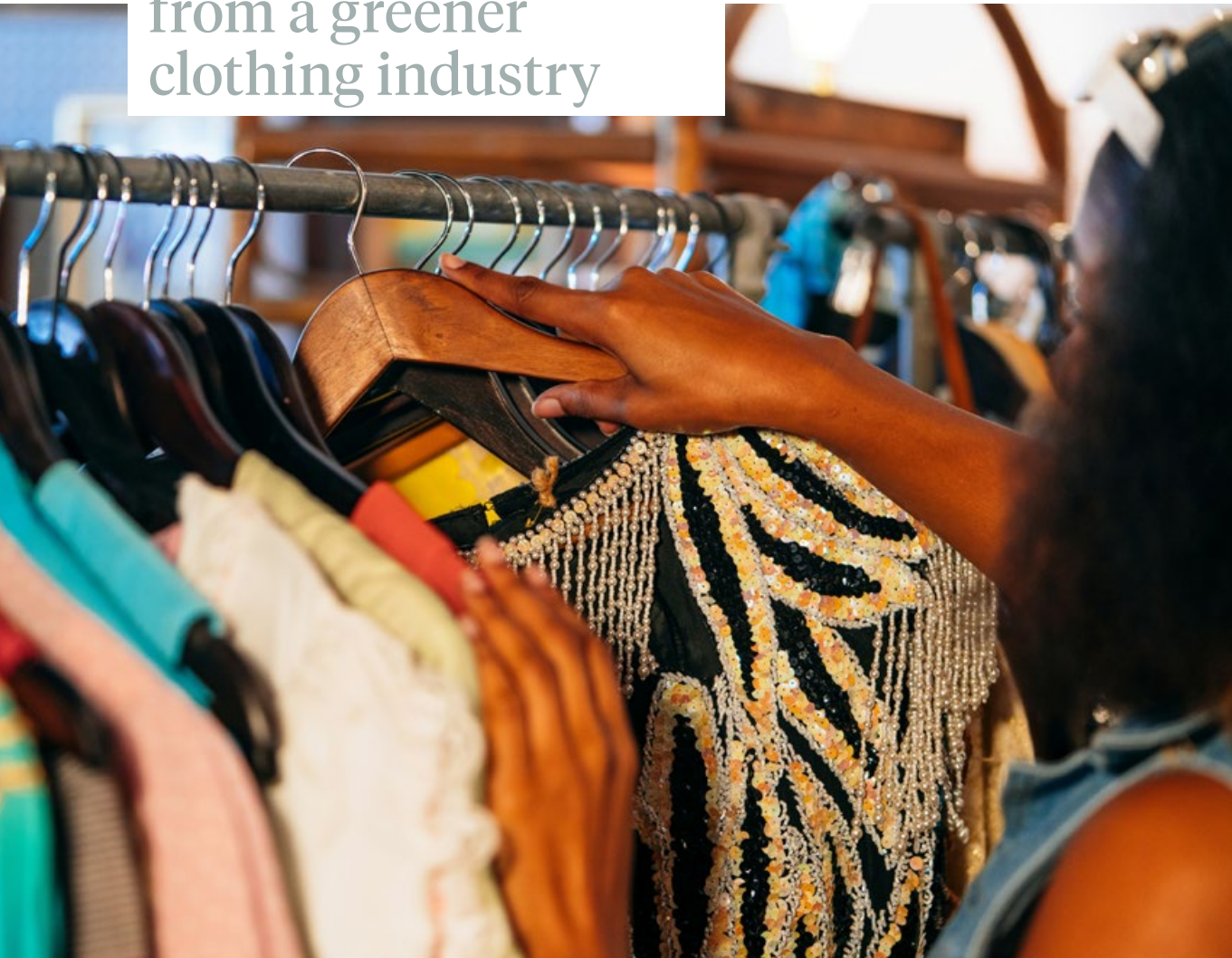


# Changing fashion

“ green alliance...”

What people want from a greener clothing industry



# Changing fashion: what people want from a greener clothing industry

## Authors

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank PwC for their report *Circular Fashion: making resale a reality*, produced for the Circular Economy Task Force, which provided the background for this report, and thanks in particular to Alex Proudfoot of PwC for his contribution to our workshops.

Thanks also to the following individuals and organisations we interviewed and consulted for this report, including Hedda Roberts, Ray Georgeson and Iain Gulland from Zero Waste Scotland; Sophie de Salis at British Retail Consortium; Alan Wheeler at Textiles Recycling Association; Sarah Ottoway, Adam Read and Stuart Hayward-Higham at SUEZ; Peter Foxton and Sarah Church at Phyllis Tuckwell House; and Sarah Gray and Kathryn Tims at WRAP.

This is produced by Green Alliance as part of a work programme for the Circular Economy Task Force, a policy focused business forum to promote ambitious ideas on the better management of resources.

The analysis and recommendations presented here are solely those of Green Alliance and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Circular Economy Task Force members or the organisations we spoke to as part of our research. Circular Economy Task Force members include:



With support from:



## Information about the polling conducted for this report:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,008 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 23 - 24 January 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

## Green Alliance

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The Green Alliance Trust  
Registered charity no 1045395  
Company limited by guarantee  
(England and Wales) no. 3037633

Published by Green Alliance  
April 2024

ISBN 978-1-915754-34-9

Designed by Howdy

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“

Buy less. Choose well. Make it last. Quality, not quantity. Everybody's buying far too many clothes.”

Vivienne Westwood

# Summary

“

**If greater reuse could be made to work for fashion, there is real hope that it could become more common in other sectors.”**

Reusing more existing products could radically cut resource consumption and its environmental impact. It also has financial benefits for the public, charities and businesses alike.

