



London Textiles Action Plan

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This action plan sets out a programme of activities that will accelerate progress towards a low-carbon circular economy for fashion and textiles in London.

This plan was developed by the Greater London Authority, London Councils' One World Living programme (textile leads from the London Borough of Wandsworth and West London Waste Authority), ReLondon and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with London's boroughs. It builds off a [commitment](#) made in 2023.

We would like to acknowledge the borough officers and industry representatives who contributed to the development of this plan. Thank you for sharing your insights and feedback.

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Chloe Holland, Fashion Initiative Programme Manager at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation: "We must accelerate efforts that not only redesign the products we wear, but also the services and circular business models that keep them in use. By promoting business models like rental, resale, repair and remaking, and making the case for more ambitious policy and investment - London and Londoners can indeed set the trend."



Alan Wheeler, CEO of the Textiles Recycling Association: "While many solutions sit at national or global levels, the London Textiles Action Plan demonstrates how cities can help set the pace and deliver change. The TRA is happy to support these efforts and looks forward to increased collaboration across our supply chain partners to help unlock new opportunities for reuse, life extension, and recycling across London."



Adam Mansell, CEO of the UK Fashion and Textiles Association: "This plan is both timely and critical to support the move to a circular economy. Its multi-stakeholder approach will not only drive significant positive change within the local fashion industry, but it will also set a precedent for other areas in the UK and overseas to follow. It will foster innovation, create green jobs and promote a sustainable economic model that benefits society as a whole."



Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium: "We are delighted to support the London Textiles Action Plan. London is the home of the British fashion industry, so it is vital that it leads the way in fashion circularity and ensure we get the most out of our clothing through innovative solutions."

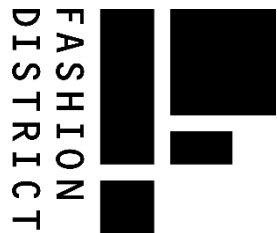




Mark Sumner, Head of Textiles 2030 at WRAP: "The London Textiles Action Plan is a clear and concise roadmap for how London can work with partners such as WRAP to deliver new ways to imagine the fashion and textiles system that is beneficial for all stakeholders, while still allowing citizens to enjoy fashion."

BRITISH
FASHION
COUNCIL

Sara Elkholy, CFIN Programme Director, British Fashion Council: "The London Textiles Action Plan aligns to the work of the BFC led Circular Fashion Innovation Network (CFIN) because it is action-orientated enabling us to test and iterate to get to the scalable circular solutions that are so needed for industry. Working collaboratively with our partners is crucial to making this a success. It ensures we have insights and data from across the value chain. A whole ecosystem shift is required, and it is great to see London leading the charge."



Helen Lax, Director of Fashion District: "Fashion District is proud to support the London Textiles Action Plan, which will play a vital role in driving sustainability across the fashion and textile sector. By fostering collaboration across communities and industry to reduce waste and support circular business models, it will help shape a greener future for the city and inspire change across the UK and beyond."



Mete Coban MBE

Deputy Mayor of London for Environment and Energy

"London has long been a global centre for fashion and creativity. It's a city that has created trends, invented iconic styles and nurtured generations of new designers that have become leaders on the world stage.

The London Textiles Action Plan is the blueprint for what's next - an exciting collaborative ecosystem where style and sustainability go hand in hand. It highlights London's commitment to working collaboratively with industry, communities, and local authorities to reduce fashion's climate impacts while embracing new ways of making, buying, and using clothing.

As the Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, I am thrilled to see London at the forefront of the circular fashion movement. Together, we can build the fashion industry of tomorrow."

Learn more

Read the [London Environment Strategy](#) to see how the Mayor of London is accelerating the transition to the circular economy across the capital and [learn more](#) about how the Greater London Authority supports the fashion sector.



Councillor Kieron Williams

Executive Member for Transport and Environment and Climate Change, London Councils. Leader, Southwark

"London is one of the fashion capitals of the world. Our city is a hub for talented local, national and global designers and brands, contributing to our economy and firmly placing London and British fashion on the international stage.

This large industry brings environmental ramifications that concerns many Londoners. Clothing represents 24% of emissions associated with the consumption of goods in London. It's imperative that we tackle this while supporting the jobs and livelihoods of people who contribute to the city's fashion brand.

Through London Councils Climate Programme, we're proud to have helped develop the London Textiles Action Plan, which outlines the opportunities and actions that boroughs, in partnership with industry and NGOs, can take to achieve a zero waste, low carbon circular economy in London.

The ideas and actions published in this plan provide an essential starting point, but we cannot do it alone. We're calling on all stakeholders committed to a more sustainable fashion future to partner with and support us in driving the innovation and delivering the solutions we need, while maintaining London's status as a fashion leader."

