methodology for the project

Research into reuse, specifically the barriers and challenges to reuse and the quantification of reuse activities, is fairly well documented as considered in the literature review in Section 2.1. The literature review formed the initial stages of the research, to avoid duplication of existing knowledge already in the public domain. This was followed by the development of a database of stakeholders to engage as part of the primary data collection.

Understanding that stakeholders involved in reuse activities are wide ranging and come from different sectors, a series of online surveys were developed to capture their views and identify good practice. The surveys focused on identifying particular strengths of the different sectors as well as pulling out the key challenges and opportunities. A range of different question styles were used, including multiple choice, scaled responses using model answers or options, and also open ended questions to capture more colour and commentary.

Four sectors were targeted for the online surveys: local authorities, reuse organisations and charities, waste management companies, and housing associations. In addition, a slightly modified survey was developed

for Ireland, taking into consideration differences in operational circumstances and policy.

CIWM was integral in circulating the survey amongst its membership through direct email and promotion through the online newsletter. Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) provided the researchers with a valuable platform at their annual conference in April 2016, accommodating a total of six breakout sessions on the topic in addition to circulating the survey to their membership. Charity Retail Association (CRA) promoted the survey to its members through social media and online newsletter and also gave the researchers access to their annual conference in June 2016 to meet with stakeholders directly. Community Housing Cymru Group, National Housing Federation, and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations also promoted the surveys to their membership. In addition, direct emails were sent out to a range of stakeholders identified from extensive in-house databases.

Detailed interviews were also carried out with a wide range of stakeholders to explore particular issues or ideas in greater detail and also to build the content of case study examples. The stakeholders identified for the interviews were agreed with the project team initially, although the list developed further following attendance at both the FRN and CRA annual conference, and also following the initial analysis of the surveys which captured examples of good practice or issues of particular note that required further investigation.

There is reference to good practice throughout the report and a number of case studies have been developed to enhance or further explore a particular issue, opportunity or challenge.

Key recommendations have been made in terms of maximising opportunities and addressing specific challenges which may be prohibiting or limiting the extensive potential benefits that reuse can realise.

# Section 3: Reuse now and in the future – stakeholder insights

## 3.1 Stakeholder views from across the nations and sectors – survey results

Whilst the surveys specifically targeted the four different sectors involved in reuse activities, the following discussion will bring together responses from all stakeholders where the same question or issue has been asked to allow for comparisons to be drawn. Caution does need to be applied to the fact that a different number of responses were obtained from the different stakeholder groups, therefore any comparisons are caveated on this basis.

Clearly where a question is unique to a particular stakeholder group then this will be considered as a standalone issue.

### 3.1.1 Responses

The greatest number of responses were from local authority representatives. Reuse organisations and charities and waste management companies had broadly the same number of responses and housing associations had the smallest number of returns (refer to table 1). In terms of who undertook the survey, the results were broadly comparable between the four stakeholder groups.

In addition to the number of completed surveys within each stakeholder group there were a number of partial responses; these were taken note of in terms of information to feed into the wider discussion, but the data was not included within the quantitative analysis of results.

### 3.1.2 Promotion and delivery of reuse

Within the local authority survey there was an overwhelming positive response to the question that asked whether their local authority promoted reuse to their residents or not (see Figure 1).

This is perhaps surprising as evidence secured by Beasley Associates[7] in January 2016 shows that the majority of local authorities do not actively promote reuse opportunities to their residents. It is possible that the positive response may simply reflect the pool of authorities taking part in the survey, rather than be truly representative of local authority behaviour in relation to reuse. Alternatively, it may be that the authorities are

Table 1: Online survey responses

| Stakeholder Group | Number of complete responses | Role or responsibility of majority of respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Local Authority | 157 | Manager/Officer |
| Reuse Organisations and Charities | 52 | Director/Operations Manager |
| Waste Management Organisations | 42 | Director/Manager |
| Housing Associations | 27 | Director/Manager/Officer |

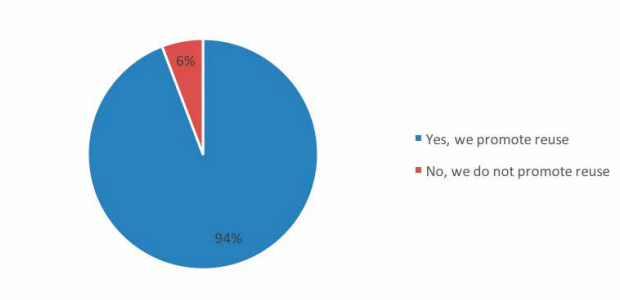



Figure 1: Promotion of reuse by the local authority to householders

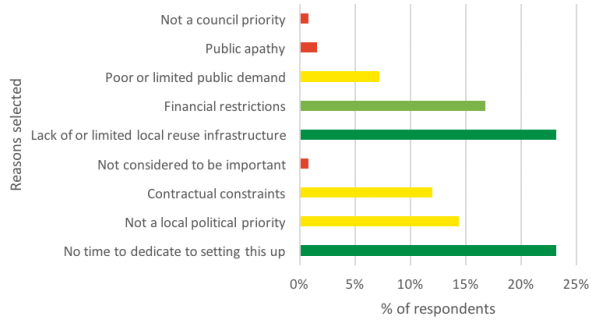



Figure 2: Local authority survey - reasons given for not promoting/limited promotion of reuse

taking an overly positive view of their action and there are varying perceptions of what it actually means to promote reuse.

It is worth noting that around a third of those who gave a positive response when questioned about the promotion of reuse, also responded to the question aimed at those who do little or no promotion. Reasons given for not pushing reuse as an option were varied, however a lack of or limited reuse infrastructure and time and financial restrictions were the most dominant reasons identified (see Figure 2). Therefore, there is a mix of internal and external factors (whether real or perceived) that appear to be prohibiting a more active engagement with the reuse sector.

The means by which promotion of reuse was delivered by local authorities were fairly evenly distributed between bulky waste collections, facilities at HWRCs, and specific events.

A question aimed at the reuse organisations and charities asked whether their organisation was set up specifically to deliver reuse activities. 50% responded that this was the case, whether this was through bulky waste collections, HWRCs, specific events, collection from private households and commercial properties, or bring banks. Of those not primarily set up to deliver reuse activities, the majority were charities or social enterprises undertaking reuse for fundraising purposes and/or provision of employment opportunities; reuse in these cases is a means to an end rather than a primary function.

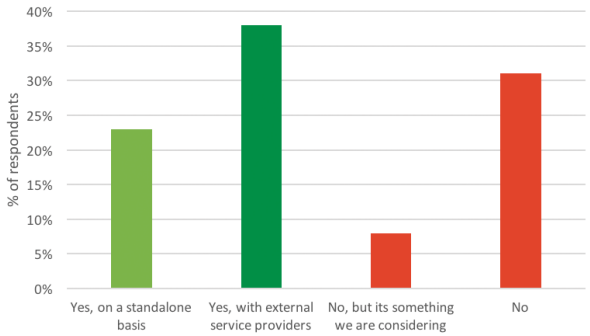



Figure 3: Active engagement of housing associations with reuse activities

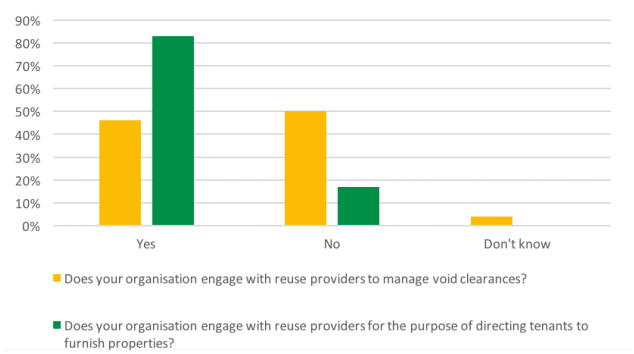



Figure 4: Purpose of engagement with reuse providers

Waste management organisations were asked whether they have any contractual responsibilities to undertake reuse activities and just over half of those who responded gave a positive answer (58%). Predominantly this was through bulky waste collections, HWRCS, or delivering specific events.

Housing associations were asked whether they were actively engaged in reuse activities and, if so, in what format. A fairly mixed response was received (see Figure 3), but over a third did state they operated reuse activities, with the support of external service providers (mainly in the form of informal relationships with the third sector, although around 20% did have formal contracts in place).

Most engagement with the reuse sector is to support tenants in furnishing their properties, although some do engage reuse providers to manage void clearances (see Figure 4).

### 3.1.3 Relationships

From a local authority perspective, formal contractual relationships with reuse organisations tend to be most commonly in place for textiles, whilst informal relationships were most common for furniture (see Figure 5). This marries up entirely with the economic climate for reuse; textiles have in the past few years enjoyed a very buoyant market and have seen an increase in local authority interest in capturing this material from the waste stream (this is discussed further in Section 3.2). White goods and WEEE are also more likely to have a contractual relationship in place.

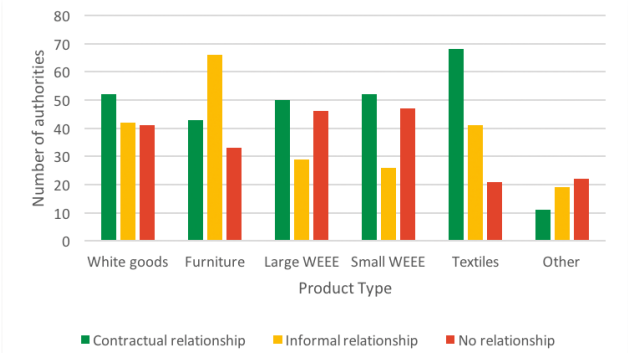



Figure 5: Local authority - types of relationships with reuse organisations for different products

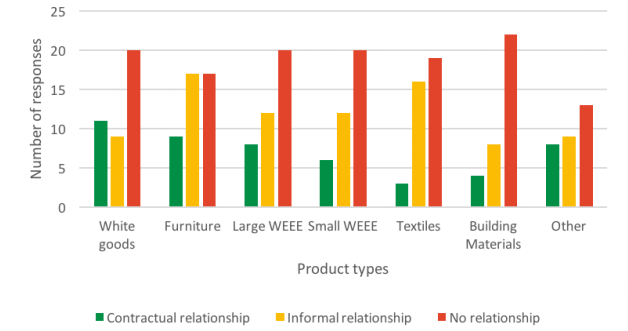



Figure 6: Reuse organisations and charities - types of relationships with reuse organisations for different products

A slightly different picture emerged for reuse organisations and charities, with an absence of any relationship being the overwhelming response for any product type. Of those where a relationship was identified, white goods were the most likely to have a contractual agreement in place and furniture and textiles the most likely to have an informal arrangement (see Figure 6).

With waste management companies again contractual relationships were not very common but when they did occur they were primarily for white goods, closely followed by large WEEE (see Figure 7). Informal relationships dominate furniture, which is also the case for local authority responses.

Overall, the picture appears to be rather ad hoc both across the sectors and also in relation to different product types. This does reflect the inconsistency and disparate approach nationally to reuse and is backed up both in the comments and feedback included in the surveys but also from the detailed telephone interviews.

### 3.1.4 Main recipients of reusable products

In order to gain an insight into the flow of reusable products and where they end up, respondents from local authorities, reuse organisations and charities, and waste management companies were asked who the main recipients were of items collected for reuse.

For local authority respondents, the main recipients of

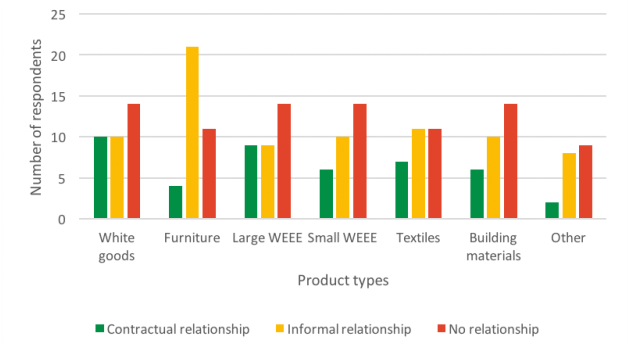



Figure 7: Waste management companies - types of relationships with reuse organisations for different products

reusable products collected from householders were identified as charity shops for onward sales. For reuse organisations and charities, the main outlet is direct sales to the general public. Respondents from waste management companies stated charity shops for onward sale but also residents of social housing, although around 25% did not know where the collected reusable items went.

### 3.1.5 Measurement of reuse

Exploring how local authorities and reuse organisations approach monitoring of the service, respondents were asked how reuse was measured and it is clear from the responses given this continues to be a challenge for some. For local authority respondents, 30% were not measuring reuse activities at all, even though they stated they were actively involved in reuse activities. Of those who are measuring and reporting data, the majority are recording tonnage data, either using estimates (including using FRN standard weights) or actual tonnage from weighbridge data.

In some cases, tonnage is being reported by a contractor or by the third sector working in partnership with the local authority/contractor. Other indicators are not commonly being used, although that isn't to say some authorities are not adopting good practice and recording wider environmental, social and financial benefits. For local authorities under significant budgetary pressures and focused on delivering a good standard of service in relation to collection and recycling, the incentive and resources to monitor and report reuse activities are just not there. Those who are more proactive with their measurement protocols tend to be driven by strong internal policy, or have clear strategic leadership that has prioritised reuse.

20% of respondents from reuse organisations and charities chose to skip the question relating to measuring the impact of reuse. Of those that responded, 50% are measuring the social impact, 64% are measuring the environmental impact and 52% are measuring the economic impact. A broader range of measurement tools are being used by the reuse and charities compared to local authorities. These include:

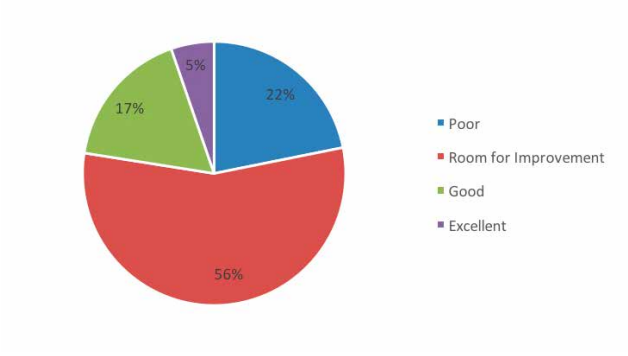



Figure 8: Local authority – effectiveness at reuse

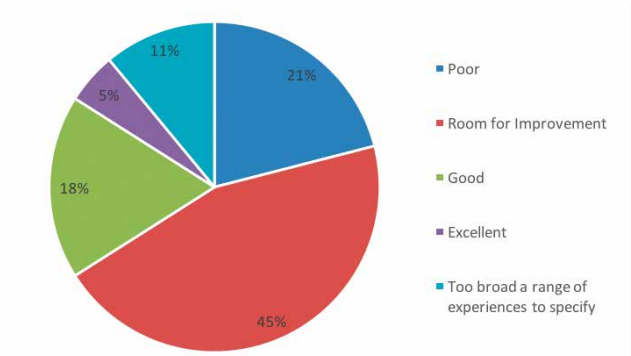



Figure 9: Reuse organisations and charities – view of how effective they consider local authorities to be at reuse

- customer surveys of both donors and buyers;
- identification of carbon savings;
- income earned from furniture reuse;
- job creation and staff employment generated through reuse activities;
- number of volunteers working within the organisation;
- quantity of training delivered or total number of trained individuals;
- number of awards of 'furniture aid' for households without means to purchase essential furniture;
- gift aid records;
- resale value after renovation/up-cycling; and
- reuse and recycling tonnage.

Therefore, it is clear that there is an appetite to measure how successful a reuse operation is, but consistency across organisations is lacking.

### 3.1.6 Effectiveness at reuse

Despite the positive response given in relation to promotion of reuse activities, when local authority respondents were asked how effective they considered their authority to be at reuse, the overwhelming response (78%) was that they felt it was 'poor' or there was 'room for improvement' (see Figure 8). This is potentially a very honest reflection when taking a snap shot of local authority performance across the board.

Of the 22% that consider themselves to be good or excellent, monitoring systems are reported to be in place and they appear to offer a more systematic approach to reuse with effective partnerships and collaboration with the reuse sector.

When respondents from reuse organisations and charities were asked the same question, the same percentage identified local authorities as good or excellent although slightly less identified local authorities as poor or requires improvement (66%) (see Figure 9). This is largely as a result of reuse organisations and charities being given an additional option of selecting 'too broad a range of experiences to specify' to reflect the different sizes of operations and relationships in place[8].

The findings do reflect the challenge of effectively engaging local authorities with the reuse agenda. Whilst there are lots of examples where local authorities have worked well with other reuse organisations, there are equally as many where the relationship has not been successful. In the main, local authorities have not prioritised reuse, predominantly because of financial pressures, reduced capacity within the authority and, in some cases, because of poor previous experiences of working with the reuse sector in the past which have damaged trust. In addition, there can be a limited understanding of what reuse actually is, with reuse terminology used interchangeably with recycling.

However, it is worth noting that with 22-23% judging themselves, and being judged by reuse organisation and charities, as good or excellent in terms of their effectiveness, this is a positive basis from which to build. It also means that there is a body of good practice available within the local authority sector.