The reuse landscape is changing fast, with large companies becoming more interested. And the public, especially in the light of the cost of living crisis, are increasingly open to the idea of buying less and buying second hand items. But this option is not yet delivering all the benefits it could.

In this report, we investigate how reuse is working in the UK for the fashion sector, where it can be challenging to make the economics stack up. Reasons include the availability of cheap, fast fashion, lack of standardisation in sizes, a wide variation in price points and low value retention, meaning items that cost a lot new are often worth a lot less second hand. If greater reuse could be made to work for fashion, there is real hope that it could become more common in other sectors.

The research we cite, carried out by PwC for the Circular Economy Task Force, shows that reuse can be profitable for fashion businesses, especially if they create appealing platforms and develop technologies to cut costs.

In the long run, though, we conclude that ending the overproduction of clothing, and shifting towards long

“

**There is a clear appetite for more government action on fashion sustainability.”**

lasting products, will be the main driver to reduce fashion’s negative environmental and social impacts.

New polling by YouGov of over 2,000 adults in Britain, conducted for Green Alliance, confirms the public want businesses and the government to take action.

Asked how they want the fashion industry to become more sustainable, the top three desires, each selected by 30 per cent of respondents, were for the industry to use less polluting production practices, to partner with charity shops and to end the destruction of unsold or returned goods. An overwhelming majority (85 per cent) also said destroying such goods is wrong.

There is a clear appetite for more government action on fashion sustainability, as people surveyed supported every policy option presented to them.

The vast majority, 81 per cent, supported standards for long lasting and high quality clothing. Over three quarters also supported new targets to increase reuse (77 per cent) and reduce clothing waste (82 per cent), which were surprisingly even more popular than recycling targets (75 per cent).

We also widely consulted industry experts through one to one interviews and an in-depth workshop, to inform our recommendations to the government. These are: to ban the destruction of unsold goods and create an effective system of extended producer responsibility for textiles, which will improve data quality, support standards for quality and durability, and, ultimately, reduce the resources used by this highly wasteful and polluting industry. The public – and increasingly businesses – understand the need to reduce and reuse. It is time for the government to take this issue seriously, reflect public concern and exercise its duty to cut waste and wasteful resource use.

## Introduction

# Why the textile industry needs an overhaul

“

Climate change is not the industry's only major environmental impact.”

The textile industry has an outsized and growing impact on the environment, with estimates suggesting it is responsible for five to ten per cent of global emissions.<sup>1,2</sup> That's more than the combined impact of international shipping and aviation.

Climate change is not the industry's only major environmental impact, with pollution and waste also standing out.

### The impact of the global textiles industry



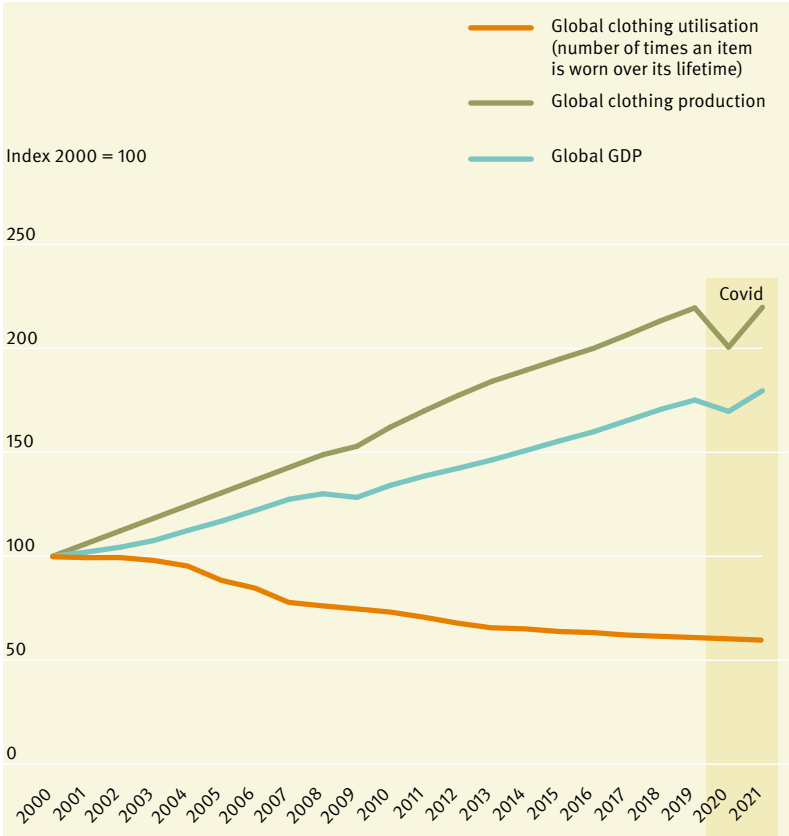
**“  
Overproduction of  
clothing is so great  
that unused and  
excess textiles are  
routinely destroyed.”**

Although there have been moves towards more demand led manufacturing, overproduction of clothing is so great that unused and excess textiles are routinely destroyed. Even markets for reuse are often saturated and unable to accept low quality items, meaning clothes collected for reuse in one country can wind up as pollution elsewhere.

Clearly, an overhaul of this industry is needed, but research by PwC for Green Alliance’s Circular Economy Task Force shows that many of the statistics for this industry are alarming: global clothing sales have more than doubled in the past 20 years and continue to grow faster than gross domestic product (GDP). This has been driven, in no small part, by the increase in fast fashion, whereby the traditional two clothing seasons have now morphed into as many as 100 microseasons, making cheap clothing available at speed with limited checks on the environmental and social impacts of its production.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, we are getting less use out of our clothing, with the number of times the average item is worn falling by 40 per cent since 2000.<sup>7</sup> This means people own more and more clothes and are not wearing them as intensively as they used to.

