Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi

YMCHWIL GYMDEITHASOL Y LLYWODRAETH

GSR

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH

Analysis for Policy

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Social research number: 110/2025

Publication date: 25/11/2025

Evaluation of Repair and Reuse Activities

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

 Digital ISBN 978-1-80633-645-6

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Full Research Report: Heron, S., Lloyd, K., Lynn, S., Rigley, H., Astley Jones, S., Allen, I. (2025). Evaluation of Repair and Reuse Activities. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 110/2025.

Available at: https://www.gov.wales/repair-and-reuse-activities-evaluation

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Glossary

Circular Economy Fund

The Circular Economy Fund is funding provided by the Welsh Government to be used on a variety of activities including increasing repair and reuse activities. The fund aims to help businesses move towards a circular, net zero carbon economy.

Conversion factor

A numerical unit used that changes a measurement or observation from one unit to another in order to estimate the impact of an activity.

Delivery Partner

A business or community organisation that delivered more than two grant funded projects or received grant funding over £500,000.

Embodied Carbon

Embodied carbon refers to the total greenhouse gas emissions associated with the entire lifecycle of materials and products, from extraction and manufacturing to transport, installation, and disposal. This is occasionally used interchangeably with embedded carbon depending on the organisation's preference.

Hubs

A physical building or space (also could include mobile spaces like a van) that is open on regular days or hours and can be accessed by the local community. The scope of activities for hubs is broad; they can include repair and reuse activities as determined by community needs, alongside opportunities for recycling or upcycling items.

Library of Things

An organisation that operates a lending library of items such as work tools.

Network organisations

Organisations which support and facilitate repair and reuse activities. These include Benthyg Cymru and Repair Café Wales.

PAT Testing

Portable appliance testing (PAT) is the process of examining electrical appliances to ensure that they are safe to use.

Repair and Reuse Activity/Activities

Repair activities involve mending and fixing malfunctioning, damaged or broken items and products with the aim at extending the life of products, helping to reduce waste and promote circular economy practices. Reuse activities involve borrowing items, or encouraging the resale of used items with the aim at extending the life of products and reducing the production and consumption of new products, helping to reduce waste and promote circular economy practices.

Repair café

An organisation or group that repairs broken items in a community setting.

1 Introduction and background

Over the last decade Wales has increasingly prioritised the circular economy as a way to reduce waste, conserve resources and support sustainable economic growth. In Wales, this ambition has been given legislative force through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which embeds sustainable development principles across public bodies, and the Natural Resources Policy (2017), which emphasises waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery. The Welsh Government's Programme for Government (2021 to 2026) committed to building a greener economy and improving places to live and work; as part of this agenda, it committed to supporting 80 repair and reuse hubs in town centres across Wales. The 2021 circular economy strategy, Beyond Recycling, sets a goal for Wales to become a zero waste, net zero emissions nation by 2050 and identifies priority actions to promote repair and reuse. The Welsh Government established the Circular Economy Fund in 2020 to support a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Circular Economy Fund provided funding for a range of activities including supporting investments in manufacturing processes to increase the use of recycled and re-used content, or to extend the lifetime of products and materials.

Despite these developments, the evidence base on how they contribute to policy goals is limited. Previous research has explored public attitudes and practitioner experiences: for example, the Circular Economy in the Community report (2023) by the Centre for Climate and Social Transformations in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy, examined the benefits and challenges of repair and reuse centres; a 2023 WRAP Cymru citizen insights survey highlighted cost savings as a key driver for reuse and repair; and a 2018 roadmap for municipal waste preparation, by Resource Futures and funded by Welsh Government modelled the economic and environmental impacts of scaling up reuse activities up to 2050 using 4 scenarios. These studies underscored the need for robust data, tailored approaches for urban and rural communities, and better engagement with citizens.

This evaluation is focussed on the activities funded by the Circular Economy Fund which the Welsh Government defined as Repair and Reuse Activities. Repair and Reuse Activities are:

- Hubs - a physical building or space (and could include mobile spaces, for example a van) that is open on regular days or hours and can be accessed by the local community. The scope of activities for hubs is broad, they can include repair and reuse activities as determined by community needs, alongside opportunities for recycling or upcycling items
- Library of Things - an organisation that operates a lending library of items such as tools and housewares
- Repair cafés – an organisation or group that repairs broken items in a community setting
- Other types of activity - there are some projects that do not fit into the above categories, such as community fridges, but are covered by the Circular Economy Fund and therefore are included this evaluation.

These Repair and Reuse Activities all contribute to the central goal of reducing waste. However, they approach this aim in different ways, which will affect any additional social, economic or environmental impacts that they may have beyond the reduction of waste.

The Circular Economy Fund provided £14,245,952 capital and revenue funding to 58 projects and two network organisations, Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru, between the financial years 2019 to 2020 and 2024 to 2025 to support the expansion of Repair and Reuse Activities across Wales. The Circular Economy Fund funded a variety of different models of Repair and Reuse Activity including two key models; the integration of Repair and Reuse Activities into Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), normally through the establishment of a reuse shop and new processes, and funding for community projects to establish Libraries of Things and repair cafés, often on the high street or in town centres. It is important to note that network organisations did not provide grant funding to Repair and Reuse Activities through the Circular Economy Fund and any support was either non-financial or limited to very small amounts of money. Network organisations were funded to support Repair and Reuse Activities through the provision of training, advice, and best practice, technical and logistical support, awareness raising campaigns, and limited financial support such as the provision of equipment.

The funding was distributed through:

- £5.6 million capital funding for projects linked to HWRCs to upgrade HWRCs by integrating reuse facilities into their operations
- £798,381 revenue funding for HWRC linked projects, aimed at staffing, operational delivery, and establishing sustainable reuse processes within existing waste-management systems
- £3.9 million capital funding for community-based projects to establish or enhance community and high street-based Repair and Reuse Activities
- £2.2 million revenue funding for community-based projects, to support staff coordination, volunteer management, training, and ongoing community engagement activities that underpin long-term viability
- £1,686,598.77 revenue funding for network organisations with Benthyg Cymru receiving £915,000 and Repair Café Wales receiving £771,598.77. This revenue funding was intended to strengthen the support infrastructure for community repair and reuse, enabling the networks to provide training, administrative systems, insurance, and mentoring to local groups, rather than directly delivering repair or lending activities.

Welsh Government commissioned Miller Research to carry out a research review of the Repair and Reuse Activities funded by the Circular Economy Fund, as the fund had not been subjected to any previous evaluation, and there was a desire to understand the social, economic and environmental outcomes of the funded activities where possible. Welsh Government also required a clearer understanding of the financial sustainability of Repair and Reuse Activities, cost-effectiveness and difference in characteristics and performance by geographical location where possible. The intention was that the Welsh Government could use this information to understand whether and how Repair and Reuse Activities would become self-sustaining in the long-term.

The Welsh Government set out the following research aims:

- A1: To understand the cost-effectiveness of the Circular Economy funding for Repair and Reuse Activities against WG expectations
- A2: To understand the extent of emerging social contributions of Repair and Reuse Activities to users and the surrounding area
- A3: To understand factors that influence how financially sustainable the Repair and Reuse Activities have been
- A4: To explore any differences in outcomes by location of the Repair and Reuse Activities (geography, urban/rural, recycling centre/town centres/other)
- A5: To understand the views and general behaviours of those who engage with Repair and Reuse Activities
- A6: To understand general public awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities in their area
- A7: To understand barriers to attending Repair and Reuse Activities

The report is organised as follows:

- section 2 describes the methodology, including the desk-based review, scoping interviews, theory of change development, surveys, focus groups and case studies
- section 3 presents the theory of change developed for the Repair and Reuse Activities
- section 4 presents the findings, highlighting patterns in participation, outcomes and financial viability
- section 5 draws conclusions and recommendations
- section 6 consists of three annexes: the User Survey (Annex A), YouGov Survey (Annex B) and the research aims and research questions (Annex C).

2 Methodology

2.1 Evaluation approach

Consistent with HM Treasury's *Magenta Book* guidance, the evaluation assessed the resources, activities and effects associated with Circular Economy Fund supported Repair and Reuse Activities. It examined:

- inputs – the resources (funding, staff, volunteers) and policy aims underpinning each Repair and Reuse Activity
- activities – the actions undertaken, including the establishment of hubs, allocation of Circular Economy Fund funding, and specific reuse or repair interventions
- outputs – the tangible evidence of activities including measures of activity
- outcomes – the short to mid-term effects of the activities
- impacts – the anticipated longer-term social, economic and environmental effects of Repair and Reuse Activities

To gather evidence across these dimensions, the evaluation employed a mixed-methods design which is described further in Section 2.2:

- a desk-based review of relevant funding documentation and data
- scoping interviews with key stakeholders to refine the evaluation framework
- development of Theory of Change models to articulate how Repair and Reuse Activities are expected to achieve their objectives
- semi-structured interviews with grant recipients, volunteers and service users
- surveys of service users and of the wider public to explore experiences and attitudes
- focus groups with members of the general public
- 4 in-depth case studies to provide detailed insight into different types of Repair and Reuse Activity.

2.1.1 Limitations and challenges

Monitoring methods developed throughout the course of the fund. Between the financial years 2019 to 2020 and 2022 to 2023 this included a project database, 40 project applications, and 21 outcome reports from 20 projects. The project database included:

- project name
- local authority location
- whether it was linked to HWRC
- partner organisations
- whether it was a town centre location
- the WG funding stream
- total funding
- revenue funding
- capital funding
- whether WG thought it was operational
- a project description
- whether funding was monitored
- hub locations
- project lead contact details

Later monitoring was improved as 11 of the outcome reports included a questionnaire which included asking recipients to detail the types of items repaired or caused to be re-used, volume of materials, number of people using the service, the number of job or volunteer roles created. These were filled out by recipients to varying levels of detail and were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which occurred during the delivery period. The other 10 outcome reports included only a project overview, photographs and testimonials. In addition, monitoring data included an internal review which consisted of a survey of 35 projects which received 10 responses.

As the Circular Economy Fund continued, monitoring of projects was improved with quarterly monitoring, activities and targets tracked across the fund from 2023 to 2025. This level of monitoring was carried out for 11 projects.

The total expenditure of the Circular Economy Fund on Repair and Reuse Activities between the financial years 2019 to 2020 and 2024 to 2025 was just over £14 million. Of that funding £2,981,269 was project revenue funding, £9,578,280 was project capital funding, with an additional £914,804.69 and £771,598.77 revenue funding provided to Benthyg Cymru and Repair Café Wales respectively.

Of the £12,559,549 million allocated to projects (i.e. all funding excluding that provided to Benthyg Cymru and Repair Café Wales), monitoring data was collected for 11 projects funded £2,782,919, with 47 projects funded a total of £9,978,978 either not monitored or monitored minimally or inconsistently. These data gaps present challenges in drawing conclusions about the impact of Repair and Reuse Activities funded by the Circular Economy Fund as a whole. In addition, the emergence of the additional monitoring data towards the end of fieldwork allowed for limited changes to the evaluation approach to take account of this and attempt to perform a more robust evaluation. Finally, of the 11 projects with monitoring data 5 were multi-year projects funded into financial year 2025 to 2026 therefore impacts are likely to continue to emerge. Further monitoring data was not collected, therefore the evaluation relies more on the primary fieldwork which is only able to cover a subset of activities, this should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Scoping interviews and the desk-based review highlighted that different types of Repair and Reuse Activity (for example, Libraries of Things, repair cafés and reuse hubs) pursue different outcomes. While the core outcomes were included in the theory-of-change models, some unique activities such as the lending of reuseable nappies were specific to individual projects and could not be evaluated systematically.

Finally, there were challenges with stakeholder engagement as at least 6 of 40 early programme contacts, 2 of which were responsible for 9 grants, were no longer in post or their details were out of date. The team attempted to reach these individuals, or those now holding the post, through alternative channels, but with mixed success.

This context should be considered when interpreting the findings and conclusions that follow.

2.2 Method

In light of the challenges described above, the evaluation took a flexible approach to ensure that sufficient evidence was gathered to address the research questions. Throughout, readers should bear in mind the limitations set out earlier when interpreting the results.

2.2.1 Scoping phase

A desk-based review of Welsh Government documentation took place. Of the 58 Repair and Reuse Activities funded, 40 applications and 21 project outcome reports were reviewed as was the Welsh Government's database of information for each funded Repair and Reuse Activity. This exercise confirmed the monitoring data gaps described above.

2.2.1.1 Stakeholder interviews

Working with the Welsh Government, organisations with significant engagement in the Circular Economy Fund were selected and 7 interviews were conducted. Participants represented the Welsh Government policy officials, Repair Café Wales, Benthyg Cymru, Wastesavers, and the waste management teams for three Local Authorities. These discussions helped to refine the evaluation approach and informed strategies for wider engagement.

2.2.1.2 Development of a Theory of Change

A key task for the evaluation was to develop a theory of change drawing on the desk review, stakeholder insights and input from the Welsh Government policy team to develop a logical explanatory sequence of how Repair and Reuse Activities were expected to deliver against Circular Economy Fund objectives. This process highlighted the difficulty of creating a single theory of change for the programme of funded activities, particularly due to the variety of activities, whether revenue or capital funded, and different delivery models of funded organisations such as the different ways a LA or Benythg Cymru may operate to achieve Circular Economy Fund objectives. As a result, 2 Theories of Change were co-produced with Welsh Government;

- a Theory of Change for the individually funded Repair and Reuse Activities

- a Theory of Change for the network organisations

Using these 2 Theories of Change an overarching Theory of Change was created for the programme as a whole and is presented in Section 3. This model shows the relationships between the network organisations and funded Repair and Reuse Hubs in order to support the development of future programmes and evaluations and to underpin the findings.

2.2.1.3 Logic model workshop

To test and refine the theory of change work, researcher facilitated a logic-model workshop with Welsh Government representatives. This session ensured that the operational realities and strategic objectives were reflected.

2.2.1.4 Evaluation framework development

Building on the theory of change work, the research questions set out in the specification and the desk-based review, a comprehensive evaluation framework was designed. This framework mapped each research question to specific data-collection activities, highlighted potential evidence gaps and guided subsequent fieldwork. As noted above, gaps in monitoring data constrained the extent to which the scale of the Circular Economy Fund's impacts and its cost-effectiveness could be assessed. Although the research questions included in the specification focused on social impacts of Repair and Reuse Activities, questions around environmental and economic impacts were also included in the evaluation framework to support the analysis of cost-effectiveness of Repair and Reuse Activities, and identify outcomes and impacts against the Theory of Change.

2.2.2 Fieldwork

Because Repair and Reuse Activities differ substantially in their funding sources, size and location, developing an appropriate sampling frame was essential. Factors considered included:

- link to household waste recycling centres - whether activities were based at, or associated with, Local Authority recycling sites
- geographic spread - ensuring coverage across Wales
- urban or rural context - recognising that challenges and opportunities vary by settlement type
- size of grant - capturing both smaller and larger Circular Economy Fund awards
- type of Repair and Reuse Activity - including Libraries of Things, repair cafés and reuse hubs
- involvement in multiple grants - recognising that some organisations benefitted from more than one Circular Economy Fund grant.

Based on these criteria, fieldwork was conducted with Local Authorities, Delivery Partners, and Repair and Reuse Activity organisers and volunteers. In addition, a bilingual online survey was launched to gather feedback from Repair and Reuse Activity users, followed by interviews with those who agreed to be interviewed.

2.2.2.1 Interviews with Local Authority representatives

The sample selected and conducted included 8 interviews, in addition to the scoping interviews, including 2 authorities that had not received Circular Economy Fund funding. These interviews were conducted to understand how Repair and Reuse Activities are implemented across Wales. These discussions explored regional variations in Repair and Reuse Activity, operational challenges and funding allocations, including considerations of cost-effectiveness. The interviews also examined the role of Local Authorities in sustaining Repair and Reuse Activities in the long term. There was a particular focus on the variety of Repair and Reuse Activities supported, with Local Authorities particularly involved in the operation of reuse shops.

2.2.2.2 Interviews with representatives of Repair and Reuse Activities

The sample selected included 9 interviews with Delivery Partners, 14 with organisers and volunteers at Circular Economy Fund funded hubs, and 19 interviews with organisers and volunteers at network supported hubs. Six, 13 and 0 interviews were conducted respectively, with recruitment challenges securing interviews with organisers and volunteers supported through the networks.

These interviews covered factors influencing sustainability, including business models, funding sources and prospects for long-term self-sufficiency were examined. Interviews with volunteers also addressed their motivations for participating, their role in maintaining green skills (repair, remanufacture and reuse), their perceptions of cost-effectiveness where applicable, and the training and quality-assurance processes that support their work.

2.2.2.3 Online user survey

To capture user perspectives, a bilingual online survey was developed using the UK GDPR-compliant SmartSurvey platform. This survey combined open and closed questions to collect demographic information, explore users' behaviours and motivations, and gather attitudinal data on perceived cost benefits. For example, respondents were asked how much they would be willing to pay for similar services if Repair and Reuse Activities did not exist, and how much they believed they saved by using free or low-cost services. With promotional support from network organisations and the hubs previously interviewed, the survey was open from 16 April to 20 May 2025 and received 73 responses.

2.2.2.4 User interviews

Following the user survey, 12 follow-up interviews were carried out with survey respondents who agreed to be contacted and were conducted by telephone or video call and in their preferred language. These interviews provided detailed insights into users' experiences, behaviours and perceptions of Repair and Reuse Activities but likely reflect the views of more engaged or active participants rather than the wider population.

2.2.2.5 YouGov regional omnibus survey

To assess public awareness of, and attitudes towards, repair and reuse activities, questions were commissioned in the YouGov regional omnibus survey. The questionnaire explored levels of awareness, perceived barriers and motivations for engagement, and collected user feedback where possible.

In total, 1,013 members of the public completed the survey (976 in English and 37 in Welsh) between 5 and 9 June 2025. Respondents who indicated they had used repair cafés, Libraries of Things, reuse shops or makerspaces were routed to tailored questions about those services. Due to small sample sizes (fewer than 50 respondents) for repair cafés and makerspaces, results for these groups were excluded in line with YouGov's terms and conditions. Responses from users of reuse shops and Libraries of Things were included as the sample sizes were higher.

While the YouGov survey reflects views from the general public, the user survey focused on individuals already engaged with Repair and Reuse Activities. The YouGov survey was a population-level study using systematic and random sampling, providing a representative picture of public awareness and participation. In contrast, the user survey used non-probability (self-selecting) sampling, offering more detailed insights into the experiences and motivations of active users but without representing the wider population.

2.2.2.6 Focus groups

Two focus groups were held with members of the public to gain more detailed insights into public perceptions, barriers to participation and opportunities to raise awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities across Wales. Recruitment was managed by DJS Research, using their specialist focus group recruitment team, a recruitment database and screening criteria and questions.

One group comprised participants from LL (North-west Wales) and NP (South-east Wales) postcode areas, regions with relatively high survey engagement, while the other group drew from a range of urban postcodes across Wales. These were chosen to provide an area with relatively high levels of Repair and Reuse Activity engagement, and one that was randomly sampled to offer a comparison. In addition,

screening questions ensured a mix of participants who were aware and unaware of repair and reuse initiatives.

2.2.2.7 Case studies

To develop a deeper understanding of the motivations, impacts and challenges associated with different types of Repair and Reuse Activity, 4 case studies were undertaken, each situated in a different region of Wales. These involved on-site visits, with interviews conducted with organisers, volunteers and a service user (including stopping a user, organisers and volunteers who happened to be using the space to take part in interviews). Case study sites were selected to reflect geographical diversity, a range of Repair and Reuse Activity models, urban and rural settings, and differing degrees of linkage to household waste recycling centres. The case studies selected were:

- Crest, a registered charity and social enterprise based in Llandudno that was established in 1998. The organisation runs 4 retail outlets that specialise in selling, fixing and refurbishing goods. The evaluation team visited 2 retail outlets and the main processing centre whilst undertaking their case study visit. This case study was written with the information gathered in four interviews, one of which was with a volunteer, one with a user, and two with organisers in the organisation.
- Pethau Pawb, based in Llandovery. The shop acts primarily as a Library of Things, whilst also hosting a repair café once per month and is part of the Benthyg Cymru network. This case study was written with the information gathered in three interviews, all undertaken with organisers from the organisation.
- The Hive, a community space in Llandrindod Wells which hosts a repair café, uniform exchange, and Library of Things amongst other services which are co-produced with residents. This case study was written with the information gathered in interviews with two organisers and one volunteer.
- Wastesavers Reuse Centre, launched in 2021 and based in Maindee, Newport. The Centre combines a reuse store, repair café, Library of Things, a nappy library (which was not running during the evaluation site visit) and is home to the Newport Makerspace. This case study was written with the

information gathered in interviews with four members of staff (one of whom was a former volunteer) and a volunteer.

2.2.3 Analysis

2.2.3.1 Qualitative data analysis

Interview transcripts and focus group notes were written up in a consistent format and analysed by stakeholder group. The evaluation team collaboratively applied thematic analysis, with findings organised using a Miro board to visualise a theme, to group related excerpts and identify overarching themes relevant to the research questions. Stakeholders were assigned codes during the analysis process which are repeated throughout this report, these are: Local Authority (LA), Delivery Partners (DP), Repair and Reuse Activity organiser (O), Repair and Reuse Activity volunteer (V), and case study (CS).

