

GET REUSE RIGHT

Policies to ensure communities are at the centre of the transition to a circular economy



V1 - September 2026



Introduction

Circular Communities Scotland's vision is for a thriving circular economy in Scotland, with local communities benefiting from the social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Our 270+ members are already helping to deliver this. Their reuse, repair and sharing activities in communities across Scotland are saving people money, reducing emissions, and creating local jobs. Our 2025 Impact Report¹ showed that together they saved 131,772 tonnes of CO₂, provided over 2,500 jobs and nearly 8,500 volunteer positions last year alone.

However, greater action is needed to deliver Scotland's circular economy commitments and Get Reuse Right for Scotland's community reuse sector. We are calling on MSPs to support the following policy priorities, and for the Scottish Government to take action to deliver them.

1. **Equip** the community reuse sector to be more resilient

Policy actions:

- Introduce a reuse credits scheme for the community reuse sector.
- Direct a sustainable flow of products to community reuse organisations through implementing restrictions on the disposal of unsold goods.
- Strengthen public procurement policy to prioritise purchasing from community reuse organisations.

2. **Embed** community reuse as a local, easy and affordable choice

Policy actions:

- Require local authorities to prioritise preparation for reuse in the new statutory Household Recycling Code of Practice.
- Improve signposting of existing services and support organisations to expand or set up where community reuse options are limited.
- Roll out a Scottish Repair Voucher scheme, starting with a regional pilot.

3. **Prioritise** reuse over recycling

Policy actions:

- Commission research to establish a national baseline for reuse in Scotland. Use this research to set ambitious, measurable targets for national reuse, priority materials and products, and local authority preparation for reuse.

Delivering these policies would move Scotland forward in the transition to a circular economy in a way that maximises social benefits.

¹ <https://circularcommunities.scot/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Circular-Communities-Scotland-2025-Impact-Report.pdf>

Why we need to Get Reuse Right for Scotland's circular charities and social enterprises

Scotland's economy is still largely based on an unsustainable linear model of extraction, consumption and disposal. This is putting extreme pressure on finite natural resources, contributing to the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, and leaving us exposed to the volatility of global supply chains. Progress towards meeting climate targets has been off track for several years, and we are missing opportunities to address many of the systemic social, environmental and economic issues we face by keeping products in use for longer.

- Globally, the extraction and processing of material resources account for 55% of greenhouse gas emissions, 40% of particulate matter in our air, and 90% of land-use related biodiversity loss².
- Scotland's carbon footprint is rising³, with around 80% linked to the products and materials we consume⁴.
- Scotland's economy is assessed to be only 1.3% circular⁵. Increasing circularity would help to reduce emissions in Scotland by up to 43%⁶.
- Over 98% of Scotland's material consumption comes from virgin resources⁷.
- Over 6 million people in the UK lack access to essential furniture, furnishings and appliances⁸.

Increasing levels of reuse — including repair, sharing, donation and resale— would help to tackle the growing climate, waste and cost-of-living crises. By ensuring communities are at the heart of this, the social benefits can be maximised.

The public are on board: 83% of people in Britain agree throwaway culture is a big problem⁹, and there is strong support for policies to reduce waste and make sustainable choices easier. 80% of people in Scotland say that they would like to reduce the carbon emissions from the household items that they buy, and that products should be made so that they are easy to repair and their components can be re-used.¹⁰

² <https://wedocs.unep.org/items/3ec5991f-1ab2-4d54-9000-c9d3cee81d16>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-carbon-footprint-1998-2022/>

⁴ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/carbon-cost>

⁵ <https://circularity-gap.world/report/scotland/overview>

⁶ https://assets-global.website-files.com/5e185aa4d27bcf348400ed82/6399cc007f63ad41fae0b240_CGRScotland.pdf

⁷ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/circularity-gap-report>

⁸ <https://endfurniturepoverty.org/research-campaigns/understanding-furniture-poverty/research-the-extent-of-furniture-poverty/>

⁹ <https://green-alliance.shorthandstories.com/people-want-to-end-the-throwaway-economy-andy-burnham-should-take-note/index.html>

¹⁰ <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumers-and-the-transition-to-a-circular-economy.html/>

Some progress towards this was made in the last session of the Scottish Parliament through the passing of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 (with cross-party support). This framework legislation provides several important enabling powers and recognises the importance of consuming differently, using resources efficiently, and transitioning to a circular economy, benefiting both the environment and the economy.