Get involved

If you are interested in learning more about the London Councils' [Climate Programme](#) or want to explore how you can collaborate with London's boroughs, please reach out to [London Councils](#).





Overview

The *London Textiles Action Plan* aims to support London's fashion and textile industry to transition to a zero waste, low carbon circular economy.

What follows builds on the best available research, aligns with academic and industry efforts where possible, and looks to make best use of combined resources to achieve the maximum impact.

This plan serves as a basis for collaboration across a wide range of stakeholders including national and local government, industry, non-governmental and community-based organisations.

It also provides guidance that can inform the delivery of activities across London's fashion value chain – activities that may be delivered by ReLondon, London boroughs or by partner organisations.

If you are interested in learning more about the London Textiles Action Plan or want to explore how you can help accelerate London's fashion and textile industry's transition, please [get in touch](#).

Fashion and textiles in London

The United Kingdom is a significant player in the global fashion industry and London is at its epicentre. Home of one of the "Big Four" fashion weeks, major fashion brands, destination shopping districts, top fashion schools and cutting-edge research bodies, London is one of the most iconic trend-setting fashion capitals in the world.

In addition to being a cultural heavyweight, the city's fashion industry also generates significant economic value, contributing £11 billion in GVA and supporting the equivalent of one in every 23 jobs.¹ Londoners also invest heavily in fashion, spending on average around £1,000 a year on clothing and footwear.²

Clearly, textiles and fashion is an important industry for London. However, increasing levels of consumption, shorter garment lifecycles, and limited options for recycling mean that it is also the cause of significant environmental impacts globally (see the [Appendix](#) for more details).

London policymakers have clear goals and a shared interest in supporting the city's fashion stakeholders to unlock new opportunities while reducing waste and lowering emissions. To spur the transition to a low carbon city, the Mayor of London set waste and resource targets in the [London Environment Strategy](#) to ensure that materials stay in use for as long as possible, are prevented from becoming waste, and that recycling is maximised. Textiles are identified as a priority area within this strategy due to their high environmental impact and economic value. Textiles are also a focus area for the London Councils' [One World Living](#) Climate Programme theme, which aims to reduce consumption emissions across the city.

To gain further insight into London's textiles sector and uncover opportunities for effective intervention, ReLondon worked with University College London and Circle Economy to trace the flows of clothing throughout London's fashion supply chain. The resulting [London's fashion footprint](#) report found that London's fashion value chain is characterised by high levels of consumption and disposal, responsible for the generation of over 2 million tonnes of carbon emissions in 2019 alone.³ However, the report also uncovered that it is possible to reduce annual emissions by over a third through reuse and repair, and the use of more sustainable fibres.

The fashion and textile industry contributes £11 billion to London's GVA and supports over 200,000 jobs.¹

Londoners purchase 48 items of new clothing yet also discard 44 unwanted items on average each year.³

London Fashion Week is one of the "Big Four" and generates an estimated £100m in orders each season.⁴

1. UKFT & Oxford Economics (2023). *The Fashion & Textile Industry's Footprint in the UK*, Retrieved from UKFT's [website](#).
2. Office for National Statistics (2024). *Family spending workbook*, Retrieved from the Office for National Statistics' [website](#).
3. University College London, ReLondon (2023). *London's fashion footprint*, Retrieved from ReLondon's [website](#).
4. British Fashion Council (n.d.). *Facts and Figures*, Retrieved from British Fashion Councils' [website](#).

Developing the plan

London aims to lead by example by tackling the environmental impact of its fashion footprint and supporting a just transition to a zero-waste, low carbon fashion industry. But it cannot be done alone. Collaboration is a cornerstone of systemic change and therefore this plan looks to build on existing efforts by industry and trade bodies to reduce their impact. By taking action, London can also help to build momentum and create change far beyond the city's borders.

To help inform the development of this action plan and ensure a collaborative approach, a series of consultations were held from 2023 to 2024 with stakeholders from across London's fashion value chain to gather feedback, align with existing work, and identify opportunities to collaborate.

- To date, 30 of London's boroughs (91%) have been consulted to identify local activities, assess needs and develop opportunities for shared learnings and collaboration. This includes input from waste, communications and engagement, climate and sustainability, culture and creative industry and procurement teams.
- Meetings have been held with over 70 stakeholders including representatives from trade bodies, academic institutions, brands and retailers and London-based designers.
- An Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from leading organisations across the UK fashion and textile industry has been established to help steer and govern the action plan's progress.

Across these engagement activities, there was a demonstrated appetite for action right across the value chain as well as an ambition to work collaboratively to achieve greater impact.

Note that this action plan covers textiles including clothing, apparel, footwear and household textiles. However, as clothing constitutes the largest share (60%) of all consumer textiles within the UK, fashion and clothing are the initial focus of this plan.⁶ Insights gained through delivery will subsequently be used to help expand the scope and tackle textiles emissions more broadly. See more detail on the process of developing the plan in [Appendix D](#).