To formulate case studies, information was organised thematically by general information, impact, successes, difficulties, and future plans. This is reflected in the structure of the case studies.

2.2.3.2 Quantitative data analysis

Responses to closed-ended survey questions, monitoring data and other quantitative inputs were analysed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics were generated to summarise patterns in the data, and cross-tabulations were used to examine frequencies for different groups or locations.

2.2.3.3 Spatial analysis

Monitoring data and information provided by network partners were used to create a QGIS map showing the distribution of Repair and Reuse Activities supported by Welsh Government up to March 2025. Repair and Reuse Activity distribution was overlaid on layers from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). The WIMD is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation of small areas and its "prime purpose" is to "provide the evidence needed about the most deprived areas of Wales to inform a variety of decisions, such as funding or targeting of programmes and services for local areas".

The QGIS map was developed to support Welsh Government policy officials to identify any relationship between the most deprived areas and presence or absence of Repair and Reuse Activities. The desk-based review highlighted gaps in the hub data, particularly regarding precise locations and operational status. In several cases, only the lead applicant's address was recorded, which did not necessarily correspond to the actual site of funded activities. Where possible, additional details were sought from grant recipients to improve the accuracy of the spatial analysis, and where this data was not available the address given on the funding application was used.

3 Theory of Change

It is best practice for publicly funded programmes to be based around a Theory of Change, to ensure that the;

- intervention is aligned with the strategic context
- needs it aims to address are clear and well-articulated
- objectives align with the needs and are achievable
- proposed inputs are suitable to achieving the objectives and can support the activities
- activities are the most appropriate to achieving the objectives
- outputs are measurable and align with the activities
- outcomes reflect the need and can be achieved through the activities
- impacts are realistically and logically follow through the activities

After development, the theory of change can form the basis on which decisions are made around the activities or projects that will receive funding, how they are monitored and what monitoring data is collected, and how the programme will be evaluated.

3.1 Development

A Theory of Change was created for the programme during this evaluation to support the evaluation framework and future Repair and Reuse Activity policy decisions. As the Circular Economy Fund funded both individual projects including reuse hubs, repair cafés and Libraries of Things, and network organisation activities, the activities, outputs and intended outcomes were diverse. This was particularly true in the case of the network organisations, whose main output was an increase in the number of organisations carrying out their supported Repair and Reuse Activity. For example, the primary output for Repair Café Wales was the number of new repair cafés established, whereas an individual repair café's output would be the number of repairs completed. In this sense, the funding allocated to network organisations operated one level above the delivery of activities - it was used to support the infrastructure, coordination, and guidance that enabled local groups to run their own repair and reuse initiatives. This included providing training, insurance, administrative systems, and ongoing mentoring to ensure consistency and

sustainability across member organisations. The Theory of Change was written in collaboration with the Welsh Government following the scoping phase, as a precursor to inform the evaluation rather than as a reflection of the findings after the evaluation. This means that the theory of change provided a hypothesis for how Repair and Reuse Activities funded by the Circular Economy Fund would achieve the intended outcomes, and what those intended outcomes and impacts were at the time (Spring 2025).

3.2 Strategic context

All activities funded through the Circular Economy Fund were responding to the same strategic context and needs, which are outlined below in a section which discusses the policy, needs, objectives and inputs for the programme as a whole.

At the policy level, the programme is underpinned by Welsh Government strategies such as Towards Zero Waste, Beyond Recycling, and the Route map Towards a Universal Culture of Repair and Reuse, as well as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and commitments to Net Zero Wales. These align with UK-wide frameworks, including the Waste Regulations and Circular Economy Package, and global drivers like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The needs, which are the identified gaps and problems than an intervention aims to address, include environmental, social and economic costs of sending waste to landfill, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with waste and consumption, continuing socio-economic inequality, and the loss of repair skills. There is also a strong emphasis on the levels of loneliness and isolation.

Therefore, the programme's objectives look to address these needs, which include reducing landfill volumes, providing social and economic benefits, raising awareness of repair and reuse and increasing participation across Wales. Central to this is the ambition of creating a national network that embeds repair and reuse practices into everyday life.

Finally, it is important to identify the inputs that supported the delivery of the programme, and implemented these objectives. The inputs included existing Repair and Reuse Activity assets, capital and revenue funding and human resources such as volunteers and staff time. Welsh Government provides additional support through

WRAP upskilling of Local Authority staff to support the integration of Repair and Reuse Activities into HWRC activities and marketing and outreach, for example through Wales Climate Week. Together, these inputs provide the foundation for the delivery of outcomes aligned with both environmental sustainability and social wellbeing.

3.3 The Theory of Change model

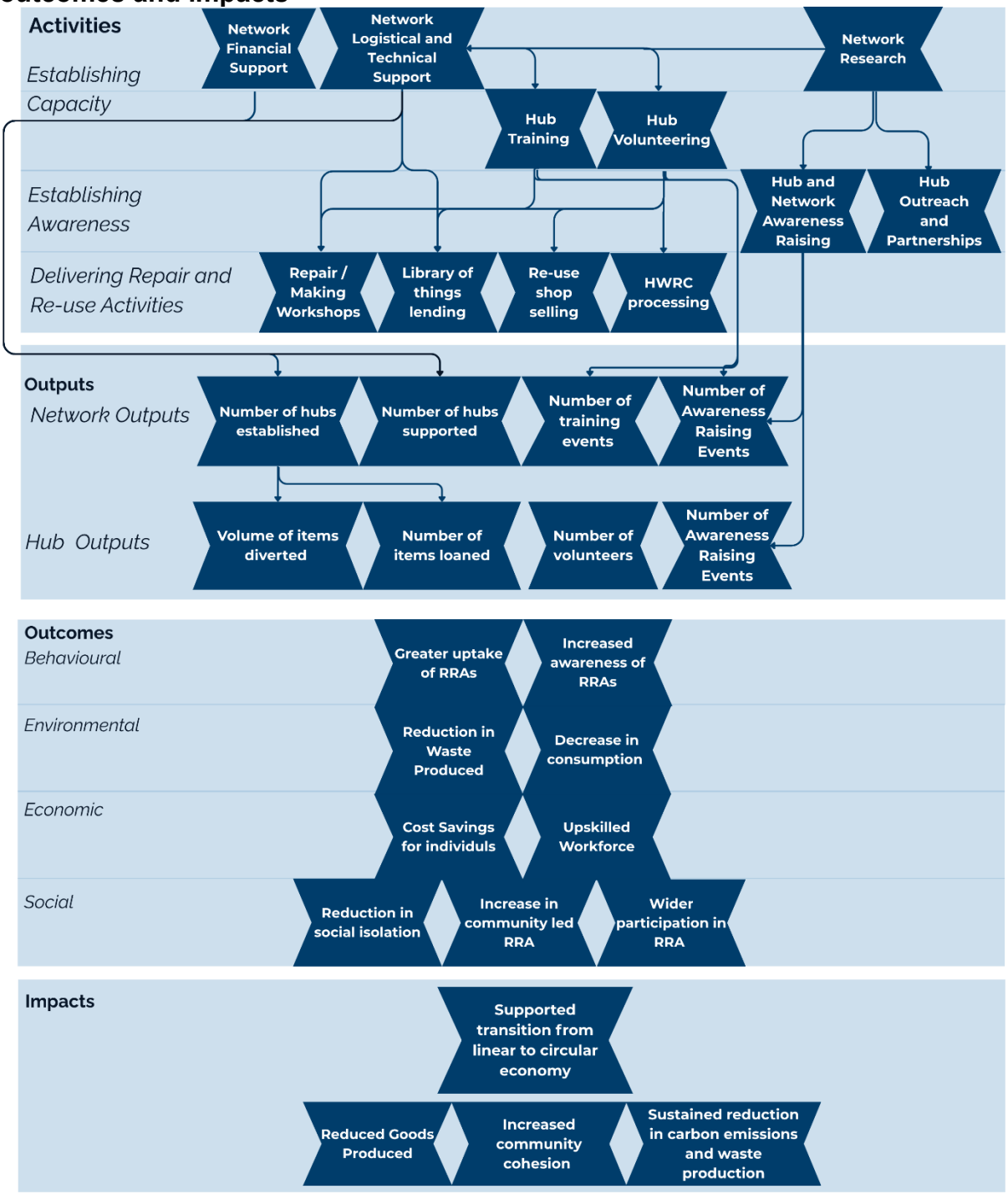
As stated in the introduction and methodology the Circular Economy Fund provided capital and revenue funding to support repair cafés, reuse shops, makerspaces, Libraries of Things and HWRC-based reuse facilities. Figure 1 highlights what happens at the level of these individual sites. These hubs are where the inputs of funding, donated goods, volunteer time, partnerships and local capacity are translated into tangible activities that deliver direct benefits for communities.

Figure 1 sets out the activities funded by the Circular Economy Fund at these hubs spanning 3 types of activity: establishing capacity (e.g. capital spending on facilities, training and volunteering programmes) and raising awareness of the services offered at facilities (through marketing and education), and delivering Repair and Reuse Activities (e.g. hosting a repair café session).The immediate outputs of these activities are both cumulative and measurable: the number of collection facilities, resale shops, repair cafés and Libraries of Things created; the volume of items repaired, diverted, loaned or created; the number of education sessions held; the number of volunteers recruited; and the hours, participants and sales value generated. These outputs also include the amount reinvested locally, ensuring that financial benefits stay within the community.

In parallel the Circular Economy Fund provided revenue funding to network organisations Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru to support the establishment and growth of Repair and Reuse Activities across Wales. Figure 1 highlights the activities of these organisations as they aim to create the enabling conditions for Repair and Reuse Activities to thrive. The Circular Economy Fund provides funding to support the organisations to do this. The network role includes the provision of training, advice, and best practice guidance, technical and logistical support such as including hubs in their insurance or negotiating an insurance rate for Repair and Reuse Activities, awareness raising such as the “fix it February” campaign, and

financial support in the form of securing discounted PAT testing and the provision of equipment such as iPads. By taking on these complex and resource-intensive tasks centrally, networks lower barriers for local organisers and increase the consistency and quality of community initiatives.

Figure 1: Repair and Reuse Programme Theory of Change: activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts



Source: Miller Research

As shown in Figure 1 each of these network activities lead to the output of network activities, that is, the establishment of Repair and Reuse Activities, growth of community-based repair cafés and Libraries of Things, and the integration of Repair and Reuse Activity into HWRCs with networks acting as a critical partner to provide advice and support. This highlights a critical difference between Repair and Reuse Activity Hubs and Repair and Reuse Activity networks, while the output of those involved in Repair and Reuse Activity Hubs reflects the activity of direct delivery, the Repair and Reuse Activity networks activities are a step higher in the Theory of Change and instead focus on increasing the number of hubs. The listed outputs, such as number of hubs supported, could be further broken down to reflect these specific activities, including the number of organisations who have accessed particular types of support such as volunteer training, or those who have accessed advice.

Therefore, the Theory of Change at activity and output level illustrates that activities across the Repair and Reuse Activity Hubs combine with network support to create and deliver Repair and Reuse Activities across Wales. Networks in particular support the establishing capacity and establishing awareness sections, while Circular Economy Fund funding, among others, supports the capital-intensive activity of establishing assets.

As these outputs increase in scale, they are expected to drive behavioural outcomes, including increased awareness and uptake of Repair and Reuse Activities, strengthened collaboration between networks and communities, and greater access to repair and reuse opportunities. Environmental outcomes flow from these changes, such as reductions in waste and consumption, and cost savings for individuals.

In parallel, the programme was designed to deliver economic outcomes: stimulating local economies, increasing footfall in town centres, and upskilling volunteers and staff. This is related to the Repair and Reuse Activities role in town centre regeneration with a large number of renovation projects returning properties to use with several projects also receiving funding from the Transforming Towns Fund. Similarly, the programme was designed to achieve social outcomes such as reducing social isolation and embedding community-led approaches through encouraging wider participation in Repair and Reuse Activities and the establishment of more community spaces. Together, these outcomes contribute to the long-term

impacts of the programme: reduced demand for new goods, reduced emissions, stronger economic resilience, greater social cohesion, and the establishment of self-sustaining Repair and Reuse Activities. These impacts align directly with Wales's commitment to a Circular Foundational Economy, ensuring that repair and reuse become embedded in both everyday behaviour and national systems of waste and resource management.

3.4 Repair and Reuse Activity external factors

A Theory of Change must be aware of the factors that are outside the control of programme yet may impact the how the programme works. The clearest example of this which severely impacted the delivery of the funded activities was the COVID-19 pandemic. With widespread impacts on the economy and restrictions on day-to-day activities delivery of the activities was limited at various points during the funding period, particularly in 2021. Other external factors which may impact the programme following the theory of change include, socio-economic disruption similar to COVID-19, the wider funding landscape for both Local Authorities and the Third Sector who are key delivery partners for Repair and Reuse Activities and the availability of suitable assets to establish Repair and Reuse Activity Hubs. The funding landscape should be highlighted, as interviews with stakeholders and organisers indicate that Repair and Reuse Activities have accessed multiple funding streams beyond the grant central to this research. These include the Transforming Towns Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Landfill Tax Community Fund, National Lottery Funding, and others. Additionally, the establishment and delivery of Repair and Reuse Activities may be influenced by the existing assets and operations of participating organisations. Well-established organisations are often able to leverage their infrastructure and experience to achieve greater impact.

3.5 Conclusion

The Repair and Reuse Theory of Change (Figure 1) illustrates a layered system in which high-level investment enables networks to thrive, networks empower hubs, and hubs generate measurable social, environmental and economic impacts. As discussed in the opening to this section, this framework offers an understanding of what is intended to happen through Circular Economy Fund funding, it suggests the provision of metrics to measure quantifiable outputs which will support Welsh

Government in identifying whether the intentions are being achieved, and the ongoing monitoring of the funding.

4 Findings

4.1 Distribution and number of Repair and Reuse Activities across Wales

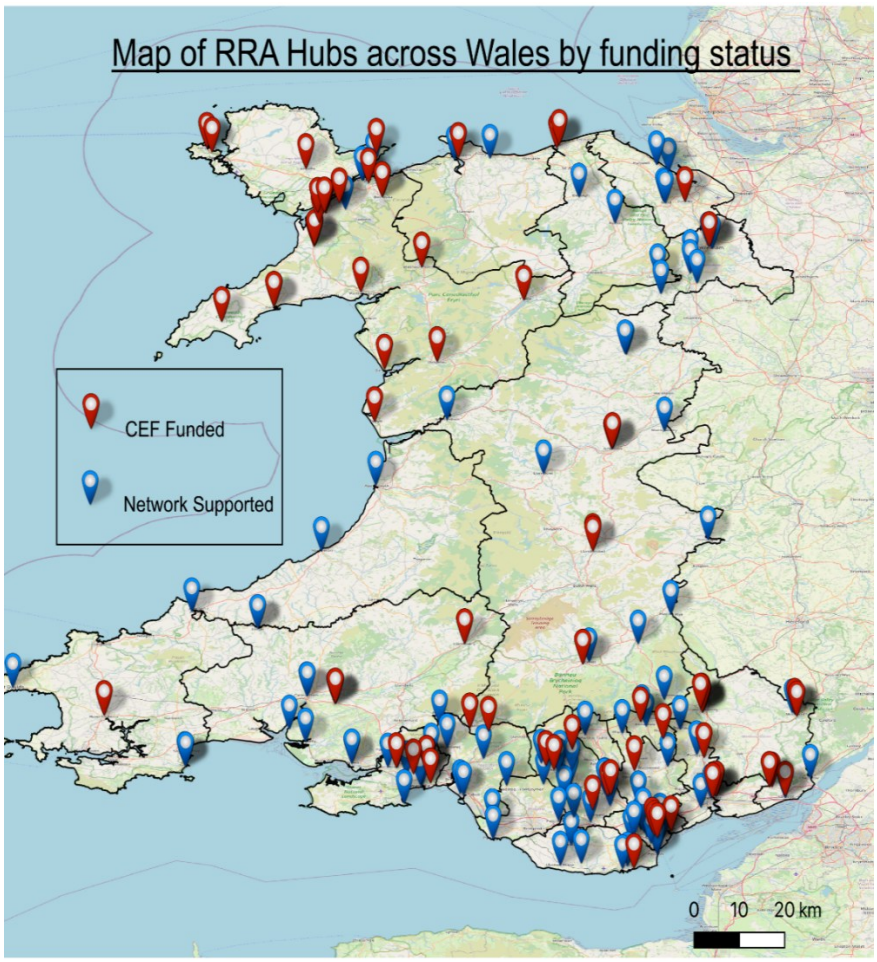
In the 2021 to 2026 Programme for Government, the Welsh Government committed to supporting 80 reuse and repair hubs in town centres. The Circular Economy Fund directly supported at least 100 repair and reuse hubs [footnote 1]. Town centre is defined as a location which is easily accessible by public transport where people would not need to access via car. For this evaluation we have determined that repair and reuse hubs based at HWRCs will not be considered as being in a town centre, and those that are not based in HWRCs will. Of the 106 hubs identified, 32 were based in HWRCs, and 73 were based in a town centre, and 1 was an online Repair Directory.

In addition to projects directly funded by the Circular Economy Fund Welsh Government supported 133 repair cafés and 30 Libraries of Things through network organisation funding. It was not possible to fully cross-reference membership of network organisations with projects which received funding, but it is likely that the 32 hubs based in HWRCs, which primarily focussed on reuse, would not be members of these organisations. Therefore, in total Welsh Government likely supported at least 195 repair and reuse hubs, of which at least 73 directly funded hubs were based in town centres. This means that it is likely when considering the addition of those supported through network organisations that Welsh Government achieved its commitment to support 80 repair and reuse hubs in town centres.

To understand the distribution of repair and reuse activity, the evaluation used GIS spatial analysis to map hubs across Wales and compare them with other datasets. Figure 2 (below) illustrates these locations: red pins indicate activities funded directly by the Circular Economy Fund, while blue pins represent those supported solely through network organisations. This map only includes reuse shops that fall within the scope of this evaluation.

Figure 2: Repair and Reuse Hubs supported by the Circular Economy Fund either directly or indirectly through network organisations

[1] It is difficult to determine a total figure as a number of projects received funding more than once, and a number of projects were funded as a network but were listed as one hub.



Source: Welsh Government monitoring data, Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru database

Table 1: Circular Economy funded hubs and network supported hubs in comparison to the number of LSOAs in each MSOA which fall in the bottom 30% for deprivation

Number of LSOAs in each MSOA which fall in the bottom 30% nationally for deprivation	Number of CEF funded hubs	Number of network supported hubs
0	28	32
1	21	26
2	9	26
3	10	13
4+	14	17
Total	**82**	**114**

Source: Welsh Government monitoring data, Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru database, WIMD data

As illustrated in Table 1 (above), to assess whether Repair and Reuse Activity hubs are located in areas of high relative deprivation, this evaluation compared hub locations with each deprivation profile of MSOA (Middle layer Super Output Layer,

between 2,000 and 6,000 households). For every MSOA, we counted how many of its constituent LSOAs (Lower Layer Super Output Areas, between 400 and 1,200 households) fall into Wales's most deprived 30% on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD, 2019). WIMD (2019) is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation, covering 8 domains: income, employment, health, education, access to services, housing, community safety and the physical environment.

Following from looking at RRA hubs' distribution against deprivation, we next examined how the two hub types co-distributed geographically, and whether local authorities with more Circular Economy funded hubs also tended to host more network supported hubs, or whether Circular Economy funded hubs are in areas with comparatively few network supported hubs. To assess this, we calculated a Pearson correlation coefficient to measure the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables. The result, r=0.28, shows a weak positive relationship: Local Authorities with more Circular Economy funded hubs also tend to have slightly more network supported hubs. It is important to note however, that this does not mean that one causes the other.

In addition, this spatial analysis has underestimated the number of hubs funded, as monitoring data records a single address for multiple hubs. Qualitative evidence also shows funding one type of activity, such as a repair café, sometimes enabled organisations to set up other activities, such as a Library of Things or reuse shop, within the same organisation or building. This suggests that the true impact of the funding is broader than what the spatial data captures, as it likely supports more Repair and Reuse Activities than can be directly identified.

4.2 Impact of Repair and Reuse Activities

As discussed in the introduction and methodology, the research questions concerning impact were focussed on the emerging social impacts of Repair and Reuse Activities and the cost-effectiveness of Repair and Reuse Activities. The following section highlights the social impacts, as well as short sections on the identified environmental and economic impacts which contribute to the evaluation of cost-effectiveness and test the Theory of Change.

4.2.1 Social

The evaluation found that Repair and Reuse Activities had a range of social impacts on both volunteers and users, including, reducing social isolation, improvements to health and wellbeing and supporting them in developing skills.

4.2.1.1 Wellbeing

Across user and organiser interviews, a consistent theme was the role of Repair and Reuse Activities in reducing isolation and fostering social connection. Both users and volunteers described how participating in these activities helped them socialise, build confidence, and feel part of a community. Several users said that attending repair cafés or reuse hubs encouraged them to leave the house and interact with others. One explained that it "gets people out who might not socialise as much" (U3), while another said it "keeps you sociable, [I] like the routine; [it] gets me out of the house" (U16). Volunteers also highlighted the sense of purpose and belonging they gain from contributing their skills, with one organiser noting that many repairers are retired and "enjoy using their skills and meeting people" (O11). Survey findings reinforce these accounts: 46% (n=71) of respondents said that connecting with others through social interaction was one of the key benefits of using Repair and Reuse Activities. The emotional and social support embedded in these spaces was also recognised by volunteers, one of whom described organiser support as "very emotionally intelligent" and including mentoring and personal development plans (DP6).