The powers created by the Act, and actions set out in the subsequent Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland¹¹ and Circular Economy and Waste Route Map¹², must now be implemented in the early part of this session in ways that move materials up the waste hierarchy and unlock the full social, environmental and economic benefits.

While most circular economy policy is devolved, some important policy levers remain reserved to the UK Government. In these areas, we set out how the Scottish Government can work with, and lobby, the UK Government to advance these measures. We stand ready to support governments and public bodies in the development of circular economy policy to benefit communities across Scotland.

Circular community organisations are already playing a significant role towards the transition and delivering a wide range of benefits:

- **Creating jobs and delivering a just transition**, with reuse generating approximately 70 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of goods collected, compared to 3-4 jobs for recycling¹³.
- **Reducing costs for households** by providing access to affordable, good-quality products and the opportunity to borrow or repair rather than buying new.
- **Cutting emissions and waste** by extending product lifespans and displacing the need to manufacture new goods.
- **Strengthening local economies** by keeping wealth within communities.
- **Creating welcoming community spaces and services** that help to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve mental and physical health¹⁴.

The Stirling Reuse Hub is one example of how community reuse organisations are about much more than reducing waste. The hub supports mental wellbeing, creating opportunities to develop skills and move towards employment, and gives people a place where they can connect and feel valued. Following the pandemic, they recognised an urgent need for mental health support after witnessing two attempted suicides in our community, and through their partnership with Dynamic Wheel have

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-economy-strategy-scotland/>

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-circular-economy-waste-route-map-2030/>

¹³ https://cdn.nimbu.io/s/zx3wipv/channelentries/cv4zytv/files/1742219227653/2921_04_reuse_job-creation-in-the-re-use-sector-data-insights-from-social-enterprises.pdf?a91vofx

¹⁴ <https://circulareconomyjournal.org/ojs/JoCE/article/view/261>

provided a weekly peer-led session at the hub for the last four years, supporting 6–8 people each week and creating pathways into volunteering and wider opportunities when people are ready.

Funding a circular economy

Transitioning to a circular economy presents an opportunity to create fairer funding mechanisms that make polluters pay, rather than taxpayers. Currently, producers are placing large volumes of unrecyclable, low quality, difficult to repair products on the market, and stretched public finances are bearing the cost of disposal or recycling. This creates a system where the environmental and financial costs of waste are not fully reflected in product prices.

Product stewardship schemes can help to address this imbalance through a range of mechanisms, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)¹⁵. By requiring producers to contribute towards the costs associated with the products they place on the market, these schemes can not only fund waste management costs and support greater levels of reuse but also encourage better product design, greater durability and increased repairability.

Such schemes must be designed in a way that benefits the third sector to maximise social value, rather than directing more materials to the private sector. For example, in France EPR schemes were designed so that 5% of the contribution went towards supporting organisations who repair items and promote “employment, integration and the ecological transition”.¹⁶

The Scottish Government should continue working with the UK Government and the devolved administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland to encourage the expansion of existing schemes beyond their current focus on recycling, and to new additional sectors, and to use these to fund community reuse.

The Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland commits to “adopt an evidenced-based prioritisation approach to product stewardship” and we welcome the commitment to develop policies on clothing and household textiles, mattresses and furniture over the next five years. We want to see Scotland’s forthcoming product stewardship schemes include incentives for community reuse and repair and ensure that a proportion of funding is directed towards community organisations that deliver social, environmental and economic value through keeping products in use for longer.

