

# Social Impact Report 2023

reuse  
NETWORK



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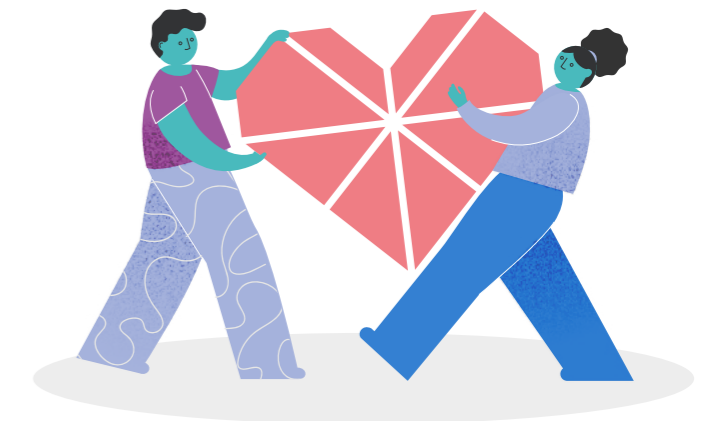
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# A message from the CEO

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**“This year, our sector has witnessed an increasing demand for reuse, while the availability of goods is decreasing due to economic pressures on new retail sales.”**



The Reuse Network Social Impact Report 2023 sets out to illustrate the difference that working with the Reuse Network membership can have on people’s lives across the UK.

In this year’s report, we take pride in presenting compelling stories demonstrating how our members and partners stepped up to make a positive impact amid ongoing challenges. This year, our sector has witnessed an increasing demand for reuse, while the availability of goods is decreasing due to economic pressures on new retail sales. Persistent issues such as poverty and austerity underscore the enduring need for reuse solutions.

Reuse Network has been dealing with this social problem and with this specific type of product for over 30 years, and things have never been as tough as they are today.

With an updated strategic plan underpinning the Reuse Network, we are developing practical proposals to approach and respond to three areas of need in the sector; set up regional logistical capacity to increase supply, develop new strategic partnerships to reduce poverty, and raise our sector’s profile and promote our socially driven reuse as the only option for reuse. It’s about having a strong and practical response to the current state of the UK and establishing collaboration and partnerships with each other and with external parties.

We are determined to make an impact and to deliver a society where everyone can create a sustainable home.

**Craig Anderson**  
CEO, Reuse Network

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# About Reuse Network

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**We are driving the message of reuse across the UK, creating a sustainable, supportive network that strives to build a society where everyone can create a sustainable home.**

There are many reasons to reuse, especially in today's climate where resources are limited and demand for household and electrical items has increased. Reducing waste through reuse not only prevents essential items from going to landfill, but also provides low-income households with household and electrical items at affordable prices.

But it doesn't stop there – the activity of reuse creates employment, training and volunteering opportunities for those most marginalised in our society.

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 can continue to provide their vital services at a time when they are needed most.

Our members work with us and each other to get access to funding and sector support, raise their profile both nationally and locally, develop meaningful partnerships and identify opportunities.

## **How we support our members**

- holding the only conference in the UK dedicated to not-for-profit reuse organisations
- running a series of regional networking events across the UK
- featuring a national service finder of reuse charities and social enterprises on our website to facilitate public donation and queries
- providing members with an exclusive space to find resources and start discussions
- offering quality management audits
- managing opportunities to buy from selected service providers and product suppliers
- providing a licenced Product Weight Protocol list for over 200 furniture and electrical items
- managing national partnerships between major retailers, reuse charities and social enterprises

# 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 make positive contributions to their communities. They combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions and cutting waste.**

## How our members are making a difference:





# Case Study: Colt Enterprise



**“Alongside sustainability and assisting with environmental issues, Colt Enterprise helps those in need rebuild their lives and find purpose by being actively involved in the prevention of waste entering landfill. Participation often leads to employment, improved mental health and better lifestyle choices. Not only are we assisting with the battle against pollution, but we are also assisting with the battle against homelessness, life-controlling addictions, loneliness, and discrimination.”**

**Terri Whyllie, Volunteer Manager,  
Colt Enterprise**

Colt Enterprise was established in 2005 as the support company for Project Colt, a recovery support charity for people living with addiction. Project Colt supports adults in Calderdale facing addiction to achieve sustainable healthy lifestyles free of addiction. ‘Colt’ stands for ‘Change of Lifestyle Training’ emphasising a holistic approach to overcoming substance use.