4.2.1.2 Inclusivity

Repair and Reuse Activities can play an important role in supporting groups who are vulnerable or excluded from mainstream employment. Across Local Authority, organiser and delivery-partner interviews, participants described how Repair and Reuse Activities created volunteering and skills-building opportunities for people referred through probation services, social services and employment hubs. Multiple interviewees highlighted their inclusivity, offering roles for people with disabilities, those with learning difficulties, and young people not in education, employment or training. One organiser described how their hub works with people who are "socially excluded, have learning difficulties or are excluded from mainstream work", providing expenses and a supportive environment (O4). Another organiser highlighted a partnership with the probation service, where participants upcycle furniture and

develop carpentry and joinery skills while contributing to the reuse of items that would otherwise be difficult to sell.

4.2.1.3 Affordability and need

Organisers and local authority representatives consistently highlighted how repair and reuse initiatives provide vital support for low-income families, offering access to affordable or free goods and services at a time of heightened cost-of-living pressures. Reuse hubs were found to redistribute surplus furniture through partnerships with residential homes and schools and work closely with social workers, mental health teams and Women's Aid to provide free furniture for people experiencing homelessness or moving into new accommodation.

Several interviewees described initiatives that provide essential household items for those most in need. Examples include rehoming packs containing refurbished furniture and white goods for people moving into social housing, as well as baby banks offering items such as highchairs and stair gates to families who might otherwise struggle to afford them. One organiser noted that being able to borrow or buy second-hand items "gives [families] a leg up to spend money on something more important such as bills" (O4). Similarly, a reuse shop manager described how affordable goods allow customers to furnish their homes during the cost-of-living crisis, with a delivery partner saying that some service users call the service a "life saver" (DP1).

Importantly, these initiatives seek to avoid stigma by remaining open to everyone. One organiser explained, "you can come to us if you're struggling financially […] but you can also come if you're keen to do your best for the planet" (DP2). This inclusive approach ensures that Repair and Reuse Activities not only meet essential needs but also foster dignity and shared community participation across different socioeconomic groups.

4.2.1.4 Skills development

Participants widely recognised that Repair and Reuse Activities provide valuable opportunities for learning and skills development. Organisers described how volunteers receive structured training in areas such as portable appliance testing, GDPR compliance, manual handling and customer service. Volunteers are often rotated through different roles - for example, operating tills, testing electrical items, or

managing collections and deliveries - to build a broad and practical skillset. Some organisers also provide mentoring and references to support transitions into employment, with several volunteers, including students, moving into paid roles as a result. One volunteer explained that they joined a Library of Things because they "want to learn skills for [their] CV" (O11).

In addition to volunteer development, several initiatives have successfully increased awareness and understanding of circular economy principles among the wider community. One hub partnered with Eco-Schools, Play Wales and social enterprises to deliver repair and reuse workshops for children and families, while others run digital-inclusion sessions for older people and migrants. These activities support both environmental education and community cohesion by normalising sustainable practices.

Survey data reinforce these findings. Over half of respondents (59%, n=71) felt they had learned new skills or gained confidence through participation. However, when asked to identify specific skills in a multiple-choice question, only six respondents selected particular options. This suggests that while participants perceive general skills growth and confidence building, they may not always recognise or articulate the specific competencies gained through engagement.

4.2.1.5 Community cohesion

Participants frequently referred to Repair and Reuse Activities as 'community hubs.' Many of these sites function not just as practical facilities but as social spaces where people meet, learn, and build networks. Local authorities and organisers emphasised how this social dimension strengthens wellbeing and community identity. For example, one local authority noted that their reuse shop aims to host wider community services such as food parcel pickups, battery recycling and awareness campaigns, while another provides flexible space for meditation groups and mother-and-baby meetups. A third, designed as a "reuse village," integrates an education centre offering school workshops and learning sessions.

Events and workshops attract wide participation. One family day drew over 500 attendees and brought together schools and colleges, and some repair cafés delivered more than 500 sessions with growing demand for hands-on learning. Users and volunteers reported that these activities build social capital: people living alone

come to “chat, make friends and feel part of the community” (U1) and newcomers to an area use them to make connections. Volunteers form their own support networks, sharing skills and friendships. The user survey supported these findings, with 85% (n=65) of respondents who agreed that they have met new people in their community through Repair and Reuse Activities, and 52% (n=71) who feel more involved in their community.

The following case study of a Library of Things in Llandovery, Pethau Pawb, highlights the social impacts that Repair and Reuse Activities can have in a community.

4.2.1.6 Pethau Pawb Case Study – Llandovery

The Organisation

Pethau Pawb is a shop in the middle of Llandovery that acts primarily as a Library of Things. The shop does also host a repair café once per month and other community events on an ad hoc basis. The space is rented from a private landlord and managed by Ynni Sir Gar, who also own a nearby community wind turbine. The funding provided from the UK Shared Prosperity Sustainable Communities fund allowed organisers to turn the old newsagents in the town into a shop for the community.

The Library of Things has 140 items in total, with most items having come through donations. For example, lawnmowers and children’s toys have been gifted by the community. The success of the space is, in part, down to the generous local community – described by an organiser as “warm and welcoming.” An organiser said that:

“One family treat the service like a family ‘treat’, coming in and borrowing toys every month”

Impact

Organisers reported that Pethau Pawb plays a vital and ever-changing role in the heart of its community, particularly for older residents who often have few other local spaces to connect. Its welcoming environment offers more than just practical support. They said that many people simply drop in for a chat, highlighting the social value of such a space.

The team’s ability to keep adapting to meet community needs is one of its core strengths, ensuring its relevance and accessibility over time. The importance of the space is clear in its everyday interactions.

Successes and Lessons Learnt

Pethau Pawb has successfully established itself as both a practical community service and a valued local space, with a careful, curated approach to presentation that draws people in. Their seasonal window displays and selective stock choices help them act as a local attraction, boosting visibility and footfall. A key success lies in their focus on helping customers save money, offering quality items that can be seen and handled in person, which adds trust and satisfaction.

The shop benefits from a strong sense of local ownership, with the community playing a vital role in maintaining respectful use of the space through informal "self-policing." However, building a consistent volunteer base has been challenging, with many locals reluctant to commit regularly but still willing to help out informally. These difficulties highlight the importance of flexibility, presentation, but particularly of fostering local relationships in sustaining their work.

Difficulties

The organisation has faced challenges in balancing delivery with administrative expectations, particularly where funding targets risk overshadowing the core purpose of their work.

While supported by Sustainable Communities funding, strict limitations have created issues; especially when unspent funds remained towards the end of the funding period but could not be rolled over for future use. This rigidity has made it difficult to

plan for long-term impact and sustainability, despite clear community need and ongoing engagement.

Future Focus

Pethau Pawb is now entering a new phase of growth and diversification, supported by recent funding that will end in January 2026. This will enable expanded storage, an increased range of items available to borrow, and the delivery of new training opportunities focused on upcycling, jewellery making, furniture restoration, and tool sharpening. Crucially, the team is also working towards greater financial sustainability, recognising that they could not operate without external funding. To diversify income, they are offering local crafters the chance to stock items in the shop for a small monthly fee and are exploring ways to attract tourists.

The team have now secured additional funding specifically for training courses, with plans to run sessions in basic sewing skills using donated fabrics, backed by newly purchased sewing machines. Often, ideas for training and workshops emerge organically through everyday conversations with customers, many of whom offer their skills or suggest new activities. Looking ahead, the team hopes to expand their offer for children too, with creative schemes like hobby horse workshops and other family-friendly events in the pipeline.

4.2.1.7 Social impact conclusion

These findings, predominantly from local authorities, organisers and volunteers supplemented by a user survey, suggest that Repair and Reuse Activities generate significant social value such as improving wellbeing, fostering inclusion and building social capital. The evaluation explored how the emerging social contribution of Repair and Reuse Activities could be measured in future. Stakeholders, predominantly local authorities and organisers suggested that future monitoring should record who uses the services, how often and for what purposes; capture qualitative outcomes such as confidence, social connection and stress reduction; and track referrals from partner organisations. Based on these findings it may be that combining participant data with recognised social-value frameworks would allow funders to quantify outcomes and identify which frameworks work best for which communities, these social-value frameworks are discussed in greater detail in the section on the cost-effectiveness of CE funding.

4.2.2 Environmental

The primary environmental contribution of repair and reuse activities lies in keeping products in use for longer and avoiding the need to manufacture new items. This is reflected in the Theory of Change, which identifies the environmental outcomes as a decrease in volume of waste sent to landfill, and a decrease in waste carbon emissions. Across the 3 types of Repair and Reuse Activity, this manifests differently:

- Reuse hubs (including those integrated with HWRCs) collect unwanted items and redistribute them. This directly diverts material from landfill and provides an alternative to buying new.
- Repair cafés restore broken items so that users continue to use what they have, thereby diverting waste and avoiding new purchases.
- Libraries of Things (borrowing services) reduce overall consumption by allowing people to borrow seldom-used items instead of owning them; by reducing ownership, borrowing can also slow the flow of goods to landfill.

These differences shape how environmental benefits are measured. Reuse hubs, particularly those linked to HWRCs, report impacts by weight of material diverted and include these figures in Local Authorities' waste reporting; carbon savings are then inferred from the waste tonnage diverted, but the avoided emissions from manufacturing new products are not captured.

Repair cafés use the Farnham Repair Cafés Carbon Calculator which estimates both the weight of items saved from disposal and the greenhouse-gas emissions avoided. The calculator multiplies the number of successful repairs by an average weight and an average embodied-carbon factor for each product category, so it does account for emissions associated with the production of a replacement item.

Benthyg Cymru uses a range of tools and guidance to calculate their impact. This includes a Product Weight Protocol developed by the Reuse Network to calculate weight diverted from landfill, a carbon calculator developed by Edinburgh Tool Library, and their own methodologies for user savings based on RRP, number of loans, and number of borrowers.

As discussed in the methodology, a lack of data has inhibited the ability to calculate the scale of impacts, including those which could be reported on in monitoring data to align with the Theory of Change such as number of repairs, borrows, weight of items diverted and tCO_2e (tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent) avoided.

Qualitative interviews highlighted one Local Authority that opened reuse shops in March 2023. Along with better processing, these shops have diverted 101 tonnes of material from landfill, showcasing the scale of impact possible with integrated systems.

Between April 2020 and March 2025, Repair Café Wales reported 23,597 items repaired, though the true figure is likely higher due to under-reporting. The network recorded an 83.4% success rate across items such as clothing, household electronics, technology, woodwork, furniture, bicycles and children's toys. Using the Farnham calculator, these repairs are estimated to have avoided approximately 776 tonnes of CO_2e of emissions and diverted 82.6 tonnes of waste from landfill. This highlights both the environmental value of repair cafés and the need for consistent reporting. Currently, Repair Café Wales uses a single conversion factor per repair, but the calculator offers 8 item-specific conversion factors. The single conversion factor used comes from the average carbon intensity of a repaired item excluding bicycles and is based on the proportion of items repaired during the period in which the study took place. Therefore, it has not weighted each item type equally but considered the proportion of repairs for each item type to reflect the operation of repair cafés.

Between 2021 and 2025, Benthyg Cymru recorded 20,062 loans. These generated user savings of about £485,571 in avoided retail expenditure, prevented 232.75 tonnes of CO_2e of emissions and kept 11.2 tonnes of waste out of landfill. While these figures do not include embedded carbon, they show the clear benefits of borrowing instead of buying.

Finally, the user survey data suggest that repair and reuse activities are broadly effective, with 77% (n=55) of respondents saying Repair and Reuse Activities had the benefit of helping them reduce waste and support environmental sustainability.

4.2.2.1 Fostering behaviour change

Beyond immediate reductions in waste, evaluation findings indicate that Repair and Reuse Activities are helping to shift attitudes and behaviours towards a more circular economy. Several stakeholders, particularly local authorities and organisers, emphasised that these initiatives play an influential role in moving away from a throw-away society, and are about "cultural change over volume" (LA8). Of the 60 respondents to the user survey who had used a repair café in the last year, only 20 had said that in the absence of the repair café they would borrow from a friend, try to repair the item themselves, or use a commercial repair service. All other respondents suggested they would replace the item with a new one or dispose of the old item through the waste system, which suggests that repair cafés support the shift towards a circular economy with the existing alternatives proving less attractive. Of the 26 user survey respondents who had used a Library of Things, 10 said they would have bought a new item and 9 said they would have bought a second-hand item while others highlighted borrowing through rental services or from rents as an alternative.

As shown in the case study of Wastesavers Reuse Hub case study Repair and Reuse Activities are shifting the perception of reuse to a location where people can access high quality goods. One volunteer organiser at a reuse shop described how the shop itself is used to "leverage change in how people manage their waste" and to demonstrate that exchanging goods can be just as convenient as buying new (O9). During the COVID-19 pandemic, they noticed that people were more inclined to throw away and replace items, and the shop has been a driver for reversing that trend (O9).

When asked in the user survey to what extent respondents agreed with the following statements on repair and reuse behaviours:

- 60% (n=65) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 'I now have more items repaired instead of replacing them'
- 56% (n=65) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 'I now repair more items myself instead of replacing them'
- 60% (n=65) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 'I buy fewer new products as I repair them instead'

- 55% (n=65) of respondents agreed that ‘I buy fewer new products because I buy them second-hand’
- 47% (n=64) of respondents agreed that ‘I am more likely to borrow items instead of buying them (e.g., through a Library of Things)’
- 86% (n=65) of respondents agreed that ‘I encourage others (friends, family) to repair, borrow or buy items second hand’

Staff at reuse shops reported that customers increasingly see pre-owned goods as a sensible alternative to buying new, even if it doesn’t necessarily reduce the amount of goods consumed. One organiser recounted a regular customer who buys a second-hand sofa every 6 to 8 months because her dog chews them; she prefers to spend £100 on a reused sofa rather than £2,000 on a new one which is behaviour that keeps reusable furniture in circulation and supports the shop’s business model.

The evaluation found that Local Authorities and network organisations promote the idea that waste items are a resource. One council’s reuse village diverts significant amounts of furniture, textiles, bric-a-brac and paint from landfill and has established a county-wide paint reuse facility. Staff training across the site has assisted in embedding a ‘resource not waste’ ideology, and the village hosts educational visits and events to reinforce this message. Another local authority noted that even though reuse shops may not deliver large tonnages, their primary value is in changing mindsets (LA8).

Initiatives such as large-scale community reuse and donation events demonstrate the impact of coordinated community efforts to reduce waste: in one year, 6 tonnes of food were donated to foodbanks and 3 tonnes of goods were diverted to reuse shops and charities within one local authority Other programmes distribute free food waste caddies and host community litter picks, using hubs as central drop-off and collection points. A mobile reuse and engagement vehicle also reaches rural communities, providing reuse services and raising awareness in areas where facilities are limited.

There are barriers to the development of behaviour change, particularly that it is not uniform across users. Some interviewees cautioned that reuse shops may simply shift where people buy goods rather than reduce overall consumption. Capacity constraints also limit what can be achieved: one local authority acknowledged that it

lacks the resources to sort bulky waste for reuse before collection, despite guidance encouraging it. As with other impact areas, robust monitoring would help to quantify how attitudes and behaviours are changing over time and to identify which interventions are most effective.

The case study below of Wastesavers Reuse Centre in Maindee, Newport, highlights the sustained impacts, including environmental impacts, that Repair and Reuse Activities can have.

4.2.2.2 Wastesavers Case Study - Maindee

The Organisation

Wastesavers Charitable Trust Ltd has its roots in recycling, having first approached Newport City Council in 1985 to introduce paper recycling. Since then, it has grown into a multifaceted social enterprise operating across South Wales.

The Wastesavers Reuse Centre, launched in 2018, and relocated to Maindee in 2021 to be based on Chepstow Road. The Centre combines furniture and IT reuse, a repair café, a Benthyg Library of Things, and is home to the Newport Makerspace. More recently, a nappy library has also been launched on site.

Their work stretches beyond the walls of the centre. Wastesavers operates ten charity shops within recycling centres across South Wales and actively supports wider initiatives such as the Pontypool repair café. The organisation's outreach extends to local charities, schools, and homeless support networks, while their partnerships with large brands provide a unique stream of high-quality donated furniture, which is available to households in need. One member of staff said:

> “What might once have been dismissed as a ‘junk shop’ is now seen as a space where people can access high-quality, affordable items”

Impact

The Centre’s large physical presence in Newport has opened up more entry points for people to engage with reuse and repair. Located between three of the city’s more deprived neighbourhoods, organisers reported that the service reaches a large cross section of the population, including lower-income families and individuals experiencing the cost-of-living crisis with affordable, practical support.

Crucially, staff and volunteers stated that Wastesavers is helping to shift public perceptions. What might once have been dismissed as a ‘junk shop’ is now seen as a space where people can access high-quality, affordable items. A volunteer reported that visitors are often surprised by the standard of donations available, and second-hand shopping is increasingly recognised as smart, environmentally conscious, and socially valuable.

The Wastesavers volunteer programme is central to this impact. With 170 active volunteers, the focus is on social inclusion and helping individuals build confidence, routines, and pathways into work. Staff suggested that many go on to find paid employment after gaining experience at the centre. Opportunities are shaped around individual goals, and the team is currently exploring Social Return on Investment (SROI) to better evidence this value.

The Centre also supports digital inclusion, especially among older residents and newly arrived migrants, helping them navigate online systems (from prescription services to council forms) through tailored, hands-on support.

Successes and Lessons Learnt

Wastesavers sees the current reuse movement as being in its early stages, just eight years into what they compare to the 20-year journey it took for recycling to become mainstream. That long view helps frame their achievements and the scale of potential still ahead.

Retail at the Reuse Centre is deliberately non-traditional: quick turnover is the goal, with staff knowing what will sell and when; from gardening gear in spring to toys at Christmas. This agility is part of what makes the centre financially sustainable.

Volunteers are an integral part of the operation. Many discover the centre simply by walking in, while others are referred through job centres, support workers, or other organisations. Whatever the route, Wastesavers ensures volunteers feel valued and supported.

Cultural shifts are underway, too. Staff reported that repair cafés and upcycling are increasingly recognised as useful, money-saving alternatives to buying new. The team notes that younger people in particular are driving a renewed interest in repairing and reusing - treating it not just as necessity, but as something stylish, empowering, and community-minded.

Difficulties

Despite strong community roots, some concepts - like the Benthyg model of borrowing - can be difficult to communicate across a diverse local population. Uptake has been slower than hoped in some areas, highlighting the need for tailored engagement.

Wastesavers also faces rising costs: fuel, utilities, insurance, and staffing have all become more expensive, putting added pressure on income generated through the shops. At times, staff shortages leave teams stretched. Sustaining day-to-day operations while continuing to grow remains a balancing act.

Future Focus

Launched as part of the 2020 to 2025 business plan, the Reuse Centre is now entering a new phase: consolidating what’s worked and looking ahead with renewed

purpose. After over four decades, Wastesavers is largely self-sufficient, but the team sees big value in expanding its education and outreach.

Plans are forming to strengthen links with schools and community groups, ideally through a funded education role. The aim is to embed reuse, repair and recycling values early, so they carry through children's lives and influence families more broadly.

With strong networks, a flexible model, and deep community ties, Wastesavers is well-positioned to lead Newport's circular economy journey and to inspire others across Wales to follow suit.

4.2.2.3 Environmental impact conclusion

Overall, the evidence shows that Repair and Reuse Activities all help reduce waste and cut greenhouse-gas emissions, though in different ways. Improving the consistency and scope of monitoring would allow stronger comparisons across activities. The available evidence points to a positive environmental impact, using carbon as a measure. However, data gaps from local authority reuse hubs mean the full scale of this impact cannot be fully determined by this evaluation. The evidence also suggests that Repair and Reuse Activities are beginning to influence consumer habits and social norms of those who use them, embedding concepts of repair and reuse in everyday life.

4.2.3 Economic

Interviews, case studies and the user survey have highlighted that Repair and Reuse Activities deliver economic benefits across multiple levels, however, it is important to note that this research has focussed on the cost-effectiveness of Repair and Reuse Activities and economic impact evaluation was secondary. This has influenced the level of data collected and the questions posed during fieldwork. The key economic impacts that emerged from the research were skills development, employment opportunities, revenue generation, and user savings.

4.2.3.1 Skills development

Repair and Reuse Activities provide valuable opportunities for participants to gain practical skills that enhance employability and support progression into work. Several

local authorities and organisers highlighted that volunteering roles are explicitly targeted at people with disabilities and young people not in education, employment or training. Some hubs also provide structured and supportive placements for people who are “socially excluded, have learning difficulties or are excluded from mainstream work” (O4). One organiser described a partnership with probation services in which participants upcycle furniture, gaining hands-on experience in carpentry and joinery - illustrating how these activities can provide meaningful routes into skill-building and employment.