¹⁵ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/extended-producer-responsibility>

¹⁶ <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/fonds-reemploi-integralement-destines-economie-sociale-solidaire#>

Actions to Get Reuse Right

1. Equip the community reuse sector to be more resilient

Scotland's community reuse, repair and sharing organisations provide essential and highly valued social and environmental services. They create jobs, reduce costs for households and strengthen communities. However, many are facing rising costs, uncertain funding and growing demand for their services.¹⁷

Alongside this, new circular economy policy has the potential to negatively impact community reuse organisations, for example by redirecting streams of much needed good quality products and materials. All circular economy policy needs be designed in a way that ensures they have the materials, funding and support needed to continue delivering and maximising benefits to their communities, the economy and environment.

In a recent Circular Communities Scotland member survey¹⁸, community reuse organisations shared the biggest challenges currently facing them. Over a quarter reported that cost of running increases are having a significant impact, with rising energy bills, national insurance contributions, and other costs affecting financial sustainability. To increase reuse and meet future targets, national policy must provide the sector with the long-term support needed to be resilient and thrive.

While addressing many issues related to the cost of running is within the power of the UK Government, the **Scottish Government should lobby for the third sector and social enterprises to receive support or discounts to help ensure they remain able to operate.**

The other challenge facing Scotland's community reuse sector is a lack of long term, sustainable funding. Very few are financially sustainable through sales alone, and they are often reliant on year-to-year funding which leaves them unable to retain staff and plan for the future. We support the SCVO Fair Funding campaign¹⁹ calls for multi-year, sustainable, flexible and accessible funding, alongside the following sector-specific support.

- **Introduce a Reuse Credits Scheme for the community reuse sector.**

A Reuse Credits Scheme would provide direct financial support to community organisations and social enterprises for successfully repairing

¹⁷ <https://circularcommunities.scot/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Community-Power-in-Scotlands-Climate-Future-Report-5.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://circularcommunities.scot/challenges-circular-third-sector/>

¹⁹ <https://scvo.scot/policy/fair-funding-procurement/fair-funding/what-is-fair-funding>

and reusing products and items such as furniture, white goods and IT equipment.

This would be modern reinvention of the ‘Scottish Waste Fund’ programme, which saw financial payments to community recycling organisations in recognition of this diverting waste from landfill and saving on landfill and waste costs.

By rewarding outcomes rather than short-term projects, a reuse credits scheme would provide a more stable funding stream, helping organisations invest in staff, premises, skills and services. The forthcoming Household Recycling Code of Practice should require local authorities to prioritise third sector partnerships so that community reuse organisations in all parts of Scotland have the opportunity to benefit from such a scheme.

- **Direct a sustainable flow of products to community reuse organisations through implementing restrictions on the disposal of unsold goods.**

The Circular Economy (Scotland) Act gave Scottish Ministers powers to bring in regulation to restrict how businesses dispose of unsold goods. This would help to address a significant source of excessive waste – for example, in the textile sector, 56% of consumer clothing and textiles is retained as excess stock or unsold goods in Scotland.²⁰

Designed in the right way, enacting this secondary legislation could divert significant amounts of waste from landfill, generate secure, sustainable new material streams and funds for community reuse organisation and social enterprises, support new employment opportunities, and help meet future reuse targets. However, with very few third sector organisations currently receiving unsold goods, support will be needed to address operational and logistical barriers.²¹

These restrictions would be popular with the public: respondents to a Parliamentary consultation during the Act showed strong support²². Similar schemes operate in Europe, including France, where its 2020 Anti-waste and Circular Economy Law (2020) banned the destruction of unsold non-food products and mandated that producers, importers and distributors must find a way to reuse, repurpose or recycle.²³ In recognition of the possible administrative burden and smaller impact they have, social enterprises and microbusinesses could be exempt from such a scheme.

