



Social Impact Report 2021

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A message from the CEO

“I am delighted to once again release our annual Social Impact Report, highlighting the very real difference reuse charities and social enterprises in the UK make to people’s lives and their local communities.”

We are proud to feature in this year’s Social Impact Report, some powerful stories on how our members stepped in to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ongoing challenges faced by the sector following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and our members response to these are a tribute to the sector’s resilience and dedication in supporting communities across the country.

As we move forward into the new year, the reuse sector is ready for the spotlight to be shone on us and to step into the limelight as reuse grows in importance, no longer only considered “a good thing to do” but a necessity in creating a fairer and more sustainable world.

Craig Anderson
CEO, Reuse Network

A new strategy for the Reuse Network

Our charity has not been immune from recent challenges, and so we take the opportunity to outline our new strategy for the Reuse Network as we too adapt to the changing needs of our membership and the wider reuse sector.

Our role is to support and raise the profile of members, and to help increase and demonstrate the impact and professionalism of the reuse sector. As a network, we review the challenges and opportunities facing the sector. Our new strategic plan is to respond to the growing urgency to address social exclusion and poverty, skills and jobs, and climate change and the emerging circular economy. Our strategy therefore focuses centrally on our newly adopted vision and mission.

Vision

A society where everyone can create a sustainable home.

Mission

We support the reuse of products by UK charities and social enterprises who are established to alleviate social exclusion, and address climate change.



About Reuse Network

The Reuse Network supports its members with the supply of products, advice and guidance to ensure that reuse charities and social enterprises are armed with the right tools to face differing challenges presented around the country and continue to provide their vital services at a time when they are needed most.

We are driving the message of reuse across the UK, creating a sustainable, supportive network that strives to help the poorest in our society build a brighter and better future for themselves.

Our 2021 successes



Successful annual conference with 129 attendees, 14 exhibitors and 6 speakers



Launched Friends of Reuse Network and have welcomed lots of new businesses and individuals to our circle of friends



Developed and launched an e-commerce platform for reuse charities called Reuse Home



Set up the Reuse Network Suppliers' Suite which now has 12 listed suppliers



Launched a project updating our Fit for Reuse guidance



Held weekly Zoom calls with the membership to help them navigate the ever-changing restrictions and guidance in the face of COVID-19

Who makes up the sector

Our members make a difference. They help low-income households live better by giving them access to fairly priced goods. They tackle social exclusion by providing training and volunteering opportunities so that more people can get back to work and positively contributing to their communities. They combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions and cutting waste.

How our members are making a difference:



The Reuse Sector

In 2021, the reuse sector as a whole reused 1.5 million furniture and electrical items.



652,098

households helped in the UK



£188.5m

saved for households



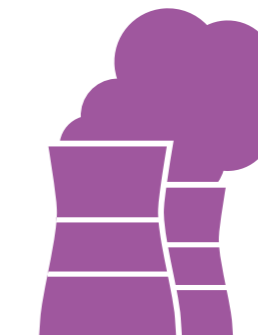
50,574

tonnes of products prevented from being wasted



54,355

tonnes of CO2 emissions saved



Case Study: Rummage Rescuers

Rummage Rescuers CIC was founded in 2015 and is a community-based not-for-profit organisation aimed at alleviating poverty locally via collaborative working partnerships. Rummage Rescuers is managed by dedicated officers and volunteers and is based across six shops and warehouses.

Rummage Rescuers were at the forefront of the COVID-19 response, supporting thousands of local people who were forced into dangerous and sometimes life-threatening situations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The organisation was able to work quickly, and its creativity in its response flowed. Many services in the local area focused solely on food, meanwhile Rummage Rescuers took a holistic approach to address the wide-ranging needs in its local communities.

Thanks to funding received, Rummage Rescuers were able to provide cookers for families to have warm food, provide nappies and baby milk to families with young children, provide equipment to disabled people, make PPE for frontline workers and give isolated people hope and contact.

During the pandemic Rummage Rescuers were able to highlight the benefits of reuse to its local council. Whilst the tips were closed, local people queued up to donate their unwanted items to the organisation which meant these items were saved from going to landfill and were reused locally to meet the needs of other people.

“It was a pleasure helping every day, the value we felt was amazing. It showed how a community can be resilient by working together to achieve the same outcome.”