Stakeholders across projects emphasised the existing “skills gap” in repair activities and the need for greater investment in training (LA1). Fieldwork confirmed that many hubs actively address this by developing participants’ confidence and practical ability through volunteering, workshops, and training programmes. Several projects reported working directly with community learning providers, offering training in carpentry, sewing and DIY. These initiatives have demonstrable employment outcomes: one project reported that 10% of its staff were recruited through supported employment pathways, while others noted that volunteers had successfully transitioned into paid roles. In a few cases, participants even developed their own businesses, applying digital and design skills gained through Repair and Reuse Activities to start small enterprises such as digital design and resin printing.

4.2.3.2 Job creation

In some cases, reuse hubs and shops have created and sustained local jobs. One reuse shop supports the equivalent of four full-time posts and contributes to the wider social enterprise model. In North Wales, Circular Economy Fund support enabled job retention at one reuse shop and created spin-off opportunities through workshop facilitation. At other sites, the progression pathway from volunteering to employment was described as a “stepping stone” to full-time work, particularly for those with limited prior experience of the labour market (LA6).Finally, local authority interviewees stated that Repair and Reuse Activities have contributed to increased high street footfall and town centre regeneration by drawing people into shared spaces, which may have potential knock-on benefits for nearby businesses (LA5, LA8).

4.2.3.3 Self-sustaining

Some reuse shops linked to HWRCs have been reported to operate on a self-financing basis, generating turnover and reinvesting profits into green initiatives or community programmes. For example, one Local Authority reported an increase in turnover from £50,000 to £107,000 within 4 years, while another recorded £400,000 across three sites in a single year. Several reuse shops run on profit-share arrangements with Local Authorities, directing surpluses to local charities or community projects. Others operate under KPI-linked contracts with bulky waste providers. Although some sites initially operated at a loss, one organiser noted that most became financially sustainable within 2 to 3 years, highlighting the importance of capital support at start-up but showing that long-term reliance on grants is often unnecessary once operations are established.

4.2.3.4 Money-saving

Findings from users engaged suggested that repairing or borrowing items instead of buying new helps them save money, with 62% (n=71) of user survey respondents reporting that using a Repair and Reuse Activity saved them money. Of the 60 survey respondents who had used a repair café, 47 said it saved them money. Users who responded to the survey stated that the items they had repaired in repair cafés would have cost on average £183 to replace new. Library of Things user respondents to the survey suggested that they saved on average £300 by borrowing the item rather than buying new.

Data from Benthyg Cymru showed that the 20,062 loans recorded between the years 2021 and 2025 generated user savings of about £485,571 in avoided retail expenditure. Repair Café Wales announced in January 2025 that £1 million had been saved through repairs [footnote 2] since being founded in 2017. These savings could have several secondary effects including building financial resilience if money is saved, supporting the local economy if spent locally, or improvements to health if used for essentials such as heating or food. While these benefits are potential rather than proven, they highlight the wider value of such services.

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[2] Wales saves £1m by mending not spending | GOV.WALES

The following case study of Crest's reuse shops in Llandudno highlights the economic impacts that Repair and Reuse Activities can have.

4.2.3.5 Crest Case Study – Llandudno

The Organisation

Crest is a registered charity and social enterprise based in Conwy County, North Wales. Established in 1998, it set out to combine reuse and recycling with community enterprise. The organisation aims to reduce waste and create jobs and training opportunities for those out of work. Today, Crest is one of the region's leading reuse organisations. It now reduces waste sent to landfill, while supporting skills development and local economic activity.

Crest runs four retail outlets selling pre-loved furniture, clothing, and refurbished electrical goods. Its headquarters at Brierley House handles repairs and refurbishment. The Ralph Higgins Reuse Hub on Pabo Lane specialises in white goods. Other activities include upcycling workshops, creating products from reclaimed materials, and managing Happitat. This is a dedicated upcycling store in Llandudno that challenges perceptions of second-hand goods.

Crest also provides furnishing services for people moving, runs a community radio station, and supports a food bank funded through profits. With an annual turnover of around £1 million, 40 staff, and 50 volunteers, Crest has become a fixture in Conwy's economic and social landscape.

Impact

Crest is seen as “an organisation that belongs to the community” to quote one volunteer. Its work blends environmental action with strong social value.

By making second-hand shopping easy, the volunteer suggested that Crest has helped change views and reduce stigma around reused goods. Organisers said that its close relationships with local stakeholders allow it to shape thinking on reuse, and its training and work schemes have helped people into jobs, boosted confidence, and built skills. From furnishing homes for people in crisis to running a food bank, Crest remains a trusted, people-focused presence in Conwy County.

Success and Lessons Learnt

Organisers state that Crest has become a model for community-led reuse. They say that its success rests on putting people first by supporting staff, volunteers, and trainees to develop skills and move on to new opportunities. Strong partnerships with stakeholders extend its reach and help share best practice.

Adaptability is another key strength. Crest has evolved its services over time, responding to changing needs and challenges. During Covid-19 its resilience was tested, when it maintained support for staff and volunteers. Each volunteer benefits from mentoring and a personal development plan, ensuring their time with Crest is a positive step for their own goals.

Difficulties

Crest now faces rising costs, including increases in National Insurance and the minimum wage. These costs place pressure on budgets and makes it harder to keep skilled staff. Recruitment is also a challenge.

Funding is often short-term and tied to narrow targets, making long-term planning difficult. Delays in funding approvals can lead to periods of uncertainty followed by a rush to spend, creating an uneven funding cycle that hinders growth.

Future Focus

Crest aims to continue growing its environmental, economic, and social impact while addressing their challenges. It sees a need for a Wales-wide reuse network to share best practice and is exploring the potential to lead this work with the right investment.

In Conwy, Crest plans to expand capacity at Pabo Lane to meet rising demand. This will offer services for refurbishing and to deliver more educational activities (such as plastic recycling workshops in schools). With experience, and a track record of innovation, Crest is well placed to keep evolving - provided it can secure the resources to match its ambition.

4.2.3.6 Economic impact conclusion

Overall, the evaluation finds that repair and reuse activities deliver meaningful economic benefits across several levels to individuals, communities, and local economies. While the Circular Economy Fund was designed primarily as an environmental programme, the evidence indicates that these initiatives have also generated skills development, employment opportunities, cost savings, and financially self-sustaining enterprises. At an individual level, participants gain practical and transferable skills that improve employability, with several volunteers progressing into paid roles or establishing their own small businesses. At the community level, reuse hubs and shops have created local jobs and reinvested revenue into social and environmental projects, demonstrating a degree of financial resilience once initial capital investment is provided. For users, borrowing, repairing and buying second-hand goods deliver tangible financial savings and greater access to affordable items during the cost-of-living crisis. Although comprehensive economic data were not collected under this evaluation, these findings suggest that repair and reuse initiatives can make a valuable contribution to local economic development when supported with targeted start-up funding, skills investment and strategic coordination.

4.3 Cost-effectiveness of Circular Economy funding

Cost-effectiveness analysis is outlined in HM Treasury's Green Book as a method of comparing the costs and benefits of different options to produce the same or similar outputs in order to identify the intervention that balances the costs, risks and benefits of a policy or programme. Ideally, this analysis is carried out when designing a programme to compare alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes. It considers costs and benefits to society as a whole, not just to the spending body, in this case, Welsh Government. Where no alternative options are available, cost-effectiveness is often assessed against a counterfactual, i.e., what would have happened if the programme had not taken place ('Business as Usual'). The evaluation therefore considers cost-effectiveness by estimating what may have happened in the absence of the Circular Economy Fund. However, the ability to determine within this evaluation whether Circular Economy Fund expenditure on Repair and Reuse Activities represented value for money was limited by several constraints.

4.3.1 Total spend and distribution of spend

The Circular Economy Fund was distributed to Local Authorities and their partners on a competitive grant basis. The funding included a mix of capital and revenue funding and was granted to those with links to HWRCs and those that were not. The following was allocated:

- £5.6 million capital funding for HWRC linked projects to upgrade HWRCs by integrating reuse facilities into their operations
- £798,381 revenue funding for HWRC linked projects
- £3.9 million capital funding for community-based projects to establish or enhance community and high street-based Repair and Reuse Activities
- £2.2 million revenue funding for community-based projects

Due to the competitive nature of the funding, it was not evenly split across Wales with Local Authorities required to bid for the funding. Table 1 outlines how the funding was allocated, with Gwynedd receiving the most, supporting the largest number of projects, and hosting the highest number of hubs.

Table 2: Circular Economy Fund grant funding by Local Authority between financial years 2019 to 2020 and 2024 to 2025

Local Authority	Total spend	Number of grants	Number of hubs
Anglesey	£446,424	2	6
Blaenau Gwent	£308,000	2	2
Bridgend	£0	0	0
Caerphilly	£761,081	2	2
Cardiff	£304,222	3	3
Carmarthenshire	£544,280	5	5
Ceredigion	£0	0	0
Conwy	£636,608	1	1
Denbighshire	£384,819	3	3
Flintshire	£352,472	1	1
Gwynedd	£2,739,302	10	27
Merthyr Tydfil	£0	0	0
Monmouthshire	£940,670	4	17
Newport	£858,755	4	4
Neath Port Talbot	£12,950	2	2
Not applicable	£33,525	1	1
Pembrokeshire	£605,000	1	1
Powys	£1,493,946	5	9
RCT	£859,318	4	5
Swansea	£686,744	5	12
Torfaen	£205,715	1	2
Vale of Glamorgan	£358,194	1	1
Wrexham	£27,523	1	1
Total	**£12,559,549**	**58**	**105**

Source: Welsh Government Circular Economy Fund data

What Table 2 demonstrates is that there is not necessarily a link between the level of funding and the number of hubs supported. Monmouthshire and Newport received around £900k in grant funding yet Monmouthshire supported double the number of hubs. This is likely due to potential scale of capital works required differing and the complexity of the funded projects. The grant funding has an emphasis on capital spend and these should be treated as strategic investments with any value considered over the useable lifetime of the assets.

4.3.2 Monitoring of outputs

As noted previously, comprehensive monitoring of outputs in relation to spend was not introduced until late in the programme. Without consistent data on the scale of activities and the number of participants, it is impossible to accurately estimate the total social, environmental or economic benefits generated, and thus to compare these benefits with the cost of funding or a business-as-usual scenario.

4.3.3 Lack of applicable social value calculations

While emerging methodologies in the HM Treasury Green Book and related literature offer ways to value social outcomes, these were not applicable here because of the wide range of potential impacts, the lack of applicable social valuations, and in some cases the lack of participation data. For example, recent studies have monetised the health benefits of physical activity; similar positive effects, such as improved confidence, social inclusion and wellbeing, may be anticipated from participation in Repair and Reuse Activities. However, these have not been developed to value the impact of community engagement and, therefore, using these may under or overestimate the potential impact. In addition, without information on the reach and intensity of Repair and Reuse Activity engagement, a social value calculation cannot be attempted.

4.3.4 Definition of intended benefits

Evidence from interviews with Welsh Government policy colleagues, the policy background, and the development of the Theory of Change makes it clear that the primary objective of the Circular Economy Fund Repair and Reuse Activity programmes was environmental, with social and economic benefits acknowledged but not consistently articulated or targeted [footnote 3]. As a result, Repair and Reuse Activities pursued a wide variety of social outcomes which is an asset in terms of community impact but a challenge for measurement. Even with a small sample of projects, it would be difficult to attribute observed benefits to programme expenditure when outcomes were neither standardised nor explicitly linked to funding decisions.

[3] As noted in the introduction one of the objectives of this evaluation is to identify social impacts to allow for future funding to better identify and monitor social impacts.

4.3.5 Diversity of spend

Finally, the Circular Economy Fund supported 4 different types of Repair and Reuse Activity and provided a mix of capital and revenue funding. Any assessment of cost-effectiveness would need to differentiate between these funding streams and activities. For instance, the wellbeing benefits associated with volunteering at a repair café cannot be assumed to apply to users of a reuse hub. Similarly, capital grants for construction or refurbishment serve a different purpose from revenue grants that support the operation of a Library of Things. Aggregating such diverse expenditures into a single cost-effectiveness calculation would therefore be misleading.

4.3.6 Counterfactual approach

The following sections consider the cost-effectiveness of capital spending, revenue support for repair cafés and Libraries of Things, and grants to network organisations separately, taking into account what would have happened in the absence of Circular Economy Fund funding.

4.3.6.1 Repair and Reuse Activity Hubs

In the context of the Circular Economy Fund, the Welsh Government invested £9.5 million in capital projects: approximately £5.6 million to upgrade HWRCs by integrating reuse facilities into their operations, and £3.9 million to establish or enhance community- and high-street-based Repair and Reuse Activities. Welsh Government guidance on developing a programme business case notes that when an intervention involves creating and delivering new facilities there is little ambiguity about what the programme will deliver. In such cases assessing cost-effectiveness involves either reviewing whether the procurement of the facilities represented value for money, or examining the impacts of the activities that took place within those facilities after procurement. For the first, value for money in procurement is assured for public bodies through standard public procurement processes, while third-sector organisations must demonstrate it in their grant applications. For the second, however, the Welsh Government did not monitor how the use of the facilities were used after procurement as it is the use of grant funding which is monitored against targets. In these cases the targets relate to capital spend such as the procurement of

contractors. Any impact upon Repair and Reuse Activities is assumed based on the use of the facilities after the grant funding has been spent and monitoring of the project has ended., No monitoring data would be collected on activities within the facilities in these cases. Assessment of the potential impact of the spend on Repair and Reuse Activities therefore relies on qualitative data collected during the evaluation.

Evidence from interviews with Local Authority stakeholders suggests that reuse shops financed through the Circular Economy Fund are now financially self-sustaining. In this sense, the capital investment can be viewed as a strategic contribution to environmental objectives while also delivering social and economic benefits. Without Circular Economy Fund support, many Local Authorities, facing pressure on core services such as education and social care, would have been unlikely to prioritise these projects in the short term. Some authorities might have introduced reuse facilities over a longer period, but the national programme has accelerated implementation across Wales.

Unlike capital funding, which focuses on creating and delivering facilities, revenue funding aims to encourage external or societal change. This type of funding is less clear-cut, involves more ambiguity, and is typically more focused on outcomes. In total, the Welsh Government awarded grants worth approximately £2.2 million to non-HWRC-linked hubs that offer repair and borrowing services and £0.8 million to HWRC-linked repair and reuse hubs. Interviews with Welsh Government stakeholders highlighted several anticipated outcomes from this support, including community engagement, skills development and environmental benefits.

As discussed in earlier sections, the absence of comprehensive monitoring data means that it is not possible to accurately calculate the monetary value of these benefits or any savings to the Welsh Government. An example saving, as identified in the social impact section, could be reduced healthcare costs through improved wellbeing and mental health. Social impact measurement techniques outlined in the HM Treasury Green Book are still evolving and are difficult to apply when participation numbers, the intensity of engagement and baseline wellbeing are unknown. Without monitoring data, the evaluation cannot estimate the potential value of avoided healthcare costs, as it cannot determine how many participants

there were, how many experienced these outcomes, and there is not a method for translating this data into avoided healthcare.

When considering the counterfactual, what would have happened in the absence of Circular Economy Fund funding, it is difficult to say whether similar social outcomes would have been realised through other community activities. It is plausible that some individuals who gained confidence or social connections through Repair and Reuse Activities might have found other avenues for engagement. Nonetheless, the headline findings underscore that Repair and Reuse Activities create distinct spaces that combine environmental action with community-building and personal development, suggesting that without Circular Economy Fund support, many of these social benefits may not have materialised at the same scale or intensity.

Finally, the presence of alternative funding sources such as the Shared Prosperity Fund and the National Lottery, while valuable for sustaining Repair and Reuse Activities, adds further complexity to cost-effectiveness analysis by making it harder to isolate the impact of Circular Economy Fund funding alone. The recommendations set out in Section 5 of this report are designed to enhance future evaluations for example by improving monitoring, clarifying intended outcomes and distinguishing between different funding streams so that a more robust assessment of benefits relative to spend can be undertaken.

4.3.6.2 Network Organisations

Evaluating whether the grant funding for network organisations Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru was cost-effective in achieving the goal of expanding Repair and Reuse Activities requires exploring what might have existed without their support. Interview data suggests that many local groups would not have launched repair cafés or Libraries of Things without the networks' support in spreading awareness, administrative support, training, and logistical assistance.

4.3.6.3 Repair Café Wales

Repair Café Wales was founded in 2017 and had received funding from the Welsh Government's Landfill Disposal Tax Community Scheme, People's Postcode Lottery, Community Foundation Wales, Wales Church Fund, and Welsh Council for Voluntary Action Volunteering Grant. It is currently predominantly funded by the Welsh Government's Circular Economy Fund.

Through the Circular Economy Fund, Repair Café Wales received £771,598 between financial years 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025. During this period, they contributed to the growth of the number of repair cafés in Wales from 8 members to 133 members. Through their members, 23,597 repairs have been completed, 1,178 members have been engaged, and 776 tonnes of GHG emissions have been avoided. Table 3 shows that the number of repair cafés and outputs such as number of repairs and GHG emissions has scaled alongside Repair Café Wales funding received through the Circular Economy Fund. However, there was a decrease in number of cafés from 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 with Repair Café Wales auditing their membership to identify inactive cafés during this time. Even with this slight decrease the number of volunteers, repairs and GHG emissions avoided increased from financial years 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025.

Table 3: Annual scaling of Repair Cafés 2020 to 2025

Financial Year	Funding received	Number of Cafés	Number of Volunteers	Number of Repairs	GHG Emissions avoided (tCO_2e)
2020-21	£59,905.84	8	382	226	7.4354
2021-22	£90,000.00	74	378	3005	98.8645
2022-23	£146,817.93	105	685	6169	202.9601
2023-24	£231,967.00	137	908	6458	212.4682
2024-25	£242,908.00	133	1178	7965	262.0485
Total	**£771,598.77**	**133**	**1178**	**23597**	**776.3413**

Source: WG and Network Monitoring data

Repair Café Wales supported around 133 cafés. UK-wide figures vary, from 400 [footnote 4] to possibly over 766 [footnote 5], however, taking the higher figure Wales still outperforms in terms of density with more than 3 times as many cafés as the rest of the UK per capita.

4.3.6.4 Benthyg Cymru (Libraries of Things)

Benthyg Cymru received £915,000 in funding between the financial years of 2021 to 2022 and 2024 to 2025 which saw growth of membership from 8 to 30 Libraries of Things. Over that time, Benthyg has supported Libraries of Things to grow annual borrowing from 903 to 6,748 borrows, diverted over 11 tonnes of waste from landfill,

[4] Network – Farnham Repair Cafe
[5] Find a repair group - Community Repair Network

supported users to save £485,571 and contributed to 232 tonnes of GHG emissions being avoided. Table 4 (below) demonstrates the increasing outcomes and impacts of Libraries of Things alongside the growth of Benthyg Cymru.

Table 4: Annual Scaling of Libraries of Things 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025

Financial Year	Funding received	LoTs	Borrows	Landfill savings (kg)	Cost savings	GHG Emissions (tCO_2e)
2021-22	£77,883.00	8	903	1825.15kg	£24,145.55	11.57857
2022-23	£218,181.69	12	4984	1905.52kg	£121,744.99	61.04282
2023-24	£316,054.47	19	7427	2550.20kg	£179,782.88	86.30428
2024-25	£302,685.53	30	6748	5039.10kg	£159,897.70	73.82697
Total	**£914,804.69**	**30**	**20,062**	**11,319.97**	**£485,571.12**	**232.75**

Source: WG and Network Monitoring data

Benthyg Cymru has about 30% of the UK total of Libraries of Things[footnote 6]. Given Wales comprises only 4.6% of the UK population, it has over 6 times the UK average number of Libraries of Things per capita.

4.3.7 Data limitations and underreporting

Activity figures are likely conservative. Reporting relies on data-sharing from individual hubs, which can be limited due to:

- informal data agreements
- administrative burden on volunteers
- development of more robust reporting systems

The actual scale of repairs, loans, and associated benefits is likely higher than reported.

In this case the growth of Repair and Reuse Activities in Wales cannot be entirely attributed to the network organisations due to the favourable strategic environment, Circular Economy Fund funding of Hubs through Local Authorities, and communities initiating Repair and Reuse Activities themselves. However, it is clear from both qualitative and quantitative data that both Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru have played an important role in the increase in Repair and Reuse Activities in

[6] Libraries of Things Directory | Ethical Consumer

Wales. Compared to the rest of the UK, Wales has built a robust repair and reuse infrastructure through investment in networks.

4.4 Factors affecting impact and cost-effectiveness

4.4.1 Location

The location of Repair and Reuse Activities - urban or rural, sites in town centres, out of town, and/or at HWRCs - was explored as a potential factor impacting their effectiveness. Evidence from user surveys, focus groups and interviews was used to highlight the impact of location on accessibility and success of these activities.

Cars were the predominant mode of transport for accessing Repair and Reuse Activities, with trips for repair and borrowing services generally being a shorter distance than reuse services. This is illustrated in Table 5 (below). User survey responses highlighted issues around accessing the services on public transport, as well as the suggestion of more town centre locations to promote the service to a wider group of people. These responses align with results from the YouGov survey of the wider public, in which 52% (n=1,013) of respondents chose high street/town centre locations and 38% (n=1,013) chose 'near a supermarket' as the preferred location for a new repair and reuse hub to open near them, as illustrated in Figure 3 (below).