Recent Zero Waste Scotland reports²⁴ on this topic have found that there is a lack of robust data on unsold goods. Therefore, a first step would be to

²⁰ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/product-stewardship-considerations-textiles-scotland>

²¹ <https://cdn.zerowastescotland.org.uk/managed-downloads/mf-onnmnuua-1782216689d>

²² <https://engage.parliament.scot/post/84848>

²³ <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000041553759/>

²⁴ <https://cdn.zerowastescotland.org.uk/managed-downloads/mf-xmyj9ww-1785249522d>

require businesses to report levels of disposal, to help understand the scale of the problem and target interventions.

- **Strengthen public procurement policy to prioritise purchasing from community reuse organisations.**

Zero Waste Scotland estimates that switching to a circular procurement model that maximises the value of existing products and materials and could save Scottish businesses at least £3billion a year.²⁵ Redirecting public spending is one of the most powerful tools available to government for supporting a circular economy, building community wealth and delivering a just transition.

There are several pieces of legislation, strategies and toolkits that recognise the importance of circularity, including:

- The Sustainable Procurement Duty in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014²⁶ requires public bodies to consider, among other things, how they can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area.
- The Public Procurement Strategy²⁷ for Scotland, which runs from 2023-2028, contains the objective to “act in a way that will secure net zero emissions through a Just Transition and promote a circular economy.”
- The Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland²⁸ contains the priority “Promote circular purchasing through procurement practices”.

However, they do not currently go far enough in driving demand for reused products and increasing levels of reuse. Strengthening policy to require consideration of community reuse first would lead to a more predictable and sustained demand from public bodies, helping community reuse organisations to generate additional revenue to serve a greater number of people, increase their financial stability and justify investment in infrastructure and scaling up. Additionally, research has shown that contracts with local supplies have lower costs²⁹.

The next Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland should be strengthened to require public bodies to prioritise contracts with community reuse organisations before purchasing new, with clear justification where reuse is not selected. Environmental, social and circular economy related criteria should be properly valued to enable reused products to compete with new.³⁰

²⁵ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/circular-procurement>

²⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/12/section/9>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-procurement-strategy-scotland-2023-2028/>

²⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-economy-strategy-scotland/pages/5/>

²⁹ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/apce.70028>

³⁰ For more on advancing climate, environmental and social goals through public procurement, including the Reuse Consortium as an example - https://cdn.nimbu.io/s/zx3wipv/channelentries/ffr5t8m/files/1742205171119/2024_04_reuse-research-report-advancing-climate_-_environmental-and-social-goals-through-public-procurement.pdf?acpeeew

Circular Communities Scotland's award-winning Reuse Consortium³¹ was established in 2016 and offers local authorities, housing associations and other public sector organisations easy access to a range of quality assured reuse furniture and white goods from local social enterprises, often at a cheaper price than new. Part of Scotland Excel's national procurement framework, buyers can order domestic furniture through the Reuse Consortium, removing the need to go through a separate tendering service. The Reuse Consortium Annual Impact Report for 2025/26 estimated that nearly 3,500 low-income household benefited from receiving quality furniture and white goods, over 300 tonnes of waste was diverted from landfill, and local authorities saved over £100,000 over buying new.³² This cost saving is an important benefit considering the budget cuts that local authorities are facing and is before taking into account cost saved through avoiding replacing poor quality new items.

However, currently only seven local authorities purchase through the Reuse Consortium, and choosing reuse over new depends on the individual staff member placing orders. National government policy could be used to direct more procurement decisions towards community reuse, diverting materials from landfill and supporting local economies. The RREUSE network has published European examples, including the Reuse Consortium, of how public procurement is being used to achieve a low-carbon, circular and inclusive economy.³³

By combining sustainable funding, targeted investment and stronger procurement requirements, the Scottish Government can create the conditions for Scotland's community reuse sector to thrive. This would increase reuse, reduce emissions, create jobs and deliver greater value for communities across Scotland.

2. Embed community reuse as a local, easy and affordable choice

Reusing, repairing, borrowing or donating items is often not the easiest or most affordable option. High repair costs, limited access to reuse services and the availability of cheap, low-quality products often make unsustainable options the default choice. If Scotland is serious about building a circular economy, policy must embed making community reuse the most convenient and easiest choice – both for donating products and purchasing them.