The UK is Europe’s worst offender: according to a study by the European Clothing Action Plan, the average person in the UK buys far more clothing and other textiles than people in other European countries. At 26.7 kilogrammes per person per year, it is nearly twice the consumption of Germany, which was the second worst offender in the study.<sup>8</sup> Following a brief dip during the pandemic, clothing sales in the UK are again on the rise.

Global growth in clothing production has outstripped GDP growth while the use per item has fallen<sup>9</sup>





# Companies know they need to change

“

**Businesses are slowly becoming more conscious of the problem.”**

Although there is a very long way to go to turn this negative picture around, businesses are slowly becoming more conscious of the problem and some are looking for solutions. Fashion companies, from budget to high end designers, have launched initiatives for reuse, resale and recycling. Many reuse initiatives involve take back schemes, including those that offer vouchers for new purchases to customers in return for their old clothing. On the face of it, these are positive as, for instance, donated clothing may be sold on through charity shops. It is worth noting, though, that they could, in fact, be driving ever higher sales and the already significant problems caused by the industry.

Businesses are also making concrete pledges. But those made by clothing producers focus almost entirely on recycling, recyclability and recycled or ‘sustainable’ content, which is not tackling the problem at source.<sup>10</sup> Examples include:

- Primark and & Other Stories have targets to use 100 per cent recycled or sustainably sourced materials by 2030.<sup>11,12</sup>
- Zara has committed to 40 per cent recycled content in its clothing by 2030.<sup>13</sup>
- M&S says it will use 100 per cent recycled polyester by 2025-26.<sup>14</sup>
- Patagonia aims to use only ‘preferred materials’ like organic and regenerative organic cotton, recycled polyester and recycled nylon by 2025.<sup>15</sup>
- Gucci intends to use 100 per cent sustainable cotton by 2025.<sup>16</sup>

# Change is not happening fast enough

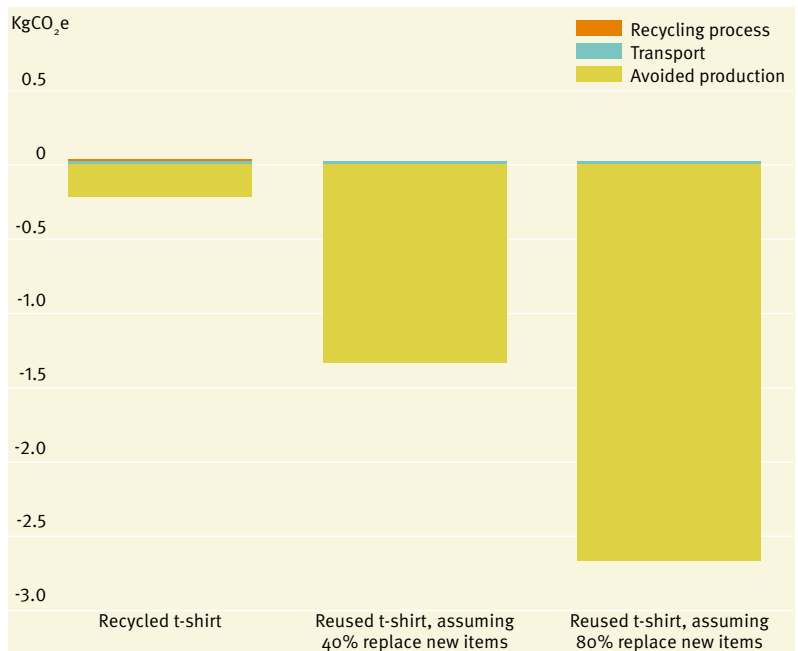
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Reuse is almost always better than recycling from an environmental perspective.”

While recycling commitments are commendable, the fashion industry still has a long way to go to achieve them. Estimates suggest that, globally, less than one per cent of textile waste is recycled back into fibre.<sup>17</sup>

The strong focus on increasing recycled content by clothing businesses, though, means that environmental benefits will be more limited. PwC’s research found that reuse is almost always better than recycling from an environmental perspective.<sup>18</sup> As a typical example, an EU-commissioned lifecycle analysis estimates that the carbon footprint of a reused cotton t-shirt is about 60 times smaller than a new one, and could save between eight and 16 times more carbon than recycling it.<sup>19</sup>

Reusing a cotton t-shirt can save up to 16 times more carbon than recycling






# Reuse business models already exist

“

Some brands are starting to offer repair and resale services or platforms.”

As our previous research has shown, there are several ways businesses, charities and others can make money through business models that reduce the sale of new products. These include product service systems, sharing and rental, the latter two are emerging in the clothing sector. Reuse, meanwhile, is well established through charity shops and resale platforms like eBay, and some brands are starting to offer repair and resale services or platforms.