⁵ London Councils (2023). *What do Londoners think about climate change?*, Retrieved from London Councils' [website](#).

⁶ WRAP (2021). *Textile Market Situation Report 2019*. Sourced from: WRAP's [website](#).

Over 90% of London's boroughs were consulted during the development of the action plan.

Over 70% of Londoners are willing to embrace new behaviours related to fashion and textiles.⁵

Over 70 stakeholders were engaged to help gather feedback and inform the action plan.

The vision

London has the opportunity to be a global exemplar for circular fashion and textiles. This action plan builds on the Mayor of London's ambition to catalyse the transition to a zero waste and low carbon circular economy and London Councils' commitment to tackle consumption emissions. It aims to nurture creativity and innovation and unlock opportunities to collaborate with national and local government, industry, non-governmental and community-based organisations across London's textile supply chain.

Together, these actors hold the potential to reduce waste and minimise the environmental impacts that arise across the entire lifecycle of textiles. Through joint action, all Londoners can embrace sufficiency, love their clothes for longer through reuse, repair and sharing, and ensure that unwanted textiles find another use.

To support the achievement of this vision, three outcome pillars have been developed:

1 Make things well

2 Use textiles for as long as possible

3 Reuse and recycle non-rewearable textiles locally

This action plan aims to accelerate London's fashion and textile industry's transition to a zero waste, low carbon circular economy.

Make things well

To accelerate London's transition towards a more circular fashion industry, it is crucial that this action plan aligns with the fashion and textile industry and supports stakeholders' efforts to embed and prioritise circular design principles.

This pillar therefore aims to:

- i. Reduce waste generated through design, manufacturing and retail processes and practices.
- ii. Improve design to enable durability, repair, reuse and enhance longevity as well as recyclability at the end-of-life.
- iii. Increase uptake of more sustainable materials by brands/designers.

Use textiles for as long as possible

Research demonstrates that a change in consumption models holds the potential to reduce emissions and waste. This action plan will therefore create and enhance opportunities for care and maintenance, repair, reuse, rental, swapping and sharing models.

This pillar aims to:

- iv. Replace new clothing purchases with second-hand, rental, and sharing.
- v. Increase the number and scale of London-based businesses integrating circular models (such as repair, sharing, and renting).
- vi. Build strong awareness and uptake of sustainable consumption models that are accessible to all Londoners.
- vii. Develop skills for repair and maintenance.

Reuse and recycle non-rewearable textiles locally

To achieve the aims of the previous two pillars and close the material loop for textiles within London, it is important to improve practices and drive investment into collection, sorting, recycling and reuse infrastructure so that non-rewearable textiles can be managed locally.

This pillar aims to:

- viii. Reduce post-consumer textiles going to incineration or landfill.
- ix. Improve domestic sorting infrastructure to enable reuse and recycling.
- x. Improve opportunities for domestic recycling.
- xi. Reduce exports and improve transparency and traceability for post-consumer textiles.



Action plan activities

To achieve the action plan's vision, London boroughs and partner organisations aim to support and deliver a range of activities that help to accelerate London's fashion and textiles industry towards a zero waste, low carbon circular economy.

Please note that the actions outlined within this plan are areas identified for further exploration, and the delivery of some are subject to funding. Additional or alternative activities may also be included in subsequent iterations of this plan.

Identifying potential activities

The prioritised activities included in this action plan were informed by research outlined in the [London's fashion footprint](#) report and co-designed with support from London's boroughs.

A longlist of over 40 potential interventions was initially compiled which drew from international best practice before being refined by London borough officers. Nine actions were ultimately selected for prioritisation after being assessed according to local needs, citizen receptivity, feasibility and potential impact. These actions also underwent further scrutiny through consultation with experts from across London's value chain. Please see [Appendix D](#) for more details.

Given the diversity of actors and varied level of influence across the supply chain, the activities prioritised for delivery under this action plan focus primarily on city levers and are categorised under the following intervention areas: infrastructure and places; education and skill building; communication and engagement; business support and incentives; and policy and legislation (including procurement).

The following pages provide an overview of the prioritised activities. These activities may be delivered by London's boroughs or other stakeholders and aim to complement efforts by industry stakeholders to transition away from a linear textiles value chain.

Note that the delivery of some actions are already underway while others are more ambitious, long-term projects. To support delivery and potential scaling of these activities, a description, project status, estimated costs and impact, proposed stakeholder groups, and project leads have been outlined. London is now seeking delivery partners and, where relevant, additional funding from industry, academic, and/or philanthropic bodies to enable the activities to progress.