³¹ <https://circularcommunities.scot/reuse-consortium/>

³² <https://circularcommunities.scot/reuse-consortium-one-million/>

³³ https://cdn.nimbu.io/s/zx3wipv/channelentries/ffr5t8m/files/1742205171119/2024_04_rreuse-research-report-advancing-climate-environmental-and-social-goals-through-public-procurement.pdf?acpeeew

- **Require local authorities to prioritise preparation for reuse in the new statutory Household Recycling Code of Practice.**

The Circular Economy (Scotland) 2024 Act requires Scottish Ministers to publish a statutory Household Recycling Code of Practice (CoP) “setting out the standards expected of, and steps to be taken by, local authorities in so far as they relate to the collection and recycling of household waste.” This includes preparing for reuse, and the final CoP should explicitly require local authorities to prioritise preparation for reuse before recycling and disposal.

Local authorities should develop reuse services that reflect the best option for the local context, which may include reuse co-location or collection points at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and bulky reuse collection services. These services should be designed and delivered in partnership with community organisations to maximise the social benefit. This would increase access to affordable goods, reduce waste management costs and help local authorities meet preparation for reuse targets.

The Zero Waste Scotland report “Making Reuse Happen at Household Waste Recycling Centres”³⁴ has best practice examples of collaborative reuse services that already exist. This includes Dumfries and Galloway Council, who have partnered with The Furniture Project (Stranraer) Ltd, a social enterprise, to operate a reuse shop at a HWRC and reuse shipping containers at 4 other HWRCs. During 2022 total sales were £396,032, 23 jobs were provided and 300 tonnes was diverted from landfill.³⁵

Local authorities could use this document as a blueprint for upscaling their HWRC and bulky waste collection reuse services, developing strong partnerships with the third sector and making this choice as easy as possible for the public.

- **Improve signposting of existing services and support organisations to expand or set up where community reuse options are limited.**

Access to community reuse, repair and sharing services currently varies significantly across Scotland. Additionally, where these do exist, they may not be well known.

To address this, research should be commissioned to produce a detailed map of existing services, and the aspects of reuse they provide. This would build on the existing Circular Communities Scotland members map³⁶ by helping to identify gaps in services and where effort should be focused to support organisations to expand into these areas, or for new groups to set up, to increase access to community reuse.

³⁴ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/making-reuse-happen-household-waste-recycling-centres>

³⁵ <https://hcms.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-05/DGStranraer%20case%20study.pdf>

³⁶ <https://circularcommunities.scot/map/>

A dedicated multi-year Community Reuse and Repair Investment Fund, available to the whole sector but with priority for underserved areas, should then be established. This would complement the Scottish Government's £70million Recycling Improvement Fund³⁷, launched in 2021, which has been providing capital funding grants to local authorities for improving recycling infrastructure and waste services. However, to date relatively little funding has benefited community reuse activities, so a dedicated fund for reuse is needed.

This would also support community organisations seeking to scale up and respond to opportunities such as public procurement contracts or receiving greater volumes of unsold goods, who are unable to secure capital through routes open solely to the private sector.

Highland Council is already demonstrating what can be achieved through dedicated funding for reuse with their Highland Reuse and Repair Fund³⁸. This enables community reuse organisations to extend their services and pilot new projects.

ILM Highland received funding through the Highland Council Reuse and Repair Fund. Angela Stewart, their Business Development Manager said: *"The Highland Council's Reuse and Repair Fund has enabled ILM Highland to turn our ambitions around repair and reuse into practical action through our Rescued & Ready project. The funding has allowed us to expand the repair and reuse of small household electrical appliances, keeping more items in circulation and making safe, affordable refurbished essentials available to people across the Highlands. It has also enabled us to deliver practical community workshops where people can develop repair skills, build confidence and learn how to extend the life of everyday electrical items."*

The impact goes beyond simply diverting products from the waste stream; it demonstrates how investment in reuse and repair can deliver environmental, social and economic benefits at the same time. Longer-term, multi-year funding would allow organisations like ILM Highland to build on this work with greater certainty, develop skills and capacity, establish stronger partnerships and ultimately increase the scale and impact of reuse and repair within our communities."