Examples of reuse business models<sup>20</sup>

 <b>Third party reselling</b>	 <b>Peer to peer</b>	 <b>Take back schemes</b>
<p><b>How it works</b> Customers purchase used clothing from resellers, both businesses and charities, in store and online</p>	<p><b>How it works</b> Platforms, which are normally digital, facilitate transactions, often between individuals</p>	<p><b>How it works</b> Brands and retailers develop or outsource take back schemes and resale systems.  Collected goods may be sold on their own platforms or donated to charity</p>
<p><b>Examples</b> Charity and vintage shops</p>	<p><b>Examples</b> eBay, Vinted, Vestiaire Collective</p>	<p><b>Examples</b> Zara Pre-Owned, Reselfridges, Finisterre x Reskinned</p>

# Businesses can make money from reuse

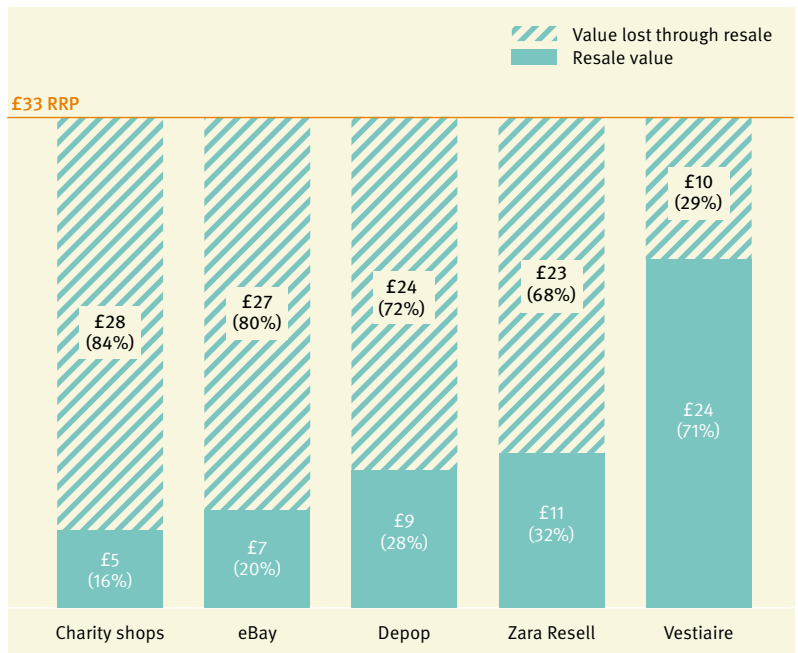
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Second hand clothing can retain between 25 and 55 per cent of its initial recommended retail price.”

Businesses can profitably run reuse services, particularly if they add value for the customer. According to PwC’s research, second hand clothing can retain between 25 and 55 per cent of its initial recommended retail price (RRP). How much they can ask for a product is heavily influenced by a couple of factors:

- Platforms that add value through services like authentication, repair or cleaning can charge more.
- Premium and luxury brands in high demand retain more value.

Value of a Zara jumper when resold through different channels<sup>21</sup>



## It's hard to be green with ever rising clothes sales

“

**In a transformative scenario, the UK textile industry could use 63 per cent less raw material.”**

Clothing reuse is not niche in the UK, with estimates suggesting that it applies to up to a quarter of clothing.<sup>22</sup> At the moment, reused clothing is often bought as well as, rather than instead of, new purchases, with estimates suggesting around 54 per cent of reuse displaces new products.<sup>23</sup>

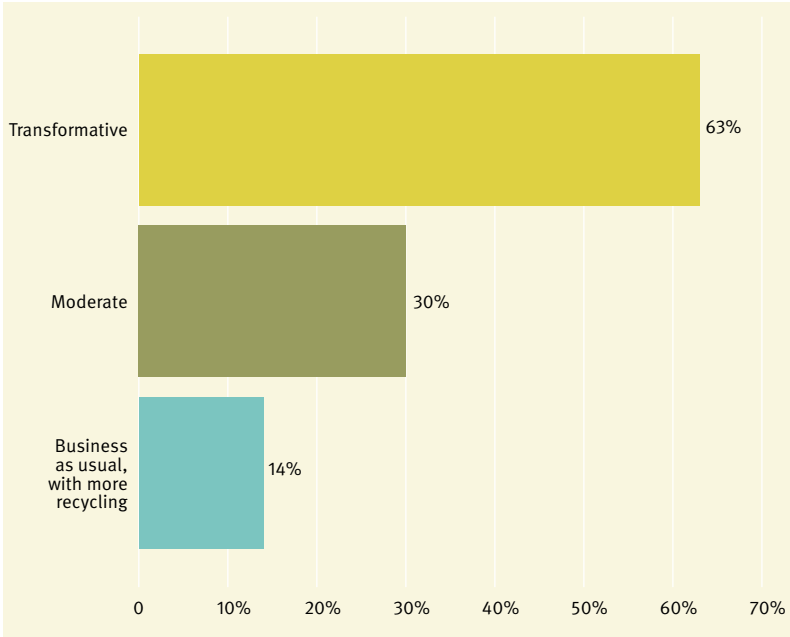
For the reuse sector to scale up and replace more new purchases, it needs to become central to companies' business models and public buying habits.

A rise in reuse and recycling will certainly have some effect in reducing the raw materials used to make clothing. However, this positive impact would be considerably dampened if sales of new items continue to rise.

Our analysis shows that, in a moderate reuse scenario where 40 per cent of clothing is reused, and fibre-to-fibre recycling reaches 26 per cent (from the current starting point of less than one per cent), the UK clothing industry could consume 30 per cent less raw materials.<sup>24</sup>

As the illustration overleaf shows, much more is possible. In a transformative scenario, where 60 per cent of clothing is reused, fibre-to-fibre recycling reaches maximum technical potential and more reused items displace new clothes, the UK textile industry could use 63 per cent less raw material.<sup>25</sup>

Three scenarios: raw material reduction potential with different levels of new purchases, reuse and recycling



# The public wants change

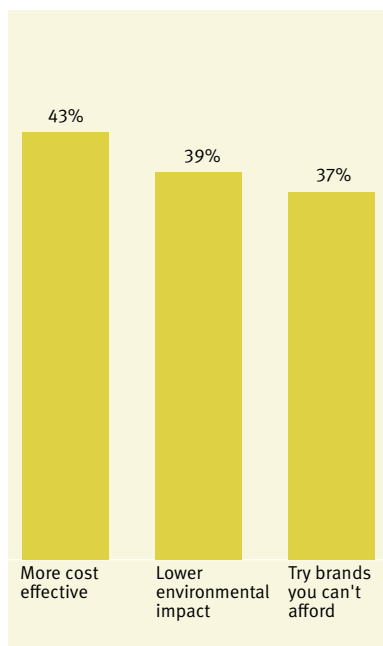
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Industry experts told us trends increasing the appetite for reuse include destigmatisation amongst younger shoppers, as well as the high cost of living.”