Infrastructure
and places



Education and
skill building



Communication and
engagement



Business support
and incentives



Policy and legislation





1. Circular economy hubs for textiles

Industry

SMEs

Local authorities

Circular textile hubs hold the potential to reduce waste and support local supply chains. This activity aims to explore opportunities for London's boroughs to support the growth and development of local spaces that enable the recovery, remanufacture or reuse of textiles. This could also involve skill building and social inclusion opportunities. Initial funding has been secured through the UKRI's Future Fibres Network+ fund to conduct supporting research on unlocking post-consumer textiles as feedstock for reuse and recycling within London. Additional funding would be needed to conduct further research or to support the development of new hubs.

Lead: ReLondon

Pillar aims: 1 (iii), 2 (v), 3 (viii, x)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Partly funded



2. Repair voucher scheme

Citizens

Industry

SMEs

Local authorities

This action aims to increase the uptake of repair by subsidising the cost of professional services. This activity holds the potential to support local repair shops and change citizen behaviour, and may also provide co-benefits such as poverty alleviation, job safeguarding, high street revitalisation and community building. Funding has been secured through the London Councils' One World Living programme to explore the feasibility of a repair voucher scheme which will include assessing London's repair landscape and identifying potential delivery models. Note that plans to pilot or deliver a pan-London voucher scheme have not been established.

Lead: One World Living programme

Pillar aims: 2 (vi), 3 (viii)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Partly funded



3. Educational programme for schools

Citizens

Charities

Local authorities

Develop a schools engagement strategy on circular textiles. Expanding on the primary and secondary school education packs, this activity encompasses a programme of work that aims to develop additional educational resources, establish reuse mechanisms within schools, change student behaviour through swap programmes, and distribute clothing to families in need. Initial funding has been secured through the London Councils' One World Living programme to support the development of this action.

Lead: One World Living programme

Pillars: 2 (iv, vi, vii), 3 (viii)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Partly funded



4. Small business support

Industry

SMEs

Local authorities

ReLondon's [Business Transformation programme](#) provides advice, connections and grants for London-based circular businesses that are driving textile innovation and using a variety of circular business models, from sharing, rental and reuse to upcycling and repair of existing garments. This action includes the delivery of the [ReWear grant programme](#) which was funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Additional funding would be needed to continue or extend support programmes for small businesses.

Lead: ReLondon

Pillar aims: 1 (i, ii, iii), 2 (v)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Partly funded



5. Textiles map/directory

Charities

SMEs

Local authorities

To support awareness building, behaviour change and the development of business networks and local supply chains, this activity aims to develop an online map that identifies local assets (such as textile banks, repairers, scrap shops and hubs) as well as highlighting businesses that promote circular designs and/or business models.

Lead: TBD

Pillar aims: 2 (iv, v, vi)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Not resourced



6. Segregated textile collections

Industry

Charities

Local authorities

Increase the volume of collected textiles and reduce waste by connecting local authorities and textile collectors/charities to enable segregated clothing collection services across all 33 London boroughs. Work with partners to set measurable targets and design communication assets for citizens to signpost best practices for unwanted textiles and reduce contamination in residual/recycling streams.

Lead: One World Living programme

Pillar aims: 3 (viii, ix, xi)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Partly funded



7. Procurement framework for the public sector

Local authorities

Through engagement with local authorities and public service organisations, this action aims to encourage the assessment of internal procurement policies and could result in the development of either voluntary guidance or a formal commitment related to the purchase of textiles (e.g., uniforms made of low emission or recycled materials), promotion of reuse and repair practices, and establishment of best practices at the end of life.

Lead: TBD

Pillar aims: 3 (viii)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Not resourced



8. Pan-London campaign

Charities

Citizens

Industry

Local authorities

Building on ReLondon's [Love Not Landfill](#) and [Repair Week](#) campaigns, this activity looks to work with London's boroughs, charities, businesses, the education sector, and other partners to develop or amplify opportunities to encourage the uptake of circular alternatives such as second-hand, rental, swapping and sharing. This could, for example, include promoting partner's campaigns, local infrastructure and assets, or involve supporting activations and developing additional tools or assets that enable messaging to reach a wider audience.

Lead: ReLondon

Pillar aims: 1 (ii), 2 (iv, v, vi)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Not resourced



9. Textile sorting and recycling infrastructure

Industry

Local authorities

This action aims to align with industry's efforts to develop post-consumer sorting infrastructure through the [ACT UK](#) project by assessing London boroughs' needs in order to understand what will work best for facilitating London's textile reuse and recycling. It could also include supporting skill development related to sorting, collection and redistribution.

Lead: London Councils

Pillar aims: 3 (ix, x, xi)

Potential impact: ●●●

Estimated cost: ●●●

Status: Not resourced

Get involved

This action plan sets out a programme of activities that will accelerate progress towards a low carbon circular economy for fashion in London. Collaboration is key to achieving the aims of this action plan. Efforts to continue and expand engagement with a wide range of relevant organisations across London will help inform effective actions and to foster collaboration.