Finally, to ensure that existing services are as well-known and used as possible, a national public awareness raising campaign should be delivered. The forthcoming update to the Scottish Government's Public Engagement Strategy and subsequent delivery plans offers an ideal opportunity to include circular economy messaging and activities, to help embed community reuse as the first choice, make people more aware of what is

³⁷ <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/recycling-improvement-fund>

³⁸ <https://www.whatsoninverness.com/community-projects-awarded-over-272000-in-first-round-of-highlands-reuse-and-repair-fund/>

available in their area, and maximise the benefits community reuse organisations provide.

- **Roll out a Scottish Repair Voucher scheme, starting with a regional pilot.**

As well as being a critical service for extending the life of products, repair activities support resilient local economies, provide jobs and help to deliver a just transition. However, repair remains largely unsupported by government policy and several barriers need to be addressed to realise these benefits.³⁹

Cost is the single biggest barrier to people choosing to repair items.⁴⁰ A Scottish Repair Voucher scheme for electrical items would provide a direct and practical way to overcome this barrier. This would offer a an instant-discount scheme for repairs carried out by an accredited network of repairers. In addition to stimulating demand, the scheme would increase recognition of Scotland's repair services.

This scheme could start with a regional pilot before rolling it out nationally. By reducing repair costs for household products could be kept in use for longer and local economies supported. Alongside this, communications about the scheme could also be used to help raise awareness of community reuse and repair options.

Ahead of this, research should be carried out to assess the impact of similar schemes in Europe, such as in France⁴¹, to inform the level of discount offered and how to ensure good levels of take-up.

The Restart Project has recently published data on a pilot repair voucher scheme which ran for 12 months between April 2025 and March 2026 in seven North London boroughs⁴². It offered residents a 50% discount on electrical repairs, up to £50. The scheme was very popular and reached a diverse audience, with 4,000 applications and 50% of users earning less than £30,000 a year. Their research showed that repair vouchers potentially support an intention to repair more, showing that they help to encourage more sustainable choices if cost barriers are removed.

Alongside this, the Scottish Government should press the UK Government to extend existing Right to Repair legislation. Following the lead of the EU, laws should cover more products, include price controls on spare parts, ban in built restrictions on IT repairs, and ensure safe and easy dismantling.

³⁹ More information on the barriers and opportunities relating to repair: https://cdn.nimbu.io/s/zx3wipv/channelentries/map24ni/files/177823289674/rreuse_ensuring-a-business-case-for-repair_final-for-website.pdf?9ngx79z

⁴⁰ <https://consumer.scot/publications/circular-economy-behaviours-in-scotland-recycling-repair-and-disposal-html/>

⁴¹ <https://avis-services.fr/en/blog/appliance-repair-bonus-france/>

⁴² <https://therestartproject.org/repair-economy/north-london-repair-voucher-trial-so-what-did-we-learn/>

3. Prioritise reuse over recycling

The Circular Economy (Scotland) 2024 Act requires Scottish Ministers to consult on circular economy targets by 2026 ahead of setting them in 2027 and provides powers to set targets for local authorities. The Act states that these targets should consider how material consumption and whole life carbon emissions associated with materials can be reduced. This is welcome, and target should help to shift focus up the waste hierarchy, provide accountability, drive investment and provide an indicator of progress. Measures in the Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland must be quantified so that it is clearly demonstrated that they will get us on track to meeting targets.

There are various ways targets could be set and measured. For an overall target that meaningfully drives change, we the calls of Scottish Environment LINK to introduce science-based material and carbon footprint targets. Material footprint targets should be set to get Scotland on track to reduce this from the 2018 rate of 19 tonnes per person to the widely accepted sustainable level of 8 tonnes of material per person per year by 2045.