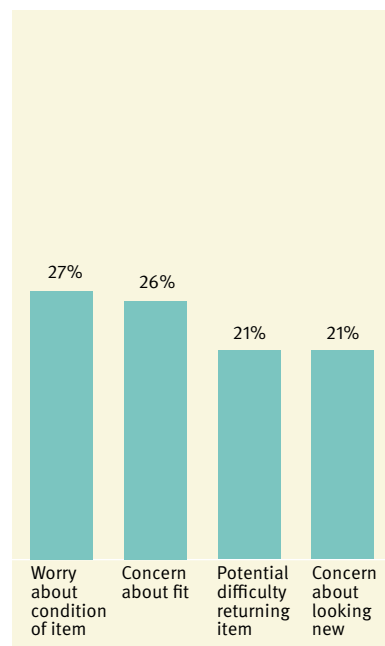
WRAP research, conducted in autumn 2021, found that 54 per cent of the public were happy to purchase second hand or vintage clothing.<sup>26</sup> Our interviews with those who work in reuse – including charities, trade associations and businesses – suggest several factors are leading to more common reuse.

Industry experts told us trends increasing the appetite for reuse include destigmatisation amongst younger shoppers, driven by online platforms like Vinted and Depop, as well as the high cost of living. This builds on WRAP’s findings which indicated cost as the main motivation for those buying used clothing.<sup>27</sup>

Top motivations for buying used clothing (WRAP research)



Top barriers to buying used clothing (WRAP research)



# People don't want useful clothes to go to waste

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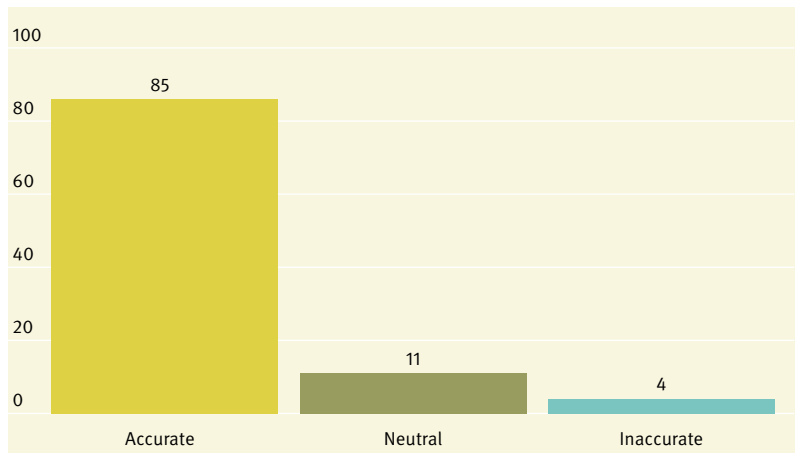
**There was unequivocal opposition to the landfill or incineration of unsold clothing.”**

YouGov carried out polling in January 2024 on behalf of Green Alliance to explore what people think about their clothes shopping habits and what they would like to change to make them more sustainable.

It found that, although the environmental impact of clothing was not a major worry for many (only 33 per cent indicated concern), most owned many clothes they didn't regularly wear (60 per cent) and more people than not are frustrated by clutter in their wardrobes (43 per cent said they were frequently frustrated, compared to 33 per cent who aren't).

But, despite apparent disregard for the environmental impact of their own clothing, significant concerns surfaced in responses to other questions. There was unequivocal opposition to the landfill or incineration of unsold clothing, with 85 per cent indicating it was wrong. The same proportion opposed the destruction of clothing still in useable condition. This is likely to be a view informed by high profile media coverage highlighting the destruction of unsold goods.<sup>28</sup>

Q “I feel it is wrong when clothing that could still be worn is destroyed”





# Consumers want businesses to take more action

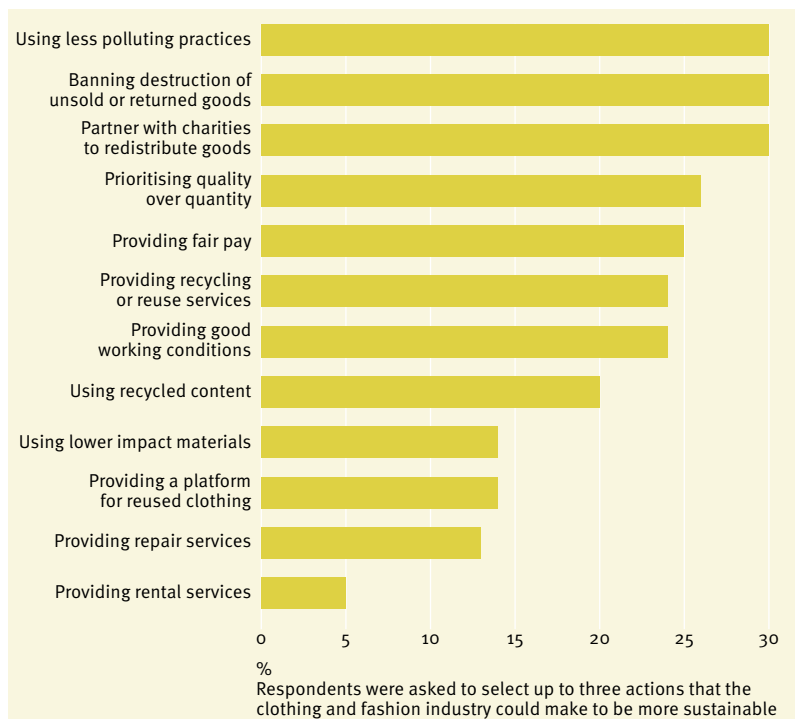
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**Most people believed that clothing producers are most responsible for its environmental impacts.”**