Liz Crook, CEO, Rummage Rescuers



Our commercial partners impact

Since we started in 1989, we have created strong ties with some of the most well-known retailers in the UK. Ranging all the way from big department stores, to TV + Film storage companies, to interior designers. The scope of who we work with is vast!

In 2021, through major commercial retail partnerships managed by Reuse Network, we supplied our members across the UK with **40,000** furniture and electrical items.

32,040

households helped in the UK



£4,552,387

saved for low-income households



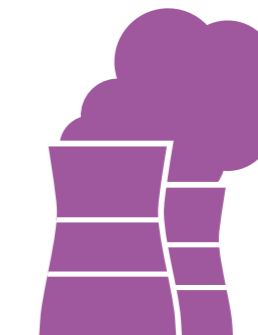
1,779

tonnes of products prevented from being wasted



1,548

tonnes of CO2 emissions saved



Case Study: Sewing Rooms

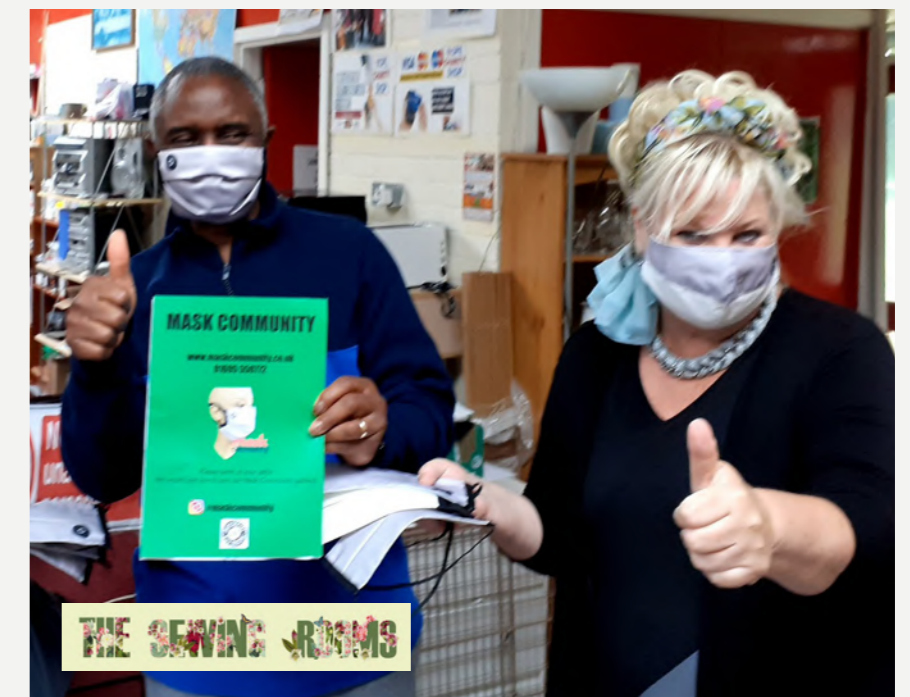
The Sewing Rooms is a social enterprise based in Skelmersdale, in the North West of England, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities it works with. The organisation does this through running bespoke training workshops and a manufacturing department that makes soft furnishings, accessories and bespoke upholstery for private and corporate clients. The money raised through these services is put back into its local communities.

The issues that were presented to The Sewing Rooms as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the organisation who had to put its staff on furlough and cease its usual activity. In the face of uncertainty, the Sewing Rooms set about galvanising volunteers on a project that would see them making thousands of masks for vulnerable people.

With support from Reuse Network, the organisation was put in touch with John Lewis who supplied fabric, sheets and duvet covers. The Sewing Rooms provided sewing machines for those who needed them and set about making masks, scrubs and wash bags for nurses and care staff to put their scrubs in. As a result of the project, 50,000 facemasks were manufactured, 35,000 masks donated free of charge, 100 volunteers recruited, and 1 new job was created at the Sewing Rooms.

“It was such a positive thing that we all contributed to. It brought a belief that our collective ‘action for good’ really did deliver to the most vulnerable and needy.”