Alongside these, establishing clear and measurable reuse targets, supported by funding, infrastructure and public engagement, would help move materials higher up the waste hierarchy, reduce emissions, strengthen local economies and build capacity in the community reuse sector. Increasing levels of reuse would help to meet material and carbon footprint targets through reduced demand for imports and consumption of new products.

Being able to quantify existing levels of reuse, and its carbon saving impact, are vital first steps towards setting targets. The Scottish Government should therefore **commission work to establish a national baseline for reuse**, drawing on experience from countries such as Ireland⁴³ that have done this ahead of setting reuse targets, and **establish an agreed methodology to measure the carbon impact of reuse**.

Following this, we are calling for reuse targets to include:

- **A national reuse target, to drive overall progress and provide a clear indicator of success.**

A kg reused per person per year or total annual tonnage diverted may be the simplest metrics to use but may not reflect the true impact of reuse as product designs evolve and items become lighter over time and does not account for the social value added. A national reuse target could instead be based on a measure of the carbon savings and social value of reuse (for

⁴³ <https://www.rediscoverycentre.ie/research/q2-reuse/>

example, job creation, or consumer cost saving) beyond a mere tonnage diverted figure. Care must be taken when designing policies to meet reuse targets, to ensure that community reuse is supported. There is a risk that materials and support may simply directed to the private sector and inadvertently encourage greater production of materials to result in more being diverted for reuse.

- **Material and product-specific reuse targets** for high-impact sectors such as furniture, textiles and electricals.

Product stewardship schemes for high impact sectors such as furniture, textiles and electricals should be designed to include reuse targets. These can also provide dedicated funding for community reuse and repair services.

- **Local authority preparation for reuse targets** to ensure reusable products are diverted from disposal and recycling and directed towards community reuse organisations.

Currently, significant levels of potentially reusable items are handled through local authority recycling centres and via bulky waste collections, but there is little incentive to divert items for reuse despite the numerous environmental and social benefits. Local authority preparation for reuse targets would help to direct products to community reuse operators who can maximise social and environmental outcomes and reduce waste.

Examples from Europe

Evidence from across Europe shows that reuse increases most rapidly when targets are combined with investment in collection systems, reuse facilities, local authority partnerships and community organisations.

The Belgium region of Wallonia saw a doubling of reuse between 2013 and 2023⁴⁴, coinciding with financial support for social circular organisations, expansion of municipal reuse facilities, communications campaigns and tools to help locate reuse points.

In France, targets for reuse and preparation for reuse were set in their extended producer responsibility schemes for textiles, furniture and electricals set and allocate 5% of their fees must be allocated to finance reuse activities conducted by social enterprises. Additionally, targets for levels of reused materials are set for textiles, and it is specified that at least 15% need to be sold locally by 2027.

Based the experience of their members in the EU, the RREUSE network has published principles for the design and implementation of reuse and preparation for reuse targets to maximise the environmental and social benefits⁴⁵, which we endorse and should be used to inform Scotland's targets. These include:

⁴⁴ [202511 research-report reuse-targets-in-the-eu rreuse.pdf](#)

⁴⁵ [202511 research-report reuse-targets-in-the-eu rreuse.pdf](#)

- Set targets based on a reliable baseline with incremental increases leading to a final target, with regular review periods.
- Set targets for reuse within product stewardship schemes, separately from recycling targets, and ensure third sector activities are not inadvertently displaced through financial support and/or requirements for participation.
- Cover formal reuse activities only.
- Avoid seeing the targets in isolation and connect with socially and environmentally responsible and public procurement policies and strategies to promote employment.

About Circular Communities Scotland

Circular Communities Scotland is a membership body that supports and represents over 270 reuse, repair and sharing charities and social enterprises across Scotland.

For all queries about our Get Reuse Right policy priorities please contact our Circular Economy Policy Officer, becky@circularcommunities.scot.