The reuse project within Colt Enterprise is housed within a renovated mill in Elland, Halifax and boasts just over a 2,170 sq.m setting. The mill is home to renovation and upcycling workshops, recycling areas, a repurposed potting shed and a holistic garden featuring reusable furniture, planters and a vegetable growing area. The donated furniture and wood materials Colt Enterprise obtains are often reused to create an object with new intentions. Each piece is unique and produced by its volunteers who in turn acquire life skills that they can utilise to gain future employment or personal achievement.

Through its reuse activities, Colt Enterprise is able to support a diverse range of individuals with wrap around support in the form of one-to-one counselling, group therapy, creative workshops, gardening workshops, food and nutritional advice sessions, drug awareness seminars, cycle for health groups, barbering courses and much more. In addition to this, the reuse project has generated 9 employed roles and 45 volunteer placements.



# The Reuse Sector

In 2023, the reuse sector as a whole reused 2.6 million furniture and electrical items.



**89,920**

tonnes of products prevented from being wasted



**£335.3m**

saved for low-income households



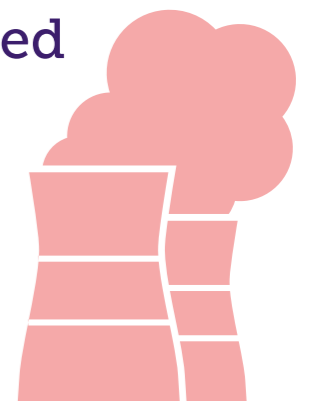
**1.59m**

households helped in the UK



**96,643**

tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions saved



# 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.

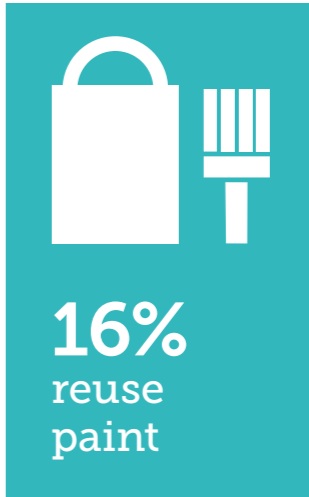
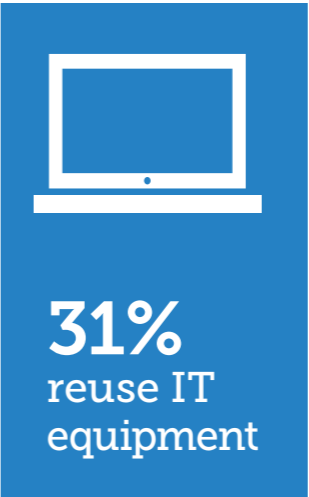
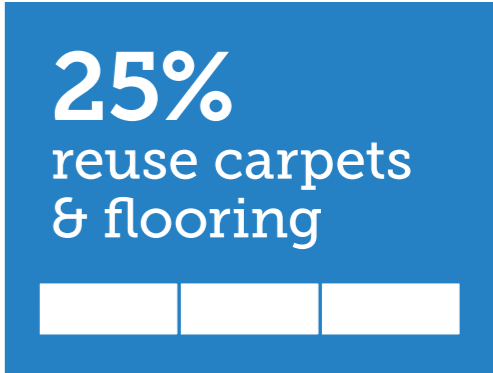
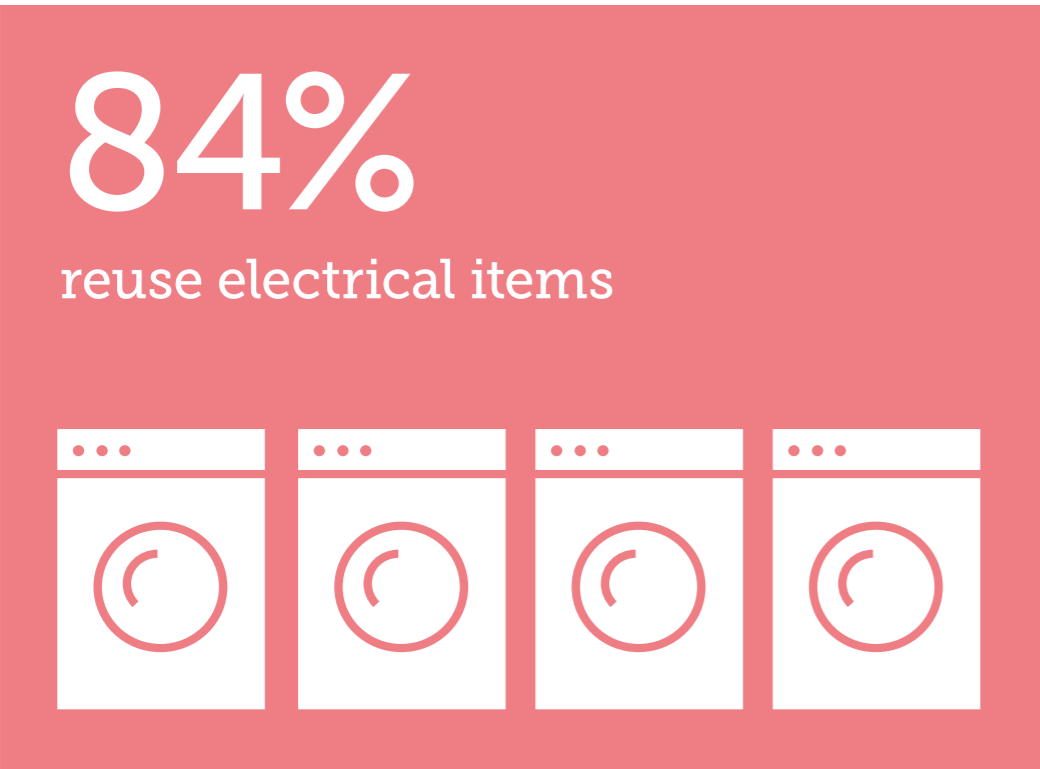
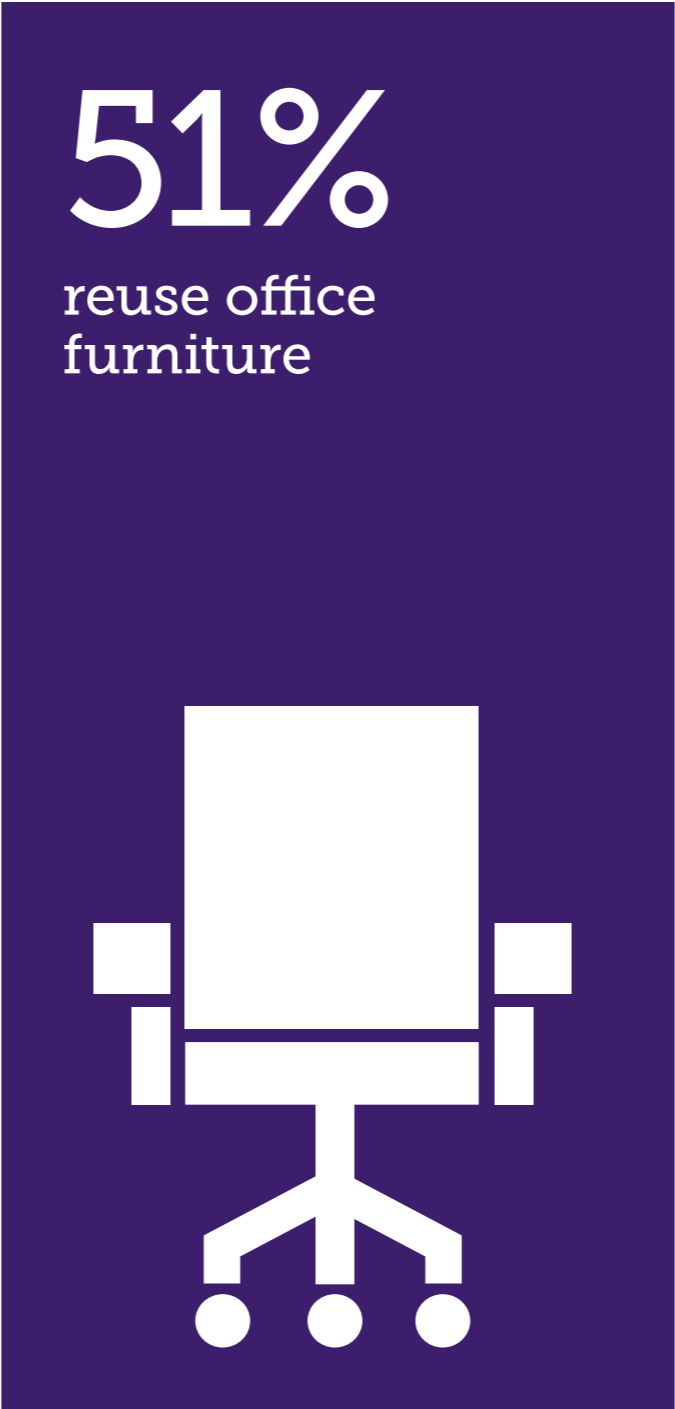
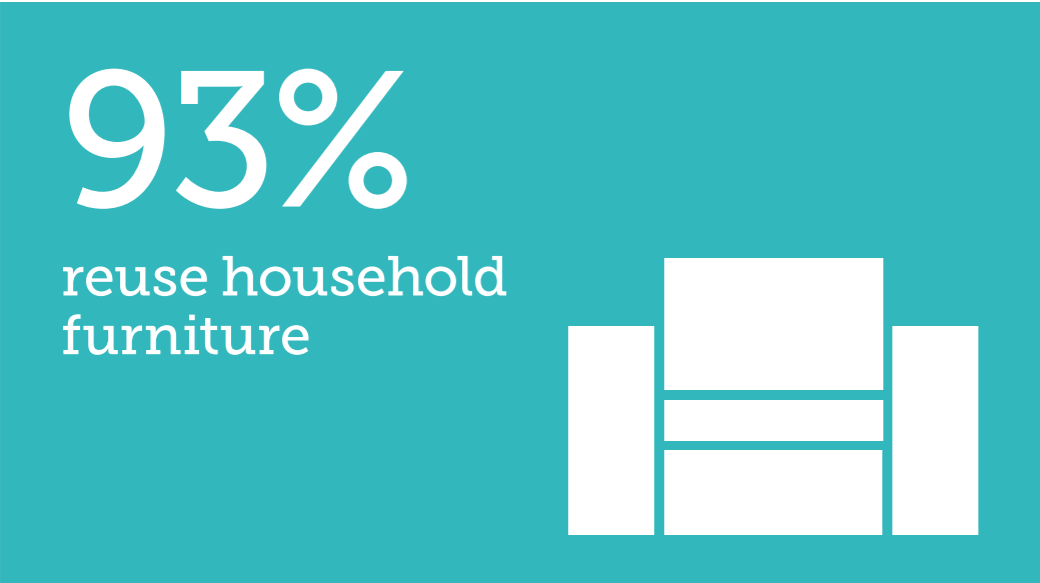
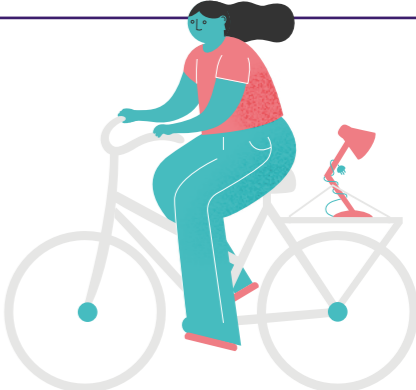
## The people our members support:



