

**P R E S S R E L E A S E**

**24th August, 2020**

**Love clothes hate waste**

Imagine that dress or pair of trousers tucked away at the back of the wardrobe worn once or twice three years ago – multiplied hundreds of thousands of times.

Most of us have them. The value of unused clothing in UK wardrobes is estimated at around a staggering £30 billion. It is also estimated that £140m worth of clothing goes into landfill every year.

The fashion industry is ranked fourth in terms of its negative environmental impact – just below housing, transport and food.

And people in the UK buy more clothes than any other European country.

Clothes are a major contributor to the problem of plastic in the ocean. It has been calculated that around half a million tonnes of plastic microfibres shed during the washing of synthetic textiles such as polyester, nylon or acrylic end up in the ocean annually.

The challenge is massive, but clothing is the latest target in a re-use campaign by the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham (BDR) Waste Partnership and Renewi, the firm behind the waste treatment facility at Manvers.

A social media campaign #ChooseDayisReuseDay will run every Tuesday throughout September with tips and ideas on how we can all do something about the growing clothing mountain and the problems it creates for the planet.

Community Education Liaison Officer, Abi Cox, who is based at Manvers, said less than 1 per cent of all materials in clothes are recycled into new garments.

“People want to do the right thing and the UK sends 700,000 tonnes of clothing to recycling centres, textile banks, clothes collections and to charity each year – enough to fill 459 Olympic-size swimming pools.

“But before it comes to this, there is another way of tackling the problem - buying fewer new clothes, buying second hand, and caring for and repairing the clothes we have.

“The average lifetime of a garment in the UK is about 2.2 years but extending the life of clothing by just nine months can cause a significant reduction in its environmental impact.”

School uniform is a particular problem. The average cost of school uniform is £230 per child, not including sport and PE kits, and even more for secondary school pupils. Uniform with branding and school logos is often discarded at the end of the school year as pupils grow out of them.

“Consider buying second hand instead, pass on old uniform to friends or family, donate it to a charity shop or ask the school if they have a uniform project,” said Abi.

The re-use campaign has already tackled plastic bottles, cutlery and straws, tea bags and coffee pods, and carrier bags. Watch out for more re-use targets coming up including coffee/hot drinks cups, re-using at work, beauty and nappies.

**Note to Editors: The award-winning waste treatment facility at Manvers processes around a quarter of a million tonnes of leftover waste a year from 340,000 homes across Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham, turning it into useful products rather than sending it to landfill.**

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