



Textile Waste: Sew What?



A school programme to help young people tackle fast fashion and textile waste

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Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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Textile Waste - The Issue



- Across the UK, including Northern Ireland, we throw away 1,000,000 tonnes of textile waste each year with 300,000 tonnes ending up in landfills.
- The fashion industry is ranked fourth in terms of its negative environmental impact - just below housing, transport, and food.
- Fast fashion and its advertising heavy drive to buy more negatively impacts the mental health of young people who are made to feel they need to constantly buy new clothes.

Textile Waste - The Solutions

Repair

Extending the life of clothes by an extra nine months reduces its carbon, water, and waste footprint by around 20-30% each. We give people the repairing skills to extend the life of their clothes.

Reuse

A recent Fashion Forever survey showed that while 65 percent of people in Northern Ireland regularly donate items they no longer need, only 17 percent would shop second hand. We break down the stigma of buying second hand clothes, reducing the need for newly made clothes

Reimagine

UK adults only wear on average 44% of the clothes they own. This is often because of ill fitting items and boredom. We give people the skills to alter their clothes to bring them back to use.



Sources:

Ellen MacArthur Foundation, A new textiles economy: Redesigning fashion's future, (2017)
WRAP, Mapping clothing impacts in Europe: the environmental cost (2017)

Textile Waste Programme



Project Overview

A fully funded six week course of 1 hour sessions will be delivered after school on site to a group of 6 students. This course will teach basic sewing skills, educate the students in the issues around textile waste and give them campaigning tools and confidence to talk to friends and family about the issues around textile waste.

The project will conclude with an exhibit of the students' work at 2 Royal Avenue in Belfast City Centre to raise the profile of the issues with the wider Belfast community and decision makers.

Session outlines

Week 1 - an introduction to textile waste and what we can do about it. Scrap fabric will be used to create cushions to start their sewing journey

Week 2 & 3 - Alterations and repairs. Sewing on a patch, hemming trousers and skirts and refashioning

Week 4 - Communication skills - students will discuss and agree on a group project to present to their peers. It will be in the form of an textile art exhibit highlighting textile waste issues

Week 5 & 6 - Creating textile art with scrap material - students will work on their projects.

The programme will end with an exhibit of the students' work at 2 Royal Avenue in Belfast City Centre to raise the profile of the issues with the wider community and decision makers.

Commitment from School

- A space be made available after school one day a week for 6 weeks with desks, sockets and flipboard/white board/interactive white board.
- A staff member present at the sessions and a representative for the exhibit at 2 Royal Avenue.
- Support for transport of students to exhibit if necessary.
- Publicity of project through existing school communications.



Make it Fab CIC Overview

At Make it Fab CIC we use our experience in teaching and coaching to provide high quality therapeutic sewing and upcycling courses. We also widen access to sewing equipment to promote wellbeing and social inclusion for marginalised and underrepresented groups.

Our Aims:

- Improve access to sewing particularly for low income families and neurodiverse children & adults
- Improve health & wellbeing
- Reduce textile waste and promote sustainable (slow) fashion

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