We are therefore calling for partners to support the delivery of the *London Textiles Action Plan*. This will include local authorities, civil society and leading charities, funders, brands, retailers, academic and public sector institutions, and could involve:

- Volunteering your organisation to pilot new models and circular fashion initiatives across London.
- Providing financial support needed to scale the impact of the action plan.
- Providing connections with organisations, cities and businesses within the city, across the UK and internationally to create knowledge sharing and partnership opportunities.
- Helping spread the word and increase uptake through communications support.



If you are interested in learning more about the London Textiles Action Plan or want to explore how you can get involved, please reach out to [ReLondon](#) or [London Councils](#).

Pillar 1: Make things well

Support stakeholders working within the fashion industry to embed and prioritise circular design principles.

Pillar 2: Use textiles for as long as possible

Create and enhance opportunities for repair and maintenance and promote the uptake of circular business models.

Pillar 3: Reuse and recycle non-rewearable textiles locally

Improve practices and drive investment into collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure so that non-rewearable textiles can be managed locally.

Achievements to date

In addition to publishing the [London's fashion footprint](#) report in 2023, several other exciting achievements have taken place across London.

- In 2022 the Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries launched [a new campus for fashion, innovation, and sustainability](#), in the Fish Island Village development in Hackney Wick, to support small sustainable fashion businesses. This campus forms the centre of London's Fashion District and is supported in collaboration with the Mayor of London, the London College of Fashion, the London Legacy Development Corporation, and the British Fashion Council. The campus includes studios, manufacturing, coworking and event spaces for emerging fashion businesses, in recognition of the array of local talent already within London's fashion industry, with an aim to build a new generation of fashion designers within London.
- London Councils' [One World Living](#) theme has worked to facilitate partnerships between the textile charity TRAIID and London boroughs to enable home collection services for textiles. So far, TRAIID's home collection service has been rolled out across six London boroughs enabling the capture of almost 160 tonnes of textiles and saving 1,360 tonnes of CO2e.
- ReLondon works with businesses and citizens through its [Love Not Landfill](#) campaign to encourage 16-24-year-old Londoners to buy second-hand, swap, share and give more to charity. Love Not Landfill works with organisations across the fashion supply chain to help reduce overconsumption and waste through organising second-hand pop-up shops, clothes swaps and repair events.
- ReLondon's annual [Repair Week](#) aims to give Londoners practical skills and encourage greater use of existing repair services. First starting in 2020, Repair Week brings together a wide range of businesses, not-for-profits and individuals across London to run hands-on repair sessions, host online tutorials and facilitate discussions with those at the forefront of the repair movement. In 2025, 106 events had a focus on textiles and building skills which extend the lifetime of clothing.
- London boroughs' [Waste Reduction and Recycling Plans](#) (2023-2025) included 44 key actions on textiles from 29 boroughs. This includes actions such as supporting reuse and repair events, delivering waste prevention campaigns and maximising local collection services and waste sites.



References

1. UKFT & Oxford Economics (2023). The Fashion & Textile Industry's Footprint in the UK, Retrieved from UKFT's [website](#).
2. Office for National Statistics (2024). Family spending workbook, Retrieved from the Office for National Statistics' [website](#).
3. University College London, ReLondon (2023). London's fashion footprint, Retrieved from ReLondon's [website](#).
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6. WRAP (2021). Textile Market Situation Report 2019. Sourced from: WRAP's [website](#).
7. Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017). A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning fashion's future. Sourced from: Ellen MacArthur Foundation's [website](#).
8. Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (2021). Textile Action Plan for Sydney Councils, Retrieved from SSROC's [website](#).



Appendix

To inform the development of the action plan, research, evidence gathering and a series of stakeholder consultations took place from 2022 to 2024.

These materials helped to inform where effective actions could be taken to reduce waste and carbon emissions, as well as where there is appetite from Londoners to act.

This following section provides a brief overview of London's fashion landscape, and the process taken to shape the action plan to date.

A. London's policy landscape

London policymakers have clear goals and a shared interest in supporting the city's fashion stakeholders to evolve, set the trend and unlock new opportunities while reducing emissions. To spur the transition to a low carbon circular city, the Mayor of London set waste and resource targets in the [London Environment Strategy](#) to ensure that materials stay in use for as long as possible, are prevented from becoming waste, and that recycling is maximised. 'Textiles' was identified as a priority area within this strategy due to its high environmental impact and economic value.

The Mayor's [Economic Development Strategy for London](#) identifies London as an international fashion hub and a centre for design, and the [Culture Strategy for London](#) outlines a series of policies to support and grow the industry, such as an aim to help Londoners gain employment in the creative industries, integrate culture into major infrastructure projects and support creative production and export.

