

# REUSE FIRST POLICY MANIFESTO



May 2025



## Executive Summary

Circular Communities Scotland is calling for a “Reuse First” approach to Scottish circular policy with three key asks on:

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

## Overview

Circular Communities Scotland is a membership body that supports and represents over 250 reuse, repair and sharing charities and social enterprises across Scotland.

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

## What is a Reuse First 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 target.
- 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** must be part of this work.

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. Consideration should be given to setting a similar, appropriate and ambitious target 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. 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.

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

## 2. Reuse Infrastructure

What are we asking for?

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

### Why promote reuse co-location, reuse collection points and bulky reuse services in the Statutory Code of Practice?

**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.

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 **reuse 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.

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 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.

This would be similar to the “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 repairing their own electrical item over buying a new one, the repair service must be as affordable and as accessible as buying the equivalent item new. If circular repair options are neither affordable nor convenient to the public, then we are not going to see any significant circular behaviour change around electrical item repair.

A **Repair Voucher Scheme** would see a financial subsidy offered to the public to repair their electrical and electronic appliances instead of throwing them away.

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.

## 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](mailto:info@circularcommunities.scot).