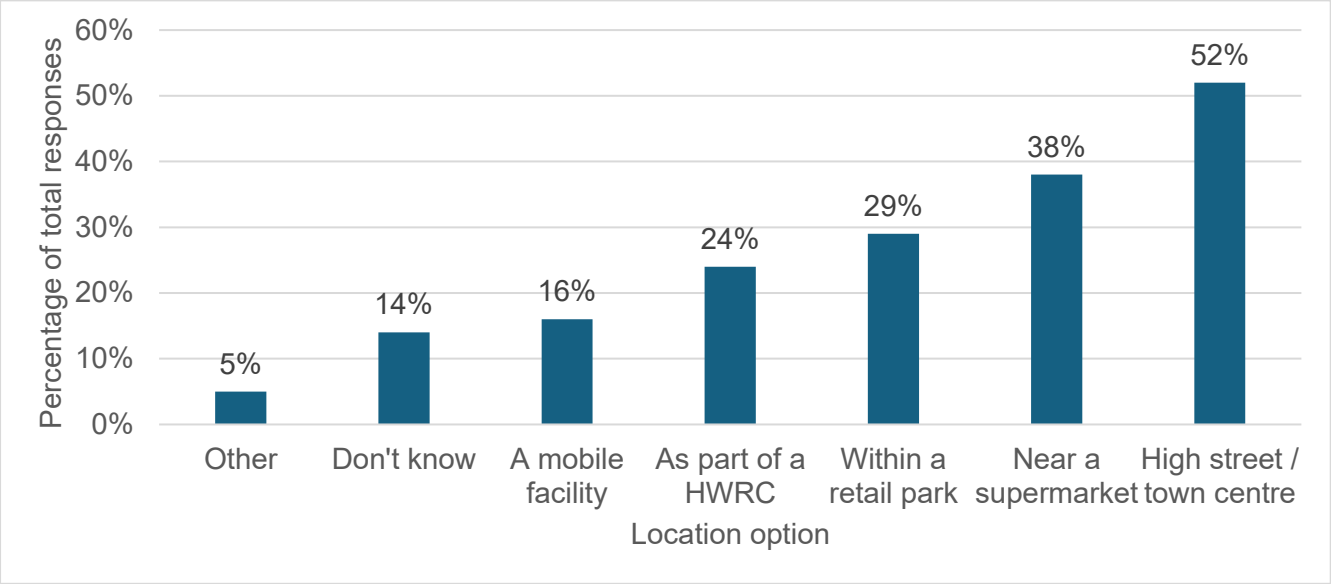
Table 5: User survey data indicating the modes of transport and travel distances for users of different Repair and Reuse Activities and services.

Service used	Most common modes of transport	Most common travel distance
Repair Services (n=56)	Car (64%, n=36)	1 to 2 miles (34%, n=19)
Borrowing Services (n=26)	Car (61%, n=16)	1 to 2 miles (35%, n=9)
Reuse shops (donation) (n=32)	Car (81%, n=26)	3 to 5 miles (31%, n=10)
Reuse shops (buying) (n=25)	Car (84%, n=21)	3 to 5 miles (32%, n=7)
Training/workshop sessions (n=13)	Car (46%, n=6)	Less than 1 mile (31%, n=4) and 3 to 5 miles (31%, n=4)

Source: Miller Research Repair and Reuse Activity User Survey

When asked if anything would encourage the respondent, or the wider community, to use Repair and Reuse Activities more often, 8 of the 33 written responses in the user survey highlighted current barriers in place including availability of public transport to access locations.

Figure 3: YouGov survey question asking respondents to suggest which location they would most likely use to access a new community-based service if one were to open near them.



Source: YouGov Survey, n=1,013

Interviews with Local Authorities and organisers revealed that the location of Repair and Reuse Activities has a significant influence on accessibility, visibility, and operational effectiveness. Town-centre or high-street locations were viewed by organisers, volunteers and users as highly beneficial for their connection to the local community, access by public transport and increased visibility and footfall. Their presence in central, familiar spaces was thought to normalise repair and reuse, attracting casual visitors who might not otherwise engage. However, organisers and users also highlighted practical limitations, particularly around parking and handling bulky donations or purchases, which can deter participation for those transporting large or heavy items.

By contrast, out-of-town and HWRC-based models were recognised by local authorities and organisers for their operational efficiency and environmental impact, as they enable reusable items to be intercepted before reaching landfill and can accommodate larger volumes and bulkier goods. Several users suggested that these sites are typically more convenient for users with access to cars and are integral to

waste-management systems. However, they are often less accessible by public transport, limiting inclusivity for those without private vehicles. Several organisers also cited space constraints for sorting and storing items, even within HWRC compounds, and described difficulties promoting Repair and Reuse Activities in rural areas, where communities felt “left out” of advice and funding opportunities (O5).

Overall, the findings suggest that town-centre models maximise visibility and community engagement, while out-of-town models optimise material recovery and efficiency.

4.4.2 Business models

The evaluation identified different models of delivery which were defined in the introduction as ‘HWRC-based’, ‘community-based’, and ‘network-supported’. However, before describing the models in detail, it is important to emphasise that these models are not rigid or mutually exclusive categories. In practice, most repair and reuse activities sit somewhere along a spectrum, drawing on elements of each approach. A Library of Things might be hosted in a community centre (community-based), receive training and insurance support from Benthyg Cymru (network-supported) and collect stock from a household waste recycling centre (HWRC-based). Likewise, a reuse shop at a HWRC may collaborate with a network organisation to develop income streams, or a community repair café might operate on land owned by a Local Authority.

The typology used here is intended to highlight the differing strengths, opportunities and challenges associated with the main delivery routes rather than to suggest that Repair and Reuse Activities should conform to a single model. Classifying projects in this way avoids the need to define a proliferation of bespoke models and helps to structure the discussion of what works well and where further support might be required.

The funding through the Circular Economy Fund was distributed according to the differing needs and delivery models of the programme. HWRC-based projects primarily required capital investment to build or upgrade infrastructure, with £5.6 million in capital funding used to integrate reuse facilities into existing waste-management operations. These projects also received £798,381 in revenue funding

to support staffing, operational delivery and the establishment of sustainable reuse processes within Local Authority systems.

In contrast, community-based initiatives tended to receive a higher proportion of revenue support to sustain ongoing engagement and coordination. £3.9 million in capital funding was allocated to help establish or enhance community and high-street-based facilities, while a further £2.05 million in revenue funding supported the day-to-day running of projects.

4.4.2.1 HWRC-based model

In the HWRC-based model, Repair and Reuse activities are integrated into household waste recycling centres. Across the interviews with organisers, this model was consistently described as capital-intensive to establish but relatively inexpensive to run thereafter. One reuse shop operator noted that they "don't really need additional funding. [We've] got the tools, got the people. All paid for already. [The shop is] pretty self-sufficient" (O7). Another added that "start-up costs are the biggest cost" but once established, these operations are "relatively low cost to sustain" (O7) and "low-cost to run" (O10). Nevertheless, capital funding is essential: "Need the funding to set things up – can't do it without it" (O11).

Capital funding

These strengths make HWRC-based initiatives attractive from a funding perspective: they rely mainly on capital grants to build facilities or purchase equipment, and thereafter they cover their own running costs. Several organisers stressed their preference for contract-based funding rather than short-term grants, aiming to create sustainable enterprises and avoid "constantly chasing pots" (CS2). One organiser noted that they only apply for grants where they already meet the criteria and can keep the service going when funding ends. Another commented that while the repair café element of their operation is still in its infancy and not commercially viable on its own, the core business is self-sustaining and funding is used for "capacity building, creating more opportunities" (O5).

Capital investment has also enabled innovation. One Local Authority repurposed an area outside the town into an 'eco-village' with shops and a garden centre made from reused shipping containers; the complex includes a bike shop, paint shop, textiles shop, and a larger store for bric-a-brac and furniture. Stock comes from

recycling centres and donation centres, and the grant funded staffing and vehicles. Another Local Authority built a paint-reuse facility at their HWRC; any paint brought to the site is mixed into white emulsion for resale, and the facility is now open county-wide. Grants have allowed some Local Authorities to open more spaces or keep existing ones open when they might otherwise have closed.

Income generation

Some HWRC-based schemes generate enough income to cover their costs and operate in a self-sustaining manner. A Local Authority officer remarked that their reuse shop, launched just before Covid-19, achieved financial sustainability with minimal external input. At one site, everything repaired is sold to cover rent and staff costs, with profits passed on to community programmes or reinvested within the organisation: “the tip shop is 100% self-sufficient” (O4). Another authority reported that their shops are financially self-sustaining, with surpluses used to support green initiatives; turnover grew from £50,000 to £107,000 over 4 years. Reuse operations across 3 sites in one local authority generated £400,000 in turnover in 2024, delivering a small surplus without additional Local Authority subsidy.

Sustainability

Despite the emphasis on financial sustainability, organisers acknowledged that some activities are not commercially viable. One manager observed that “repair cafés don’t cost a lot to run” but they incur ongoing expenses (insurance, PAT testing, premises) and are not revenue-generating (O5). Others cautioned that most reuse enterprises would need ongoing support if they were to operate at scale. Many HWRC-based schemes still rely on volunteers, and several organisations envision a future in which projects become volunteer-led.

In summary, the HWRC-based model combines an initial capital investment to establish the service, followed by a self-financing operating model. It delivers immediate environmental impacts through high volumes of material diverted from landfill and provides affordable goods to local communities. At the same time, it offers employment and volunteering opportunities and can act as a catalyst for broader community regeneration. Challenges include the need for start-up capital, the limited commercial viability of some activities (particularly repair cafés) and the

reliance on volunteers, but overall, this model demonstrates how repair and reuse can be embedded into mainstream waste-management infrastructure.

4.4.2.2 Community-based model

Community-based Repair and Reuse Activities are typically initiated and run by local groups, often with support from Local Authorities and networks. They encompass a wide variety of initiatives, repair cafés, baby banks (facilities where families can access donated essential items for babies and children for free), textile-repurposing schemes, a mobile repair café, and rely heavily on partnerships, volunteer effort and a patchwork of funding, including a reliance on revenue funding during the Circular Economy Fund programme.

Capital funding

Capital funding has enabled community groups to acquire premises and equipment. Grants have been used to build repair sheds, equip makerspaces and expand facilities. In one local authority, a grant facilitated the repurposing of shipping containers to provide a space for repairing and re-selling items; staff and vehicles were also funded. Other projects struggled until they had a building: “Had funding to deliver projects already, but nowhere to run them from. This funding got the building” (DP1). Funding has also kept spaces open that were at risk of closing. A common theme identified by the evaluation is that small pots of money can have a big impact: one authority used a £50,000 fund to support 5 community projects, including textile repurposing and a repair café, and set aside further money for other groups.

Revenue funding

Community-based Repair and Reuse Activities often operate on mixed funding models. Some aim to be self-sustaining through sales and donations; others depend on grants for start-up costs or to pay staff. Funding delays and lack of revenue have forced some cafés to reduce opening hours, and the absence of revenue funding has hindered plans to develop central sorting and redistribution hubs despite political support. Profit-sharing arrangements with Local Authorities can also reduce the amount of surplus that can be reinvested in community activity; one project noted that the Local Authority takes £5,000 of a £10,000 profit because the shop operates on their land. Rising energy and staffing costs are eroding margins, meaning that sites must make enough money through sales to remain viable. Several interviewees

emphasised that they avoid grants that they cannot sustain after the funding period ends and called for more revenue funding to maximise the return on capital investment.

Sustainability

Volunteer labour is at the heart of most community-based Repair and Reuse Activities. The goal of one baby bank is to become “volunteer-led”: the coordinator is developing training so that volunteers can manage referrals, sort donations and deliver packs to families, with staff involvement limited to coordinating and providing expenses (DP2). Many projects see volunteering as a way to give people agency and rebuild community spirit: “mutual support is highly beneficial and sought after for mental health and wellbeing” (O10). However, volunteers can be hard to recruit and retain, particularly given Local Authority bureaucracy and paperwork: “There are too many hurdles” for people who want to help (O1).

Successful Repair and Reuse Activities depend heavily on both community partnerships and dedicated staff capacity. Local Authorities typically operate reuse shops with paid staff on council-owned land, while community models, which Libraries of Things and repair cafés tend to be, rely more on volunteers. For example, in Monmouthshire, two reuse shops are council-run, whereas the Libraries of Things are community-managed, except for Chepstow, where limited volunteer capacity has required Local Authority oversight. To strengthen delivery, two full-time roles funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund now coordinate activity across Benthyg, repair cafés, and school-based projects, demonstrating the importance of stable staffing alongside volunteer involvement.

At the community level, strong relationships with local organisations are critical to sustaining activity. One organiser described building their baby bank by creating “distribution points” in partnership with other charities and by approaching partners directly, finding that “face-to-face conversations work better than blanket emails” (DP2). These collaborations extend across sectors: some projects work with Local Authorities and social-care teams to provide day-service placements for people with learning disabilities, while others supply outdoor play materials to schools in partnership with Play Wales. Groups also collaborate with smaller local organisations to deliver circular-economy workshops and uniform repairs. Larger reuse charities

link into national supply chains, for example securing ex-display stock from department stores and furniture from cleared military housing through contracts negotiated by the Reuse Network.

Together, these examples show that effective partnerships, adequate staffing, and a balance between community initiative and institutional support are what make Repair and Reuse Activities sustainable and embedded in local systems.

Building partnerships can be difficult and may act as a barrier to Repair and Reuse Activity growth with interviewees highlighting that formal networking opportunities are unpredictable. One interviewee noted that an early makerspace network in Gwynedd "died down" and there are now "not a lot of networking opportunities" (DP6). There is also frustration that individual key performance indicators can discourage collaboration: "Individually we end up competing for the same pot" of funding (DP3). Some organisations called for a more coordinated approach to grants and partnerships by funding organisations so that community projects can "tie together" different funding streams and work more efficiently (DP3). Working with local businesses has proved challenging; one organiser reported little success in securing time or support from commercial partners (O6).

Barriers to growth include limited engagement from Local Authorities on data collection, "clunky" payment systems for borrowing items (O1), and a sense that policymakers are detached from grassroots practice: "Sometimes when policies come out, we've already been doing that for years. Need more direct contact with officials" (DP6). The same interviewee argued that community groups could deliver national strategies "with more trust, more funding, more collaboration," turning Wales into a stronger circular-economy nation (DP6). A Local Authority representative and an organiser flagged the need for a clearer local circular-economy strategy to guide expansion "we haven't got a plan of action other than to make what we have sustainable" (LA2) and for sustained networking to ensure consistent momentum across activities.

Despite these challenges, community-based Repair and Reuse Activities demonstrate how local initiatives can deliver tangible social and environmental benefits. They offer low-cost services, foster social connection and provide opportunities for volunteering and skill development. The diversity of projects, from

baby banks to eco-villages, shows the adaptability of the model. However, long-term sustainability will depend on stable revenue streams, supportive partnerships with Local Authorities and businesses, and mechanisms to share learning and resources across Wales.

4.4.2.3 Network-supported model

The network-supported model refers to repair cafés and Libraries of Things that are established and sustained without direct access to the Circular Economy Fund but receive support through the expertise of Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru. Interviewees repeatedly emphasised that without this support many projects would never have started. As one organiser said, they "wouldn't know how to start, how to advertise, [or deal with] issues around insurance and paperwork" and would likely not have taken the risk without Repair Café Wales's experience and legitimacy (O6). Another described the network's starter packs, complete with risk-assessment templates and waivers, as "instrumental in setting up" their project; they said they "would have really struggled" without them (O11). Repair Café Wales's starter pack was praised as comprehensive, with "always someone to ask questions if needed" (O10).

In practical terms, the networks provide a number of different types of support. Firstly, the networks provide logistical support. Repair Café Wales supplies the paperwork required to operate, offers a bulk-rate insurance scheme and arranges discounts on annual calibration of PAT-testing machines. Monthly meetings allow organisers to share best practice and troubleshoot problems; Repair Café Wales also provided a PAT testing machine and paid for volunteers to attend a PAT-testing course which is essential for electrical repairs. Organisers attend these meetings "for practical help and signposting for issues such as insurance advice" (O5). Both networks offer technical advice and training. Repair Café Wales runs training sessions via video call and pays for banners and PAT-testing courses; Benthyg Cymru "gives plenty of advice on best practice" and makes connections with other authorities (O11). One organiser noted that Benthyg Cymru's staff are "always on hand and are more than helpful. If they don't have the info, they make a point to try to find out," and that the organisation provides extensive resources and an educational package through its website (O1).

Some projects use online systems provided by Benthyg Cymru and Repair Café Wales to collect monitoring data. One Local Authority explained that they combined funding bids with Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru to support “continued collaboration to provide online systems to support data gathering, advice and to build on other successes” (DP3). However, others found the platforms cumbersome: a volunteer described Benthyg Cymru’s system as “not very user-friendly” because it is hosted on a US platform (V1), and several repair cafés resorted to paper forms because the Repair Café Wales online repair form “doesn’t translate into practice” – the organiser felt that the forms were clunky and impractical for users to complete during repair sessions (O3). They also noted that networks lack capacity to return processed data to individual cafés (“They don’t send us our stats, which would be good if they had the resources” - O3).

The networks engage in public-facing promotion and awareness-raising lending legitimacy and visibility to Repair and Reuse Activities. One organiser said membership “is useful in relation to confidence and empowerment and makes the whole process less daunting” by showing how similar projects have succeeded elsewhere (O5). Another commented that Wales has a supportive environment for circular economy initiatives, and that having networks like Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru “is critical” (O6). However, some interviewees felt this could be improved.

By linking local groups to wider networks, Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru facilitate collaboration and resource sharing. Local Authorities reported close collaboration with both organisations during initial set-up and ongoing operations. One organiser and one volunteer expressed a desire for an even broader Welsh circular-economy network to connect initiatives beyond repair cafés and Libraries of Things.

Interviewees also highlighted challenges. The growth of Repair and Reuse Activities has increased the workload and costs for network organisations, and continued public funding may be necessary to sustain their core functions. In North Wales, Repair Café Wales staff are “trying to fill a gap,” in terms of repair cafés in the region, and there are still areas without network-supported cafés (O6).

Despite these issues, there was consensus that without the financial and practical support of Repair Café Wales, Benthyg Cymru and the Welsh Government Repair and Reuse Activities would be less advanced, with one organiser stating that “there would still be nothing except for one shop” (O11). One founder, who started a repair café during the 2021 Covid-19 lockdown, noted that from 4 founders they now have a regular team of 12–15 volunteers, illustrating how network support can help small initiatives grow.

The following case study of The Hive, a community led Repair and Reuse Hub in Llandrindod Wells, highlights the potential impacts, enablers and barriers facing the community-based model.

4.4.2.4 The Hive Case Study – Llandrindod Wells

The Organisation

The Hive sits at the heart of Llandrindod Wells, providing both a physical home and a vital sense of stability for a wide range of community-led projects. For the past three and a half years, it has been a hub of activity thanks to a successful partnership between Severn Wye, Llandrindod Wells Town Council, and Trawsnewid Llandrindod Transition (TLT), which secured over £300,000 from the Welsh Government’s Circular Economy Fund. This funding enabled the long-term rental of a prominent vacant commercial unit in the town centre, transforming it into a dynamic centre for community engagement.

Inside The Hive, a diverse Repair and Reuse Activity of initiatives flourish—including a Library of Things, a community workshop, a baby bank for redistributing baby

clothes, a uniform exchange, and a welcoming community hub. The space also includes meeting rooms for hire and rooms rented to local businesses, with a shared staff kitchen that's frequently used for birthdays and group events.

The repair café - one of the most popular initiatives - began by running for ten months of the year and has enjoyed strong attendance from the outset. Over time, it has built a loyal following of regulars who save their broken items to bring in each month.

Its influence has extended beyond Llandrindod, inspiring the creation of other repair cafés across Powys, built on good practice and lessons learnt through The Hive's approach.

Described by a volunteer as having a "lovely atmosphere" and being especially "friendly," the space maintains a steady flow of visitors, with a reliable core of regulars and occasional surges in demand that lead to buzzing, high-energy days. The Hive continues to serve as a consistent and valued presence in the community, meeting a broad spectrum of social and practical needs.

The repair café in the Hive originated with 3 organisers back in 2014. The group comes under the umbrella of the Llandrindod Transition group, who has a wider sustainability remit.

One of the original volunteers spoke of their interest in the café due to the opportunity to use their woodwork skills by helping to repair woodwork appealed to her. Before establishing themselves within the Hive, the café started under a canopy in a part of Llandrindod working outside in all weathers.

Having started from the ground up, the volunteers then worked to obtain a group of skilled fixers, and slowly the message spread to friends and more of the local community through canvasing at events and word of mouth.