The [One World Living](#) theme of London Councils' climate programme also plays a key role through its aim to reduce the city's consumption-based emissions. Through this programme, London boroughs are delivering a range of circular actions across key material streams, including textiles. This includes activities such as promoting repair and resale and incorporating circular procurement statements within local government policies.

London and its stakeholders are, therefore, well positioned to help drive a reduction in the city's fashion footprint. In addition, this action plan also aims to align with the following governmental policies and priorities:

- The [Net Zero Strategy](#) introduced legislative requirements to reduce net carbon emissions by 100% relative to 1990 levels by 2050 with an aim to make the UK a 'net zero' emitter. This strategy includes a commitment to move to a more circular economy.
- The Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs' [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) set out long-term commitments and ambitions to eliminate avoidable waste by 2050 and identified textiles as a "priority waste stream". [The Maximising Resources, Minimising Waste](#) programme further outlined aims to reduce textiles going to residual waste by increasing product utilisation, diverting products and materials from residual waste and stimulating a profitable textile recycling industry; increasing circular business models such as resale, rental and repair; and investing in textiles reprocessing and recycling in alignment with the waste hierarchy.
- The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: [Unlocking Resource Efficiency](#) reports looked to assess the potential for resource efficiency in the UK. Textiles were selected as part of the first phase of research due to the high potential for carbon reduction, virgin material reduction and waste prevention. The technical report was released in 2024 and will inform the next steps for resource efficiency policy and strategy development within Government.

B. Where we are now

Globally, the sector has a significant environmental impact. Fashion and textiles is the fifth highest producer of greenhouse gas emissions and accounts for an estimated 4% to 10% of global emissions⁵. Annually, 98 million tonnes of non-renewable resources are consumed to produce textiles, making it the fourth highest industry in terms of raw material usage.

Clothes on average have an increasingly short lifespan and only an estimated 1% of used garments are recycled. Without significant intervention, these impacts are expected to compound as consumption levels increase, putting the industry on track to use over a quarter of the world's carbon budget by 2050⁸.

In 2023, ReLondon worked with University College London (UCL) and Circle Economy to trace the flows of clothing (excluding upholstery, household textiles, shoes and accessories) throughout London's entire fashion supply chain. Greenhouse gas emissions were linked to these flows, providing insight into where hotspots occur.

This research found that in 2019, London consumed **154,600 tonnes** of new clothing. This equates to a huge 48 items acquired per person on average per year.

This level of consumption has an environmental cost including the production of **2,009,300 tonnes CO₂eq** (0.23 tonnes CO₂eq per person). This is roughly equivalent to all the home energy usage within three inner London boroughs.

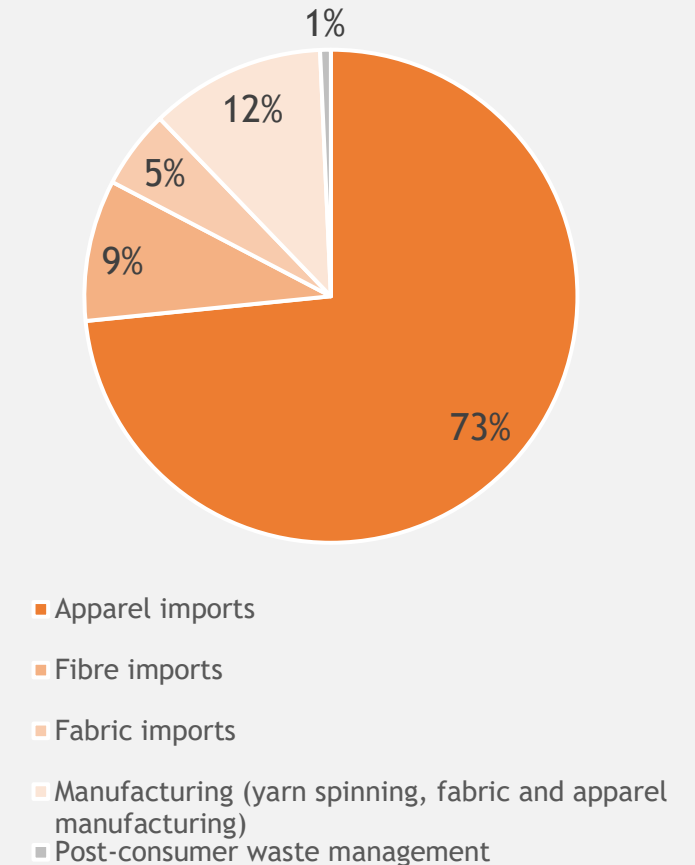
The results also highlighted the city's integration into the global fashion value chain as an overwhelming 92% of the clothing moving through the city was made elsewhere, meaning 87% of the total consumption-based emissions are linked to imports.