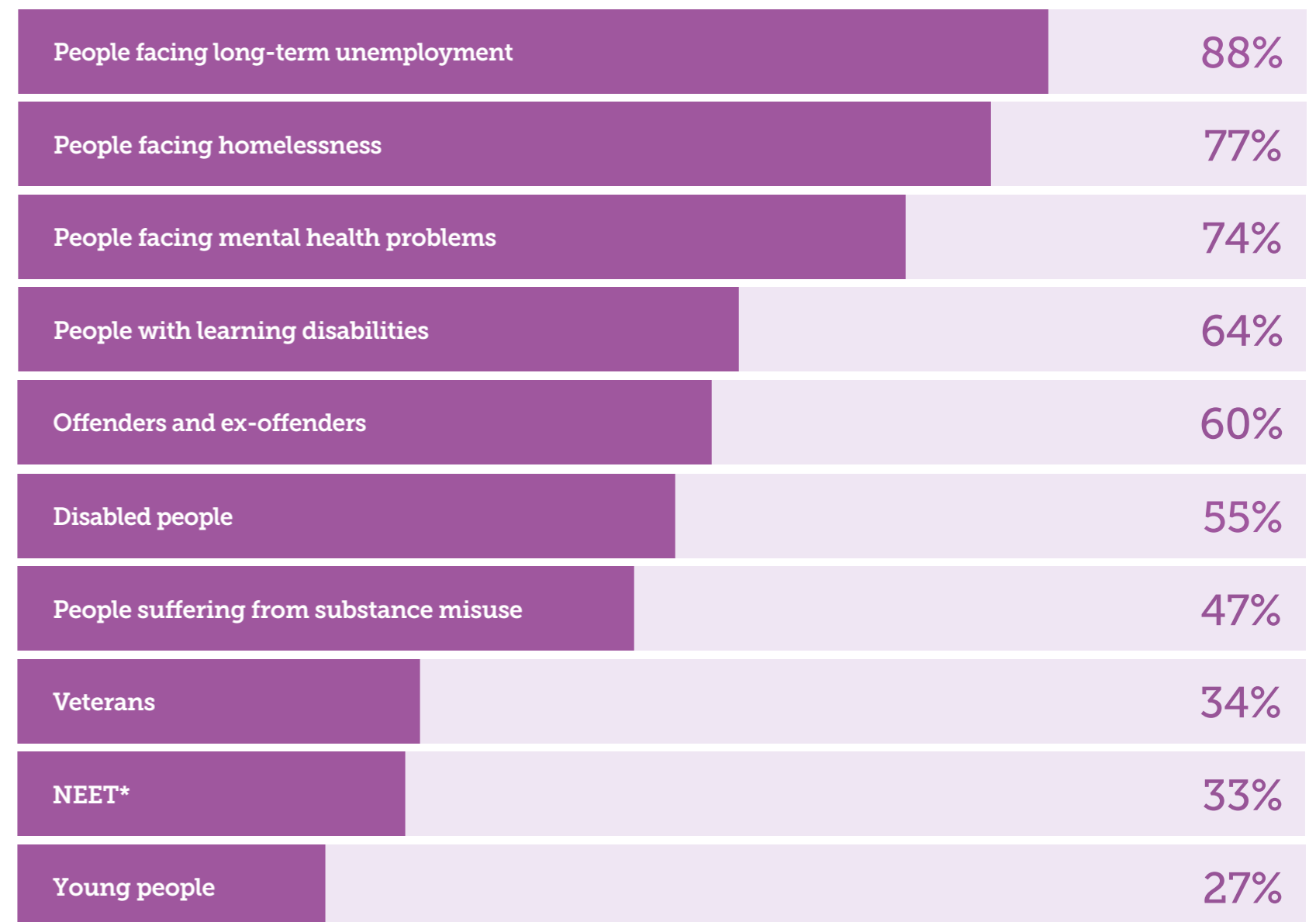
Paula Gamester, Director, Sewing Rooms



Who our members are

Our members are located throughout Scotland, Wales, England and the Channel Islands. They support people in their local communities through a whole host of activities. In addition to reusing household furniture and electrical items, many of our members run food banks, community cafés, and other complementary activities, as well as providing volunteering and employment opportunities.