Through purchasing a repair café manual (from the Dutch Repair Café Foundation) the group learnt key skills and insights into how best establish a startup in the repair café space. An organiser said:

"When I first came into post, there was a lot of stigma about using the service, some communities don't want to be seen as asking for help"

Impact

Organisers suggest that the impact of the Hive is rooted in community. They say that it has become a vibrant and essential community hub, fostering sustainability and social connection through their activities. Organisers and a volunteer suggested that volunteers - many of whom live alone - look forward to the sociable atmosphere, where shared skills, refreshments, and a welcoming buzz help combat isolation and build confidence. They have also developed strong local partnerships, working closely with charity shops to circulate clothing and linking with judo and karate instructors to ensure uniforms are reused. Through informal networks, it regularly signposts individuals to additional services like foodbanks, creating a well-connected, compassionate ecosystem of local support.

Success and Lessons Learnt

The Hive has evolved into a beacon of community-led sustainability, sharing its model through seminars, direct advice, and hands-on pop-up events to inspire and guide others. By connecting with schools, it promotes a culture of repair among younger generations, embedding sustainable thinking into everyday life.

Initially, the team faced cultural barriers - particularly in rural and farming communities where asking for help carried a stigma - but proactive outreach reframed the service as a positive, environmental initiative. This shift significantly increased uptake, with growing numbers of repeat users and a clear appreciation from the community. The impact is not only social but environmental too, with measurable carbon savings and consistent feedback from users who tell organisers they "don’t know what they would do without this service."

Future Focus

The Hive now faces a period of uncertainty, with current funding due to end and the local council reclaiming the building in September 2025. While there are early conversations around alternative funding streams and new premises, the future remains precarious. At the time of fieldwork in June 2025, the team was actively exploring options to safeguard the continuation of the service, but concerns persist about the viability of sustaining their vital community work without secure resources in place.

4.4.2.5 Business models conclusion

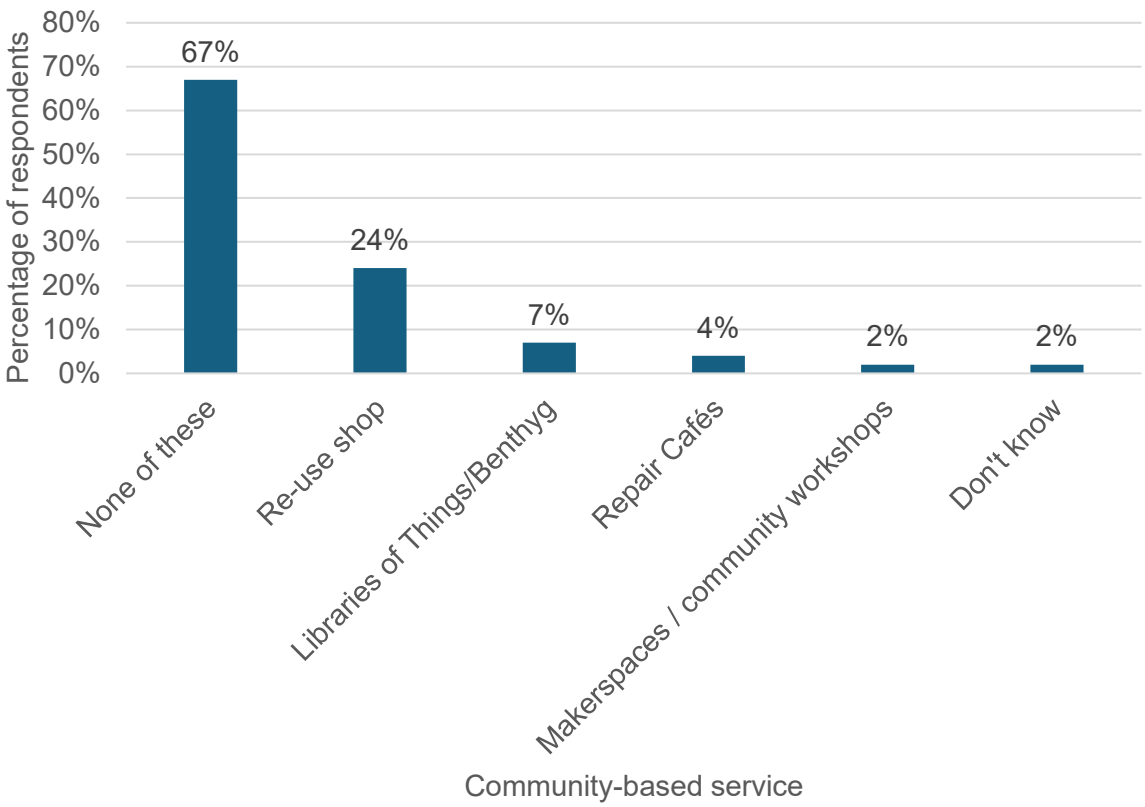
In summary, the network-supported model harnesses the expertise and infrastructure of national organisations to lower barriers to entry, provide technical and administrative support and foster collaboration. While there are shortcomings, particularly around data systems and ongoing funding, the networks play a critical role in catalysing and sustaining repair cafés and Libraries of Things across Wales.

4.4.3 Public behaviour

Data on the behaviour and demographics of Repair and Reuse Activity users came from two main sources: the user survey and a YouGov survey of the general public. This was supplemented by observations from users, volunteers, organisers and Local Authority representatives when interviewed. It is important to note that these data sources were collected in very different ways, which affects how their results should be interpreted. The YouGov survey represents the general public, while the other data was gathered through snowball sampling from people already involved in Repair and Reuse sites and activities.

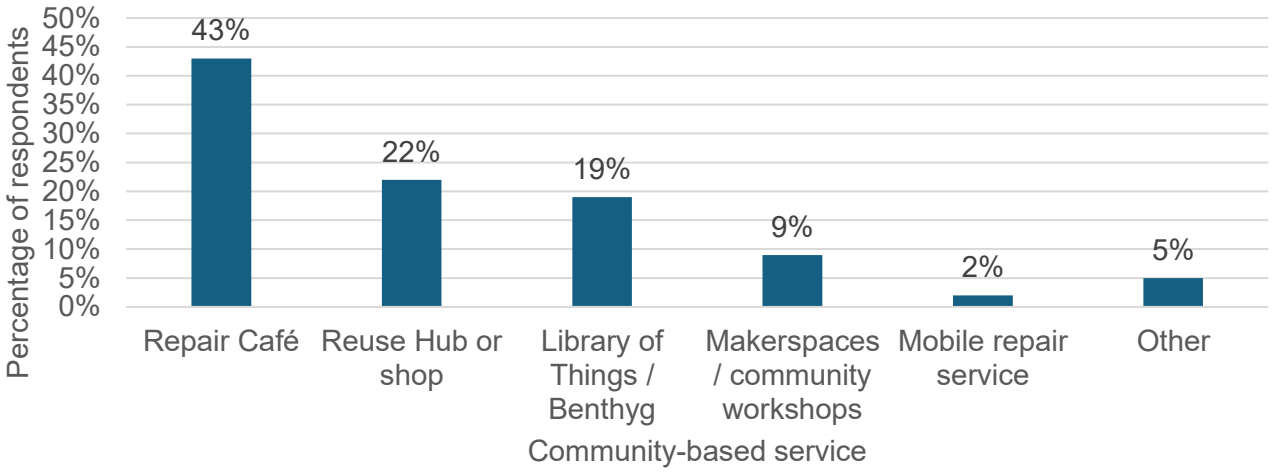
Among the general population, as represented by the YouGov survey data (Figure 4), 67% (n=480) of respondents had not taken part in any community-based Repair and Reuse Activities. Among those who had, reuse shops were the most common activity (24%, n=175). In contrast the user survey (Figure 5), showed that repair cafés had the highest participation rate (43%, n=60), followed by reuse hubs or shops (22%, n=30).

Figure 4: YouGov survey responses to being asked which of the following community-based services the respondents have used in the last 12 months



Source: YouGov survey, n=718 (Respondents could select multiple responses)

Figure 5: User survey responses to being asked which of the following community services the respondents have used in the last 12 months



Source: Miller Research Repair and Reuse Activity User Survey, n=71 (Respondents could select multiple responses)

4.4.4 Demographics

The YouGov survey collected data on age, gender, working status, household type and socioeconomic status. Female respondents outweighed male respondents in

terms of Repair and Reuse Activity usage in the YouGov survey; no supporting qualitative data was collected.

While the user survey suggested that Repair and Reuse Activity participants tend to be older, with 54% (n=38) aged 60 or above compared with 45% of respondents (n=452) in the YouGov survey who were 55 or older, the broader data indicated a more mixed picture. The YouGov results showed that people age 25 to 34 actually have the highest levels of participation in Repair and Reuse Activities (Table 5). This aligns with qualitative responses from focus groups and organisers who cited growing participation with Repair and Reuse Activities among younger age groups. At the same time, some qualitative interviews also highlighted that many current users were older (over 65) and often retired (Organisers, Users), suggesting that Repair and Reuse Activities have cross-demographic appeal, particularly reuse shops. To note in Table 5 is that the asterisk represents insufficient data for comparison as a result of less than 50 respondents. In addition, respondents were able to select more than 1 answer, therefore, percentages will not add up to 100% for Tables 6, 7 and 8.

Table 6: YouGov survey data on usage of community-based services according to demographic factors.

Service used	18-24 (n=40)	25-34 (n=95)	35-44 (n=120)	45-54 (n=112)	55+ (n=356)
Repair cafés	*	4%	7%	4%	4%
Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing)	*	12%	9%	4%	6%
Reuse shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items	*	31%	24%	18%	26%
Makerspaces or Community Workshops	*	4%	4%	2%	0%
None of these	*	57%	62%	76%	66%
Don't know	*	4%	4%	0%	1%

Source: YouGov survey

One user and one volunteer interviewed suggested that working people among the middle age ranges, especially those with children, had less time to use Repair and Reuse Activities because of time constraints. However, the YouGov data showed no trend to support this, with households with and without children being broadly similar in terms of Repair and Reuse Activity usage (Table 7). The YouGov data on working

status does show a modestly higher level of participation among retired people compared to those who are working; this was supported by qualitative responses from some organisers.

Table 7: YouGov survey data on usage of community-based services according to demographic factors.

Service used	Working (full and part time, n =375)	Retired (n=234)	Households without children (n=540)	Households with children (n=176)
Repair cafés	4%	6%	3%	6%
Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing)	6%	8%	7%	7%
Reuse shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items	23%	26%	25%	25%
Makerspaces or Community Workshops	2%	1%	1%	3%
None of these	68%	63%	68%	63%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	3%

Source: YouGov survey

In terms of socioeconomic status, the YouGov survey collected data on respondents' National Readership Society social grade, with the results splitting users into categories based on their occupation:

- ABC1: Higher managerial, administrative and professional; Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional; Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional
- C2DE: Skilled manual workers; Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers; State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only

Table 8: YouGov survey data on usage of community-based services according to social grade.

Service used	ABC1 (n=405)	C2DE (n=318)
Repair cafés	5%	4%

Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing)	9%	5%
Reuse shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items	25%	23%
Makerspaces or Community Workshops	2%	1%
None of these	65%	69%
Don't know	2%	2%

Source: YouGov survey

The YouGov survey data indicates a marginally higher representation from ABC1 respondents than C2DE (Table 8). Qualitative data supports a mixed representation, with some organisers reporting higher usage of Repair and Reuse Activity services by lower-income households, while others reporting increasing participation from middle and higher-income groups (organiser and Local Authority representative). One organiser suggested that town centre locations would attract more diverse socioeconomic groups, suggesting a possible association between location, accessibility and socioeconomic status of Repair and Reuse Activity users.

4.4.5 Motivations

User motivations for accessing Repair and Reuse Activities varied, but qualitative data from focus groups with members of the public, and interviews with organisers, Local Authority representatives and users indicated that cost savings were a primary driver for using services such as repair cafés, reuse shops and Libraries of Things. Respondents from focus groups, users and organisers cited value perception – people getting quality items at significant discounts – as strong motivators for using reuse shops. Economic motivation was supported by the YouGov survey data - 52% (n=50) of Library of Things users and 62% (n=175) of reuse shop users cited ‘to save money’ as a reason for using them. The user survey indicated cost savings were a motivator for 25% (n=38) of repair café users and 29% (n=16) of reuse shop buyers.

For Libraries of Things, qualitative data indicated that users and focus group respondents valued borrowing items they rarely used, rather than having to purchase and store them. Similarly, YouGov data for Libraries of Things showed respondents’ highest motivation for borrowing items was ‘to access items I only need temporarily’ (68%, n=50). This aligns with user survey data which indicated that 32% (n=25) of respondents chose to borrow an item instead of buying it because they only needed it for a certain period of time.

Environmental motivations were cited in the qualitative data, with volunteers, organisers and Local Authority representatives reporting growing environmental awareness and a cultural shift towards sustainability, though often remaining a secondary motivator. The YouGov survey data for reuse shops found respondents strongest motivation for using them was ‘to reduce waste’ (64%, n=175). Similarly, user survey data indicated environmental motivations – including; reducing waste/being environmentally friendly’ was a motivation for users of repair services (33%, n=50) and reuse shops – both donating (27%, n=30) and buying (25%, n=14).

Quantitative data indicated that supporting local/community initiatives was a common motivator among users of Repair and Reuse Activities; YouGov survey data found that 40% of Library of Things users and 48% of reuse shop users cited ‘to support a community or local initiative’ as a motivator for using those services. User survey data shows that 18% (n=14) of borrowing service users and 18% (n=10) of reuse shop users cited ‘supporting community-led initiatives’ as motivators. User survey respondents who donate to reuse shops cited ‘helping others who may need the item’ (21%, n=23) and ‘giving the item a second life’ (20%, n=22) as strong motivators for donating.

Perceptions of Repair and Reuse Activities were mixed; qualitative responses from focus groups and organisers interviews reported a perception that repairing items was an activity of the past, especially for items of sentimental significance. They suggested that older people are more likely to have things repaired because of cultural norms of the past, but that repairing was becoming more ‘fashionable’ again. Additionally, people’s perceptions and attitudes towards consumption, especially a preference for buying new items over repairing or purchasing second-hand, were cited by one organiser as a potential barrier to people engaging with Repair and Reuse Activities.

The research has found that users primarily engaged with Repair and Reuse Activities for economic, practical, environmental, and community reasons. Cost savings and value for money were the strongest motivators identified, with users and organisers citing the affordability of second-hand or repaired goods as a key draw. Others appreciated the convenience of borrowing items they only need temporarily and the opportunity to reduce waste or support local community initiatives. While environmental awareness is growing, it generally remained a secondary driver.

4.4.6 Behaviour

Repair and Reuse Activity usage behaviour was collected from the user survey, with users being asked how often they use services, and what they would do if the service hadn't been available to them. The bullet points below summarise how frequently users engage with different community reuse and repair services and outline their most likely alternative actions if those services were not available.

- Repair Services (n=56)
    - Frequency of use: Most respondents use repair services every few months (33%).
    - Alternative behaviour: If unavailable, 30% would replace the item with a new one.
- Borrowing Services (n=26)
    - Frequency of use: Usage is evenly split between every few months (36%) and once or twice a year (36%).
    - Alternative behaviour: 23% would buy the item new, while another 23% would borrow from friends, family, or neighbours.
- Reuse Shops – Donations (n=33)
    - Frequency of use: Most participants donate items once or twice a year (64%).
    - Alternative behaviour: 45% would donate to a charity shop instead.
- Reuse Shops – Buying (n=24)
    - Frequency of use: The majority use this service once or twice a year (42%).
    - Alternative behaviour: No alternative specified by respondents.
- Training and Workshop Sessions (n=13)
    - Frequency of use: Responses were evenly distributed among weekly, monthly, and every few months (23% each).
    - Alternative behaviour: No alternative specified by respondents.

Focus group responses to a similar question asking where they would source items from if they were looking to purchase second-hand suggested that online re-selling

marketplaces such as Facebook Marketplace, Vinted and eBay were popular with members of the public, as well as charity shops which were widely cited.

Overall, the findings suggest engagement with Repair and Reuse Activities tends to be occasional or event-based rather than routine, with most users accessing services a few times per year. Where alternatives were identified, users typically said they would buy new items or donate to charity shops indicating that Repair and Reuse Activities are successfully diverting activity from mainstream retail and waste channels. Borrowing and repair activities appear to foster modest but tangible behavioural shifts, encouraging users to consider alternatives before purchasing new items and promoting a culture of reuse within communities. However, these services are also complementary to other existing services such as charity shops and online second-hand selling/buying platforms. Interviews with organisers, Local Authorities and DPs highlighted that those operating reuse shops work in partnership and alongside existing charity shops to minimise any potential impact on charity shops.

4.5 Potential future impact

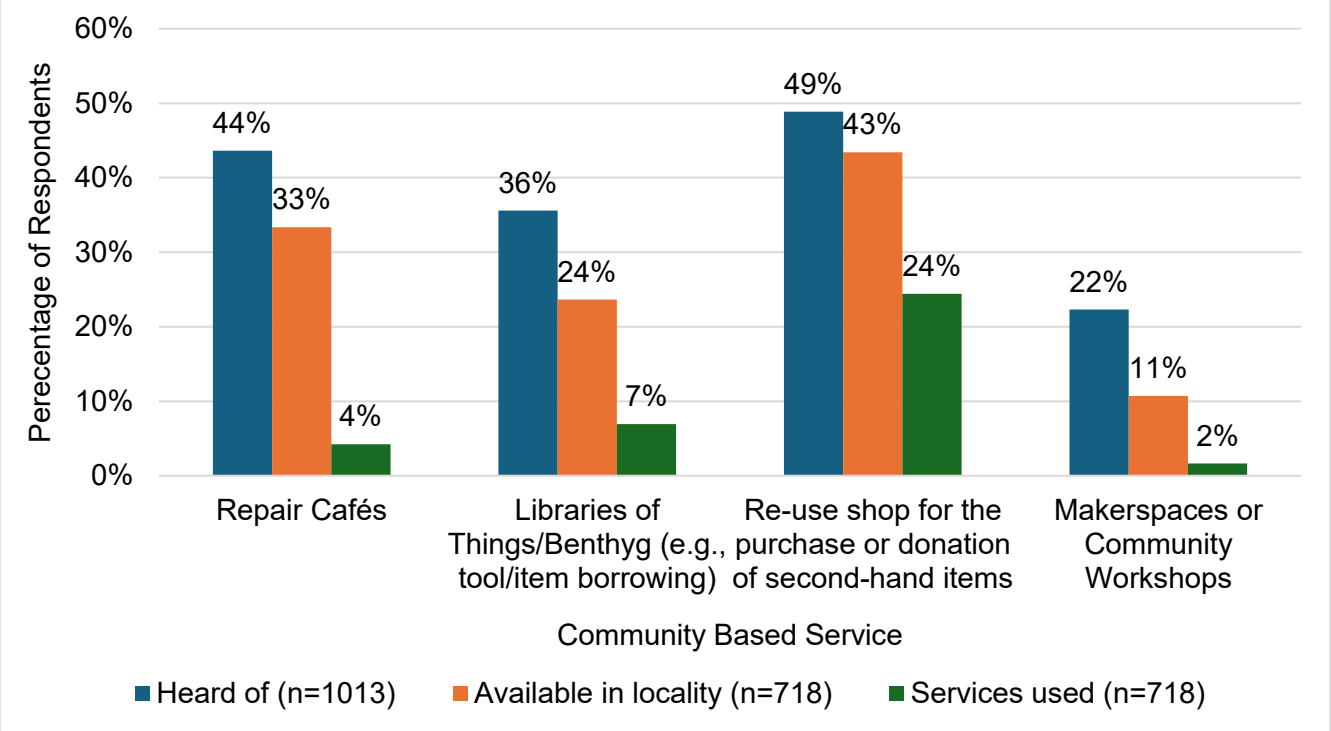
Public awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities was measured through the YouGov survey and qualitatively via focus groups and interviews with users, volunteers, organisers and Local Authority representatives. A lack of public awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities was highlighted by some organisers and Local Authority representatives as a key barrier to engagement with the public, and multiple focus group participants stated they were unaware of the presence of Repair and Reuse Activities in their local area, or even of the services themselves. Though some organisers and Local Authority representatives reported cultural shifts and changes in perceptions towards Repair and Reuse Activities, these were seen as having a “long way to go” in some cases (LA1). YouGov data supports the premise that a lack of awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities acts as a barrier to public engagement; when asked why respondents had not used Repair and Reuse Activities, the second most common reason (28%, n=480) was ‘I don’t know where they are’. A further 4% stated that they had not heard of these services.

Quantitative data from the YouGov survey suggested that awareness of repair cafés, Libraries of Things, reuse shops and makerspaces/community workshops was relatively high, with 71% (n=723) of respondents having heard of one or more of the

following services: repair cafés; Libraries of Things/Benthyg; Reuse shops for the purchase or donation of second-hand items, and Makerspaces or Community Workshops. Only 27% of respondents stated that they hadn't heard of any of these services, and just 2% said they didn't know.

However, when comparing data on awareness to usage, awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities does not appear to translate into higher levels of usage. When asked which, if any, of the services respondents had used in the past 12 months, 67% (n=723) of respondents stated they had used none of them. The most used service was reuse shops (24% respondents). Figure 6 shows how awareness and availability of Repair and Reuse Activities, and usage of these services, relate to one another, with higher awareness and availability of service not necessarily corresponding with high usage. For example, 44% of 1,013 respondents stated they had heard of repair cafés and 33% stated they had one or more repair cafés in their locality. However, just 9% of respondents who were aware of repair cafés had used them between June 2024 and June 2025.

