

REUSE MANIFESTO

A call for reuse to be prioritised over recycling in Scotland



September 2025



Executive Summary

Circular Communities Scotland is calling for reuse to be prioritised over recycling in Scottish circular policy with three key asks for:

1. Reuse Targets
2. Reuse Infrastructure
3. Reuse Investment

Overview

Circular Communities Scotland is a membership body that supports and represents over 260 reuse, repair and sharing charities and social enterprises across Scotland.

Our members address over-consumption, prevent goods from entering landfill, create local jobs, develop economic opportunities, and help promote social and environmental justice.

What is a Prioritising Reuse Approach?

The Circular Economy (Scotland) Act was passed in June 2024 with unanimous cross-party support. We call for it to be implemented quickly and focus on the actions at the top of the waste hierarchy, particularly reuse and repair.

To date Scottish Government's policy and investment focus has been on recycling and waste management – we need to shift this to reuse and repair. Reuse brings numerous circular benefits including:

- **Social:** Reuse tackles the cost-of-living crisis by offering affordable pre-loved goods and helps overcome employment barriers by creating work and training placements.
- **Environmental:** Reuse addresses the climate crisis and the challenges of achieving net zero by dealing directly with the issue of over-consumption and material use.
- **Economic:** Reuse creates opportunities for green skills, local and Scottish based jobs and supports economic growth.

1. Reuse Targets

What are we asking for?

- The setting of an ambitious **National Reuse Target** based on a kg/person or carbon saved calculation.
- A commitment to set ambitious **Local Authority Preparation for Reuse Targets** that prioritise and support the community reuse sector.

Why a National Reuse Target?

The Circular Economy (Scotland) 2024 Act requires Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish a circular economy strategy and to make provision for circular economy targets. An ambitious **National Reuse Target** should be part of this framework.

Backed by suitable resources and an implementation plan, a **National Reuse Target** would drive resource efficiency, reduce environmental impact, spur economic growth, engage the public and build capacity in the community reuse sector. All of these elements are crucial for achieving Scotland's long-term sustainability and circular economy ambitions.

Ireland has already set the ambitious target of reusing 20kg of materials per head of population per year. Work should be commissioned to baseline current reuse levels in Scotland and a similar, appropriate and ambitious target set for Scotland.

Why Local Authority Preparation for Reuse Targets?

The Circular Economy (Scotland) 2024 Act requires Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish an updated recycling code of practice that includes preparing for re-use. The Act also gives Scottish Ministers the powers to impose targets on local authorities.

We are calling for appropriate **Local Authority Preparation for Reuse Targets** to be set and implemented for local authorities in Scotland. These targets should focus on the environmental and social benefits of reuse. For example we would support a measure of the carbon savings and social value of reuse (job creation/poverty alleviation) beyond a mere tonnage diverted figure.¹ Currently significant levels of potential reuse go through local authority recycling centres and via bulky waste uplifts, currently there is little incentive to pass these items to the reuse sector despite the numerous environmental and social benefits.

Local Authority Preparation for Reuse Targets would support the work to process and manage these items in a more circular manner, prioritising reuse over recycling and

¹ We note that Spain has gone a step further than this and passed a law that 50% of local authority contracts for waste must go to the social sector (not private companies).

directing products to reuse operators who can maximise social and environmental outcomes and reduce waste.

2. Preparation for Reuse Infrastructure

What are we asking for?

- For the Local Authority Statutory Code of Practice to **promote Preparation for Reuse via co-location, reuse collection points and bulky reuse services** over recycling.
- A commitment to **invest in preparation for reuse infrastructure** making local reuse and repair services the first choice and the affordable choice for the public.

Why promote Preparation for Reuse in the Statutory Code of Practice?

The Circular Economy (Scotland) 2024 Act requires Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish an updated recycling code of practice on household waste recycling services that includes preparing for re-use. We want to see this updated code of practice advocate for **preparation for reuse including co-location services, reuse collection points and bulky reuse services**.

Zero Waste Scotland published a “Making Reuse Happen at Household Waste Recycling Centres” report in June 2024. It has best practice examples of collaborative reuse services that already exist, including **reuse co-location** and **reuse collection points**. We would like to see all local authorities use this document as a blueprint for upscaling their reuse services.

Reuse co-location happens when a reuse hub (managed by a local social enterprise) is located next to a local authority recycling centre. This currently happens in Forres and in Stranraer. We ask that **reuse co-location** is considered for in every local authority area in Scotland.

Reuse collection points are reuse containers (often shipping containers) that are located close to the entrances of recycling centres where reuse items can be diverted at the earliest opportunity. We ask for reuse collection points at every recycling centre in Scotland.

Bulky reuse services are re-imagined bulky waste services with a presumption for reuse first, where good quality items are diverted to reuse operators and not to recycling centres. We ask for all local authorities to give due regard to co-designing **bulky reuse services** with the social reuse sector.

Local Authorities cannot be expected to create these services and infrastructure without significant financial investment which we argue should be provided from Extended Producer Responsibility fees.

Why an investment in reuse infrastructure?

Local reuse and repair services will only become the first-choice option for the public if there is a significant investment in reuse and repair infrastructure across Scotland.

We ask for a new **Reuse & Repair Investment Fund** exclusively for the reuse and repair sector. This would complement the Recycling Investment Fund that has been providing £70 million capital funding grants to local authorities for improving recycling infrastructure and waste services (where only a minority has gone to fund reuse projects).

3. Reuse Investment

What are we asking for?

- The introduction of a **Reuse Credits Scheme** for the reuse sector as a financial incentive to divert more items from waste for reuse.
- The introduction of a **Repair Voucher Scheme** that incentivises the public to repair their electrical and electronic appliances instead of throwing them away and buying new.

Why a Reuse Credits System?

Reuse offers numerous social, environmental and economic benefits over recycling, but to accelerate the shift from recycling to preparation for reuse requires a significant scaling up of reuse services and enterprises. Scottish circular social enterprises are at the forefront of reuse services and a **Reuse Credits System** would be a vehicle for them to take reuse to the next level.

A **Reuse Credits System** would see community reuse organisations and social enterprises rewarded with a financial payment for successfully repairing and reusing products and items such as furniture, white goods and IT equipment collected from Local Authority Recycling Centres.

This would be equivalent to the historic “Scottish Waste Fund” programme which saw financial payments to community recycling organisations for recycling in recognition of

diverting waste from landfill and saving on landfill and waste costs. This helped many organisations get off the ground and grow their capacity.

A modern **Reuse Credits System** would incentivise circular reuse and repair activities, deliver carbon savings and contribute to a more circular Scotland.

Why a Repair Voucher Scheme?

For the average member of the public to choose repair over buying new, the repair service must be as affordable and accessible. In our current linear economy this is often not the case (for example with electrical goods). If circular repair options are neither affordable nor convenient to the public, then we are not going to see any significant circular behaviour change.

A **Repair Voucher Scheme** would see a financial subsidy offered to the public to repair items instead of throwing them away and buying new.

Austria is already running a **Repair Voucher Scheme**. Up to €200 of the cost of a repair of electrical and electronic devices can now be paid from the Austria-wide subsidy pot, which has resulted in cheaper repairs, less e-waste and a boost for local repair services. There is also pilot for such a scheme in London.

Who Would Pay for a Reuse Credits System and a Repair Voucher Scheme?

There is potential to pay for both the **Reuse Credits System** and the **Repair Voucher Scheme** from extended producer responsibility (EPR) funds as more schemes are introduced.

For all queries on our Reuse Manifesto please contact info@circularcommunities.scot.