This is in significant contrast to the 12% of emissions that are associated with clothing that is manufactured within London. The remaining 1% comes from emissions linked to post-consumer waste management.

These insights highlight the immediate need to reduce London's fashion footprint and clearly indicate what levers are accessible at a city level to influence change, emphasising the need for collaboration across the global supply chain to address consumption, embed circularity and create meaningful impact.

7. Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017). A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning fashion's future. Sourced from: Ellen MacArthur Foundation's [website](https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/).

Consumption-based emissions across London's fashion supply chain



Learn more about London's fashion footprint by reading ReLondon's report. Visit: relondon.gov.uk

The research also highlights the significant volumes of fashion textile waste each year in London. While fibre, fabric and clothing are discarded at various points across the supply chain, a large proportion is thrown away by citizens.

The total volume of clothing discarded by Londoners was **142,700 tonnes** in 2019 (around 44 items per person). Of this, over 40% ended up in the waste bin where 90% is lost to energy from waste/incineration and 10% goes to landfill.

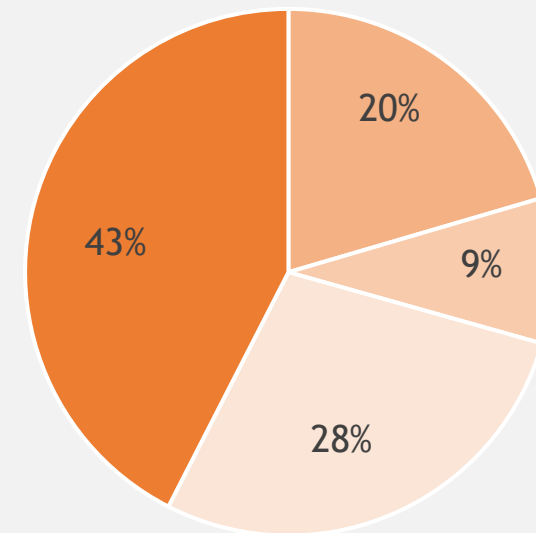
As of 2024, 5 boroughs offer weekly kerbside textile collections, 12 have a bookable scheme, and 16 operate bring backs. Between them they capture 9% of discarded clothing. Textiles form on average 3.02% of borough's residual waste and 1.2% of recycling bins. Given impending updates to the UK's Emissions Trading Scheme, expanding collection services will help to mitigate against potential future costs associated with new carbon prices.

Through the mapping of materials and emissions associated with London's fashion supply chain, two key levers were identified that can support the transition to a circular and low carbon fashion supply chain:

1. **Shift to lower emission fibres:** Cotton makes up 43% of Londoners' clothing. Swapping 50% of this existing cotton for more sustainably grown and processed cotton fibres could reduce London's fashion-related consumption-based emissions by 4% each year.
2. **Extend the life of existing textiles:** By displacing 25% of existing new clothing purchases with second-hand purchases instead (approximately 12 of the 48 average items per person) and repairing 5% of clothing already within our wardrobes, we could reduce fashion related emissions by 30%.

Across these two actions alone, there is the potential to reduce London's fashion-related consumption-based emissions by over a third each year.

End-of-life destinations for unwanted clothing in London



- Collected by charities
- Local authority segregated collection
- Captured by other textile collectors
- Discarded in the bin



Learn more about London's waste composition 2023 study.
Visit: relondon.gov.uk

C. Citizen behaviours

London Councils conducted a climate poll in 2023 to gain insights into Londoners' perceptions, activities and behaviours. Results show that over 70% of Londoners are willing to embrace new consumption behaviours for fashion.

These findings have been consistent over four consecutive years of surveying, demonstrating that Londoners are open to considering circular practices such as buying second-hand, hiring clothing, repairing and, when they do purchase new items, prioritising sustainably-made garments.



Learn more about London Councils' annual climate poll.
Visit: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk

Buy second hand clothes rather than new

28% 23% 24% 11% 14%

Repair clothing

35% 28% 24% 7% 6%

Hire clothes for special occasions rather than buying

15% 27% 29% 13% 16%

Purchase clothing with a small carbon footprint

23% 31% 33% 7% 6%

Reduce clothing purchases

45% 23% 22% 6% 5%

Recycle old clothes and electrical goods

45% 25% 19% 5% 6%

- I am currently doing this
- I would definitely consider doing this
- I might consider doing this
- I wouldn't consider doing this
- I definitely wouldn't consider doing this

D. Process of selecting actions

The London Textiles Action Plan was co-developed alongside London's boroughs. To identify the list of prioritised actions, a series of consultations were held to get insight and feedback.

In total, three workshops were held in 2024 with local authority officers to identify a list of prioritised actions. Two questionnaires were also distributed to test the workshop findings and ensure buy in. Across these different engagement opportunities, 30 (91%) of boroughs inputted.