Figure 6: YouGov survey responses to being asked a) what community-based services respondents had heard of, b) what services were available in their local area, and c) what services respondents had used.



Source: YouGov survey

Understanding of terms like 'repair café' or 'Library of Things' was highlighted by one organiser and one focus group respondent, suggesting that people might not

understand the concept or what the service offered. The YouGov data supported this, with 13% of responses to the question of why respondents had not used Repair and Reuse Activities indicating that respondents were unsure of what the services offered. When asked what factors might make it easier or more appealing for people to use Repair and Reuse Activities, 51% of YouGov survey respondents cited ‘more visible and accessible services’ and 55% cited ‘clearer information about what’s available’. A further 39% of respondents cited ‘more education or awareness campaigns’. Another barrier to public awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities was suggested by a user who felt that publicity around these services only reached ‘the usual suspects’ – such as those already interested in sustainability issues or repair and reuse – and that reaching people outside this group was a challenge.

4.5.1 Enablers of public awareness

Enablers of public awareness and examples of successful methods for promoting Repair and Reuse Activities to the public were discussed in qualitative interviews. Education was cited by organisers and Local Authority representatives as important for promoting Repair and Reuse Activities, with schools being used successfully in one Local Authority to increase community awareness of and showcase Repair and Reuse Activities in the area. One volunteer suggested that bringing Repair and Reuse Activity concepts into the curriculum would improve the knowledge and skills of younger generations for repairing, which they felt were lacking.

Other enabling factors identified to promote Repair and Reuse Activity awareness included paid advertising and events and social media presence. Partnerships with Local Authorities, businesses and Repair and Reuse Activity networks, such as Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru, were cited by one organiser and Local Authority representative as key in promoting public awareness of and engagement with these services. Embeddedness within the local community was cited by organisers as another factor which improves visibility of services and promotion via word of mouth. Two organisers suggested that the network organisations and Local Authorities could play a larger role in promoting Repair and Reuse Activities through advertising campaigns. The user survey supports this observation, with the most common response to the question ‘What would encourage the respondent or the wider community to use Repair and Reuse Activities more often?’ being better promotion and/or advertising of Repair and Reuse Activities (n=9).

4.6 Barriers

A range of barriers for using and running Repair and Reuse Activities were identified by respondents within qualitative interviews and focus groups including health and safety, staff and volunteer expertise, Local Authority capacity, and the funding process.

Organisers and Local Authority representatives recognised that repairing equipment, especially electricals, required a strict set of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and insurances to ensure equipment was safe for the public to use. This represented a barrier for those providing a Repair and Reuse Activity, however, potential users expressed concerns that the perception of health and safety risks may act as a barrier to their participation. Focus group participants cited concerns around borrowing electrical/power tools and being liable for them if they then broke. They also spoke about risks for the Repair and Reuse Activity in lending out power tools to people who didn't know how to use them safely and potentially being liable for those risks. Respondents suggested that guarantees, PAT testing and engagement with professionals to show users how to use tools would mitigate these risks.

Staff and volunteer expertise was raised as a potential barrier to running Repair and Reuse Activities. With regards to repair services, organisers, DPs and focus group respondents (members of the public) cited challenges in recruiting and retaining experienced staff and volunteers with the technical expertise to do repairs safely. Staff turnover was also raised by 2 organisations as a challenge; one organisation suggested that they had to compete with higher-paying employers for high-quality staff. Volunteer recruitment and retention was mentioned by several organisers and one volunteer. Retaining committed, reliable volunteers who were willing to take on roles of responsibility was cited by several organisers as a key challenge in running Repair and Reuse Activities. One organiser suggested that funding training for volunteers was a challenge, though they wanted to give back and make volunteers feel valued. This was seconded by a volunteer who expressed a desire to see more support and training for volunteers.

One Local Authority cited limited internal capacity within Local Authorities and community organisations to develop projects and apply for funding pots. Another

Local Authority suggested that best practice in Repair and Reuse Activity projects across Local Authorities was limited, and that more resource sharing would be helpful – citing WRAP Cymru or a Welsh Government-led body to provide best practice blueprints and resource services.

A recurring barrier identified across projects relates to the structure and timing of funding processes. Short application windows and rigid delivery timescales often create intense pressure on organisations which undermined long-term planning. Several projects described being given only weeks to apply and then a compressed delivery window - sometimes just 3 months - which limited their ability to purchase capital assets or build sustainable initiatives. Organisers cited delays in meeting previously agreed deadlines for making grant approvals, which further squeezed delivery periods, while highly prescriptive funding criteria left little scope for tailoring activities to local contexts. Organisations also highlighted fragmented funding and a lack of alignment between Local Authority departments, which compounded administrative burdens and reduced flexibility. Together, the evaluation has concluded that these factors risk diverting energy away from delivery and innovation, while discouraging smaller, community-led projects from applying at all.

5 Conclusions

The evaluation suggests that the Circular Economy Fund programme for Repair and Reuse Activities has broadly met, and in some respects exceeded, expectations. Monitoring data indicates that more than 80 Repair and Reuse Activities in town centre locations were supported, achieving the Welsh Government's Programme for Government commitment. However, this achievement needs to be understood in context: activity was supported through different mechanisms, including capital funding to establish physical hubs, revenue funding to sustain delivery, and the enabling role of network organisations. Together, these forms of support created the conditions for growth, though sustainability and long-term impact remain less certain.

5.1 Social impacts

Qualitative evidence from interviews and case studies highlights strong social outcomes. Benefits cited by participants include increased skills, reduced social isolation, and improved wellbeing, with volunteers gaining confidence and transferable abilities. Organisers, volunteers and users suggested that community hubs were seen as accessible and inclusive spaces, enhancing local resilience and cohesion. These findings mirror those from a public consultation of repair and reuse conducted by WRAP in 2025, which found that 75% of respondents cited community engagement as a key benefit of engaging with RRAs [footnote 7]. These outcomes align closely with the programme's objectives around empowerment and social value. These outcomes also align with the programme's broader objectives, but evidence gaps, described further in recommendation 5.1.1, variability across Repair and Reuse Activities, and lack of social impact valuation methods mean the overall scale of impact cannot be fully quantified.

5.1.1 Recommendation: Data should be collected for cross-cutting social outcomes

One of the aims highlighted by Welsh Government was that Repair and Reuse Activities should engage with a wide range of people as users and volunteers. Evidence from the case studies and the YouGov survey suggests that Repair and

[7] WRAP (2025) Towards a Universal Culture of Repair and Reuse in Wales: Consultation Analysis

Reuse Activities funded by the Circular Economy Fund do engage with a wide range of people, with qualitative fieldwork suggesting they particularly engage with those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, detailed evidence on inclusivity and the breadth of engagement with Repair and Reuse Activities across communities is lacking. As an aim of the programme Welsh Government should ensure that engagement data is captured to understand who is using Repair and Reuse Activities which can inform future policy and funding decisions to ensure that Repair and Reuse is an option for all.

5.1.2 Recommendation: Existing social impact valuation methods should be adapted for Repair and Reuse Activities

There is currently no robust or consistent method for valuing the social impacts of Repair and Reuse Activities such as empowerment, inclusion, wellbeing, and skills development. While there are established approaches in adjacent fields, they are not yet systematically applied to Repair and Reuse Activities.

The HM Treasury's *Green Book* guidance encourages the use of wellbeing-adjusted life years (WELLBYs) to monetise changes in life satisfaction. However, Repair and Reuse Activities rarely collect the pre- and post-participation wellbeing data that would allow this translation. Improvements in social connection, reduced isolation, and feelings of empowerment reported in interviews could, in principle, be quantified as WELLBYs, but current practice does not capture the necessary data.

Social value frameworks like the Social Value TOM System™ [footnote [8]] already assign proxy values to volunteering (£15 per hour) and training leading to qualifications. While Repair and Reuse Activities depend heavily on volunteer labour and often build participants' skills, there is no consistent reporting of volunteer hours or training outcomes. As a result, the substantial economic contribution of volunteers and the longer-term benefits of skill development remain invisible in most evaluations.

To ensure the full value of Repair and Reuse Activities is visible, investment could be made in developing and piloting fit-for-purpose methods that adapt existing tools

[8] The National TOMs Framework is a widely used, open-source system for measuring and reporting on social value.

(e.g. WELLBYs, TOMs) to the specific context of repair and reuse. This would require (1) systematic collection of wellbeing data, (2) consistent recording of volunteer hours and training outcomes, and (3) building capacity within community projects to use these frameworks without adding disproportionate reporting burdens. Doing so would strengthen the evidence base, improve comparability across Repair and Reuse Activities, and provide funders and policymakers with a more accurate assessment of social returns.

5.2 Environmental Impacts

Monitoring data confirms that Repair and Reuse Activities contributed to waste diversion and reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions. For example, reuse shops and repair cafés recorded thousands of items repaired, borrowed, or resold, translating into measurable landfill savings. The available figures strongly suggest that Repair and Reuse Activities are delivering environmental benefits consistent with programme aims, although data gaps remain, particularly due to under-reporting and administrative burdens on volunteers. In addition, methods of calculating impact differ significantly between Repair and Reuse Activities meaning that it is difficult to understand the relative impact of each Repair and Reuse Activity.

5.2.1 Recommendation: Investment and research should be undertaken to improve impact calculators for Repair and Reuse Activities

Current impact metrics for Repair and Reuse Activities (particularly Libraries of Things and repair cafés) are underdeveloped and inconsistent. Reported figures use varying assumptions that hinder comparability across projects, and the full potential of existing tools such as the Repair Café Carbon Calculator are not utilised. Investment in standardised, transparent measurement methods would improve accuracy, allow fair comparisons between initiatives, and provide a clearer view of environmental returns. Additional research building on the Repair Café Carbon Calculator and the Edinburgh Tool Library Carbon Calculator model would strengthen monitoring frameworks and ensure more meaningful evaluations of cost-effectiveness.

5.2.2 Recommendation: Defined outcomes and targets

This evaluation has highlighted the importance of systematic data monitoring where targets align with a clear Theory of Change. Throughout the Circular Economy Fund monitoring has developed substantially and monitoring data was collected for the 2023 to 2025 period. When considering the Circular Economy Fund as a whole, and to some extent the latter period, monitoring can be improved to allow for greater evaluability. A key aspect of programme evaluation is a consistency of targets across projects, and while it is understood that each project may have distinct aims, a programme should have cohesive objectives and targets to address the needs that made the programme necessary.

Each project should at a minimum report on the number of items reused, and if possible, the weight of items reused, and the amount of carbon emissions avoided. In addition, repair cafés could track the number of sessions, repair success rates, and participant satisfaction. Libraries of Things could monitor borrowing frequency, number of unique borrowers, and user savings, and reuse shops could capture retail performance. These should be set out in monitoring forms in a way that is consistent across projects. Setting and monitoring defined outcome targets will improve accountability and allow for more meaningful evaluation across the sector. This finding is supported by evidence from WRAP's 2025 report on a repair and reuse route map for Wales; 87% of consultation respondents highlighted the importance of setting clear targets and transparently measuring progress against them. WRAP concluded that measuring progress against such targets provided accountability to organisations and could influence motivation by showing progress or areas for improvement.

5.2.3 Recommendation: Monitoring of spend against targets

The evaluation highlights gaps in monitoring data and the challenge of linking expenditure to outcomes. For example, while budgets can be measured against repairs completed or GHG savings, under-reporting due to volunteer burden and the need for data-sharing agreements between network organisations and individual hubs both remain a challenge to capturing the full scale of Repair and Re-use Activities. It is recommended that Welsh Government develop a systematic monitoring framework to which includes a data map that identifies available data

against targets, and an understanding of the scale of underreporting and methods to address this. This will allow Welsh Government to more effectively measure against outcome metrics which would improve cost-effectiveness assessments and future policy design.

5.3 Economic Impacts

Although economic outcomes were not a central focus of the fund, there is some evidence of positive effects. Projects created volunteering roles and, in some cases, employment opportunities. Users reported saving money by accessing low-cost goods and services. However, sample sizes for some user groups were small, and the wider economic impacts - such as the role of Repair and Reuse Activities in stimulating local economic activity or reducing demand for new goods - remain difficult to quantify.

5.3.1 Recommendation: Research should be undertaken to understand the sectoral impact of reuse retail and Circular Economy interventions

While reuse retail models are often discussed in terms of their potential for financial self-sufficiency, a major evidence gap remains around their wider impact on the retail and charity sectors. Repair and reuse activities can displace or complement existing offers, but the nature and scale of this interaction is not well understood. For instance, reuse shops may compete directly with charity shops for donations and customers, although the qualitative evidence from organisers, Local Authorities and Delivery Partners suggests they are aware of this and work alongside charities to minimise competition. In addition, Libraries of Things and repair cafés could reduce demand for paid hire, retail or repair services. Equally, they may drive positive behaviour change by shifting consumers away from fast fashion, cheap goods, or unsustainable disposal practices.

Dedicated research and modelling are needed to understand these dynamics at both local and national levels. This should examine (1) the effect of reuse shops on the charity retail sector and local high streets, (2) the potential substitution of commercial repair and hire services by community-led alternatives, and (3) the overall net effect of Repair and Reuse Activities on consumption patterns. Generating this evidence would ensure that circular economy interventions are designed to complement,

rather than unintentionally disrupt, existing offers, while maximising their role in encouraging long-term behaviour change.

5.4 Cost-effectiveness

The evaluation was not able to undertake a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis due to data limitations. While illustrative estimates (e.g. of avoided carbon emissions) suggest potential value, the absence of consistent monitoring data on outputs and outcomes prevented a full assessment. Cost-effectiveness also varies by model: HWRC-linked schemes appear more likely to become financially self-sustaining, while community-based initiatives rely on ongoing revenue support. These findings underscore the importance of clearer targets and more robust monitoring frameworks to enable future evaluations.

5.5 Role of networks

Theories of Change and subsequent qualitative findings show that network organisations such as Repair Café Wales and Benthyg Cymru have been critical enablers of success. By providing insurance, training, administrative systems and peer learning opportunities, networks reduced barriers for local groups to set up and expand repair and/or reuse services. This suggests that investment in networks was an effective method of increasing the number of Repair and Reuse Activities across Wales. Similarly, findings from WRAP's 2025 public consultation suggest that building partnerships between businesses and repair and reuse stakeholders is a key priority for maximising opportunities to expand Repair and Reuse Activities and improve accessibility to these services.

5.6 Public awareness and usage patterns

Public engagement surveys show that awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities is uneven across Wales. Reuse shops are relatively well-known, while repair cafés, Libraries of Things and makerspaces remain less visible. Among those who use Repair and Reuse Activities, key motivations include saving money, reducing waste, learning new skills, and social interaction. These findings are supported by WRAP's 2023 survey into repair and reuse activity in Wales, which found that users were motivated primarily by cost savings and desires to get a good deal. This suggests that, while Repair and Reuse Activities are meeting important user needs, there is

scope to strengthen awareness and broaden participation through targeted promotion and continued network support. This finding is echoed by WRAP, whose public consultation into repair and reuse in Wales included a common theme of needing to increase awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities through better branding and communication. Respondents suggested that this would make these services more accessible to marginalised groups and those in rural areas [footnote 9].

5.7 Factors influencing impact and business models

The sustainability and impact of Repair and Reuse Activities are closely linked to their delivery models:

- HWRC-linked schemes, typically supported by capital investment, have clearer routes to becoming financially sustainable through integration into local authority waste systems.
- Community-based initiatives, such as repair cafés and Libraries of Things, deliver high social value but depend heavily on volunteers and ongoing revenue funding. Their sustainability is less certain.
- Network organisations have played a critical role in enabling grassroots activity, providing insurance, training, and administrative support. Their involvement has been essential to the expansion and resilience of Repair and Reuse Activities, but the reliance of repair cafés and Libraries of Things on their infrastructure also raises questions about future funding and governance.

These differences point to the need for tailored funding approaches and underline the importance of maintaining strong support for networks. Similar findings from WRAP's 2025 public consultation found that respondents recommended more, sustained funding and local authority support for Repair and Reuse Activities to improve their reach [footnote 10].

[9] WRAP (2025) Towards a Universal Culture of Repair and Reuse in Wales: Consultation Analysis
[10] WRAP (2025) Towards a Universal Culture of Repair and Reuse in Wales: Summary report

5.7.1 Recommendation: Distinct funding pots should be developed to distinguish between projects of different types

The evaluation highlighted, through the Theory of Change and findings, that the Circular Economy Fund Repair and Reuse Activities cover a wide range of activities and project types. In particular there are distinct differences between HWRC-based reuse schemes, which often require upfront capital investment but tend to become self-sustaining, and community-based activities, which rely heavily on volunteers and require ongoing revenue support. The HWRC projects act as strategic investments in the waste system for Local Authorities supporting the integration of Repair and Reuse Activities into their waste processes. Community based projects cover a range of interventions which include more social aims, a wider variety of environmental aims, and include greater behaviour change. By creating separate funding pots for each type of activity Welsh Government would be able to develop fewer and more specific targets, strategically target funding to those HWRC which still require improvement, and improve the evaluability of the fund. In addition, the HWRC Repair and Reuse Activity funding may reduce over time as these investments have been made, allowing for a more focussed approach on increasing Repair and Reuse Activities outside of HWRCs.

5.7.2 Recommendation: Developed a tiered grant structure for organisations applying for different levels of funding

Stakeholders delivering Repair and Reuse Activities in the charity and community sector noted that smaller community projects face significant barriers in applying for and managing grants due to administrative burden. In addition, the management of the fund, including extensive delays in funding being awarded and released was particularly difficult for smaller organisations. Grant sizes ranged from £5,000 to £1.8 million, therefore, a tiered grant structure, proportionate to project scale and ambition, could lower the administrative barriers to participation of smaller organisations. This could also maintain robust requirements for larger organisations and grants commensurate with the risk associated with the size of the grant. This approach would support innovation without sacrificing accountability.

5.8 Challenges and gaps

Despite these achievements, the evaluation identified recurring challenges. Short-term and restrictive funding cycles limited long-term planning and placed strain on volunteers and staff. Monitoring and evaluation processes were inconsistently applied, making it difficult to quantify impacts across all Repair and Reuse Activities. Furthermore, financial sustainability remains uncertain for many community-based activities, particularly where reliance on volunteers is high.

5.8.1 Recommendation: Funding timelines

Funding timelines and structures should be amended to better support community-led reuse organisations. Evidence from interviews highlights how compressed delivery windows, delayed approvals, rigid rules on underspends, and prescriptive criteria undermines long-term planning and places undue stress on staff and volunteers. To address these issues, funding could be offered on longer (3 to 5 year) cycles with options for rolling or staged applications, flexibility to carry over unspent funds, and the ability to sustain proven projects rather than only initiate new ones. While this recommendation may prove difficult to implement due to the need for funding windows and annual spending, Welsh Government should explore options in the Circular Economy space due to the need to embed these activities in communities. While multi-year cycles are preferred, alternative solutions include spending bands rather than strict amounts, including longer planning phases in projects to absorb any delays and allow for staff recruitment, and potentially taking different approaches to capital and revenue projects. This would reduce administrative burden, improve value for money by avoiding rushed spending, and give community organisations the stability and trust they need to invest in staff, infrastructure, and services that deliver lasting environmental and social impact.

5.9 Overall Assessment

Taken together, the evidence indicates that Repair and Reuse Activities have performed against their expected outcomes, with the Welsh Government surpassing the headline target of supporting 80 initiatives. They have delivered tangible environmental benefits, meaningful social outcomes, and a step-change in the visibility of repair and reuse in Wales. At the same time, the evaluation highlights the

need for clearer measurement frameworks, differentiated funding models, and sustained support for networks to ensure that these achievements are embedded and scalable in the longer term.

6 Annexes

6.1 Annex A - User Survey

Miller Research has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to assess the impact of Repair and Reuse Activities (RRAs) funded through the Circular Economy (CE) Fund in Wales. This includes repair cafés, Libraries of Things, Reuse Hubs, Makerspaces, and other initiatives that help extend the life of items through repair, reuse, and sharing.

As part of the evaluation, we are seeking feedback from people who use these services across Wales to understand:

- How RRAs are used and their impact on communities
- Why people engage with RRAs and the benefits they experience
- What challenges exist in accessing or using RRAs
- How RRAs influence behaviours around repair, reuse, and consumption

By completing this survey, you will directly contribute to shaping how the Welsh Government supports and funds repair and reuse initiatives in Wales in the future.

This survey should take no longer than 5-10 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes.

To read more about how your data will be processed as part of this evaluation, please see the following [Privacy Notice].

If you have any questions about the survey or queries about how we will use the data, please contact [name] at [email].