The people our members support:



*Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Case Study: Changing Lives Together

Changing Lives Together is a Cheshire-based social enterprise and charity who run a number of different projects across Cheshire West aiming to reduce waste, improve quality of life of those in crisis and reduce social isolation. As an organisation, they support people through a variety of work, training and volunteering programmes for vulnerable, disabled and excluded members of the community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people had their ability to work taken away from them which meant that affording essentials like food was going to be more difficult than ever. To combat these changes, Changing Lives Together set up the Cheshire Food Hub with the aim of distributing surplus food to groups across Cheshire. In its first project, the Food Hub provided food for 5,250 children over the summer holidays and has since gone on to feed over 14,000 children.

As part of the Cheshire Food Hub project, the organisation promoted food waste and education and encouraged its community to recycle and live sustainably, which was particularly important in times of food shortages and financial uncertainty. The legacy of Changing Lives Together's work means that the organisation now works closely with Feeding Britain and other food groups and food banks in the creation of cross border food poverty strategies. This work will continue to support its local community long into the future for generations to come.



“People were inspired by our commitment, and we saw our donations of large household products rise during the pandemic. As a result, more people and businesses than ever are now aware of our charity programmes in Cheshire and are donating their food and furniture as opposed to just throwing it in landfill.”

**Joanne Garner,
Head of Development at Cheshire Food
Hub, Changing Lives Together**

Our members' reuse activities



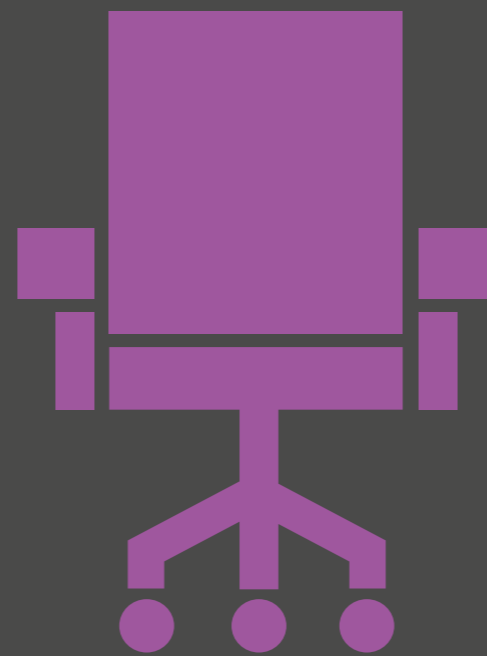
96%

reuse household furniture



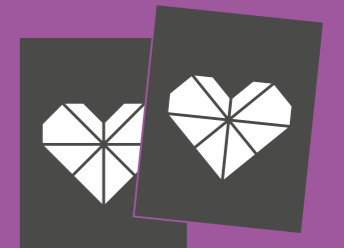
51%

reuse office furniture



36%

offer starter packs



35%

reuse textiles



32%

reuse carpets & flooring



83%

reuse electrical items



35%

reuse textiles



32%

reuse carpets & flooring



29%

reuse IT equipment



19%

reuse paint



19%

run food banks



Case Study: Wastesavers

Wastesavers is a social enterprise and charity based in Newport, South Wales, who run a network of reuse shops and two local education programmes teaching local schools about the benefits of reuse and recycling. The organisation supports poverty alleviation by providing people in need with items donated to its nine retail outlets based throughout the local area.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Wastesavers made the decision to donate every item that it currently had in stock. The charity's statement was clear: 'if you are supporting someone who needs it, and we have it, we'd love to donate it to you.'

The organisation remained 'open' to people in crisis throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing essential items such as good quality secondhand furniture and electrical appliances to those who needed it most. The response from Wastesavers meant it was able to support not only people affected directly by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also those to whom the pandemic simply meant they were unable

to get credit and did not have the means to buy from the major retailers that were still open during the pandemic.

One particular young family stands out to the Reuse Operations Manager at Wastesavers, Nicola Rossiter, which was that of a mother with a 4-year-old and a 1-year-old who had just managed to secure temporary accommodation.

"When we arrived to the property, the only two pieces of furniture were a toddler bed that the children were sharing, and the mother's bed. Happily, we were able to support and donated a sofa, TV, TV Unit, table and chairs, a single bed, some storage, a microwave, a kettle and starter kit for the kitchen containing kitchen crockery and utensils. We left the house feeling more like a home!", remembers Nicola.

"The initial slow down also allowed us an opportunity to reflect and refocus our charity aims and allowed us to ensure we were helping those that really needed it." said Nicola.



reuse

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