The results were further sense checked in discussion with industry stakeholders and ultimately scrutinised through an impact matrix (see page 26) to test the feasibility of delivery and potential impact.

This result of this process was the selection of eight activities for prioritization within the action plan which build on existing evidence established through the London's fashion footprint report, are feasible to deliver (see [Appendix E](#)) and respond to local needs as identified by London borough officers.

Identified potential activities

Over 40 different activities were identified for consideration that was informed by international and local case studies. Examples included: developing a digital material reuse platform, establishing council uniform swap shops, collaborating with fashion colleges, and developing an awards programme for circular champions.

Engaged London's boroughs

Three workshops were held with London's boroughs to first identify existing local activity on textiles and develop a common vision, and second to refine a list of prioritised activities according to local needs. During the final workshop, an overview of the proposed list of prioritised actions was presented for consideration.

Tested the results

To gather additional feedback on the refined list of activities identified by boroughs, two questionnaires were also distributed. Further, over the course of the project one-to-one meetings were held with over 70 key stakeholders including small businesses, academic institutions and research bodies to sense check the results.

Finalised list of prioritised actions

The refined list of actions were then assessed based on their potential impact on consumption-based emissions (as informed by the London's fashion footprint research), scope of impact, and the level of influence held for effective delivery. The resulting impact score was compared against borough prioritisation scores to refine and finalise the list of prioritised actions.

E. London's influence

This action plan was developed by and for London and the capital's key stakeholders and outlines activities that can help embed the circular economy into London's fashion supply chain. The table⁷ presented on this page helps to articulate the level of influence that London has on the production, consumption and disposal of textiles by stakeholders across the lifecycle of clothing and textiles.

Indirect influence: where actions are taken by another entity and potentially outside of London, this may result in limited or no potential influence.

Direct influence: where actions are ultimately made by another entity but where there may be some potential opportunities to influence actions.

Direct control: reflects internal functions or where decision-making and levers are readily available.

Collaboration with industry and citizens is essential for London to achieve its goals.

Where boroughs do not have direct influence or control to effect the necessary change, they will look to collaborate with stakeholders who may be able to control or influence different elements of the supply chain. This approach will be of particular importance given the proportion of clothing that is produced and manufactured overseas, and the limited transparency and data currently available to help guide evidence-based decision making.

	Local authorities	Businesses	Citizens
Raw materials	Indirect influence	Indirect influence	Indirect influence
Textile production and manufacturing	Indirect influence	Indirect influence	Indirect influence
Purchase decision	Direct control	Indirect influence	Indirect influence
Access to maintenance and repair	Direct control	Direct influence	Direct influence
Collection services	Direct control	Direct control	Direct control
Redistribution opportunities	Direct influence	Direct influence	Direct influence
Recycling infrastructure	Direct influence	Indirect influence	Direct influence

F. Impact matrix

Unknown

Activity						Impact score (CBE reduction x Influence)	Borough prioritisation score	Activity prioritised
	Circular strategy	Circular strategy's potential impact on consumption-based emissions (CBE)	% textiles in scope	Maximum CBE reduction	Level of Influence			
Procurement framework	Design; repair; reuse	34%	1.8%	Low (1)	Direct control (3)	3	4.72	X
Repair voucher scheme	Repair	5%	100%	Medium (2)	Direct influence (2)	4	6.56	X
Educational programme	Repair; reuse; higher collection rate	30%	Estimated ~16%	Medium (2)	Direct influence (2)	4		X
Pan-London campaign	Repair; reuse; higher collections	30%	100%	High (3)	Indirect influence (1)	3	6.53	X
End-of-life communication assets	Higher collections	0% (unless linked to increased reuse/recycling)	100%	Low (1)	Direct influence (2)	2	6.06	
Sewing machines in public venues	Repair	5%	100%	Medium (2)	Indirect influence (1)	2	3.94	
Best practices template for boroughs	Repair	5%	100%	Medium (2)	Direct control (3)	6	4.89	
Textile sorting infrastructure	Recycling	0% (unless linked to increased reuse/recycling)	100%	Low (1)	Indirect influence (1)	1	4.35	X
Segregated collection of unwanted textiles	Higher collections	0% (unless linked to increased reuse/recycling)	100%	Low (1)	Direct control (3)	3		X
Lobby for enhanced legislation	Design; repair; reuse; recycling	34%	100%	High (3)	Indirect influence (1)	3	6.88	
Map/directory	Design; repair; reuse; higher collections	34%	100%	High (3)	Indirect influence (1)	3	5.81	X
Circular economy hubs	Repair; reuse; recycling	34%	100%	High (3)	Direct influence (2)	6	6.65	X
Small businesses support	Design; repair; reuse; recycling	34%	100%	High (3)	Direct influence (2)	6		X