Our polling found that most people (58 per cent) believed that clothing producers are most responsible for the industry’s environmental impacts.<sup>29</sup> Asked how they wanted the industry to become more sustainable, they favoured using less polluting production practices, partnering with charitable causes to redistribute goods and, unsurprisingly, ending the practice of destroying unsold or returned goods.

Significantly, people were more likely to believe it is important to prioritise clothing quality over quantity than to use recycled content or more sustainable materials, suggesting they acknowledge the need to reduce clothing production.

How can the clothing industry become more sustainable?



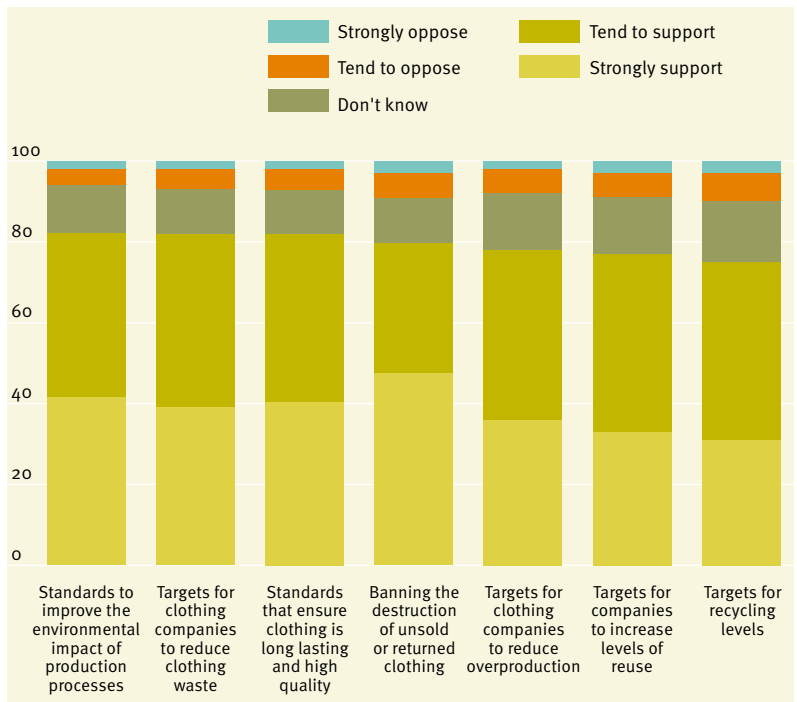
# People support policy intervention

“

**Targets for companies to reduce waste and overproduction, and increase reuse, were more popular than targets for recycling.”**

When asked about what the government should do, most people supported every option presented to them, suggesting a general appetite for more government intervention to increase the sustainability of the clothing industry.<sup>30</sup> Notably, targets for companies to reduce waste and overproduction, and increase reuse, were more popular than targets for recycling. This is perhaps surprising, given the perpetual focus in the public sphere, and by the government, on recycling rather than on reduction and reuse. It suggests the government would have public backing if it took its duty to adhere to the waste hierarchy more seriously. This is where prevention of waste in the first place and reuse are targeted ahead of recycling.

Targets, standards and bans are overwhelmingly supported



# What should businesses do?

“

There are several steps businesses can take to cut the amount of clothing being bought and wasted.”

PwC’s research shows that businesses can make money out of reuse. Our polling indicates strong public appetite for reuse and reduction, and a desire to see businesses take responsibility for environmental impacts.

There are several steps businesses can take to develop profitable reuse offerings and cut the amount of clothing being bought and wasted. These include:

- **Create appealing platforms.** Those that add value, such as content curation, product authentication or repair, can command higher resale prices.
- **Develop technologies to cut costs.** Our research with experts indicates that developments in sorting, grading and pricing technologies have accelerated, as has AI’s ability to personalise online platforms and match customers’ needs.
- **Partner with charities.** Unlike economies in the EU, the UK has a wide network of well used charity shops, which many brands partner with to sell unsold stock. Other opportunities for collaboration could be developed which would also be popular with the public.<sup>31</sup>
- **Move away from a ‘fast fashion’, volume led model.** Moving away from a damaging ‘linear economy’ should be the ultimate, long term goal for businesses. For the clothing industry this means focusing more on timeless styles and durability. In addition to designing items to be kept in use for longer, it would justify higher prices for reused clothing and make in house reuse business models more viable. Overall, this would not necessarily mean people have to spend more on clothing, as a successful business shift would require societal change in which people buy fewer, but higher quality, items of clothing.

“

**Reuse makes most economic sense for high value products with standardised designs that can retain their value.”**

### Lessons for other sectors

Many of the steps we suggest could also be taken by businesses in other sectors. Reuse is growing in popularity beyond textiles and, in many ways, could be easier to embed in other high impact sectors like packaging, electronics and furniture. Reuse makes most economic sense for high value products with standardised designs that can retain their value.

With textiles, product design is highly varied, with fashion and design changing season to season and a lack of standardisation when it comes to clothing sizes. The price of products that perform the same function can vary wildly, and it is nearly impossible to make a return from the reuse of cheap, fast fashion. Products that start off more expensive often retain less value as a proportion of their initial price in the resale market (though luxury items are still more likely to retain enough value to make resale profitable). There are limited incentives for people to ensure their unused clothing is moved on quickly as clothing takes up relatively little space.