### 3.1.7 Reuse within internal procurement

When local authority respondents were asked whether reuse was considered within internal procurement activities, the vast majority (76%) stated 'no' or 'don't know'. However, for respondents from reuse organisations and charities, reuse within internal procurement features more highly on the agenda, with 65% stating that this was the case and only 35% stating 'no' or 'don't know'.

Waste management companies fell somewhere in between local authorities and reuse organisations, with 48% of respondents stating that reuse was considered within internal procurement and 52% stating 'no' or 'don't know'.

In terms of specific constraints which prevent or limit

reuse being considered within internal procurement activities, 56% of local authority respondents did not know. However, those who felt there were constraints gave a number of reasons, such as prohibitive product specifications, lack of joined up thinking/co-ordination around procurement and lack of engagement with procurement teams located in a different department. Difficulties for the third sector in competing against large suppliers on price were also raised and the use of frameworks for procurement which exclude reused or refurbished items was identified. Attitudes towards reused or refurbished items and a lack of desire to have 'second hand' goods were also cited.

For reuse organisations and charities, product specifications and funding mechanisms are considered to be an issue, as is the availability of items and the estimated lifespan of items required. Safety labels and fire regulations were also raised as an issue and this barrier is considered further in Section 3.2.1.

For respondents from waste management organisations, barriers to internal procurement policies for reuse include quality and suitability of products, access to products in a suitable number and quality, information security, specifications and safety; and the resources to commit to putting internal processes in place.

Getting procurement right in terms of generating supply and demand for reused items is essential and this is considered in more detail in Section 3.2.

### 3.1.8 Reuse as a normalised activity

When asked whether there is a reuse culture embedded across their authority, 86% of local authority respondents stated 'no' or 'don't know'. A more positive response was received from waste management respondents with just over half considering there to be a reuse culture embedded across their organisation.

Local authority respondents were asked what more could be done to embed reuse as a normalised activity (see Figure 10). Improved public engagement and improved reuse infrastructure were considered by most to be important/very important; thereby the focus on improvement is on access and supply of goods. On the other hand, linkages with poverty and employment were not really regarded as significantly important by all local authority respondents. This is contrary to the message that the reuse sector is currently trying to promote in terms of the wider benefits of reuse activities and is considered in more detail in Section 3.2.

Respondents from reuse organisations and charities followed a broadly similar pattern, as they considered better communications locally, improved public engagement, and improved reuse and collection infrastructure as most important (see Figure 11). Again, the focus appears to be on access and supply of goods, and behaviour and participation of residents.

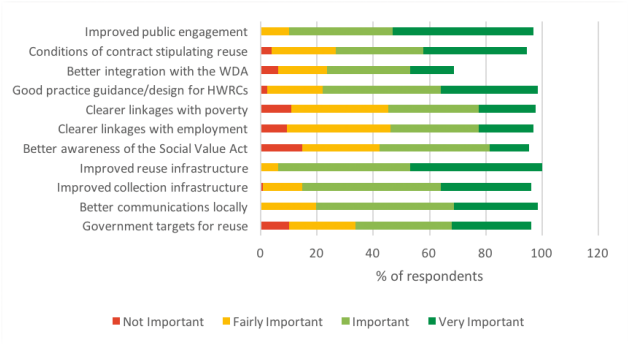



Figure 10: Local authority – what is required to embed reuse as a normalised activity?

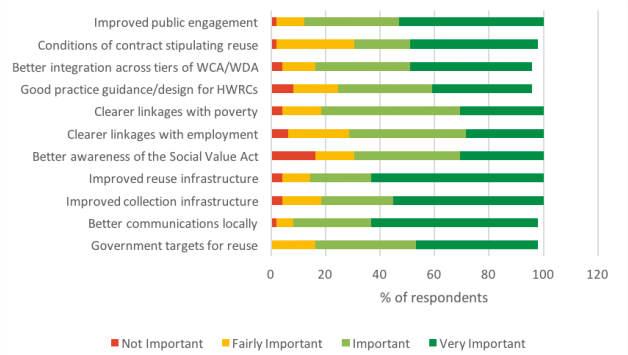



Figure 11: Reuse organisations - what is required to embed reuse as a normalised activity?

There was more support for government targets for reuse than in the local authority responses. Better awareness of the Social Value Act, good practice guidance/design for HWRCs and clear linkages with employment were less well supported in terms of what was seen as important to normalise reuse.

Respondents from waste management companies considered improved reuse infrastructure and improved collection infrastructure, as well as good practice guidance/design for HWRCs, as important/very important issues (see figure 12). Again, in line with the local authority view, clear linkages with poverty were not seen as a fundamentally important requirement in order to normalise reuse. As with both the previous survey groups, the key issue is accessing appropriate goods for reuse purposes.

### 3.1.9 Drivers that motivate involvement in reuse

**Waste management companies** were asked to identify the main drivers that motivate their involvement in reuse. Perhaps unsurprisingly cost savings dominated the responses (See Figure 13). Clearly a financial case can be made to reuse where possible.

### 3.1.10 Engaging with the reuse sector

**Housing associations** were asked a series of questions to gauge their level of engagement with the reuse sector.

In terms of the main reused goods that were of importance to housing associations, it is no surprise that furniture tops the list; the reuse sector clearly has an

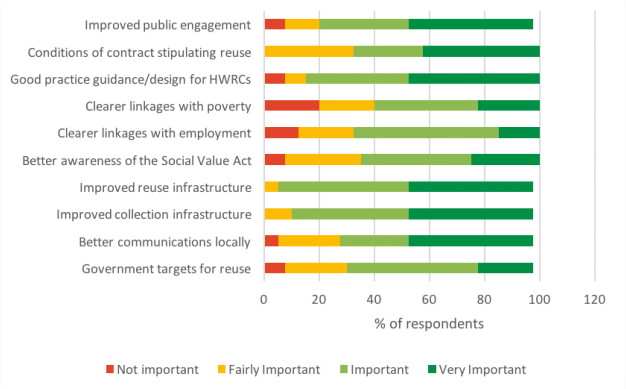



Figure 12: Waste management companies - what is required to embed reuse as a normalised activity?

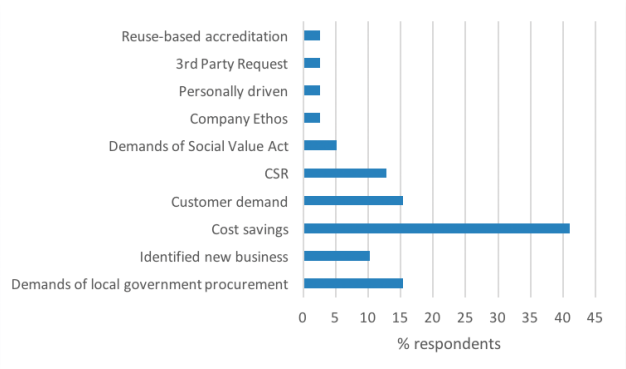



Figure 13: Waste management companies – drivers motivating reuse

important role to play in provision of low cost furniture to those who are most vulnerable and without the financial means to purchase new items (see Figure 14).

When asked how engaged in reuse they considered their organisation to be, there was a polarisation of views amongst respondents from housing associations. Asked to select the statement that most reflects their current circumstances, the responses are broadly split between those who feel reuse is fully embedded in policy and practices, those who are directing tenants to reused goods, and those who feel they have no consistency in practice but are open to opportunities (see Table 2)

Housing associations respondents asked what the main reasons were for engagement with reuse, identified tackling poverty, closely followed by supporting local social enterprises (see Figure 15).

When asked to consider how much of an issue a number of different factors were in terms of engaging with reuse organisations, access to material/products and contractual constraints did not really feature as areas of concern (see Figure 16). One of the most significant challenges for housing associations appears to be prioritisation of other issues, and cost and time concerns. A small percentage of respondents also identified tenants' attitude to reused items, lack of confidence in supply, and health and safety concerns as major issues.

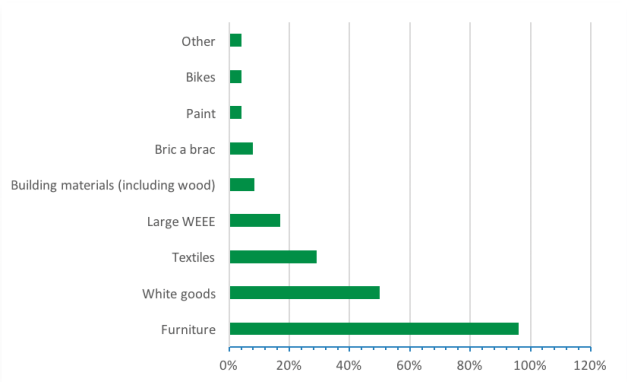



Figure 14 Housing associations - the main reused products accessed

Table 2: Housing associations – level of engagement in reuse

| Level of engagement in reuse | % response |
|---|---|
| Fully embedded in organisations policy and practice | 27% |
| Directing prospective tenants to reuse and refurbished good suppliers | 35% |
| Make passing reference to reuse and refurbished good suppliers in literature | 4% |
| No consistency in practice but open to opportunities | 35% |

There are a number of fundamental issues surrounding the practical implementation of reuse for housing associations and tenants that have been raised by respondents. Firstly, transportation of reused items to tenants houses. As furniture and white goods dominate what tenants are mainly accessing, the logistics of getting these to the tenants' properties in a timely fashion can be an issue if relying on volunteers within the reuse organisation or charity. It depends on the scale of operation, staffing levels, and access to transport; this can mean a very different experience in different parts of the country.

Secondly, there are the health and safety implications; for example, with soft furnishings, there may be a potential danger of hypodermic needles being present when collecting, handling, and sorting. The liability when passing on a reused product, or leaving furnishings in a void for the next tenant, is therefore an area of concern for some reuse organisations and housing associations. Wales and West Housing, concerned about health and safety and issues of liability if items catch fire or cause harm, is looking into the legal obligations on Registered Social Landlords when facilitating the transfer of furniture between existing tenants and also when the housing association informally passes on furniture that has been left in voids to new residents.

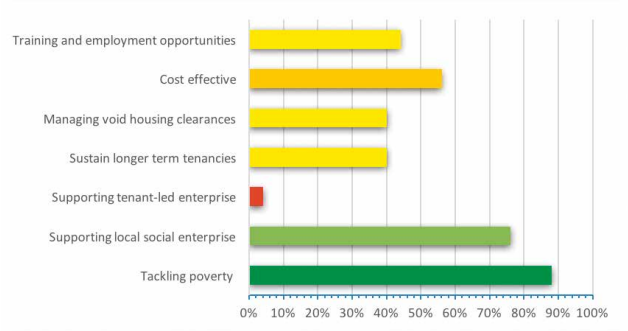



Figure 15: Housing associations - main reasons for engagement with reuse

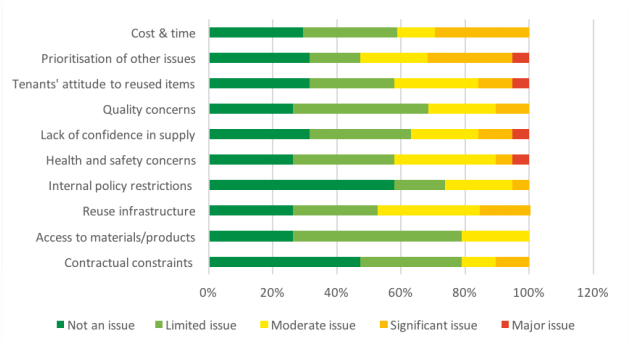



Figure 16: Housing associations - how much of an issue, in terms of engaging with the reuse sector, are the following factors?

On the question of specific actions that have been taken to address any of the issues prohibiting or limiting engagement with reuse, one response focused on the challenge of accessing goods and talked about implementing a one off 'contamination charge' for items received from void clearances which had been incorrectly bagged – i.e. not separated correctly – with the resulting contamination rendering the targeted items no longer suitable for reuse. However, this was not very well received in principle and was not seen as a positive means to bring about a change in practices.

Another response, still on the issue of access and supply of goods, talks about extending the partnership area to work with third sector organisations outside the immediate vicinity; this is in order to address supply and infrastructure issues locally. Lack of adequate local infrastructure is raised as an issue time and time again, both in terms of the survey responses and the more detailed interviews.

In terms of proactively directing tenants to sources of help, many housing associations are not only signposting reuse organisations as suppliers of affordable furniture and white goods; they are also providing funding to secure goods. Charter Housing for example, has extended its 'MyPad' course for young potential tenants to incorporate a visit to a reuse centre so they can see the quality of goods available. They also receive a £30 voucher to spend at the centre and all tenants receive a 10% discount on all goods available. The same housing association is also lobbying the Welsh Government on the issue of using the Discretionary Assistance Fund for reuse.

Other housing associations are also looking into putting arrangements in place to ensure discounted items are available to tenants from third sector organisations offering reusable goods, to tackle poverty issues in their most vulnerable groups.

When asked about future engagement, virtually all housing association respondents stated that reuse would be a higher priority for their organisation in the future. Tenancy sustainability, greater partnership working with other housing associations, the local authority and the third sector, increased levels of poverty, income generation, employment opportunities and reducing wastes costs were all seen as key issues to stimulate future engagement.

### 3.1.11 Level of reuse for different products

In three of the sector surveys (local authority, reuse organisation and charities, and waste management organisation) respondents were asked to estimate what proportion of white goods, furniture, large WEEE, small WEEE and textiles were reused, refurbished, repaired, recycled or disposed.

Some found this question difficult to answer, not having monitored their activities in enough detail to be able to give a response. However, for those that did respond the following trends can be identified:

- For local authorities, recycling dominates for all materials except furniture where disposal was the preferred choice. No local authority respondent selected repair for any of the goods collected and refurbishment only featured to a small degree for white goods and furniture.
- Waste management companies selected recycling for all materials.
- Reuse organisations and charities selected reuse as the predominant process for all materials collected except Large WEEE. There was no real distinction between the different processes for large WEEE (except refurbish where it didn't feature at all), and responses were varied.
- Refurbish does not feature for any of the organisations in relation to large WEEE, nor does it feature for small WEEE for local authorities and waste management organisations. Treatment and disposal is not an option for reuse organisations and charities in relation to small WEEE and textiles.

### 3.1.12 Summary of the surveys

The surveys attracted a good response across the targeted sectors and, with almost 280 responses, they provide a strong base of current opinion and practice

**Key themes emerging from the surveys:**

- Local authorities consider themselves to be active in promoting reuse, however a significant majority indicate they have room to improve their service.
- Reuse organisations are slightly more charitable towards their local authority partners in evaluating their effectiveness, but the clear message is that there is much room for improvement.
- Practical, financial and human resource limitations currently restrict councils in their ability to promote reuse, and the same applies to housing associations, although a significant minority are very actively engaged with reuse. Again, there is significant room for improvement.
- Reuse organisations do not enjoy much contract security with local authorities in their primary interests around the collection of furniture; however, they have better contractual relationships on textiles and white goods.
- Direct sales to the general public to meet identified social needs remains the primary market for much of the product handled by reuse organisations.
- Significant minorities of councils and reuse organisations are not engaged in any measurement of their activities or their impact; this represents a significant opportunity for improvement.
- There is widespread agreement across all sectors that improvements to reuse infrastructure and communications would help to expand reuse.
- There is less agreement on the merit of reuse targets, with reuse organisations much more positive about this than local authorities or the private sector.

in reuse in the UK and Ireland. In general, they paint a picture of the state of reuse which broadly chimes with the tone of many of the subsequent detailed interviews we conducted.

## 3.2 Insight from key stakeholders and opinion formers

A significant number of stakeholders were interviewed for this project. The format of those interviews was kept intentionally open and the focus was very much dependent upon the role of the individual and the nature of their organisation. However, the context as presented in Section 1.1 provided the overarching framework. The following section draws out the main findings from these interviews and presents a discussion of the challenges and opportunities facing the reuse sector.

### 3.2.1 Challenges

Whilst the challenges to reuse are well established and relatively well documented (see Section 2), it would be remiss not to cover the key issues raised by stakeholders during the interviews; specifically, in terms of challenges that prohibit or reduce opportunities to maximise reuse or maximise the value that can be obtained through reusing products.

- Staffing

Volunteers are seen to play a pivotal role in reuse projects and are often regarded as "the lifeblood of reuse organisations". Many support the view that they make the difference as to whether a project is sustainable or not, particularly for smaller scale projects that do not have the funds to pay a large body of staff. Securing volunteers, in the right numbers, at the right time can be an ongoing challenge and is a limiting factor in terms of the capacity of a reuse organisation to move forward and develop.

Reuse activities can be time intensive and require person power to source, collect, sort, repair, refurbish, sell and promote reusable goods; this is one of the reasons why the reuse sector is lauded for its employment potential. However, funds have to be available to meet the costs of employment and when this isn't the case, volunteers have to step in.

According to the CRA, over 218,000 people volunteer in charity stores nationwide; this is the largest single group of volunteers in the country[9]. CRA have found that 61% of charity shop volunteers believe that volunteering has a positive impact on their physical and mental health and over 80% think it improves their self-esteem and confidence. In addition, 80% of charity shop volunteers believe that volunteering has helped them to learn new skills. Therefore, whilst a reliance on volunteers and recruiting enough can be a challenge, the personal benefits (whether real or perceived) that being a volunteer can bring should not be under estimated.