Section 1: About you

1. Please specify your age range:
    - 17 or under
    - 18-24
    - 25-34
    - 35-44
    - 45-54
    - 55-64
    - 65 and older
    - Prefer not to say

2. Please could you share the first half your postcode? (e.g., NP7, SA1 etc.)

3. Do you currently live in Wales?
    - Yes
    - No

Section 2: Engagement with RRAs

4. Which of the following have you used in the last year? *Please select all that apply.*
    - Repair café
    - Library of Things (e.g., ran by Benthyg Cymru)
    - Reuse Hub or shop to donate or purchase second-hand items (either on the high street or at my local HWRC)
    - Makerspace / Community Repair Workshop
    - Mobile Repair Service
    - I'm not sure
    - Other (please specify)

5. How did you first hear about repair and reuse services in your local area? *Please select all that apply.*
    - Word of mouth (friends, family, colleagues)
    - Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
    - Local council
    - Posters, flyers or local events
    - Community organisation (please specify)
    - Other (please specify)

6. Have you accessed a repair and reuse service to get a faulty item repaired?
    - Yes (route to Q7A: Repair Section)
    - No (Skip to Q8: Borrowing Section)

7a. Repair behaviours

7a) Where was the repair service you visited located? Please specify the name and/or town, city, or village. If you have visited multiple locations, click 'Add another location' to enter additional responses

7b) What mode of transport do you usually use to reach this space?

- Walking
- Car
- Motorcycle
- Bicycle
- Public transport (e.g., the bus, train etc.)
- Other (please specify)

7c) How far do you typically travel (one way) to visit this repair service? *(Please select one option that best represents your usual travel distance)*

- Less than 1 mile
- 1 to 2 miles
- 3 to 5 miles
- 6 to 10 miles
- 11 to 15 miles
- More than 15 miles
- Don't know

7d) How often do you access this repair service?

- I have only accessed this service once
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Once or twice a year
- Not sure / I don't know

7e) What type of item did you last get repaired?

- Clothing, textiles & accessories (e.g., trousers, jackets, shoes, bags, jewellery)
- Furniture
- Household Items & décor (e.g., lamps, kitchenware)
- Small electricals & appliances (e.g., kettles, toasters, hairdryers)
- Technology & gadgets (e.g., laptops, phones, tablets)
- Garden & DIY tools (e.g., lawnmowers, drills, saws)
- Sports & outdoor equipment (e.g., bicycles, bicycle accessories, camping gear)
- Toys & games (e.g., board games, electronic toys, dolls)
- Musical instruments (e.g., guitars, keyboards)
- Other (please specify)

7f) Following your visit to the repair café, was the item repaired?

- Yes (it was completely successful and working again)
- Yes (it was not perfect, but good enough to use again)
- No (the item could still not be used)
- Unknown at the moment (I left it for repair)
- Other (please specify)

7g) What did you do with the item afterwards? *(Select one)*

- I am still using it successfully
- I used it for some time and then it became faulty again
- I sold it
- I kept it as a working spare
- Disposed of it through household recycling (e.g. kerbside recycling collection, council collection)
- Thrown it away as part of my household waste (e.g. put it in my general rubbish bin)
- I kept the item for personal reasons although it was not useable/working
- Other (please specify)

7h) What motivated you to use a repair service instead of replacing the item with a new one? *Please select all that apply from the list below.*

- To save money
- To reduce waste and be more environmentally friendly
- To preserve a valuable, sentimental, or high-quality item
- To support a local/community repair initiative

- To learn repair skills or get advice on fixing items
- Other (please specify)

7i) Why did you choose this repair service instead of other repair options? (Select all that apply)

- It was the most affordable option
- It was the most convenient (e.g., closest location, suitable opening times)
- I trusted the quality of service or expertise available
- I wanted to support a community or non-profit repair initiative
- Other (please specify)

7j) If the repair service wasn't available, what would you have done with the item? *Please select all that apply.*

- Replaced the item with a new one
- Paid for a commercial repair service
- Borrowed from friends/family
- Thrown the item away as part of my household waste (e.g. put it in my general rubbish bin)
- Disposed of it through household recycling (e.g. kerbside recycling collection, council collection)
- Taken it to my local Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)
- I don't know
- Repaired through another route (please specify)
- Other (please specify)

7k) How much do you estimate it would have cost to buy this item new?

7l) Did using the service save you money?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- I don't know

7m) Have you taken any other types of items to be repaired through these services? *Please state which types of items you've also taken to be repaired in the past:*

7. Have you accessed a repair and reuse service to borrow an item (e.g., through a Library of Things)?
    - Yes (Route to Q8A: Borrowing Section)
    - No (Skip to Q9: Donations Section)

8a. Borrowing/sharing behaviours

8a) Where was the borrowing service you visited located? Please specify the name and/or town, city, or village. If you have visited multiple locations, click ‘Add another location’ to enter additional responses

8b) What mode of transport do you usually use to reach this space?

- Walking
- Car
- Motorcycle
- Bicycle
- Public transport (e.g., the bus, train etc.)
- Other (please specify)

8c) How far do you typically travel (one way) to visit this borrowing service? *(Please select one option that best represents your usual travel distance)*

- Less than 1 mile
- 1 to 2 miles
- 3 to 5 miles
- 6 to 10 miles
- 11 to 15 miles
- More than 15 miles
- Don’t know

8d) How often do you access this borrowing service?

- I have only accessed this service once
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Once or twice a year
- Not sure / I don’t know

8e) What type of item do you most regularly borrow (e.g., through a Library of Things)?

- Clothing, textiles & accessories (e.g., fancy dress costumes, maternity clothing, bags)
- Furniture
- Household items & home décor (e.g., lamps, kitchenware)
- Small electrical appliances (e.g., kettles, toasters, hairdryers)
- Technology & gadgets (e.g., laptops, phones, tablets)
- Large electricals (e.g., Audio/IT equipment, fitness, event equipment)
- Gardening & DIY tools (e.g., lawnmowers, drills, saws)
- Mobility Aids
- Sports & outdoor equipment (e.g., bicycles, camping gear)
- Toys & games (e.g., board games, electronic toys, dolls)
- Musical instruments (e.g., guitars, keyboards)
- Other (please specify)

8f) On average, how long have you borrowed this item for in the past?

- 1 day

- 2-3 days
- 1 week
- 1-2 weeks
- More than 2 weeks
- I can't remember

8g) Why did you choose to borrow this item, rather than buy it? *(Please select all that apply)*

- I only needed it for a certain period of time
- I wanted to try it before deciding whether to buy one
- I wanted to save money
- I didn't have space to store the item long-term
- I was unsure how often I would use it
- Borrowing was easier and more readily-available than buying
- I prefer to support community-led initiatives
- Other (please specify)

8h) What would you have done if you couldn't have borrowed this item through a Library of Things? *(Please select all that apply)*

- Bought the item new
- Bought the item second-hand
- Used another borrowing or rental service (please specify)
- Borrowed from friends, family, or neighbours
- Used an alternative item I already own
- Gone without the item
- Other (please specify)
- I don't know

8i) How much do you estimate it might have cost to buy this item new?

8j) Have you borrowed any other types of items from a borrowing/sharing service? *Please state which types of items you've also borrowed in the past:*

8. Have you visited a reuse shop to donate an item for reuse?
    - Yes (Route to Q9A: Donation behaviours)
    - No (Route to Q10: Buying second hand)

9a. Donation behaviours

9a) Where was the reuse shop you visited located? Please specify the name and/or town, city, or village. If you have visited multiple locations, click 'Add another location' to enter additional responses.

Reuse shops sell donated items that have been saved from waste, and are often located at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) or on the high street. They are different from charity shops in that they are usually part of local authority or social enterprise initiatives to promote reuse and support communities.

9b) What mode of transport do you usually use to reach this space?

- Walking
- Car
- Motorcycle
- Bicycle
- Public transport (e.g., the bus, train etc.)
- Other (please specify)

9c) How far do you typically travel (one way) to visit this reuse shop? *(Please select one option that best represents your usual travel distance)*

- Less than 1 mile
- 1 to 2 miles
- 3 to 5 miles
- 6 to 10 miles
- 11 to 15 miles
- More than 15 miles
- Don't know

9d) How often do you donate to this reuse shop/hub?

- I have only donated to this service once
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Once or twice a year
- Not sure / I don't know

9e) What type of item(s) did you last donate to a reuse shop?

- Clothing, textiles & accessories (e.g., fancy dress costumes, maternity clothing, bags)
- Furniture & home decor
- Household Items (e.g., lamps, kitchenware)
- Small electricals & appliances (e.g., kettles, toasters, hairdryers)
- Technology & gadgets (e.g., laptops, phones, tablets)
- Garden & DIY tools (e.g., lawnmowers, drills, saws)
- Sports & outdoor equipment (e.g., bicycles, bicycle accessories, camping gear)
- Toys & games (e.g., board games, electronic toys, dolls)
- Musical instruments (e.g., guitars, keyboards)
- Other (please specify)

9f) Why did you choose to donate this item to a reuse shop? *Please select all that apply.*

- To reduce waste and prevent items from going to landfill
- To support a community project or local organisation
- To help others who may need the item
- To give an item a second life
- To make space at home
- I was encouraged to donate by a friend, family member, or the organisation itself

- Other (please specify)

9g) If the reuse shop/initiative didn't exist, what would you have most likely done with this item? (Select one)

- Thrown it away as part of my household waste (e.g. put it in my general rubbish bin)
- Disposed of it through household recycling (e.g. kerbside recycling collection, council collection)
- Taken it to my local Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)
- Sold it through a second-hand platform (e.g., Vinted, eBay, Facebook Marketplace, Gumtree)
- Donated it to a charity shop
- Given it to a friend, family member, or neighbour
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

9h: Have you donated any other types of items to a reuse shop? *Please state which types of items you've also donated in the past:*

9. Have you visited a repair and reuse service to **buy** a second-hand or refurbished item?

- Yes (Route to Q10a: Buying Section)
- No (Skip to Q11: Skills & Making Section)

10a. Reuse behaviours

10a) Where was the reuse shop you visited located? Please specify the name and/or town, city, or village. If you have visited multiple locations, click 'Add another location' to enter additional responses

10b) What mode of transport do you usually use to reach this space?

- Walking
- Car
- Motorcycle
- Bicycle
- Public transport (e.g., the bus, train etc.)
- Other (please specify)

10c) How far do you typically travel (one way) to visit this reuse shop? *(Please select one option that best represents your usual travel distance)*

- Less than 1 mile
- 1 to 2 miles
- 3 to 5 miles
- 6 to 10 miles
- 11 to 15 miles
- More than 15 miles
- Don't know

10d) How often do you access this reuse shop/hub?

- I have only accessed this service once
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Once or twice a year
- Not sure / I don't know

10e) What type of item did you last purchase through a reuse shop/hub?

- Clothing, textiles & accessories (e.g., fancy dress costumes, trousers, jackets, shoes, bags, jewellery)
- Furniture & home decor
- Household Items (e.g., lamps, kitchenware)
- Small electricals & appliances (e.g., kettles, toasters, hairdryers)
- Technology & gadgets (e.g., laptops, phones, tablets)
- Garden & DIY tools (e.g., lawnmowers, drills, saws)
- Sports & outdoor equipment (e.g., bicycles, bicycle accessories, camping gear)
- Toys & games (e.g., board games, electronic toys, dolls)
- Musical instruments (e.g., guitars, keyboards)
- Other (please specify)

10f) Why did you choose to buy this item second-hand instead of new? *Please select all that apply*.

- It was more affordable
- Sustainability reasons (e.g., reducing waste, lowering environmental impact)
- Ethical reasons
- I wanted to support a local or community project
- I like finding unique or vintage items
- It was the most accessible or convenient option (e.g., located nearby, available immediately, faster than ordering new)
- Other (please specify)

10g) How much would this item have likely cost if you had purchased it new?

10. Have you visited a repair and reuse service to learn a new skill (e.g., through a workshop or training session)?

- Yes (Route to Q11a: Skills & Making Section)
- No (Skip to Section 3: Barriers & Benefits of using RRAs)

11a. Skills/making

11a) Where was the makerspace/workshop you visited located? Please specify the name and/or town, city, or village. If you have visited multiple locations, click 'Add another location' to enter additional responses

11b) What mode of transport do you usually use to reach this space?

- Walking
- Car
- Motorcycle
- Bicycle
- Public transport (e.g., the bus, train etc.)
- Other (please specify)

11c) How far do you typically travel (one way) to visit this makerspace/workshop? *(Please select one option that best represents your usual travel distance)*

- Less than 1 mile
- 1 to 2 miles
- 3 to 5 miles
- 6 to 10 miles
- 11 to 15 miles
- More than 15 miles
- Don’t know

11d) How often do you access this makerspace/workshop?

- I have only accessed this service once
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Once or twice a year
- Not sure / I don’t know

11e) Thinking about your visits to the Makerspace, workshop, or training sessions in the last six months, what were your reasons for attending? *(Select all that apply)*

- To learn new skills (e.g., repairing, upcycling, woodworking, electronics, textiles, etc.)
- To fix or improve something I already own
- To work on a personal or creative project
- To use tools or equipment that I don’t have at home
- To meet and collaborate with others in my community
- To try something new out of interest/hobby
- Other (please specify)

11f) What were your main motivations for attending these sessions? *Please select all that apply.*

- To develop practical skills for personal use
- To save money by repairing instead of replacing items
- To reduce waste and be more environmentally friendly
- To gain skills for a job or career
- To meet and connect with like-minded people

- To gain confidence in working with tools and materials
- Other (please specify)

11g) What skills or knowledge did you gain from attending? *(Select all that apply)*

- Repair skills (e.g., electronics, furniture, textiles, mechanics, etc.)
- Upcycling or repurposing materials
- How to safely use tools and equipment
- Sewing, knitting, or other textile-related skills
- 3D printing, laser cutting, or digital fabrication
- Woodworking or DIY home repairs
- Confidence in fixing things independently
- Other (please specify)

11h) Have you used these skills outside of the space since attending?

- Yes
- No
- Not yet but plan to

Please feel free to explain your answer:

Section 3: Benefits & challenges of using RRAs

12. What benefits have you experienced from using a repair and/or reuse service? *Please select all that apply.*
    - Saved money by repairing, borrowing, or purchasing second-hand instead of buying new
    - Helped reduce waste and supported environmental sustainability
    - Learned new skills or gained confidence in repairing items
    - Connected with others through social interactions
    - Felt more involved in my community
    - Gained access to tools, equipment, or resources I wouldn't normally have
    - Supported local businesses and community-led initiatives
    - Improved my sense of wellbeing (e.g., satisfaction from fixing something, social interaction, reducing waste anxiety)
    - I haven't noticed any particular benefits yet
    - Other (please specify)

    Please feel free to expand on your answer using the comments box below:

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about how using a repair and reuse service has influenced your behaviours? *(Strongly agree/ Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly disagree/Not applicable)*

    - I now have more items repaired instead of replacing them
    - I now repair more items myself instead of replacing them
    - I buy fewer new products as I repair them instead

- I buy fewer new products because I buy them second-hand
- I am more likely to borrow items instead of buying them (e.g., through a Library of Things).
- I encourage others (friends, family) to repair, borrow or buy items second hand.
- I have gained skills or confidence that help me repair items or extend their lifespan.
- I have met new people in my community through repair and reuse services
- I have shared skills, knowledge, or hobbies with others through repair and reuse services.

14. Have you ever experienced any challenges in accessing or using repair and reuse services? *Please select all that apply.*
    - The location is too far away
    - My nearest service is not accessible on foot or by public transport
    - I am unable to drive to a location
    - I don't know where my nearest repair and reuse service is
    - Opening hours don't fit my schedule
    - It's sometimes quicker or more convenient to buy new instead
    - I'm unsure about the quality or reliability of repairs/borrowed items
    - There are long wait times for repairs or borrows
    - I've faced stigma or negative perceptions around using second-hand or repaired items
    - Other (please specify)
    - No challenges – I find them easy to access and use

    Can you describe how, if at all, you have overcome this/these challenge(s) or what could be done?

15. Would anything encourage you or your wider community to use RRAs more often? *For example, greater promotion of activities, longer opening times, more locations.*

16. Are there any other repair, reuse, or borrowing services you have used that were not covered in this survey? If so, please tell us about them and your experiences:

Section 4: Follow up

17. Would you be open to a follow-up conversation to discuss your responses in more detail?
    - Yes
    - No

18. If yes, please provide your contact details below:
    Name:
    Email:
    Phone Number:

Thank you for completing this survey

6.2 Annex B - YouGov Survey

1. Before taking this survey, which, if any, of the following type of community-based services have you heard of? (Please select all that apply)
    - Repair cafés
    - Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing)
    - Re-use shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items
    - Makerspaces or Community Workshops
    - None of these
    - Don’t know

2. Which, if any, of the following types of community-based services are available in your locality? (Please select all that apply)
    - Repair cafés
    - Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing)
    - Re-use shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items
    - Makerspaces or Community Workshops
    - None of these
    - Don’t know

3. Which, if any, of the following types of community-based services have you used in the last 12 months (i.e. since May 2024)? (Please select all that apply)
    - Repair cafés
    - Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing)
    - Re-use shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items
    - Makerspaces or Community Workshops
    - None of these
    - Don’t know

4. Which, if any, of the following were reasons why you used this community-based service? (Please select all that apply)
    - To save money
    - To reduce waste
    - To reduce greenhouse gas emissions
    - To access items I only needed temporarily
    - To repair a broken item I didn’t want to throw away
    - To support a community or local initiative
    - Other

5. Which, if any, of the following types of items have you repaired, borrowed, or purchased second-hand through this service? (Please select all that apply)
    - Large electricals
    - Small electricals
    - Tools / DIY equipment
    - Clothing and textiles
    - Toys or leisure items
    - Large furniture
    - Small furniture
    - Bric-a-brac

- Other

6. Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you have not used them? (Please select all that apply)
    - I don't know where they are
    - I'm not sure what they offer
    - There aren't any near me
    - I prefer to buy new
    - I don't need these services
    - I'm concerned about quality or reliability
    - I have not heard of these services
    - Other [open] please specify
    - Don't know

7. Please imagine a new community-based service (i.e. Repair cafés, Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing), Re-use shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items, Makerspaces or Community Workshops) is going to open near you. How likely, if at all, would you be to use them?
    - Very likely
    - Fairly likely
    - Not very likely
    - Not at all likely
    - Don't know

8. Please imagine a new community-based service (i.e. Repair afés, Libraries of Things/Benthyg (e.g., tool/item borrowing), Re-use shop for the purchase or donation of second-hand items, Makerspaces or Community Workshops) is going to open near you. Which, if any, of the following locations would you most likely use to access it? (Please select all that apply.)
    - High street / town centre
    - As part of a Household Waste Recycling Centre
    - Within a retail park
    - Near a supermarket
    - A mobile facility
    - Other [open] please specify
    - Don't know

9. How easy or difficult, if at all, is it to repair or fix a broken item (e.g., electronics, furniture, clothing, etc.) in your area?
    - Very easy
    - Fairly easy
    - Fairly difficult
    - Very difficult
    - Don't know/ not sure

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People in my area should be supported to repair and reuse more, rather than throw things away.
    - Strongly agree
    - Tend to agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree

- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don’t know

11. Which, if any, of the following would make it easier or more appealing for people to repair, reuse, or borrow items instead of buying new? (Please select all that apply)
    - More visible and accessible services
    - Clearer information about what’s available
    - Lower costs or free repair/borrowing options
    - Better quality or trusted repair services
    - More education or awareness campaigns
    - Nothing would make a difference
    - Better opening hours
    - Other [open] please specify
    - Don’t know

6.3 Annex C – Research aims and questions

The Welsh Government set out the following aims and research questions:

- A1: To understand the cost-effectiveness of the Circular Economy funding for Repair and Reuse Activities against Welsh Government expectations
    - RQ1: How many Repair and Reuse Activities are still open?
    - RQ2 What are the financial costs to the Welsh Government in delivering these Repair and Reuse Activities?
    - RQ3: What are the financial benefits and savings to the Welsh Government of Repair and Reuse Activities?
    - RQ4: Do the benefits outweigh the costs?
- A2: To understand the extent of emerging social contributions of Repair and Reuse Activities to users and the surrounding area:
    - RQ5: What are the emerging social contributions (potential examples include emerging community benefits such as increased 'warm' spaces, opportunities for social interaction) to users and the wider community of Repair and Reuse Activities?
    - RQ6: How could the emerging social contribution of Repair and Reuse Activities be measured for future evaluations?
    - RQ7: How significant are the emerging social contributions of Repair and Reuse Activities to users?
- A3: To understand factors that influence how financially sustainable the Repair and Reuse Activities have been:
    - RQ8: What are the current business models (including type of funding leveraged) of Repair and Reuse Activities?
    - RQ9: What business models are more or less able to sustain Repair and Reuse Activities and why?
- A4: To explore any differences in outcomes by location of the Repair and Reuse Activities (geography, urban/rural, recycling centre/town centres/other)
    - RQ10: How does the location of the Repair and Reuse Activities influence their effectiveness?

- A5: To understand the views and general behaviours of those who engage with Repair and Reuse Activities:
    - RQ11: Who is using Repair and Reuse Activities? In particular:
        - Do they already generally recycle or re-use items?
        - Do they attend these places multiple times or do they only go for specific items / only attend once?
        - What would they have done with items if they had not attended a Repair and Reuse Activities site?
        - Would they have bought second hand items anyway (applicable to Library of Things)?
- A6: To understand general public awareness of Repair and Reuse Activities in their area:
    - RQ12: How aware are the public generally of any Repair and Reuse Activities in their area?
    - RQ13: What is general public awareness like in areas where there are no Repair and Reuse Activities in the local area?
- A7: To understand barriers to attending Repair and Reuse Activities:
    - RQ14: Are there any barriers to people attending Repair and Reuse Activities and how could these be minimised by those delivering?)