But this is not the case with other high impact sectors. Many packaging types are relatively standardised. Electronics, particularly big ticket items like smartphones, TVs and laptops, often retain significant value. Large furniture items are likely to be offered up for reuse as soon as they are no longer required as most people do not have room for multiple beds or sofas. Businesses in these sectors should find it easier to make reuse viable, whether in partnership with charitable causes or on their own.

# What should the government do?

“

**The government can be confident that any action it takes would be very popular with the public.”**

Our polling indicates the government can be confident that any action it takes to tackle the growing problem of textile overproduction would be very popular with the public. This will require multiple policies, some of which can be quickly implemented, and others which are more long term. We recommend the following three step approach:

## 1. Ban the destruction of unsold goods

As an immediate and popular move, the government should ban the destruction of unsold and returned textiles.

Incinerating or landfilling unused goods is a reckless waste of resources, and the public clearly opposes it. In our polling, 85 per cent said they thought it was wrong that unsold, returned or still wearable clothing was destroyed.

France has already instigated a ban on the destruction of unsold non-food goods, and the EU has agreed to ban the destruction of unsold clothing and footwear. The Scottish government is exploring new powers to ban the destruction of unsold ‘durable goods’ through its Circular Economy Bill.<sup>32,33,34</sup>

The UK government should follow suit with a similar prohibition as a first step towards addressing overproduction and its considerable impacts. This should be done in a way that improves tracking and avoids loopholes that could mean charities and other countries become overburdened with goods that can no longer be destroyed but which are impossible to sell on.<sup>35</sup>

It will be vital to pair this initial step with longer term policy to ensure businesses address the overproduction of short-lived clothing.

## 2. Use extended producer responsibility and standards more effectively

In the medium term, the UK should develop a robust system of extended producer responsibility (EPR) for textiles, where producers are financially responsible for the full lifecycle impacts of their products. This will be popular with the public, who believe businesses are the most responsible for fashion's environmental impact.

Currently, the UK is falling behind other jurisdictions, including the EU, where a new EPR approach for textiles is being brought in to charge producers based on a product's environmental impact. This means they will have to pay for the waste management of textiles, including financing separate collection, sorting, reuse and recycling.

These moves mean many international businesses will already be gearing up for a change in approach, which should make it easier for the UK to act. But the government should go further and design an EPR system centred on the need to reduce clothing production as well as its relative impacts. Notably, the EU's scheme does not include targets for waste prevention, reuse or recycling, though some member states, including the Netherlands, have gone further towards this.<sup>36</sup> It also looks likely that France will introduce environmental charges on producers who make low cost, fast fashion pieces, which could also be incorporated into an EPR system in the UK.<sup>37</sup>

To achieve effective EPR for the textiles industry, the following are needed:

- **Data.** As a starting point, much better data is required to understand textile production, its impacts and the final destination of used textiles.
- **Targets.** The government should use its powers to set targets for EPR schemes through the Environment Act. These are needed immediately for recycling and reuse, but also for a reduction strategy (see step three).
- **Complementary standards.** The UK should use its resource efficiency powers under the Environment Act. For instance, it should set standards around the production impacts and the durability of textiles, to ensure they

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The government should design an extended producer responsibility system centred on the need to reduce clothing production as well as its relative impacts.”

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**Substantial reduction in raw material use cannot be achieved unless there is a significant shift in policy to drive it.”**

remain suitable for reuse. This should inform producers' fees under the EPR scheme, with higher quality clothing incurring lower costs. Our research with industry experts suggests that proving or improving clothing durability would not necessarily lead to marked increases in the cost to consumers. Indeed, some innovative, less impactful production processes can save manufacturers' costs associated with energy, water and material use. This is important when both businesses and the public are suffering from the impacts of high inflation.

### **3. Set resource reduction targets for textiles and other high impact industries**

Our polling shows the public understands the importance of reduction over recycling when it comes to clothing. It is time the government did too. As we have discussed, while reuse is important and greener than recycling, reducing the use of materials in the clothing industry overall should be the ultimate aim to make a major difference to its environmental impact. Available data clearly shows this is not yet happening, despite the impression that businesses are changing. Substantial reduction in raw material use cannot be achieved unless there is a significant shift in policy to drive it.

We repeat our previous call for the government to send a strong signal to this industry, and other sectors, with a new economy-wide target to bring UK resource consumption within sustainable levels, which is likely to mean at least halving raw material use.<sup>38</sup> A broad target also needs complementary, specific targets to effectively drive action in different sectors and for certain materials. The textile industry is a high impact sector in need of such a binding, long term target, alongside construction, furniture, electronics, vehicles, plastic and packaging, and food, all of which the government has already identified as priorities in its waste prevention plan.