Volunteers are generally crucial to the success or otherwise of reuse organisations. In addition, volunteering can provide positive personal benefits to individuals' physical health and well-being.

- Funding

Whilst funding, in whatever form, is not an absolute requirement for reuse organisations in general, it can be a significant challenge for some. Both availability and levels of funding have diminished significantly over recent years, not just in relation to capital funds to set projects up, but also resources to provide much needed staffing through employment-focused grants and 'back to work' initiatives. The reduction in funding has seen a number of smaller reuse organisations become unsustainable and some partnerships, for example

between local authorities and reuse organisations, have folded.

There is now a real requirement for reuse organisations to operate on a more business-like footing and be self-sustaining, regardless of the 'worthiness' of the charity or cause they are supporting. This is a challenge for some without the necessary capacity or skills to change models of operation. A notable trend and characteristic of the reuse sector is the emergence of greater diversification in operations, particularly around 'upcycling' and generating added value from product. While this may be seen as simply "riding the wave" as one social entrepreneur put it, it points to an increased flexibility and commercial acumen amongst successful reuse organisations.

In addition, an absence of funding means that there is increasing pressure on the sale of stock to underpin the activities of the reuse organisation and generate much needed funds for the charity or cause. In some cases, there can be difficulties were the reuse organisation is selling stock and attempting to generate income from the very people that the organisation may be designed to serve or support.

For those reliant on funding and grants to support their activities, sources have diminished significantly in recent years. Therefor flexibility and diversification is key, as is a business-like approach in the face of diminishing financial support.

- Inward looking and parochial projects

One relatively surprising aspect of the research was how self-critical the reuse sector can be as a whole (whether real or perceived). On a number of occasions, the view was expressed that "inward and parochial projects" remain evident across the UK though and these may face greater challenges in terms of securing long term viability through partnership working and collaboration. Having met with an extensive number of organisations through the course of this research, it is clear that this is a real rather than perceived issue, but the number of organisations that operate in this way are in the minority.

What is interesting to note is that projects that tend to be inward looking or parochial often express a sense of vulnerability and it is clear that they face significant pressure from having insufficient capacity and resources to operate as effectively as they could. Passion for the charity or particular cause, and concerns that competition is "taking away goods and products that they could be selling and using to raise funds", can also lead to a more defensive position being taken.

These aside, a significant number of reuse organisations are demonstrably outward looking and are successfully engaging in collaborative working, sharing of stock, expertise, equipment and personnel. Most recognise the need to be open minded and adaptable in terms of how they operate; this adaptability is a real asset to the skills set of the sector as a whole.

Adaptability and openness towards collaborative working and engagement can make the difference between a project being successful (or not) in the medium to long term.

- Relationships with local authorities

Developing a relationship with local government may not be as crucial to success as securing positive relationships with donors, customers, staff and volunteers, but it can play an integral or complementary role to developing those wider relationships.

Whilst there are pockets of good practice where the reuse sector and local authorities have formed close partnerships and are driving forward reuse activities together, there are common challenges. Where relationships have not previously been developed for whatever reason, there can be a sense of 'us and them' from both sides; it is also clear from partnerships that have worked that opportunities would have been missed if the relationship hadn't been embarked on. There is a sense that whilst the reuse sector has evolved over time – adapting to change, diversifying, and delivering much broader benefits – the relationship with local government has not and certainly how local authorities procure services and their priorities for procurement remains a barrier in a lot of cases.

There is a real disparity across the UK in terms of how reuse organisations are treated, whether in terms of rental agreements for facilities and sites, or charges for disposal. Different rules are applied in different parts of the country and there is a sense that some reuse organisations are being financially penalised as a consequence of their geographical location. Understanding the financial pressure that local authorities currently find themselves under is not a given, equally the role that reuse organisations play and can play in more effective management of resources, social care and employment is not automatically acknowledged by local authorities. This came out in the surveys and also in the detailed interviews.

Whilst relationships with local government may not be as paramount to the sector as other issues, the absence of any relationship can mean opportunities are being missed.

- Need for diversification

It was repeatedly raised on a number of occasions that reuse organisations need to "diversify to exist". Whilst

there are exceptions, it is not considered sustainable to focus on one material stream alone unless the organisation is operating within a niche area and has a strong position in the market place. Vulnerability to the market place and fluctuating prices, alongside challenges of consistently sourcing goods and products of the right quality, mean that a more diverse business has a greater chance of surviving in the medium to long term. There are numerous examples where organisations, such as the SOFA project, have expanded their remit and broadened their focus.

If organisations are not open to diversification they potentially leave themselves exposed and vulnerable in terms of their sustainability.

- Size of operation

The reuse sector is made up of a wide range of organisations including: small stand-alone projects with a minimal staff base supported by a group of committed volunteers; projects with multiple outlets and a larger body of staff and training opportunities for volunteers and members of the public; partnership projects sharing resources and expertise; franchises operating from a central model; and large high profile national organisations. This diversity can be a challenge when attempting to represent the views of all stakeholders.

On this point, the survey responses and interviews highlight that it can be difficult for small operators to "have a voice and be heard above all the noise". Some expressed a view that they were "feeling disenfranchised", even as members of national networks, and did not feel that others saw them as "valid stakeholders" in any discussions relating to the future strategic direction of the sector. They felt "overlooked". In addition, there were numerous small or micro-organisations who were not members of any network or membership organisation and felt they were too small to be included. Membership fees were regarded as a "luxury" and the application process too onerous. Awareness of the benefits that networks and membership organisations could bring was not high; however a need for ongoing support was identified, particularly in relation to operational efficiency.

Conversely, there were organisations who consider themselves to be "punching above their weight" and feel national networks help them to "mix with the big players and get their viewpoint across". They value the national networks and trade bodies and consider the access they get to other organisations to be crucial to their ongoing development.

There are also some who view the large national charities as a real threat to their organisation. When pushed to qualify this view, it appears that the sheer size of the national operations and all the benefits this can bring (capacity, skills, strategic co-ordination etc.) makes it difficult for the smaller organisations to feel they can compete in terms of accessing donations, attracting buyers into their retail outlets, and securing contracts or informal relationships with others. The question of whether lessons could be learnt from the national charities and if there could be greater collaboration and support was mainly met positively and openly.

The sector consists of organisations of all shapes and sizes; this can be a challenge in terms of developing representative views. There is a need to embrace the variety and find a way to be fully inclusive, from national networks through to micro-organisations.

- Brand loyalty

Building up brand loyalty was something that many organisations referred to and aspired to achieve. When income depends on the sale of reusable items, and donations dictate the quality of stock available to sell, ensuring that customers choose you is as important to reuse organisations as it is to big high street names jostling for trade.

At the risk of over simplifying the issue, there are three main types of donor/customer:

- those who go for ease of access when making a donation and may or may not purchase from a charity shop or reuse outlet i.e. they have no preference;
- those who go for ease of access when making a donation but in terms of purchasing have a preference for a particular charity shop or outlet based on various factors such as image, quality, and/or price; and,
- those who have a personal loyalty to a particular charity or cause in terms of both donating and purchasing.

The challenge of developing a brand and fostering loyalty is very real for those organisations where there is not necessarily a clear audience or the target group is niche. For some social enterprises, the cause or driver for that organisation is not readily understood or a connection is not readily made. However, strategic developments led by FRN (with their accreditation process for ARCs) and Zero Waste Scotland (with their accreditation process for the Revolve brand) are starting to embed generic operating procedures and principles into reuse organisations from which benefits can accrue. Although accreditation does not automatically translate into strong brand identities, it is an important step and may make it easier to embrace the benefits of branding in future years.

Good examples exist elsewhere in Europe of embedding public-facing branding for reuse shops and organisations

(separate from national charity chains), such as the well-developed Komosie network in Flanders and the ENVIE network in France[10].

There are different mechanisms to achieve brand loyalty and ensure donors and customers return; the key is finding the most appropriate way to do this for each organisation.

- Access to stock

One of the biggest challenges for the reuse sector is accessing appropriate items of the right quality for reuse purposes. At local authority level, collection practices and advice being given to householders are not always conducive to maximising the value of items for reuse. For the general public, whilst some may have loyalty to specific charities, ease of opportunity to donate can dictate their actions. A shop's location may be prohibitive due to traffic and parking issues, so other means of securing goods for reuse have to be developed.

The flow of stock can be affected by any number of things. For example, a change of policy by a retailer might result in the removal of bring banks from their car parks in preference for a particular partner or charity; a local authority might decide to incorporate textiles and small WEEE into the kerbside collection, where traditionally householders may have donated these items to local charity shops; or changes to Cabinet Office policy on National Exemption Orders for door-to-door collections.

Some stakeholders have reported issues with 'take-back' schemes when the collection fee does not cover the cost of disposal of the item, for example a sofa that doesn't have a fire label, is found to be unsuitable for resale. Some reported that 50% of the items delivered are waste whereas others report receiving more in than they can sell.

Quality of stock can also be a challenge. Awareness amongst the general public needs to be raised in terms of what can be reused and how it should be presented. Soiled garments are worth significantly less than clean clothing ready to be put on the racks. Second hand items sold on eBay tend to be ready for wear (i.e. washed and ironed) but there is not always the same assiduous approach towards donations to charity shops. It can be difficult to present a message without putting people off donating – awareness raising needs to be handled sensitively.

Flow and management of stock is essential to the sustainability of any organisation. Get this right and one of the biggest challenges has been addressed.

- Space

Space, specifically lack of it, is the most often quoted challenge that reuse organisations raised during the research. Regardless of the organisation's size, space limitations impact on their ability to operate successfully, particularly in terms of storing items that are out of season or where there is excess stock or a surplus of a particular item. Space limitations also severely restrict opportunities to repair or refurbish items, thereby impacting on the potential value that can be realised.

Some responses to this include temporary renting of additional space to accommodate a specific campaign or initiative, or to deal with a glut of stock. Whilst this is an additional cost, it can be justified and offset by increased sales as a result of additional stock or better stock management. Other responses include sharing of space with other organisations or accessing space owned by local councils on a temporary basis. Rotating access to goods also addresses space limitations, for example reuse organisations collectively providing a bulky service or collectively being the point of contact to whom local authorities can direct the public.

Being innovative with space and finding solutions to a lack of storage is crucial in effective stock management and maintaining opportunities for customers to buy a wide range of products.

- Product Safety Standards (including fire labelling)

The challenge of having to abide by product safety standards[11] for the sale of all second hand goods (with the exception of antiques) means that all reuse organisations and charities selling to the public have the same obligations with regard to consumer rights and product liability as any retailer or commercial trader. Clearly for some items sold the risk is minimal, but for those supplying electrical items or furniture, for example, the potential risk increases significantly.

There are measures that reuse organisations can put in place to offer some degree of protection by clarifying the quality of an item being sold and reducing the potential for later challenge. The use of signage is becoming increasingly commonplace, for example, declaring that the customer must take responsibility for their purchase and undertake a thorough examination to ensure they are happy with its state before making their purchase. In addition, there is a real focus on ensuring that any faults are pointed out or are completely obvious to mitigate against future complaints. Where items are on sale for repair or reconditioning, it is preferable to place these in a separate area of shop or premises and clearly indicate their condition so there can be no doubt over their status. It remains a challenge, however, for reuse organisations to be able to adequately prove that a purchase has been made with full customer knowledge

of the condition of the product.

Regardless of what measures are taken, if a customer brings something back the onus is on the reuse organisation during the first 6 months to prove that the product wasn't faulty and was as described when sold. This responsibility shifts to the consumer after 6 months, but there remains a liability with the reuse organisation to resolve any issues that may arise with the customer in relation to the product for up to 6 years (5 years in Scotland). Again, it can be difficult for reuse organisations to have all the necessary systems and processes in place to deal with this liability.

Fire regulations present their own specific challenge; if the fire safety label has been removed from an item of furniture then it cannot be re-sold. This has significant consequences for upholstered furniture as most people do not understand the reasons for keeping fire labels intact and attached and the tendency is to remove them at the first opportunity. Attaching the fire label in a better place or in a more permanent manner would be a first step in addressing this challenge, and FRN has been at the forefront of lobbying for labels to be stitched down across all sides making it more difficult for them to be cut off by the consumer. In addition, in light of proposed changes in relation to the fire retardant chemicals, FRN has also been engaged with government to ensure that this will not prohibit the reuse of upholstered furniture pre-dating these changes.

Reuse organisations need clear systems in place to meet product safety standards to protect both themselves and their customers. Equally, the liabilities imposed on traders of second hand goods needs to be fully realised and, where possible, measures put in place to manage these liabilities effectively.

### 3.2.2 Opportunities

- Establishing and maintaining a good supply of stock

Some reuse organisations have developed excellent systems for generating and maintaining a continual flow of stock. Small scale local operations can survive on regular drop-off donations; where there is more competition, however, this is not always the case. In any scenario, quality can also be an issue. To address this pressure, diversification is taking place, with reuse organisations securing agreements with local authorities to collect from the kerbside, at HWRCs, through pop-up shops and bring banks, direct from students, at auction, and by securing excess stock from each other. Innovation in maintaining good flow of stock is evident throughout the sector and can be replicated to suit different local circumstances and conditions.

The British Heart Foundation (See case study 1) has become extremely successful in how they manage and operate their business. Recognising that access to stock, and the right stock to ensure that income can be maximised, is a priority for the business and a range of different sources are used.

Accessing stock from retailers is another growth area where mutually beneficial relationships between major retailers and reuse organisations can significantly develop the potential for effective reuse. The developing relationship between retail furniture giant IKEA and the FRN (See case study 2) provides a strong example of how identifying shared benefits that make commercial sense can deliver success for all parties.

- Co-ordinating access to materials

One of the difficulties is that the public wants to donate items, particularly larger items, but may not know how to do this or where to go. Whilst the FRN and CRA provide signposting from their websites, the public would need to be aware of these organisations in the first place. Therefore, it is often the local authority that is the first point of call for householders seeking an alternative to disposal. Unless the local authority has clear information on their website or their central call centre is fully briefed on the options available then the opportunity to divert the goods for reuse may not always be realised.

It needs to be easy and clear to the public how they can donate items, particularly larger household products.

In Scotland, steps have been taken to address this with a central Reuse Line (See case study 3), directing residents to their local reuse organisations and ensuring that when householders make contact, the service they receive is standardised as far as possible through a requirement for all organisations to have a recognised quality standard.

There are immediate and obvious benefits from having a single contact point to promote and direct residents to, however difficulties can occur when there is no or limited capacity in a local area. It is important to recognise that the Reuse Line is one element of a wider strategic approach to reuse in Scotland (covered in a separate case study) and represents an investment for the long term, recognising that its reach has limits whilst reuse capacity still needs to expand.

Guiding and networking those with items to reuse and those who have a need or want for those items works at the commercial level also. Warp It (See case study 4) is a good example of a networking platform that links donors with customers and items are traded for free. The network has achieved considerable success in some quarters, but whilst the network is freely available to reuse organisations and charities there has been limited uptake to date. It is an emerging business model worthy of examination by reuse organisations wishing to develop their operations.

### Case Study 1: British Heart Foundation – different approaches to establishing and maintaining a good supply of stock for reuse

Large national reuse organisations and charities take a very strategic approach to accessing and maintaining stock. The British Heart Foundation (BHF) for example, has adopted a dual approach to ensuring donations are maintained; initiatives and activities delivered locally and also those organised centrally by Head Office. On a local level, each shop is provided with standardised tools to support endeavours to access stock, and training to deliver the initiatives and maximise opportunities is provided for management. This streamlines the process across the country. Nationally, Head Office co-ordinates annual events to boost stock locally and deliver PR messages to attract donors; however it is up to each local shop to become self-sufficient through local initiatives and activities to maintain the flow of donations for onward sale. The aim is for 350-400 bags of donations each week and this can be a challenge with so much competition on the high street.

Taking this into consideration, BHF look for donations in different ways, such as:

- locally operated bring banks to provide off-site opportunities for people to donate to BHF shops;
- local campaigns and initiatives delivered within the community to maintain levels of donations;
- nationally-led high profile initiatives at key times of the year to stimulate stock generation;
- establishing direct links to furniture shops locally and negotiating partnership arrangements through Head Office for nationwide retailers; and
- delivering kerbside collection services for targeted items alongside the local authority kerbside service.

However, it is the relationship with universities and targeting of the student population that is explored further within this case study.

In 2011 a trial was put in place with Birmingham City Council and the University of Birmingham, to collect reusable items from student residences off campus via a kerbside collection, and also to provide bags for students in halls. All bags were delivered to a storage facility for analysis so that BHF could make a judgement on the success or otherwise of the trial and consider the potential to roll out the initiative. Key challenges included the timing of the collections; students were not necessarily very prompt at putting their bags out by 7am. There was also the challenge of bags being stolen once they were put out for collection. The 4-week trial generated £13,500 worth of stock and because of the difficulties with the kerbside collection 99% came from students in halls/street clothing banks.

To explore the potential to extrapolate the trial in other university areas, partnerships were set up with a further 25 Universities in two BHF regions.

In 2012, the student focused collections brought in 20,000 bags of stock and in 2013, this rose to 55,600 bags. The decision was made that the trial had been successful and could be rolled out as a nationwide initiative. The campaign is called 'Pack for Good' and in 2014, 55 universities were involved. The number increased to 78 last year and there are currently 85 universities on board with the project. Last year, the initiative generated over £1 million worth of stock based on a value of £14 per bag.