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



# Our members' reuse activities



# Case Study: NU Life Furniture



NU Life Furniture is part of the Cadwyn Housing Association based in Cardiff Bay and is working to tackle furniture poverty in the local community through reuse. The charity works in partnership with other local organisations and services including Cardiff Council, housing associations, and child support services to ensure that those suffering from furniture poverty get what they so desperately need.

This year, NU Life Furniture supported 357 families in finding furniture. In this time, the charity also saved 7,706 items of furniture from going to landfill.

Alongside the reuse project, Nu Life Furniture run a volunteer support programme which currently supports 15 volunteers. Collectively, the hours worked by the volunteers amount to over 4,000 hours each year! NU Life Furniture has helped many of its volunteers find paid employment over the past year; four of the charity's six members of staff started as volunteers at NU Life Furniture.



As part of its volunteer programme, NU Life Furniture offers a wide variety of opportunities to all its volunteers including PAT testing training, learning to drive, first aid training and attending various upcycling and repair workshops.

**"These achievements are important because it brings more awareness to reuse and saving furniture from going to landfill. Our hope is that by holding these upcycling courses, more people will have the skills to reuse an item rather than throw it away. We live in a throwaway society and if something doesn't match our new colour scheme, we throw it but; what if more people had the skills to turn it into something even better."**

**Megan Lawless**  
**NU Life Furniture**

# Our commercial partners

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

In 2023, through major commercial retail partnerships managed by Reuse Network, we supplied our members across the UK with 46,000 furniture and electrical items.

**36,802**

households helped in the UK



**£5.5m**

saved for low-income households



**1,705**

tonnes of products prevented from being wasted



**1,457**

tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions saved





# Case Study:

## White Goods Return Scheme



Since 2014, Reuse Network, Currys and DHL Envirosolutions have been working closely together on the White Goods Return Scheme, an innovative project established to tackle the increasing amount of waste produced by people replacing their old electrical appliances.



The White Goods Return Scheme gives Currys' customers the option to have their old appliances taken away when their new one arrives. When a customer's old appliance is taken away, it is returned to a Currys depot, and from there, Reuse Network charity members will visit the depot to collect the good quality items to take back to their charities to repair and reuse.

One of the many charities working on the scheme is Furniture Matters, a charity working across Morecombe and Blackpool. Furniture Matters support low-income households in its local community by providing affordable furniture and white goods. In addition, the charity also provides meaningful training and workplace opportunities to local people.

Kevin joined the Furniture Matters team on a 6-week mandatory work programme through the Job Centre. Kevin started out supporting cleaning the machines that were received on the White Goods Return Scheme and quickly made a difference to the team.

Once the placement was over, Kevin was offered a full-time permanent position due to his hard work and dedication.

More recently, Furniture Matters has been able to provide two Kickstart trainees with an engineering qualification. Specifically working on the White Goods Return Scheme, the trainees have progressed to rebuilding the units themselves allowing them to gain skills that will lead to meaningful employment in the future.

In 2023, Reuse Network, Currys and DHL Envirosolutions were recognised for work on the White Goods Return Scheme and won the award for 'Waste Management Initiative in the Retail, Commercial and Public Sector' at The Awards for Excellence, and the Partnership Excellence' award at the National Recycling Awards respectively.



# reuse

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