# Endnotes

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- 2 European Parliament, 29 December 2020, 'The impact of textile production and waste on the environment (infographics)'
- 3 European Parliament, 2020, 'The impact of textile production and waste on the environment'. The pollution occurs through the treatment and dyeing of textiles
- 4 Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017, *A new textiles economy*
- 5 OC&C Strategy Consultants and WGSN, 2023, *Doing more with less*
- 6 C Moran et al, 2021, 'The challenge of "Depeche Mode" in the fashion industry: does the industry have the capacity to become sustainable through circular economic principles, a scoping review', *Sustainable environment*
- 7 PwC, March 2024, *Circular fashion: making resale a reality*. This research was conducted by PwC for the Circular Economy Task Force.
- 8 ECAP, 2018, *Used textile collection in European cities*. The study assumes that three quarters of household textiles are clothing.
- 9 PwC, March 2024, op cit
- 10 There are a very small number of exceptions, including Selfridges, which has a target for 45 per cent of transactions to be 'circular'. This does, however, still include recycling, as well as resale, rental, and repair and does not differentiate between the different 'circular' activities in the target. See Selfridges, 2022, *Project Earth Report 2022*
- 11 Primark, 14 September 2021, 'Primark pledges to make more sustainable choices affordable for all as it unveils extensive programme of new commitments'
- 12 & Other Stories website, 'Sustainability'
- 13 Inditex, 2023, *Inditex new sustainability commitments*
- 14 Marks & Spencer website, 'Plan A: our planet'
- 15 Patagonia website, 'Climate goals'
- 16 Gucci, *Impact report 2020*
- 17 Ellen MacArthur, 2017, op cit
- 18 The exception would be in unlikely scenarios where only ten to 30 per cent of reused clothing prevents new purchases and recycled content reaches between 40 and 70 per cent of content.
- 19 Norion Consult, 2023, *LCA-based assessment of the management of European used textiles*
- 20 Subscription and rental models also exist, but the analysis focuses in on models of direct reuse with long term ownership as there is more established and better evidence.
- 21 Research conducted by PwC for the Circular Economy Task Force in preparing *Circular fashion: making resale a reality*
- 22 J Millward-Hopkins et al, 2023, *A material flow analysis of the UK clothing economy*. These estimates are difficult to make, not least because much of the reuse takes place through informal channels or through platforms that do not capture data to be used centrally.
- 23 WRAP, 2023, *Circular business models guide for fashion: how to get started*



- 24 A full methodology is available at: [bit.ly/49bV3ec](https://bit.ly/49bV3ec)
- 25 Ibid
- 26 WRAP, 2022, *Citizen insights: clothing longevity and circular business models receptivity in the UK*. Although this report was published in October 2022, the research was carried out in autumn 2021.
- 27 Ibid
- 28 See, for example: ITV News, 22 June 2021, 'Amazon destroying millions of items of unsold stock in one of its UK warehouses every year, ITV News investigation finds'; and BBC News, 19 July 2018, 'Burberry burns bags, clothes and perfume worth millions'. Both of these news stories led to significant public outcry and the issue has remained in the spotlight as France, the EU and Scotland have responded to similar stories by implementing or considering a ban on destroying unsold or returned goods.
- 29 This was followed by 14 per cent who think the purchaser is most responsible, 12 per cent who believe governments and political leaders are most responsible, three per cent who said none of the above are responsible and 13 per cent who don't know.
- 30 The poll asked if people would support or oppose introducing any of the following: targets for recycling levels; obligations for clothing companies to provide and pay for recycling services; obligations for clothing companies to provide repair services; targets for clothing companies to increase levels of reuse (eg by reselling used clothing, ensuring clothing is sold again in charity shops, etc); standards that ensure clothing is long lasting and high quality; standards to improve the environmental impact of production processes; targets for clothing companies to reduce clothing waste; targets for clothing companies to reduce overproduction; higher taxes or charges for companies if their clothing production has a higher environmental impact; labelling that shows the environmental impact of an item of clothing; a ban on the destruction of unsold or returned clothing. A majority supported each of these measures, with the smallest majority (56 per cent) supporting introducing an obligation to provide repair services.
- 31 Many businesses we spoke to were keen to partner with charities, especially if they could quantify environmental and sustainability impacts that could be measured against companies' environmental, social and governance (ESG) targets, for instance around waste generation and carbon. As well as unsold stock partnerships, other models for partnerships between charities and businesses include partnerships on takeback schemes, where charities sort the stock returned to retailers. Currently, for textiles, a partnership that encourages charity retailers to return items to the original retailer is unlikely to be effective, unless this provides greater value. For other sectors, this model could be effective. For example, for high value electricals, in house technical ability is lacking within charity shops, so selling back to retailers could be a useful route.
- 32 Scottish Parliament, 2023, 'Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill : policy memorandum'
- 33 European Parliament, press release, 5 December 2023, 'Deal on new EU rules to make sustainable products the norm'
- 34 Scottish Parliament, 2023, op cit
- 35 When the EU was considering its ban, for instance, there were concerns it could accidentally incentivise the export of textiles unsuitable for reuse, which led some, including the European Environment Bureau (EEB), to call for greater reporting requirements to ensure that is not the case. See, for instance: EEB, 2021, 'Policy brief on prohibiting the destruction of unsold goods', prepared by Ökopool for the EEB.
- Here in the UK, it is not only other countries that could see material dumped on them. Charity shops should not be burdened with goods they cannot sell on and might have to pay to get rid of. Ensuring this does not happen will require greater tracking of materials in the first instance, protections for those that receive donations and, ultimately, a much greater focus on reducing incentives to overproduce. The government may want to give companies time to begin addressing overproduction and to establish better tracking, after which it should ensure that the final ban sees companies penalised financially if any goods remain unusable and cannot find a market. See, for instance: H Roberts et al, 2023, 'Product destruction: exploring unsustainable production-consumption systems and appropriate policy responses', *Sustainable production and consumption*

- 36 The Dutch scheme has targets to recycle 50 per cent of discarded textiles by 2025 and prepare 20 per cent of textiles for reuse by the same year (ten per cent specifically in the Netherlands). See: Government of the Netherlands, April 2023, 'Decree on rules extended producer responsibility for textile products'
- 37 *Guardian*, 15 March 2024, 'France's lower house votes to limit "excesses" of fast fashion with environmental surcharge'
- 38 Green Alliance, 2021, *Targeting success: why the UK needs a new vision for resource use*



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