The project is resource intensive, particularly at the end of the academic year when students are moving out. In some cases, collections are 7 days a week with 3 or 4 drivers making collections However, the boost in stock to local shops is significant, specifically with regard to small WEEE, textiles, books and items of furniture. In addition, at some universities permanent bring banks and collection bins have been put in place; this helps maintain the flow of donations aside from peak times of student changeover dates.

The success of the project is reliant on establishing effective partnership working with the universities and meeting their needs at the right time in terms of timing the intensive period of collection, ensuring it is communicated effectively, and providing bags to students.

Clearly targeting students has potentially wider benefits in terms of securing custom for reusable items and normalising the purchase of second hand goods.

### Case Study 2: IKEA and Furniture Reuse Network – mutually beneficial partnership working to maximise access to goods for reuse

The international furniture and household goods retailer IKEA has set clear goals for sustainability and good environmental management within its operations which include the ambition of creating net positive environmental impact from their activities. In part, this has been driven by clear messages from their customers wishing to see the company do more in this area. When IKEA asks customers in surveys and focus groups about their concerns, the main feedback is around sustainable use of forests and of the durability of products. The company takes this feedback seriously and has programmes in place across the business to address these and other customer interests, including better recycling facilities.

The relationship that has developed between IKEA and the FRN emerged from the company's desire to find more closed-loop opportunities for product. It also significantly contributes to the company's sustainability profile and Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

The essence of the partnership is the identification of a solution for the reuse and recycling of preused mattresses, upholstery and large domestic appliances collected by IKEA through their Take-Back service when delivering new products to customers. IKEA now promote the benefits of reuse within store and encourage customers to use the Take-Back scheme which is an increasingly attractive consideration for customers at the point at which they are ready to buy new product in-store.

The scheme operates through 18 FRN Approved Reuse Centres (ARCs) across the UK and their local IKEA stores. These ARCs are fully audited (meeting the compliance standards required for Internal Audits by those registered to ISO 9001, 14001 and 18001). This arrangement supports the continuing professional development of the FRN membership as only accredited organisations with the necessary processes and operational standards are able to take advantage of the supply from IKEA stores. It also provides IKEA with a strong degree of confidence and security in their duty of care in relation to the Take-Back scheme and the onward distribution of product for reuse or recycling.

This service and facility helps to meet the FRN objective of reducing poverty by supporting households in need to access furniture, white goods and other household items at affordable prices, along with reducing the amount of waste being placed into landfill. It is also helping IKEA to take a significant step forward towards key sustainability goals set by the IKEA group which are; reducing its $CO_2$ impacts and emissions; having zero waste to landfill operations; providing sustainable living solutions; and being a good neighbour in local communities.

When product arrives at an ARC from an IKEA store Take-Back scheme, their priority is always to try and maximise reuse. However, many of the ARCs now have the capacity to recycle and deconstruct product and find ways to upcycle, as illustrated in Case Study 6: Total Reuse (as one of the ARC projects benefitting from a relationship with their local IKEA).

The partnership works and has long term potential as a result of the clear identification of a mutual benefit, supported by clear corporate sustainability goals plus a third sector partner with commercial acumen and the membership structure and developing professional profile to service a significant corporate. Trust and good communication help, and this is evident in the way that both partners are obviously proud of the relationship and the benefits it has delivered.

- Maximising opportunities for resale

The development of shops as part of the set-up at HWRCs to provide an outlet to sell reusable products has received increasing attention over the last few years. Their appeal is immediately obvious in terms of providing a mechanism to capture items being brought to HWRCs and facilitate their onward sale. In addition, reuse organisation and charities can build up a better business case than the private sector in terms of operating Reuse Shops. They get 80% mandatory relief and up to 20% discretionary relief on business rates, generally the public is more open to donating goods if a charity or good cause is benefiting rather than a commercial concern, and gift aid can be claimed against donations made.

There are numerous examples of good practice that exist in relation to locating Reuse Shops at HWRCs, including the multi-award winning project in Warwickshire[13].This is largely due to the way Warwickshire County Council approached the service, recognising both the potential available at the sites for reuse but also acknowledging and addressing any potential limitations in the way they tendered the service. Four lots were put to market, to enable bidders to tender for one or more of the lots and grouping facilities together into the different lots to ensure that bottom line profitability would be broadly similar. A minimum benchmark of £50,000 as the franchise/concession fee was attached to each lot. By offering a network of Reuse shops (and also the chance to operate two HWRCs for the smaller facilities) really stimulated the market.

## Case Study 3: Reuse Line – simplifying the process to access re-usable items from the householder and providing confidence in the quality of reuse operations through a recognised quality standard




Originating as a pilot programme in 2011, the Reuse Line now has 12 local authorities actively engaged in the initiative. A further 10 authorities, whilst not fully engaged at present, have discussed involvement and may explore the Reuse Line as an option moving forward. The remaining 10 authorities in Scotland are not in a position to join the initiative at present as there is currently an insufficient number of local reuse organisations registered with the Reuse Line in their areas. Zero Waste Scotland continues to work towards growing the collection capacity of the Reuse Line, so if things change then they would be actively encouraged to be involved.

The Reuse Line was cited as part of the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan and developed by Zero Waste Scotland, having originated in direct response to research revealing only a small proportion of potentially re-usable items were being diverted from landfill. Subsequently researchers have found people are more than happy to pass on items for reuse, but don't necessarily know who to contact or how to go about it. There is an inconsistency of approach amongst local authorities in terms of how they promote reuse and the level of information about local reuse organisations that is provided to householders.

In addition, there are many reuse organisations in Scotland that are small, independent charities and third sector organisations, and have limited resources to promote their activities and raise their profile with local authorities in order to access products for reuse. Therefore, the Reuse Line provides a platform for these organisations to be linked with householders who have items for reuse in their area.

The concept is simple in principle. Residents are linked up with appropriate organisations that want their items for reuse and are locally-based in order to make collections. The Reuse Line focuses on bulky items including bed frames, mattresses, chests of drawers, bookcases, wardrobes, dressing tables, tables, chairs, sofas & armchairs (with fire labels attached), washing machines, electric cookers, fridge freezers and bikes. All items must be in good working order and must not be left outside. Details are taken down and arrangements are made for a local reuse organisation to establish contact and collect the item. To ensure fairness, where there are multiple reuse organisations serving one local authority area, the system is set up to rotate through the organisations. This helps the flow of material through the different reuse organisations and the broader community.

Fully-engaged local authority partners include information on their individual websites detailing the service provided and the sorts of items wanted for reuse. The phone number or link to the online referral form is clearly stated. Some local authorities embed the Reuse Line within their contact centre scripts, directing calls for bulky uplifts to the Reuse Line if the item is suitable for reuse. This information is valuable to provide the householder with clarity as to what is wanted for reuse. A further screening process takes place when contact is established and if items are deemed unsuitable the call handlers may redirect householders to their local household waste recycling centre for example.

Zero Waste Scotland is responsible for the communications and engagement with local authorities and recruitment of reuse organisations onto the service. Local authorities signed up to the initiative can give out a single message and a single number and can piggy back onto communications being done by Zero Waste Scotland to promote the initiative and reuse more broadly.

The actual operation of the contact centre itself is a contracted service, staffed by 2.5 full time employees. Conversion rates in terms of calls received and referrals made to reuse organisations is one of the key measures of success for this initiative. In 2014 there were 4,500 calls to the Reuse Line throughout the year, and from this there were 1,655 referrals; representing a 37% conversion rate. In 2015, following promotion of the service by local authorities, calls increased to just over 14,000, with referrals reaching 3,289; an increase in contact made through the Reuse Line (but a drop in the conversion rate to 23%). This illustrates the delicate balance between encouraging householders to consider reuse and make the call, but being clear about the sorts of items that are appropriate to reuse. There are householders who have good quality items, suitable for reuse, but because they no longer want them, have difficulty seeing their value to someone else. On the other hand,

there are those that think everything they have, even in a broken state would be of interest to a charity somewhere. Therefore, the communications that surround the initiative and promote it across Scotland have to motivate householders to consider reuse as an option, but be very clear as to what is suitable. The most important message to stress to householders is that if something is in good condition and in good working order, then a second life through reuse is a real potential; quality is key.




The ability to make a request online is a relatively new development to the Reuse Line, primarily brought in to ensure that householders have access to the initiative outside traditional office hours. The benefits of the online service have been an improvement in conversion rate, from online enquiry to referral. This is primarily as result of the step by step guidance built into the form providing clarity on the quality criteria and screening out inappropriate requests at source; as householders are completing the information they realise quite quickly when the item is not appropriate.

Once the referral is allocated to a reuse organisation, the responsibility for fulfilling collections lies with that organisation. The Reuse Line referrals are received along with referrals from elsewhere so can take time to be collected; a challenge when customers want quick turnaround or specific dates and times. In addition, whilst the allocation process provides a means of distributing items fairly across geographical areas, oversupply of certain items can still provide an intermittent challenge and result in temporary stops for some organisations until demand picks up again.

Monitoring of the initiative is a key feature at present; feedback is constant in terms of what is working and what can be improved upon. Reports are issued which identifies number of calls and referrals, where the calls have come from, how the householders heard about the initiative etc. It is possible through this monitoring to identify areas of improvement that may be occurring at any point in the referral process. For example, if call numbers increase from a specific area, but referrals are lower, then it may be that the local authority has changed copy on the website or changed the advice they are giving on their central call centre, which is having a detrimental impact on the type of calls being made to the Reuse Line. If this was found to be the case, then action can be taken quite swiftly with partners to address these issues.

In terms of communications, there are key times of the year when there is a big PR push across Scotland, using advertising hooks to promote reuse and the single phone line. Spikes in the number of calls are evidence that promotional activity is working, linked to campaigns. Support is also provided to local authorities through suggested text for websites, social media and hard copy, and also content for scripts for call centres or automated messages.

Having a national line to process all enquiries and link householders up with a viable means to reuse their items ensures that local authorities do not have to individually secure these arrangements and manage the process. In addition, it means that reuse organisations, no matter how small, have the opportunity to access stock from householders ringing in to the service. There are currently 43 reuse organisations registered in the service and able to receive referrals. To ensure a standardised service regardless of which organisation undertakes the collection, a Memorandum of Understanding has been developed which all organisations coming on board are required to work within. Over the last 12 months or so, as the service has grown significantly, more requirements have been added, including the necessity for all organisations to meet or provide evidence of equivalency with the Revolve entry level standards; this is Scotland's national reuse quality standard[12].

Looking forward, Zero Waste Scotland sees this as a key project, capable of being linked and embedded within many other initiatives. Options to explore in the future are wide ranging and include, for example, providing a shared service for the collection and delivery of reusable items from donating householders to reuse organisations or to centralised hubs for repair and further distribution. This would remove the cost and hassle of managing a fleet, reduce the pressure of having to meet response times at the household level and result in increased diversion of quality reuseable goods into the supply chain. In addition, a central hub could address some of the short term storage issues that reuse organisations can face. There are many opportunities which could arise from the project as it develops; clearly there are cost implications linked to any initiatives but maintaining a forward thinking approach will ensure that potential opportunities are not missed.

### Case Study 4: WARP IT - sharing resources and facilitating reuse within the public and private sector

Warp It is a resource redistribution network, essentially a communications platform to allow organisations from the public and private sector to procure more sustainably by trading surplus assets. The brainchild of Daniel O'Connor the network was launched in October 2013 to provide an environmental solution to surplus stock and unwanted items of furniture and equipment in the public and private sector. It aims to reduce consumption, maximise reuse, generate financial savings and minimise carbon emissions. Waste is reduced as a consequence of its activities.

Warp It started life as a Freecycle-style email ring, but there were too many inefficiencies in the system. A lot of work has subsequently gone into the software to make it as simple but effective as possible.

Warp It currently serves central government, 20% of NHS, 30% of local authorities, and 50% of universities across England. In Scotland, all the NHS are users of the service, and 80% of universities and 60% of local authorities access the service. In addition, it serves a significant number of large private sector businesses and is also popular with start-ups and SMEs who are able to access surplus corporate resources.

One of Warp It's objectives is to help support charitable activities. Organisations often have surplus resources which they no longer need but are in good condition and the network facilitates the distribution of these resources to organisations carrying out charitable work. Membership of Warp It is based on an annual flat fee (the actual price is dependent on the size of an organisation), however it is a free to use service for all charities, not for profits, social enterprises, community groups and groups which are not commercial but have a social service. Once signed up, charities and social enterprises receive notifications of surplus items in their area which they can access. The system also facilitates collaboration with other organisations and also sharing of charities' and reuse organisations' own surplus stock.

The concept is straightforward. The web application works by linking together individuals (contributors) who loan/give resources, with individuals (recipients) in the same or different organisations who require the resource to reuse as part of their operations/activities or service. Unwanted resources are advertised and a recipient claims the resource and then arranges the collection. The legal transfer of ownership declaration is completed by both parties on transfer. Responsibility for checking items are safe to use lies with the recipient however the system has several control mechanisms in place to reduce risk. In terms of managing who gets the goods advertised for reuse, internal staff are always prioritised over external and external sharing can be turned off or on, and certain partners preferred over others.

Warp It clubs can also support local networking; if there are a number of organisations in the same local area (where local sharing is convenient) or sharing similar activities then they can be linked on Warp It by setting up a Warp It club.

The most traded items for reuse are furniture, electrical equipment, office consumables (such as stationery and ink jet cartridges), lab equipment, supplies and medical equipment.

As an extension to the original service, Warp It offers a repair and refurbishment element to the network. With typical savings quoted of 70% over buying new when refurbishing operators' chairs, Warp It offers to collect items in bulk, deliver to their partners for repair or refurbishment (in this instance Premier Sustain), and when the work is completed return them with a warranty. The most common items of furniture repaired, refurbished or remodelled are chairs, operators' chairs and desks. Electrical items are also repaired and these generate the biggest environmental and financial benefits.

Monitoring is comprehensive – each item claimed is given a financial value by the system (of what it would cost to replace new), and each item is also given a waste disposal financial value related to weight and volume. An avoided waste figure is generated (kg equivalent) and an avoided carbon figure ($CO_2$e kg) is calculated.

Reported savings are extensive. For example, Sunderland City Council has saved around £0.5 million through trading and reusing items over the last few years and Glasgow and Clyde NHS is reportedly saving over £15,000 a month. The top 10 performers can be seen here www.warp-it.co.uk/leagues.

Even though the savings are persuasive, reuse is certainly not mainstream yet. For Warp It to work successfully, it requires collaboration between departments and an openness around procurement. This can be a challenge for organisations where departments have tended to work in silos. Organisations may have to change processes if they want to get maximum value for their assets; address how they dispose and procure assets. In some organisations this change of practice can be considered too challenging.

In terms of what's next for Warp It, plans for the immediate future are to carry on solving problems around resource use in large organisations with new features and services, as well as growing the customer base in Australia and the USA.

The offering was potentially much more lucrative than what is normally applied to reuse shops and, as a result, five competitive bids were submitted. Age UK Warwickshire won the contract and has been operating successfully at the sites ever since. It's worth noting that within the Warwickshire contract, textiles are not included – this is because a textiles arrangement is already in place and the intention with the reuse shops is to provide a different reuse opportunity at the HWRCs compared to the high street. Now that the contract is underway, regular meetings are held with the council and the contractor to consider how effectively the sites are operating, whether there is consistency of experience across the sites (including pricing), what the dominant materials are etc. The biggest barrier is space; no matter how large the storage area or shop, space seems to be the limiting factor.

When planning for the development of reuse shops on HWRCs there are a number of considerations related to the setting up and running of the service. These include consideration of what the financial liabilities will be for each of the parties, staffing requirements, ongoing maintenance and site safety, management of items unsuitable for reuse, and ongoing communications. What reuse shops can generate per tonne largely depends on material types[14] and the operational efficiency of the shops, which can be impacted by the scale of material throughput, available storage space, and investment in training staff. However, even at the lower end, the payback period for infrastructure investment can make the activity viable.

Important factors which contribute to the success or otherwise of reuse shops are not just throughput (in terms of customer number and items donated), but also the shop itself in terms of the experience (its layout, design, attractiveness, access), the staff (in terms of how engaged they are), how well the site is managed, and what is being prioritised for retail (especially where space is limited). There are many different models such as leasing, franchising, management of entire contract; all have distinct requirements and expectations

The experiences in Warwickshire and other authorities are very positive in demonstrating how reuse shops can viably operate on HWRCs. However, a number of authorities have been unable to attract interest in their sites, as a result of location, the offering in terms of the size of the operation and/or number of sites included in the proposal, or current contractual arrangements. For some, the answer has been modifying what is available, for example rather than provide the opportunity for a reuse shop on the site, offer space for collection and storage prior to redistribution to an existing network of retail outlets. There are solutions which can be found in order to maximise reuse activity in partnership with the local authority, the waste contractor and the reuse organisation (See case study 5).

There are many examples that demonstrate the variety of options available for reuse at HWRCs including collection and storage points for sale off site, fully equipped on-site shops, outdoor sales areas, auction houses, and repair workshops. It all depends on the availability of space, location of the site, focus and scale of operation proposed. Other alternatives to running reuse shops on HWRCs is to develop the area as central storage hub and each day or each week invite a different reuse organisation to visit the storage hub and take whatever goods or products they want. The benefits are spread across a number of organisations and sharing access avoids oversupply of particular items to single organisations.

Reuse at HWRCs can bring many benefits in terms of reduction in waste management costs and generation of income, provision of employment, training and volunteer opportunities, and addressing deprivation and poverty through access to low cost goods.

There is a further emerging trend in terms of maximising opportunities for reuse, focused on the concept of 'upcycling' and adding value to discarded products. This may involve the transformation of materials or products into something completely different in terms of its use (and may in itself cause some confusion in the traditional definition of reuse) and is increasingly meeting a demand in the market for quirky alternative uses for discarded items. Repurposed items that carry a 'backstory' appear to have value and a degree of market 'cachet' which may well sustain[15].

Whilst upcycled items enjoy enhanced commercial value, the trend is unlikely to have a significant tonnage impact. However, it can help to energise the market and mobilise public awareness and support for wider reuse if managed well and dovetailed with other reuse activities. The case study of the award-winning Total Reuse (See case study 6) in Skelmersdale, Lancashire, is a good example of this.

- Priority goods and materials

The most dominant materials collected and sold for reuse are furniture, textiles, WEEE (small primarily but some large), bric-a-brac, books, and also specific items such as bicycles and paint. With paint it is worth noting that whilst there are examples of paint reuse schemes dotted around the UK and good examples of partnership working, there are also many examples where setting up paint reuse schemes has been a real struggle.

Furniture reuse is particularly important, not just in waste terms due to its size and tonnage, but in response to social issues, particularly recognising the important role furniture reuse plays in poverty alleviation and social programmes. Ensuring access to discarded furniture products is vital and is seen as a fundamental requirement in tackling household poverty, providing

### Case Study 5: HWRC and Reuse Facility – an FRN case study which considers the successful partnership that has developed between West Berkshire Council, Newbury Community Resource Centre and Veolia

Established in 1997 by Berkshire Women's Aid with a grant from the National Lotteries Charities Board, Newbury Community Resource Centre (NCRC) helps local people by providing access to good quality re-usable furniture and household goods at affordable prices, particularly to the low waged or to people on benefits. In addition, NCRC provides a range of volunteering and accredited training opportunities to develop work and social skills, and works with other community groups and local businesses by providing greener waste and reuse services.

A good relationship has existed between West Berkshire Council (WBC) and NCRC for some time, and there is a strong recognition and good understanding of the value that a reuse organisation can bring to the wider community and how the work of NCRC complements the councils own objectives. It made sense therefore when the PFI waste management contract was being designed that the importance of including third sector/community focused outcomes was recognised.

The contract included management of a new HWRC and at the time the procurement process was underway, NCRC undertook a trial to access and remove reusable furniture and appliances from the original HWRC site. Although the outcomes were less than successful because of limited space, the trial unintentionally informed the local authority of the requirements and specifications for designing future HWRC facilities to maximise reuse and recycling. WBC also visited other HWRC reuse facilities around the country and consulted with third sector organisations in the area about their capacity for reusing and recycling bulky waste. The conclusion was that a third sector organisation should be included as part of the waste solution at the new HWRC site; doing so was essential for maximising reuseable furniture and other household items. Whilst the size and value of the contract was beyond the capacity of most, if not all, third sector organisations, the addition of social clauses in the specification ensured their inclusion.

During the procurement process information was included about NCRC as one of the community waste initiatives in the area. This prompted a request to NCRC for specification information from one of the waste management bidders. NCRC was asked about the service and the capacity that the charity could provide, so that the waste management company could include a community-delivered service specification for reuse to meet contractual conditions. This prompted NCRC to contact and give presentations to all potential waste management bidders.

Veolia Environmental Services (Veolia ES) was awarded the waste management contract in 2008 and a segregation and reuse Service Level Agreement between NCRC and WBC and an operational service schedule between NCRC and Veolia were put in place. This enables NCRC to access the HWRC site in order to remove reusable items, as and when required, but often twice daily. NCRC provides two members of staff or volunteers to sort and store furniture and white goods in a purpose-built shed, which the organisation uses free of charge. As a point of note, when developing the new HWRC WBC did explore the option of building a reuse retail outlet but it was decided a reuse shed was a lower cost option. The goods segregated from the waste stream are sorted on site and used to supply NCRC's three retail outlets.

As a registered Approved Authorised Treatment Facility, NCRC is also Veolia's Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS) nominated reuser of WEEE; this enables them to take WEEE from the HWRC site to reuse and sell to low income families in exchange for supplying reuse evidence to Veolia's PCS. It is worth noting that the arrangement to handle WEEE is separate to the PFI contract; money is not exchanged for the WEEE reuse service and NCRC does not have a formal contract in place other than an operational service schedule. However, NCRC derives income from the sale of the WEEE, and from local authority payment of reuse credits.

In addition to the service provided at the HWRC, NCRC also provides a reuse only collection service for householders, independent of the local authority, for which they request a voluntary donation per collection.

All items rejected by the NCRC are disposed of at the HWRC, free of charge. Veolia provides the infrastructure to handle disposal / recycling of rejected materials, and where goods are sent for landfill as a last resort, WBC meets the cost of disposal.

Positive strong relationships have been fundamental to the development of the arrangements currently in place. There is clear commitment by all parties to ensure that this agreement continues, that reuse rates increase and WBC achieves positive social outcomes from this innovative waste solution. A very good understanding of local community reuse organisations, their capacity, aims, ambitions and reuse potential helped WBC design a solution that satisfied the needs of all involved. This, as well as an earlier pilot, was integrated into the design of the larger PFI waste management contract.

Whilst the experiences between these partners are clearly replicable, it does rely on a strong commitment from local government to support the reuse agenda and for the reuse organisation to have the capacity, skills and expertise to meet the delivery requirements and targets in the short, medium and long term.

### Case Study 6: Total Reuse - maximising opportunities for resale

Total Reuse is a multi-material and product reuse social enterprise located in the 1960s new town of Skelmersdale, an area characterised by high levels of social deprivation as well as a very strong local identity.

The Total Reuse story began in October 2009 when the founder suggested that the only way to achieve zero waste was to find an alternative use for the things people threw away and totally reuse them. That night he went home and Googled the term 'total reuse' and discovered that no one was using it so he bought the company and domain names for Total Reuse with the intention that it would simply be an online forum for people to share their skills, knowledge and experiences of finding solutions to waste streams. The company was converted to a community interest company as it wanted to make a difference to individuals, families and the communities within which it operated and was registered in June 2010.

In those early days its core activity was diverting reusable items from landfill and making them available to low or no income families, charities, good causes and community groups. An invitation to clear a flat where the elderly male resident had passed away led to the introduction of its Tool Shed initiative. The resident in question had lay dead on the floor for 6 weeks before anyone missed him and research into the problems faced by older men led to the Australian Men in Sheds programme. Based on the principle that older men like to do stuff, Total Reuse launched their version where the members, (predominately older men but open to all), would repair, restore, and refurbish items and manufacture bespoke furniture from salvaged and reclaimed materials.

As more people began to understand that there was a different way of disposing of waste, the company introduced a new initiative to meet this demand. Total Clearance provided a commercial and domestic clearance service, The Green Team offered an alternative to skip hire, 3RDeconstruction dealt with mattresses' and sofa, 3RElectrical offered a Designated Collection Facility under the WEEE regulations, and Bulky Solutions delivers two council bulky waste services. There are other examples, but the common thread is a strong emphasis on branding and meeting genuine local needs through a social enterprise, revenue-generating approach.

Further developments included establishing the Sewing Rooms as a separate social enterprise offering a range of commercial services and bespoke training interventions, while Bike Works repairs donated bicycles and provides them to local residents looking for work and also donates them to the Bikes for Africa campaign. A Community RePaint scheme reuses paint donated by people such as Farrow & Ball and Earthborn and connections to national programmes have been successfully made (such as RePaint).

The company itself is a multi-award winning organisation at local and national levels that has achieved the gold standard at the Zero Waste Awards, has been shortlisted for the Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management for five consecutive years (winning the best community recycling section in 2013) and most recently was crowned the best waste prevention initiative at the 2016 National Waste Recycling awards.

Creating economic, environmental and social value, Total Reuse's combined activities now employ over 20 people, provides education, training, work experience and volunteering opportunities, donate items to over 150 charities, community groups and good causes a year, and give furniture and other household items to over 100 individuals a year and 300 families in crises or urgent need. The company operates three retail outlets where over 9,000 low income families a year are able to access good quality new and used furniture at affordable prices. Combined together, its activities diverting excess of 1,300 tonnes of reusable items from the waste stream and landfill annually.

The organisation remains dynamic and benefits from strong and energetic, commercially focused leadership. It continuously looks to generate commercial income to support its wider work. It describes itself as a "jigsaw with no edges where a solution to someone's problem will start off a new row". Those solutions include working with such household names as John Lewis and IKEA, University of Liverpool, Edge Hill University and Liverpool Hope University, borough and county councils, Liverpool Student Guild and Edge Hill Students Union and many more.

Total Reuse has developed an appetite for diversification, all following social enterprise principles and seeking to deliver revenue. Designing and installing a 50 seat cinema, the refurbishment of the Cafe on the Square and bespoke furniture for cafes, restaurants and bars all from 100% reused materials, are just some of the commissions undertaken in the past few years leading to the establishment of the latest venture, The Design Studio. The Studio has developed distinctive niches in upcycling, using identified 'historical' scrap items and repurposing with product history and provenance attached – there is a significant market for such products that command value added prices.

With the mantra "if its reused it doesn't need recycling" Total Reuse symbolises the potential for reuse to deliver commercial value, employment and added social value through a combination of energetic social entrepreneurship, strong partnerships and commercial acumen and local community support.

### Case Study 7: Effective Collaboration and Partnership Working - leaving a legacy for future local clothing reuse initiatives and demonstrating what can be achieved working together

For one week in March 2016, consumer clothing campaign Love Your Clothes and Bangor University challenged people across North Wales to raid their wardrobes and donate a tonne[17] of unwanted clothing to the Love Your Clothes pop-up shop in Bangor's Deiniol Shopping Centre. The shop was a hub for free events designed to help people make the most of their garments while drawing attention to the environmental issues of clothing waste.

Bangor University signed up to be a WRAP Sustainable Clothing Action Partner (SCAP) in 2015 following on from a number of projects looking at textile reuse both in the UK and the East African market. They wanted to find an initiative that would benefit and strengthen their links with the whole community of Bangor, including university staff and students, local businesses and the local community. Love Your Clothes and Bangor University's Sustainability Lab[18] worked in partnership with Age Cymru, British Heart Foundation (BHF) Cymru and Antur Waunfawr and Bangor Students' Union and challenged university students, staff and Bangor's wider community to donate one tonne of unwanted clothes for local charities during a series of events running from 11-16th March.

The concept was fairly simple. 1,500 purpose-made reusable LYC branded collection bags were distributed across the university campus and in Bangor shops, cafés and public buildings. Collection hubs were organised by volunteers at various locations enabling ease of access for drop off and encouraging a wide range of groups to participate. A market stall was also set up during Bangor's Friday market as a collection and information point.

The clothes collected were displayed in the popup shop in Deiniol Shopping Centre to visibly illustrate what one tonne of clothing looks like and time-lapse photography captured the mountain of clothing building up and then coming back down for use in workshops and the clothes swap; this was available to view on social media.

To raise the profile of the event a competition was launched for Bangor University Students' Union clubs and societies to create an outfit made from old clothes and/or recycled materials that represented their club or society, with a prize of £100 and the opportunity to be a live mannequin. The Mayor of Bangor judged the competition on the Saturday. The live mannequins attracted attention in both the popup shop and the Age Cymru shop, increasing the footfall through both venues.

A swishing/clothes swap event was held in the popup shop, for all those who donated clothes to pick up a pre-loved item of clothing. Donors were given innovative branded, bilingual tokens to use at the clothes swap event later in the week (5 tokens per bag of clothes), or if they had not been able to donate they were able to donate £1 per item to one of our charity/third sector partners. The event, originally scheduled for one day, was carried over to a second day because of the number of clothes available to swap and the level of interest and excitement from the local community.

A series of workshops in the popup shop and a repair cafe in the Age Cymru shop encouraged consumers to extend the useful life of their clothes while learning skills to repair, upcycle and make alternations. These included talks on capsule wardrobes and fabric care, demonstrations, sewing skills for beginners and 'Up-accessorising' and other advanced techniques such as upcycling and garment remodelling.

A specific upcycling and upskilling workshop was held exclusively for Antur Waunfawr staff and workers. A fact forest was created in the shop to upskill visitors to the shop in the key messages of the LYC initiative and encourage behaviour change.

During the weekend the activities formed part of the Bangor Science Festival and included family workshops with activities such as making tie-dye upcycled t-shirts, sock puppets and Easter bunnies all from recycled clothes, and the Easter treasure trail provided family fun through the charity shops on Bangor High Street.

The event was a great success with over two tonnes of items collected from the local community; one tonne of clothing found new homes as a result of event activities and a further tonne was donated to the three local charity shops at the end of the campaign; Antur Waunfawr, British Heart Foundation and Age Cymru.

A survey conducted at the swap shop asked attendees what they thought of the event, whether they would like to see it happen again, if they would recommend it to a friend/family and to rate it out of ten. 55% rated the event 10/10, 25% rated it 9/10. 100% would like to see it happen again and 100% would recommend the Swap Shop to family and friends.

There were a number of unexpected outcomes including a better ongoing relationship with the community and city officials and better than expected response in terms of donations and quality of donations. The repair café at the Age Cymru shop was so popular it is now a monthly event and there is a growing demand for the next

#LoveYourClothesBangor. Another swishing event for accessories was also held with the local art gallery and café on 8th June. The profile on social media was better than expected with #LoveYourClothesBangor trending on Twitter in Wales for three days in a row (14th, 15th and 16th March).

The potential for this partnership arrangement to be rolled out and similar events held with other universities, charity and reuse organisations and local communities is significant. The Financial Inclusion Officer for Môn Communities First, based in Holyhead and Llangefni, contacted The Sustainability Lab and visited the shop to discuss running similar events in conjunction with them in the future. In addition, Reuse Kits are available for anyone wanting to hold a similar event, with reusable bags, tokens, pop ups and information on how to set up an event like this, including bilingual materials in Welsh.

affordable household goods to those who need them. It clearly dominates collection systems for reuse and remains integral to the operation of many reuse programmes.

WEEE, particularly small WEEE can bring a lot of value to reuse operations. Small items that simply need to be PAT and functionality tested before resale can attract a premium and take up little room, thereby addressing in part the ongoing challenge of space. It's fair to say that during times of recession there can be a declining quality in items such as small WEEE being donated because they are broken or have lost their functionality. However, when consumer spending recovers, the return to the 'upgrade and replace' mentality can be a bonus for reuse organisations selling small WEEE.

While bric-a-brac meanwhile, may seem less important to some, demand is always high and reuse offers a valuable alterative to disposal. Again, there is potential for upcycling to enhance the retail offer. It requires more patience sometimes in the collection process, to avoid unnecessary breakages that cost reuse organisations time and money to deal with.

In terms of textiles, women's clothing is most in demand, followed by babies and children. As a staple of a significant amount of reuse operations, clothing reuse has a long history with many high street charity shops relying on the income this material stream generates. According to WRAP, it is estimated that 619,000 tonnes consumed textiles is collected for reuse and recycling every year, and an additional 820,000 tonnes of clothing and household textiles which is currently consigned to landfill could be diverted[16]. Issues that charity shops face in relation to textiles are over supply of items out of season, over supply of poor quality products and competition from textile traders, local authorities (many of whom have seen the value that can be secured and have added textiles into their recycling collection), and other charity and reuse organisations.

The textile market was very buoyant at one point, so much so that even rag prices were reasonably high. This meant that quality was not really an issue, nor was oversupply. Presently, however, there are significant challenges in textile markets, and prices are fluctuating. This is likely to be further compounded by the uncertainty created by Brexit negotiations, as the UK textile industry is very heavily dependent on migrant labour (mainly from the EU's central and eastern Member States) for the continued economic survival of the industry. In addition, the textile industry is reliant on the EU as a key export market and as the lead partner on trade negotiations with other markets e.g. East African community. Traditionally relying on export routes for reuse means there is a real need to reassess end markets and potentially maximise opportunities for UK-based reuse operations (See case study 7).

Finding outlets for even lower quality items of clothing has become a big driver in order to maximise value from textiles. There has been much discussion and reference to charity pound stores, selling lower items at very low cost without affecting the brand and image that has been built up by the charity or reuse organisation, as a means to shift lower quality items.

Mainstream products for virtually all high street charity shops, second hand books are donated in vast quantities to reuse organisations. Oversupply of this product is often an issue and results in books being sent for recycling as pulp, although some markets exist in developing countries for our surplus books. Examples of good practice do exist where books can not only find a second life but in doing so generate social benefit (See case study 8).

Whilst bicycles are a target item for many charities and reuse organisations, and there are many examples of community projects across the UK and Ireland that are successfully accessing bicycles for resale or donation (See case study 9), the driver does not necessarily tend to be environment or resource related. Often it is linked to health, or provision of training opportunities and skills development in relation to repair workshops, addressing poverty issues by providing access to bicycles for free, or providing mobility to individuals who may not have access to other forms of transport. Environmental benefits are a side issue, if they are considered at all.

- Product types with most potential for growth

In both our surveys and stakeholder interviews, it is clear that opportunities still exist in theory to capture greater quantities for reuse across all the key materials and product streams; specifically furniture, large and small WEEE, textiles, building materials and white goods.

### Case Study 8: Re-Read – a highly replicable local level environmentally driven initiative with extended social benefits

The sight of a 10 tonne skip full of books, destined for disposal, stimulated the formation of a social enterprise Re-Read. The books were owned by a dealer who had extracted ones they considered to be of value and the remaining tonnage was considered to be of little or no worth. Motivated initially by environmental reasons, the founder of Re-Read, an experienced waste management professional, sought out alternative options for the unwanted books.

With funding from the Coalfield Regeneration Trust, the Sheffield-based Key Fund and Community Foundation, the social enterprise was set up over a 6-month period. A storage unit was leased and with the support of another social enterprise, 'Refurnish', the infrastructure was put in place. Donations from a local book charity of books earmarked for disposal helped to launch Re-Read and the benefits to the local book charity were reduced waste management costs.

In terms of how the model currently operates, Re-Read buys in stock from other charities (which are often inundated with stock) at 10p per kg, and from dealers and auctions. In addition, stock is given as donations. The stock is reviewed, graded, recorded and most is sold online through platforms such as Amazon. Any books damaged are sold for recycling and obscure titles are sold onto specialist dealers; the skill is spotting any antiquarian or books of value from the tonnage that comes into the warehouse. Income generated from the online sales funds the social aspect of Re-Read, where children's books that are in a good condition are given away to families, schools, and children's books.

According to research carried out by the National Literacy Trust in 2011, 3.8 million children in the UK do not own a book. In addition, in response to research which states that increased access to materials such as books can reduce the effects of living in poverty for children, The National Literacy Trust has called for more literacy resources to be made available in deprived localities such as pop-up book stalls on high street locations and other community venues in order to promote easy access to books. Re-Read takes this one step further; focusing on deprived communities, the social enterprise attends community events, visits children's centres, has pop up shops, and attends galas with the simple purpose to give away quality used children's books to families, children and anyone who wants one. There are no special criteria, an open approach is adopted to ensure anyone can access children's books and take them home.

Part of its remit as a social enterprise involves the creation of volunteering, work placement and job creation opportunities. There is currently a core staff of 7, and 4 trainees with physical or mental disabilities, plus volunteers who support the work of Re-Read in various ways. The organisation actively looks to employ those most in need, such as long term unemployment or those facing challenges in securing employment of any kind.

Due to its success in the local community, Re-Read was approached by Doncaster Council and asked to take on the running of a local library. At the time it was only open 3 days a week and it's now open 6 days a week. The Council covers the cost of the library itself in terms of utilities and building space, with volunteers from Re-Read running the operation of the library. There is a donation station for books for the Re-Read project and a space for community events. In addition, after the cancellation of mobile community libraries, Re-Read won a council-funded contract to take books to the most isolated members of the community by installing and stocking bookshelves with free books at local amenities including community centres and pubs.

Recently, the social enterprise has taken on a second library in a deprived area of Doncaster and this has become a focal point for community action and serves as a meeting place for those in need.

Since its launch in 2012, Re-Read has given away 200,000 children's books, and there are currently 170,000 books for sale online. On average 3 tonnes of books are received a week, and approximately £15,000 is generated a month in income from the sales of books. New premises have had to be found due to its continual success and Re-Read is currently housed in a unit almost 500 square metres in size.

By trading in used books, Re-Read promotes reuse and reduces waste material destined for disposal, generates income to meet the needs for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and adults in the community through the provision of free books, and volunteering and work placement opportunities. Re-Read wants to ensure that everyone has access to books and has the opportunities to enjoy and be confident in their reading and its social impact reaches far wider than anyone could have originally anticipated when the social enterprise was set up.

Looking forward, whilst Re-Read is still reliant on grants this reliance is diminishing all the time. Delivery of small contracts, the running of the libraries and exploring retail sales, including potentially renting space in coffee

shops/cafes, will address Re-Read's wish to become completely self-sustaining.

Re-Read continually looks to improve and lessons learnt would include:

- moving to a larger unit earlier to provide more storage space;
- managing and administration of the inventory in a more uniform way;
- forecasting increased sales and staffing accordingly; and,
- managing the taking on of trainees and volunteers in a more co-ordinated way.

From this perspective, rather than looking to identify the 'next big thing' in reuse, the focus should be on efficiently and strategically maximising the capture and reuse of the existing primary product streams. While there is a range of different opinions on the merits of measures such as statutory reuse targets and the potential to stimulate reuse through extended producer responsibility, most stakeholders recognise the need for a fresh approach to the policy framework for reuse strategy and see a clear leadership role for UK governments to encourage long-term planning, capacity building and security of supply.

In addition, securing feedstock from commercial sources is definitely considered an area prime for development and growth (See case study 10). Turnover of products and items in the commercial and building sector is fairly regular in relation to upgrades and refurbishments and, in addition, the availability of by-products from different processes and operations can present significant opportunities.

Potential for growth is not just shaped by the identification of material and product streams with untapped reuse opportunities. It is also shaped by the location of the reuse centre or shop and the need to respond effectively to the local demographic. For example, one shop may be able to focus on vintage products and secure good turnover for maximum value, whereas another may be in an area of low employment and growth, and is more likely to focus on supplying basic necessities at low cost.

Generating and building on the cross over between new and reused items is another growth area identified; increasing the footfall and potential purchases by offering a more diverse range of products. In addition, blurring the edges between new and nearly new can help dispel prejudice about second hand products. Some charity shops and reuse organisations are particularly skilled in this area, but on a more local level, selling artisan products, or local pieces of artwork, gifts etc., is a way of engaging with the local community and diversifying.

The reuse and charity retail sector, as they cement their place on the high street, need to build relationships with retail neighbours and local commerce. British high streets face huge challenges in responding to the changing retail climate, with a 26% reduction in footfall in the last five years[20]as a result of the shift to online shopping and changing retail consumption and behaviour patterns. Charity shops play an increasingly important role on many high streets and have the potential to be seen as part of retail revival in many areas, but are not universally loved by commercial neighbours who often see them as traders with an advantage because of business rate relief. A recent CRA survey showed 74% of the public support charities receiving business rate relief as a means of aiding the charity's work.

Public opinion is inconsistent too; although anecdotally concern is often voiced about 'too many charity shops', the public generally indicate strong support for charity shops as a primary means of offering help to British charities[21].

The continued development of charity and reuse retail, with investment in branding, window displays and a general uplifting of the retail offer, will certainly assist in improving neighbourliness on the British high street and the CRA conference this year illustrated very clearly the appetite of the sector to address this issue.

### 3.2.3 Benefits of reuse

- Environmental benefits

Environmental impacts of reuse and the benefits that can be realised from diverting products for reuse are well documented in terms of better waste management and diversion from disposal and carbon savings from avoided production of new products. WRAP research[22] suggests that 0.5 tonnes of $CO_2$ equivalent per tonne of WEEE and 13 tonnes of $CO_2$ equivalent per tonne of clothing are saved through reuse. Increasingly however, environmental concerns are playing second fiddle to financial and social drivers.

- Employment benefits

An important aspect to realising the value in resources is the recognition that better resource use can be an employment creator and this inherently adds value into the economy. Most studies have failed to take consistent methodological approaches to estimating the employment impact of better resource use (including reuse), but the key messages remain very similar – namely that reuse has the potential to create significantly

### Case study 9: Reuse of bicycles for Harrogate Bike Library – a social project, using repaired and refurbished second hand bikes to provide free access to bikes for children

Yorkshire Bank has provided funding of £10,000 to support the repair and reuse of old and unwanted children's bicycles to give them a second life through the Harrogate Bike Library, which provides free access to bicycles. The funding has supported the development of the Bike Library in terms of securing premises, setting up service stations, training volunteers in bike mechanics and building capacity.

The concept is simple; donations of old and unwanted bicycles are made to the Bike Library's donation station at Resurrection Bikes (a volunteer run organisation that repairs and resells old bicycles for charity). Volunteer mechanics, trained as part of the scheme, then repair the bicycles so they can be used by the Bike Library. Veloheads, a local bike servicing and training company with a not-for-profit element, operates the library and local residents can be loaned bicycles for a negotiated period of time and receive cycling proficiency support.

One of the issues in reusing old bicycles is that for the bicycles to be roadworthy and in a suitable condition for continual lending, the priority is to secure good quality donations and this is not always easy. The benefits of partnering up with Resurrection Bikes, in this instance, is that they will accept any donation of any quality and sell them on, allowing the two projects to work in tandem with the Bike Library selecting the higher quality more durable bicycles that require minimum repair and refurbishment to ensure they are road worthy.

Launched in April, the Bike Library has built up a stock of 15-20 bicycles and an academy is in place to train volunteers to become bike mechanics, with around 20 volunteers in place at the moment. The focus of the Bike Library is on health benefits, providing access to anyone who wants to ride but has no bike, and also bike safety. The fact that bicycles are reused for the library is requirement of the funding arrangement from the Yorkshire Bank and is driven by environmental reasons.

The plan is to grow the library and train more individuals through the programme. The partnership with Veloheads ensures that support for rides can be accessed as training is available, and the partnership with Resurrection bikes means there is an access point for donations and also a route for individuals who borrow bicycles to potentially secure an affordable bike of their own.

more jobs compared to other waste management practices when measured on a per tonnes basis because of the labour intensity of many reuse activities[23].

Whilst very dependent upon the nature of the activity, it has been estimated that on average 59 jobs are created per 1,000 tonnes of reuse activities, whilst other research has suggested that 0.7 jobs and 1.8 volunteer opportunities arise per 10 tonnes of waste reused[24]. This includes white goods, furniture, small WEEE, and reuse shops[25]. Concerning textiles, the collection and sorting of textiles is reported to provide at least 15-25 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of textiles. In addition, preliminary calculations by RREUSE[26] show that for a given amount of WEEE collected and prepared for reuse, at least five times more jobs can be created than the collection and recycling of an equivalent amount.

Green Alliance and WRAP recently published a comprehensive analysis of opportunities for employment in a more circular economy[27]. Where this differed from previous studies was that it presented a much more detailed examination of labour market differentials, on a regional basis, as well as a more granular analysis of job skill type and number in several scenarios for a more ambitious approach to the circular economy. It considered issues of displacement and net job creation across employment type and should be seen as the most valuable contribution to this body of research so far. The work considers various scenarios for the development of the circular economy in which increased reuse is a key element. In a high development scenario, up to 517,000 jobs could be created by 2030 with net unemployment reduction of 102,000. In a mid-range development scenario, up to 205,000 jobs could be created with net unemployment reduction of 54,000. While this does not break down into exact employment scenarios for reuse as a separate activity, the key point here is that this labour market analysis identifies reuse and repair as economic activities in the circular economy with potential to offer lower skilled and mid-skilled and waged employment, dispersed evenly across the UK without obvious geographical concentration, as could be expected.

- Financial benefits

The Local Government Association (LGA) has identified a significant potential, within England, for reuse to divert considerable tonnages (615,000 tonnes) from disposal[28], with attendant cost savings resulting from a reduction in the volume of waste collected via kerbside collections or deposited at HWRCs. The report estimates these potentially avoided costs as being £60 million per annum, with a likely resale value of £375 million per annum; this is a significant financial consideration. In a different study it is estimated that each t-shirt reused for example, could yield £1 net revenue to reuse organisations or local authorities[29], whereas values for waste vary between £143 and £451 per tonne[30].

### Case Study 10: Greenstream Flooring Community Interest Company[19] – building on a commercial waste stream to realise social benefits

The idea of reusing carpet tiles from commercial premises for domestic properties originally developed out of environmental concerns. In general, commercial carpet tiles are replaced every 7 years or so, but they are designed with long term durability in mind and the wear and tear within an office setting can be minimal. The quality of the carpet tiles when lifted is normally very good, and therefore their potential value as a reuse product became immediately obvious, and so the business was set up in 2008 to provide an alternative to disposal.

Accessing the tiles is not a problem. Greenstream Flooring charge a gate fee and transport costs to the commercial organisation, the tiles are then sorted by staff and volunteers and graded according to condition; around 60-70% are reused.

The social element to the business developed when the founder became aware that a large proportion of residents in social housing are without a carpet or flooring cover of any kind. Working closely with community recyclers and furniture projects around the UK, as well as housing associations in Wales, the feasibility of using the carpet tiles in residential properties was explored and the Affordable Flooring Scheme was developed. Working with 12 housing associations, this scheme operates on a tenant referral basis and provides access to flooring for those on low or no incomes.

The business supplies and fits all flooring and has also expanded to supply and fit office flooring too; as well as the social element the company positions itself as a circular economy supplier. It operates very much as a commercial venture would do, providing fitters and appointment schedules, and supplying vans to collect and transfer the tiles.

The training and learning aspect is very important to the business ethos and vision. Over 1000 hours of employment placements have been provided for long-term unemployed men within the Rhondda - an area of high social deprivation over last 12 months alone. It is fair to say that the training and learning (which is funded through the operations side of the business), and addressing deprivation through affordable flooring have subsequently overtaken the environmental drivers in terms of importance to the company.

Developing the business model has been a continuous learning curve for the company and barriers still exist in terms of perception. The procurement process also remains a challenge in some areas.

Moving forward, the company intends to launch an on-online version of its Affordable Flooring Scheme in which housing associations, regardless of location, will be able to support tenants with low cost reused carpet tiles delivered to their door via Greenstream's website. Tenants will be signposted to the sites and a set of unique discount codes on the site will allow tenants to access exclusive discounts and potentially a hardship fund amount from the housing association. The tenant can select what they want from the web-site and get it delivered within 24 hours. This should streamline the process and make it more efficient.

Greenstream Flooring also brokers relationships with a host of 'community re-sellers', usually furniture groups, who add Greenstream's reclaimed carpet tiles to their normal sales of household goods. Carpet tiles can be sent unseen for free and the charity or reuse organisation can then sort prior to resale, or they can be supplied cleaned, sorted and graded at a wholesale price.

In 2015, Greenstream Flooring diverted over 65,600m$^2$ of carpet tiles from landfill. Over the last three years they have diverted over 240,500 m$^2$, equivalent to 1,500 tonnes of material, from disposal and ensured that over a thousand low-income social housing tenants can benefit from the basic warmth, sound insulation and dignity that carpets provide.

- Social benefits and social value

There are many instances in the reuse sector where the social benefits far outweigh any other drivers; for example by providing the opportunity for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as recovering addicts and those with mental or physical disabilities, and the long-term unemployed to gain skills, experience and employment. All organisations talk of the benefits that can be seen when volunteers/trainees/employees are treated with respect and have a sense that they are valued. The result is a group of people engaged in an activity that in turn brings benefits to the wider community in relation to the service they are offering.

While the UK still searches for consistent ways of measuring social value, there is little dispute about the positive social impact of reuse projects and a growing recognition that this is an integral element of the reuse agenda. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (England and Wales), which requires public bodies to take social value into account in procurement processes,

has provided a more enabling framework to realise social value but the legislation is seen as lacking in force and is reliant on an enabling approach which many in local government have yet to embrace. The waste management industry has also attempted to build interest in partnerships with the social reuse sector to boost reuse and social value impact, and attempted to quantify the potential social value related to increases in social enterprise market share of waste services procurement[31].

There are other driving factors too, particularly the poverty agenda, with some authorities increasing opportunities for reuse operations in response to the abolishment in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 of crisis loans and community care grants. Some reuse organisations operate a two tier pricing system, which allows those in receipt of income-related benefits to purchase items at a reduced price. Where an organisation is involved in local authority welfare assistance schemes, vouchers are often redeemable against specific items such as furniture (See case study 11). This enables them to meet their aims of alleviating poverty and social hardship whilst not excluding the general public (and a wider potential client base). In addition, HWRC shops generally sell items at a significantly lower price than reuse organisations and charity shops on the high street.

### 3.2.4 Demand for reused goods

It is fair to say that whilst the public can satisfy their charitable intentions by donating goods to reuse organisations, it is not a given that the same people will be customers of the shops and outlets trading the second-hand goods.

There are a number of issues that impact upon decision making as a customer, including trust. Purchasing new from an established brand does bring with it a level of guarantee in relation to the quality and durability of a product that is not always mirrored when purchasing reused items. There is growing recognition of the need to address this, particularly within the third sector reuse organisations. With the embedding of accreditation systems for reuse organisations (such as those run by FRN and Zero Waste Scotland), that require organisations to run to established standards, the ability to offer guarantees is improving, even if they are relatively limited (between 3 and 12 months). More and more reuse organisations are offering guarantees with their products, providing like-for-like replacement or credit for items that fail within the guarantee period.

It should be recognised that, even with a limited guarantee, there needs to be a clear acceptance that second-hand goods inevitably do not meet the same standards as new goods, even if they are perfectly workable and functional. In recent years, efforts to address the lack of standards for reused product have been made with the development of the PAS141. This is a process management specification for the reuse of used and waste electrical and electronic equipment (UEEE and WEEE)[32]. It was developed by WRAP in conjunction with industry stakeholders and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

This work has been a valuable contribution to building confidence in the reuse of products that require some testing and an element of guarantee to encourage successful resale. However, the PAS141 accreditation has not met its full potential as smaller reuse groups find the cost of the process prohibitive in relation to their perception of the benefits. Finding a balance between the need to accredit and operate to standards whilst making sure standards are sufficiently realistic and attainable for small organisations and meet external expectations, is key.

Image is another critical consideration. There are those who will balk at the idea of buying a used item and would rather buy new, even if this means entering into (often punitive) credit agreements if their finances do not stack up. Interestingly, however, this 'second hand is second best' attitude is less evident when it comes to online platforms such as eBay, where people readily purchase used items with the goal of securing a bargain. Reuse organisations are capitalising on this and using eBay[33] and other online sales platforms to market and sell their goods. Having said all that, research in 2015 by NfpSynergy[34], showed that the public would rather shop for items such as books, clothing and furniture in charity shops rather than online.

More work is needed, therefore, to understand the gap between public willingness to donate for reuse and to purchase reused items. Valuable insight from the Greater London Authority[35], based on residents' opinion research, suggests that 76% of Londoners think it important to reuse their old belongings, but over 40% are unwilling to purchase reused white goods because of negative perceptions around product quality. A national survey to broaden the insights generated by GLA's work would be a valuable addition to the existing knowledge base.

The price proposition clearly has to be right and it is evident that charity shops have worked hard to position themselves in the market place so that customers are broadly aware of what they can expect to pay for particular items. This has led to the emergence of 'pound shops' in the charity and reuse sector and more tailoring of the retail offer to the specific demographics of the local market. Identifying and developing a niche approach to meet specific customer profiles featured heavily in workshops and discussions at the Charity Retail Association and is clearly a trend area These efforts may be paying off, use of charity shops continues to rise with 88% of households stating that they had purchased an item from a charity shop, an increase on 2014 figures by 4%[36].

### Case Study 11: A partnership between Rhondda Housing Association and Two Good to Waste – a highly replicable project demonstrating where the benefits of reuse can positively impact upon the lives of the most vulnerable



Reuse can play a vital role in ensuring that housing association tenants not only have accommodation, but have a home. Tenants are often faced with stark choices between fuel, food, household items or rent. This can lead to difficulty in keeping their homes and place some of the more socially deprived members of our society in an increasingly vulnerable position.

Rhondda Housing Association (RHA) has recognised this, making sustainable tenancy a priority. To this end, RHA set up a Sustainability Fund from their budget pool and, working with their partners Too Good to Waste (TGTW), Fareshare and Greenstream, they are aiming to support a better quality of life for their tenants and ensure they remain in their homes. Through these partners, RHA is able to deliver basic items to furnish their homes, provide flooring in their living space, and access food. The basic principle is that RHA strives to make their tenants feel valued, creating an engaged relationship where their tenants.

The process is fairly straight forward. When Neighbourhood Officers from RHA sign up a tenant who is identified as requiring help with furnishing/white goods, an application is completed for either individual goods or for a complete furniture pack, which is gifted to the tenant. The tenant can then go to the TGTW warehouse and select their furniture which is delivered to their new address. TGTW is a reuse/recycling charity and social enterprise operating in Rhondda Cynon Taf. They reduce waste by collecting re-usable household items and redistributing them via their charity shops. The income they raise enables them to help low income households and provide training and volunteering opportunities. A registered charity and social enterprise, TGTW has been operating for 21 years and was started with an initial £50 from the Princes Trust. The CEO Linda identified a need to connect people in need with access to furniture as a result of her experience working with Barnardos.

Last year, TGTW collected 68,000 items ranging from books to sofas, as well as nearly 10,000 electrical items. The organisation employs a total of 20 full time staff and has 312 volunteers and work-based placements. It needs on average between 30-40 volunteers per day to run operations over all the sites.

TGTW have been working as a partner with RHA since they set up; however in the last twelve months the partnership has been strengthened, with RHA paying an annual sum of £5,000 (which can be replenished as necessary) to TGTW through a service level agreement.

Shopping at TGTW is designed to be a pleasurable experience, adopting an Ikea style layout. On her first visit to the showrooms, Annalisa Beavan, Housing Services manager for RHA, was "blown away" by the quality and choice of items and knew that she needed to be working more closely with them.

Analysis of this scheme demonstrates that it assists with tenancy sustainability and therefore reduces void costs. For example, a mother had no bed for her nine-year-old daughter and no carpets on the floor as her priority was to keep up with her rent payments. She was issued with vouchers for TGTW and Greenstream to purchase furniture and carpets. RHA believe that by having a better home this tenant is more likely to remain in her home and her quality of life is improved. "We offer this service to tenants to enable them to get their tenancy off to a positive start by helping to make our house their home," says Annalisa Beavan, Housing Services manager for RHA.

The mutual benefits generated from reuse go much further than resource savings.

### 3.2.5 Partnerships and collaboration

Any partnership working on reuse whether informal or formal, needs to be built on the back of a good understanding of the reuse sector, an appreciation of the different skill sets that are being brought together, and what each organisation wants to achieve through the relationship. The strengths of the third sector are that these organisations often have the networks in place, the volunteers, and the goodwill of the public as a result of the cause or purpose of their organisation. They can position themselves as useful to both local authorities and waste management contractors and take a positive, proactive stance in engagement.

## Case Study 12: Partnership working in Devon – Impact of a Reuse Coordinator



Devon County Council (DCC) in partnership with Suez and Devon Community Recycling Network (DCRN) were one of 10 successful projects to receive funding from Round 1 of Defra's Innovation in Waste Prevention Fund. Running for a year, the project was awarded £26,754 and was, in the main, match funded by officer time, including communications support.

The aim of the project was to increase awareness and promote reuse opportunities and action across Devon, including Torbay, as well as to support and network the reuse sector. The Recycle Devon website and social media accounts were key communication channels for the project.

The funding primarily was used to employ a Reuse Project Coordinator (RPC) from February 2015-16 for four days a week. Suez, as the contractor for the recycling centres, offered the facility at Pinbrook HWRC for practical workshops and supplied the furniture and other items to be upcycled as a contribution in kind. DCRN provided access to its long standing network of community contacts and promoted events through its newsletters and website.

### Strands of the Reuse Project

#### Workshops

These were a series of public, free to attend repair, refurbishment and upcycling workshops. Most took place at the Pinbrook Road Recycling Centre in Exeter which has a good sized meeting room that could be made available. Holding workshops here was also intended to increase the awareness and use of the on-site resale shop. In total, 21 workshops were held and 160 attendees repaired/refurbished/upcycled 208 durable household items and pledged to work on a further 330 items.

The activities were wide ranging and included:

- 5 x Bring Back Your Bike workshops

Two-hour bike maintenance workshops were provided by a local charity Ride On. Participants brought their own bikes and were taught how to repair a puncture as well as how to conduct a general pre-ride safety check. In many cases, other small bike repairs were carried out by the Ride On instructors during the workshop.

Impact

In addition to getting bicycles functioning again and increasing people's knowledge about what to do if they get into difficulty in the future, participants were motivated to take up bike riding again, leading to health and environmental benefits. Often participants were prompted to go on the longer, full day maintenance course offered by the charity and the charity also received several bike donations from participants.

- 8 x Transform Your Textiles workshops

Three hour practical workshops were aimed at repurposing tired textiles into something new, such as dresses from pillowcases, bags from old jeans and cushion covers from jumpers and other textiles.

Impact

Participants developed their sewing skills, including one woman who had never used a sewing machine before, and were inspired by what they had achieved.

- 8 x Upcycling Made Easy workshops

Three hour skills based / creative workshops included furniture painting, simple re-upholstery and mosaics from broken crockery. Furniture was salvaged and donated from a number of HWRCs by the operators Suez.

Impact

Participants came away with a more creative outlook on 'stuff' – bitten by the upcycling bug many headed downstairs to the Recycling Centre reuse shop to buy more items to work with.

The workshops were well attended and feedback was very positive – particularly where participants came away with a repaired or upcycled item. Some were inspired to continue projects and techniques that they had learnt and many mentioned the therapeutic and social benefits of the creative workshops. "Reuse is as much about people as stuff," explains Emma Croft, the project coordinator. More workshops than originally planned (21 instead of 12) were needed to reach the target number of 240 items reused. This took time away from delivering other elements of the project including the reuse kits and directories, but the tonnage reused via the Pinbrook HWRC resale shop increased by 175% (although some of this will be as a result of changing policy at the site).

Reuse Forum

The aim of the forum was to gather together organisations, community groups and individuals working across the county, in the area of material reuse, in order to share knowledge and to discover opportunities for working together to increase impact. Initially, there were reservations that the forum might be seen as imposing something on organisations that they hadn't asked for and it was also a challenge to meet the needs of a diverse range of attendees. However, the two forum meetings that were held, facilitated and organised by the RPC, were well attended by over 25 different organisations and were felt to be of value. The organisations welcomed the opportunity to meet others, develop synergies, discuss ideas and common issues and find out more about what was happening in other parts of the county.

The initial meeting was a day long and centred on how viable having a forum was. Participating organisations felt that six monthly meetings were appropriate. The second meeting worked on what the project could deliver that was of benefit to all. The original idea put forward by the project was a pop-up shop; however the forum felt a reuse week would be more appropriate.

This was held in May 2016, http://www.recycledevon.org/reuse-week and during this week any reuse organisation could participate by holding an event which encouraged repair, refurbish, pass it on, repurpose, maintain and lend activities. Sixteen different organisations participated with 22 events listed. These events were publicised and marketed through the local authority channels free of charge. An example was the two-for-one offer from the Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library, a registered charity that runs two toy libraries in Exeter lending toys and games. The week received excellent media reach with slots promoting reuse on both regional TV and radio, providing coverage of the HWRC reuse shop and a local children's charity shop; Jelly. The week was facilitated by the RPC and the project partners.

Looking forward, the Reuse Forum was intended to be independent and self-managing but, as was anticipated at the start of the project, it is not currently self-sustaining and needs further support for it to become established.

Reuse Directory

REUSE IT is available to view on the Recycle Devon website here: http://www.recycledevon.org/reuse-it It is a new, interactive section of the website listing reuse opportunities in the market towns, within the following categories: buy, sell, swap, repair, hire and donate. The amount of information required to populate the database and the ongoing management needs for the reuse directories is extensive. In September 2015 each district had one town listed and by June 2016 over 30 towns were listed. Keeping the directory up to date will be an on-going process and there is a continuing need to promote the directory more widely.

### Reuse Kits

A lot of work by individuals goes into organising Clothes Swaps and Give and Take Days; the idea of the kits was to take this knowledge and make it transferable and accessible to others to support replication. The kits are available for hire for free to anyone wishing to hold an event and include mirrors, clothes rails, sack trucks, hangers, screens, scales, guidance and template documents such as posters. Details can be found at http://www.recycledevon.org/clothes-swaps and here: http://www.recycledevon.org/give-and-take-events. At present uptake of these kits is minimal and more promotion is needed more widely; this has been the focus of recent targeted publicity.

### Legacy

The DCC Reuse project has been funded for an additional year by the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction & Recycling Committee, consisting of Devon's eight districts. In its second year, the project intends to take the reuse workshops county-wide and deliver a REUSE Week on behalf of the Reuse Forum, as well as continuing to promote the kits and directory. In addition, just over £6,000 has been awarded by the WEEE Distributor Take Back Scheme to fund delivery of nine electrical appliance repair events across Devon and Torbay.

Local authorities are working under severe financial strain but while these constraints are widely recognised, they remain critical to the future success of reuse and deserve recognition and support. One interviewee summed this up stating "local government still needs to be the centrepiece of the development of reuse". For those seeking engagement with local authorities, adopting proactive and flexible positions – such as profit sharing, identifying alternatives to reuse credits, promotional and logistical support, establishing a role to assist in addressing welfare issues – can help. Of course, the need to be proactive and flexible should be applied to all potential partners, not just the third sector. In the more challenging financial climate in which everyone currently operates, adopting old entrenched positions does not feel like a modern approach and this was certainly reflected in many of the interviews conducted for this report.

Bulky collections are one area where the reuse sector could play a more significant role. While there are examples of good practice where reuse organisations are effectively delivering this service, the majority of UK local authorities[37] collect bulky materials for disposal rather than reuse. In addition, although many local authorities have introduced a charge for this service, it is not generally sufficient to cover all costs. There is an opportunity, therefore, to consider a 'spend to save' scenario in which reuse organisations are encouraged to take over these collections with a long term objective that they should be self-sustaining. To achieve this, reuse organisations may need upfront support in preparing and delivering a business plan, or in raising awareness and communicating what can be collected and how it should be presented. Others may need capital support in terms of vehicles and manpower for the collection.

There are a number of good practice examples in this area. The Surrey Reuse Network currently provides bulky waste collection to a range of local authorities, both working in partnership or delivering the service, or acting as the point of referral for the authority. A consistent approach is being delivered and standards have been raised in terms of the quantity of items being reused and maximum value (in whatever form) being realised from bulky items.

A number of larger charities operate collection rounds in partnership with local authorities to target small reusable items such as textiles, bric-a-brac, books and small WEEE that might otherwise end up in the household waste stream. The benefits are that the residents receive a convenient service, the charity is provided with additional stock, and the local authority saves money from reduced waste disposal costs.

Local Reuse Networks exist across the UK and Ireland. Supporting the set up and development of an appropriate reuse forum or network is valuable as a vehicle to engage other reuse organisations in the county area. Allocation of a waste officers' time (or funding for alternatives) is helpful to co-ordinate actions and activities, particularly in the early stages.

In terms of procuring reuse, WRAP have produced guidance for local authorities, specifically in relation to HWRCs[38] but wider issues and partnership opportunities are considered. There are lots of examples peppered throughout the guidance of where local authorities have successfully procured reuse service.

Financial issues such as budget restraints, perception of investment required versus poor financial returns, risk (real and perceived) of engaging with third sector or social enterprises to deliver sub contracts, limited mechanism for cost savings across departments (wide ranging benefits impact on not just waste), minimal role of waste reuse within broader waste management contracts, can all challenge reuse procurement.

In addition, geographic coverage of reuse organisations can be extremely varied as can capacity of existing reuse organisations. Time is needed to develop partnership relationships and there can be a reluctance to develop formal relationships.

### Case Study 13: Zero Waste Scotland - a strategic approach to reuse




Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) is an agency funded by the Scottish Government to provide delivery support for the Scottish Government's strategic objectives on recycling, zero waste and the circular economy. Originally part of WRAP, ZWS separated and became an independent self-governing organisation in 2013.

ZWS has taken a long-term strategic approach to developing reuse in Scotland, working with both the private sector and particularly with the third sector. The third sector in Scotland has a strong history and foundations in community recycling as well as reuse focused on addressing social needs.

ZWS has worked closely with the membership body, Community Resources Network Scotland (CRNS) to invest in third sector reuse infrastructure, as well as providing direct support for the operation of CRNS itself.

A key feature of recent developments has been the embedding of operational quality standards for reuse shops, collection and preparation for reuse operations. Under the brand Revolve, Scotland has quality assured over 55 reuse organisations which have completed the certification process (which takes about 10 months). This process ensures robust and consistent standards are in place for all legal requirements, health and safety, human resources, retailing and business improvement. One of the key objectives is to raise standards to a shared level of professionalism and provide a comparable experience for retail customers wherever they are in Scotland under a trusted, recognisable banner that allows for local distinctiveness and character.

Additional support for organisations meeting or going through the Revolve certification process has included grant funding for shop-fitout, stock control systems and other related infrastructure. Reported turnover in Revolve certified shops is increasing, as is staff and volunteer retention and customer satisfaction.

In some local authorities, they are now choosing to work with Revolve certified local organisations and this is acting as a 'pull measure' for stock and turnover. It should be noted that this is a certification process and not a franchise.

To complement this investment, ZWS has also invested in the Reuse Line described in detail in case study 3 in this report. It forms a critical part of the overall strategy for boosting reuse. While the Reuse Line has been operational for four years, it should be recognised that establishment of such a service takes time and should be considered as a long-term investment that will become integral to the reuse offer in Scotland.

ZWS has also invested in the 'reuse hubs' operational model, designed to drive efficiencies in the collection and handling of good for reuse. Some have struggled to gain traction, especially in the major cities where potential partners find it as easy to compete as they do to collaborate (even now). It has been particularly successful in the Highlands where geography and cost have been strong drivers towards collaboration. Key success factors here included: strong appetite from the council to get involved; great relationship between the council and the third sector partners and a partnership 'mindset' much more embedded in the rural context.

Developments to come will include extending the Revolve certification to private reuse operators, especially in IT reuse and more support work with business (hospitality, food and drink, offices) to develop commercial reuse opportunities with private and public sector bodies.

Existing contract arrangements can also be a barrier, and when procuring new contracts, it needs to be very clear what is actually being procured in relation to reuse. That said, there are numerous examples of authorities that have successfully offered HWRC or bulky waste collection service as part of a wider waste contract, as well as standalone contracts as considered earlier. In addition, there are service only contracts, specifically in relation to HWRCs, where the actual operation of reuse is separate from site management. There are also reuse contacts for specific goods or materials, such as furniture, textiles, WEEE or more bespoke items such as bicycles.

Clearly some local authorities are driving forward the reuse agenda and working closely in partnership with others. There are also examples of where a co-ordinated strategic approach has been successful in standardising reuse operations and increasing their efficiency (See case study 13).

### 3.2.6 Policy interventions

- Extended Producer Responsibility

There is a view that reuse targets need to be set within producer responsibility legislation, rather than putting the entire burden on local authorities whose budgets continue to be cut every year. Many interviewees express interest in the development of extended producer responsibility (EPR) models for products that could be directed to reuse, but acknowledge that there may be little appetite for this type of approach from some UK governments. That said, if sound business cases can be put forward, then stakeholders should not hold back in their advocacy, as the prize in terms of social and environmental value and employment could be significant.

As an example, France has implemented an EPR scheme for textiles and furniture. In terms of textiles, all organisations that place new clothing textile products, pairs of shoes or household linen aimed at private households onto the French market pay a financial contribution. Taking a whole life cycle approach, contributions may be reduced for textile products that have ecolabels. This money funds an organisation whose responsibility is to encourage the further reuse, recycling and creation of value from used clothing, acting to support the collectors and sorters of textiles. Such support can be used for market development or for cost reduction, but is aimed at meeting the reuse/recycling commitments of the contributors. It also supports the employment (in sorting) of disadvantaged people. A similar approach is applied to furniture and the overall aim is to increase the amount of waste furniture put back on the market at national level by networks of social enterprises by 50% over a four-year period.

There is potential for a similar scheme to succeed in the UK but clearly work needs to be done to develop this concept further. In the UK context, it would make sense to build on the current debate about the role of EPR, which is presently more focused on materials supply chains rather than products. Textiles and clothing would be deserving of attention as well as furniture, as many stakeholders interviewed identified clothing as a product stream that could benefit from a stronger producer responsibility regime. Further work to explore how reuse could be supported through this type of policy framework would, therefore, be valuable.

- Reuse Targets

Separate targets for preparing for reuse exist in Flanders, France, and Spain helping extend product lifetimes and creating jobs.

In Flanders, for example, an overall weight-based reuse target of 5 kg reuse/capita was set for 2015 and achieved. Flanders has now reviewed its target upwards, and set a 7kg reuse/capita target to be met by 2022. This target is independent of the waste stream. The actors that report the figures of materials/products put back on the market are exclusively networks of social enterprises active in reuse/preparation for reuse. The target is also combined with an employment target of 3000 full time equivalent jobs, especially for those who are disadvantaged and/or disabled. It is important to note that whilst the target is for the Flemish region as a whole, many individual provinces are already achieving the target.

It is worth considering that if a combined preparation for reuse target covering all waste streams is set, it allows for the possibility that the target could be met by focusing on product type such as furniture or WEEE without providing any incentive for action on other waste streams. In assessing this policy option, therefore, it is important to consider whether the setting of separate targets for individual waste streams would be more effective.

Stakeholders have differing views on the merits or otherwise of reuse targets, ranging from scepticism and concern that they will be a blunt instrument through to strong advocacy. Several private sector interviewees acknowledged that if reuse targets were set, they would then work to them; others expressed a preference for a degree of sophistication in target setting, suggesting that the focus need to continue to be remain on individual material or product streams with intelligently set stretch targets for each, rather than an overall target. These views were also reflected in the results of the online surveys. Ideally, these 'smart' targets would take account of the full range of potential benefits that reuse can deliver; environmental, economic and social. If targets are generally seen to have merit, and have been successful in other countries, it suggests that more research and detailed economic modelling is clearly needed. If government support and resources is not forthcoming, it could prove to be an area where all interested stakeholders choose to collaborate to generate the required evidence base.

In order to make reuse targets enforceable and measurable, it must be also clear which actors are responsible at a national level, namely accredited/approved/authorised reuse centres and networks. These centres and networks would have to be able to report on all materials and products going into the reuse centres, the fraction that is made available on the market following reuse/preparation for reuse, and the fractions that go for further treatment (full documentation based on weight). Such an approach would potentially exclude online platforms such as eBay which facilitate pure waste prevention activities and the impact of this would need to be more fully explored.

Separate reuse targets could help generate investment into the necessary infrastructure and systems needed in order to meet those targets. Closer monitoring of the sector and data collection would also improve as a result, which would potentially help to close the door on illicit activity and sham reuse.

# Section 4: Conclusions

## 4.1 Revisiting the project scope

In initiating this research, CIWM set a series of questions (see Section 1.1) they wished to address to improve the proposition for reuse and address barriers to growth. These were a key consideration in the development of the surveys and detailed interviews with stakeholders and featured strongly in the discussions surrounding the challenges and opportunities. In addition, they helped guide the selection of case studies and examples of good practice.

However, what became very clear during the early stages of data and information collation is that dealing with them as standalone issues oversimplifies the picture. Overall, therefore, the current landscape for reuse has been considered in a more holistic manner and the opportunities and barriers assessed in relation to stakeholder relationships, access to products, supply of goods and material flows, behaviour, benefits and impacts.

Within this context, the reuse sector emerges as a sector capable of significant growth, with the potential to improve performance across all product types. However, a number of ongoing barriers need to be addressed to allow this potential to be realised, including:

- Supply and demand: improving access to reliable supplies of quality products that are suitable for reuse and stimulating more demand for reused goods
- Business case: better quantification of the benefits of reuse within a broader social, health and wellbeing, and economic context
- Collaboration: Stronger relationships and more partnership working to leverage the wide range of skills, expertise and networks available across the different stakeholder groups
- Strategic skills and knowledge: the cultivation of greater skills and knowledge related to efficient delivery of reuse activities, from commercial opportunities such a franchising, to better audience understanding and product range diversification, to core business skills such as stock management, branding and performance monitoring
- Standards and safety: greater understanding and uptake of existing standards and accreditation opportunities, and further work on specific barriers to reuse such as fire safety labels
- Policy drivers: assessment of the most effective policy interventions to better promote reuse in the future, particularly in the context of the circular economy

## 4.2 Key observations emerging from the research

Many stakeholders expressed the view that clear, long-term government strategies on reuse could provide a significant impetus. The observation is not limited to this area of waste policy, but reuse is seen to be in a weaker position than recycling, for example, because it has historically not had any policy drivers to support its development.

The diversity of the sector is also seen as both a potential weakness and a strength. The different agendas – environmental, economic, and social – operating across the sector make for a robust business case on a number of levels, but this business case is rarely articulated in such a way as to draw the various stakeholders together effectively. The willingness to partner up is often strong, but the different skill sets and capabilities mean these partnerships can be difficult to forge and manage successfully. Commercial interest in the higher value reuse streams is sometimes at odds with the social value being sought by third sector organisations.

Procurement has significant potential to support reuse but is generally seen to be as much of a hindrance as a help. This is in part due to the some of the wider social and welfare-related benefits of reuse being ignored, undervalued or simply unrecognised. More cross-department working, both at a national and local government level, is called for to provide at least a partial solution to this challenge. That said, as one interviewee observed, "austerity should not drive reuse"; it needs to be part of an integrated approach and not simply become a sticking plaster solution for wider social ills.

The lack of a strategic approach to reuse is also responsible for a sense of nervousness with regard to long-term investment in physical and human resources for the expansion of the sector. In market terms, reuse can be characterised as an immature industry sector; in many respects it displays many of the hallmarks of the recycling sector before the latter moved up the development curve thanks to EU legislation and targets, the articulation of these in national UK waste strategies, and targeted support and funding . And, in a similar way to recycling, reuse is dependent on consumer behaviour and end markets, albeit in a slightly different context.

These are not easy issues to tackle, especially in the current financial climate and with the political uncertainties surrounding Brexit. It may feel like the opportunity to champion the reuse cause are limited, but the surveys and interviews demonstrated that there is significant appetite amongst all key stakeholder groups to rally and support the development of reuse. In our view, this suggests that it is time to press home messages about unlocking the social, economic and environmental value of reuse and advocate this as an important element of the UK's environmental policy framework moving forward which has a positive contribution to make to a new post-Brexit economy.

# Section 5: Recommendations

This report's recommendations are split into four key categories: strategic delivery, communications and engagement, capacity building, and policy development.

## Strategic delivery

### 1. Co-ordination with emerging EU Circular Economy policy

It should be noted that a more robust and strategic policy approach to reuse is an integral part of the EU Circular Economy package, and could result in widespread changes to waste-related, product labelling and warranty policy and legislation across EU Member States.

**Recommendation: Given the work already underway in the European Commission and the international nature of product supply chains, future UK policy on reuse must be developed broadly in line with EU Circular Economy policy.**

### 2. Delivering progress at a UK level

This report recognises that the reuse community comprises a wide range of stakeholders, with often different primary objectives and is an area where resources are traditionally limited. Recommendations 2- 9 are predicated on an active and collaborative cross-sector approach including but not limited to those involved in this report (CIWM, CRA, FRN), other third sector organisations, WRAP, Zero Waste Scotland, WRAP Cymru, WRAP NI, local and national government.

**Recommendation: Identify or create a co-ordinating group to take forward this report's recommendations; CIWM's Waste Prevention Special Interest Group may be well placed to fulfil this role.**

## Communications & engagement

### 3. Consumer communications and awareness raising

This report highlights the need for clear and sustained communication and engagement efforts to stimulate greater levels of reuse and to help consumers understand what can be reused and how to present items to maximise their reuse value. These are similar challenges to those faced when the UK set about raising recycling levels and the Recycle Now consumer campaign put in place is considered to have played a major role in delivering the improvement in recycling rates.

Given current national and local government spending constraints, and the impact of Brexit, it is acknowledged that UK governments may have little appetite for national reuse campaigns across the UK at the present time, however it is important that the concept remains on the table for future consideration. At the present time there is a real opportunity for collaboration between key stakeholders in the reuse supply chain to map current communications initiatives and collateral (for example Scotland #Makingthingslast and the London Love Your Clothes campaign), share learning and good practice, and explore ways to build on these to reach a wider consumer audience.

**Recommendation: An initial mapping exercise should be undertaken to collate current communications and engagement activities, with a view to developing a Communications Action Plan to present to the wider reuse community for consultation.**

### 4. Wider promotion of existing good practice and guidance

There is a substantial amount of existing guidance and good practice (including WRAP's recent 'how to' reuse guides) which could be shared and signposted more widely and effectively to the reuse community, particularly for smaller scale reuse organisations operating at a local level. The challenge here is how to reach these organisations, which sit outside the established reuse and waste networks and communities.

**Recommendation: Collaborative working to explore the best routes to signpost and promote existing guidance and support to smaller independent reuse organisations, including the viability of delivering low cost local and regional workshops through their respective networks.**

## Capacity and Skills Building

### 5. Improve cross-sector engagement and understanding

This report has highlighted a number of specific barriers relating to levels of understanding and effective collaboration between different stakeholders in the reuse community, and in terms of accurate quantification of the value – be it economic, environmental or social – that is associated with reuse activities. Removing these barriers offers significant potential for further growth in the sector.

**Recommendation: Assess the opportunity to host collaborative network events or roadshows to encourage better engagement between reuse organisations, different local authority functions (e.g. procurement and social care) and other 'end users' such as Housing associations and shelters for the homeless. As appropriate, these events could address key barriers and specific issues, for example maximising the social value of local authority reuse**

activities, understanding end user needs, operating HWRC reuse shops, etc.

6. Support packages for reuse organisations

As already noted, the diversity of reuse organisations in terms of their size, scale of operation etc, is significant and there are myriad of micro-enterprises that operate on a local basis and are often focused primarily on realising the social value of reuse (either directly or indirectly as a fund raising activity for another cause). Sitting outside the established reuse community, these organisations are unlikely to be aware of or have access to current support, guidance and tools that could improve their operations.

Recommendation: Explore the opportunity to develop additional practical support for reuse micro-enterprises. Areas for consideration could include policy and procedures, monitoring and evaluation, and health and safety. The viability of providing other support mechanisms such as membership offers, mentoring schemes for practical sharing of management ideas (data, systems etc.) and training or coaching to assist individuals to improve partnership working skills, should also be considered.

## Policy development

7. Review current UK-wide policy framework

With waste and resource policy diverging significantly across the UK and Ireland in terms of both ambition and scope, a comparative assessment of the current policy landscape would be helpful, and should include specific reference to National Waste Prevention Plans and Circular Economy strategies as well as more general waste policies. This exercise would highlight where positive progress is being made and facilitate the sharing of learning across the UK countries, as well as identifying policy gaps that need to be addressed in UK environmental policy frameworks moving forward.

Recommendation: Undertake a comparative assessment of the current policy landscape in order to identify good practice and also establish where the policy gaps are that would need to be addressed.

8. Optimising reuse in Extended Producer Responsibility frameworks

Reuse is part of a much bigger debate about a range of mechanisms that could be deployed to drive further progress on resource efficiency as part of the Circular Economy agenda, including the wider roll out of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). However, in some cases, current EPR schemes are focused solely on materials recycling and do not provide incentives for reuse. Whilst the two can go hand in hand in terms of supporting reuse and providing a viable recycling outlet for by-products, in the UK and Ireland EPR does not at present extent to two of the main reusable items, namely furniture and textiles.

Recommendation: Establish a cross-sector stakeholder dialogue to assess the opportunities and mechanisms to incentivise reuse through EPR schemes and present these to national UK governments to form part of the wider discussion on EPR.

9. Assessment of the viability of reuse targets in future UK waste policy

The idea of setting separate reuse targets has been a matter of some debate across the UK and beyond and no clear consensus has yet emerged. As part of the re-evaluation of UK waste and resource policy within the context of Brexit, further work in this area would be useful.

Recommendation: Linked to Recommendation 8, initiate a cross-sector stakeholder dialogue to assess the viability of and scope for a future reuse target, including consideration of single collective targets against material or product specific targets, and the potential to use carbon metrics as the basis for target setting.

10. Improving data and metrics

The need to improve waste-related data and metrics is a recognised issue at both an EU-wide and UK level. In the 2013 National Waste Prevention Plan for England, Defra committed to "work with businesses, local authorities and civil society to develop a suite of metrics by the end of 2014 to help monitor progress on waste prevention, enabling consistent measurement of, for example, financial, environmental and social impacts, and levels of engagement". Reuse constitutes a small subset of this bigger problem but has its own particular challenges, including the disparate stakeholders that make up the reuse community, the lack of any standardised data collection protocols, and challenges around developing robust methodologies to measure wider social value of reuse activities.

Recommendation: Linked to Recommendations 8 and 9, initiate a cross-sector stakeholder dialogue to assess how reuse data and metrics can be improved and whether further research on standardised data collection methods and benchmarking would be valuable. In addition, Defra's progress on metrics should be clarified to avoid duplicated effort.

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- Jacob Hayler, ESA
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- Karen Rayner, Operations Manager, Horsham Matters
- Kelvin Hughes, CEO, Newbury Community Resource Centre Limited
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6 It is worth noting the raft of guidance published by WRAP, covering the following reuse areas: develop a reuse strategy; establish a reuse baseline for your area; set up and run a reuse forum; produce a reuse action plan; effectively communicate and write a communications plan to boost reuse; provide a reuse focused bulky waste collection service; provide for reuse at HWRCs; engage in reuse through the use of an Environmental Management System: a guide for social housing providers

7 A database of online promotion of reuse activities by English local authorities to their residents was compiled in January 2016; this showed a low level of support for reuse activities and reuse organisations

8 The number of Local Authority areas that the reuse organisations and charities covered ranged significantly, with 32% covering just one area, 19% covering two areas, 9% covering three to five areas, 15% covering six to ten areas, 13% operating across a region, and 13% operating nationally

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10 Extensively case-studied at www.rreuse.org and www.ewwr.eu

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18 University's Sustainability Lab already had strong links with the reuse community through working closely with the sector throughout Wales. S-Lab had a number of collaborative projects through ERDF programmes such as WISE Network, Beacon and the Wales Centre for Behaviour Change with organisations such as Greenstream, Seren, Antur Waunfawr and Crest Cooperative and is also a member of the Technical Advisory Group for Reuse Alliance Wales

19 Wales Social Enterprise of the Year 2014, Carpet Recycling UK Reuse Member of The Year 2014 & 2015, MRW Resource Management Business of The Year (small) 2014

20 As reported in her keynote speech to the Charity Retail Association annual conference 27th June 2016 by Clare Rayner, retail guru

21 Charity Retail Association (2016) Brits love to support charity shops, News Release 12th July 2016

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Green Alliance and WRAP (2015) Opportunities to tackle Britain's labour market challenges through growth in the circular economy http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Opportunities%20to%20tackle%20Britain%27s%20Labour%20Market%20Challenges.pdf

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32 PAS141 standard available at http://www.wrap.org.uk/sustainable-electricals/esap/reuse-and-recycling/guides/PAS-141-Guide

33 It is worth noting that just 25 per cent of items on eBay are now sold at auctions and 70 % of items are sold as new. http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/features/ebays-enduring-appeal-online-auction-site-is-still-the-uks-most-popular-e-commerce-retailer-9681925.html

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36 https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/160704_caf_charity_street_report_web.pdf

37 Not the case in the Republic of Ireland where services are all privately run and subject to local competition in many areas

38 WRAP have recently published a number of reports and how to guides including 'How to Include Reuse in Local Authority HWRC Procurement' - See more http://www.wrap.org.uk/node/58906 . The purpose of the guide is to inform anyone funding or running HWRCs of the procurement options and opportunities available when introducing or improving reuse services. It aims to help potential partners gain an understanding of the local authority procurement process

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