

# Driving durability innovation to extend clothing lifecycles



For over half a century Asda has delivered value to its customers, by providing products at great prices that don't compromise on quality.

The business is passionate about sustainability and continues to make great strides in terms of its own environmental performance.

Sustainability has helped to lower operating costs and in turn, provided lower prices for customers.

## Key Facts

- **Cross-departmental workshop** on designing for durability & longevity, adaptability & versatility, re-use, repair & restyle, as well as discussing raw materials & textiles, colouration & finishing and consumer services quality.
- **Exploration of options for a re-use tracking programme.** Technology solutions include radio frequency identification (RFID) tags and barcodes. Manual or low technology solutions include 'message in a bottle' or partnership working.
- **Potential links to non-clothing products** sold by Asda could highlight opportunities to improve the durability and environmental footprint of clothing e.g. washing nets minimise wear and tear.

Overview

Workshop and  
Re-use tracking

Re-use tracking  
and Links to other  
products

Communicating  
links to other  
products

## Case Study

## Sustainability Clothing Action Plan

As part of its commitment to continual improvement, George became a signatory of the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP) 2020 Commitment.

This Commitment is managed by WRAP and seeks to significantly reduce the environmental impacts of clothing across its lifecycle.

## Durability workshop

George brought together members from a number of departments including quality, buying, sourcing and design to attend a cross-departmental workshop on durability, facilitated by WRAP and partners.

The workshop explored designing for durability and longevity, adaptability and versatility, re-use, repair and restyle, as well as discussing raw materials and textiles, colouration and finishing and consumer services.

The workshop explored concepts and industry examples to explore what durability means for George products, what the perceived barriers were to extending the life of the products and any other ideas to promotion and embedding across departments.

## Re-use tracking programme

Research was undertaken to explore what opportunities, mechanisms and partners exist to enable a tracking programme for certain lines of clothing, such as school uniform, to promote the re-use of clothing in developing countries.

Tracking mechanisms will allow George to monitor quantities and types of clothing being sent for re-use and provide information on who is donating and receiving the clothing. The research uncovered requirements, benefits and issues associated with each potential programme.

*“Creating long lasting quality clothing is a priority for George. We are always looking for ways to further embed sustainable practices from design through to store to help our customers enjoy our products for longer”*

**Lynne Tooms**  
**George Senior Director – Quality and Sourcing**

Overview

Workshop and Re-use tracking

Re-use tracking and Links to other products

Communicating links to other products

George. **w**rap

## Re-use tracking programme (contd)

A range of different tracking mechanisms are currently available. These were grouped as technological or manual solutions.

- Technology solutions include radio frequency identification (RFID) tags and barcodes.
- Manual or low technology solutions include 'message in a bottle' or partnership working.

Message in a bottle solutions could consist of a bespoke label placed on the item of clothing or a prepaid envelope provided to track the journey of donated clothing.

Partnership working involves the promotion of existing bring back facilities at ASDA store car parks, partnership with charity or partnership with schools.

The next step is to better understand the financial and practical implication of these various options and to establish a business case for this type of scheme.

## Links to other products

George also explored how potential links to non-clothing products sold by Asda could highlight opportunities to improve the durability and environmental footprint of clothing.

There has been some work done already by brands to link non-clothing products with extending the life of clothing, such as how to optimise clothing quality through washing machines and how washing powder can enhance clothing properties.

The assessment also covered other washing products such as stain removers, fabric softeners, the use of washing lines and washing nets.

For example, washing nets help prolong clothing life through minimising wear and tear from friction within the washing machine.

Sewing machines and patches enable mending and customisation, whereas home storage boxes protect from dirt and dust, whilst hangers preserve the shape of garments.

Overview

Workshop and  
Re-use tracking

Re-use tracking and  
Links to other products

Communicating  
links to other  
products

George. wrap

## Communicating links to other products

Communicating the benefits that non-clothing products can have on extending the life of clothing items will form an essential part of the success.

There are several ways that the benefits can be communicated. This section focusses on three core ways: in-store, online and via labelling.

### In-store

In-store opportunities could include benefits to the durability of clothing in existing promotions e.g. End of aisle special offers which link up with brands to include clothing durability messaging on existing on-shelf promotions or tying-in communications with existing campaigns e.g. Back to School.

### Online

Online advice and tips for clothing care could be included on the George website. Links to other brands guidance and recommendations, such as machine cycles and optimum washing powder for type of clothing, could also be included either on the George website or via links to other websites.

For example, Persil, a brand sold at Asda have Persil Laundry Tips, Clothes and Fabric Care on their [website](#).

## Labelling

Finally, advice and instructions related to optimal clothing care already exists on many clothing items. This could be extended to incorporate specific messaging related to the links between other products identified in this report and the benefits they can have on the clothing.

Further opportunities are presented by partnerships with existing durability campaigns e.g. [Love Your Clothes](#), with brands who have conducted their own research and campaigns, or with clothing repair companies.

This will enable George customers to easily repair garments and encourage customers to mend and repair damaged items rather than throwing them away.

Overview

Workshop and  
Re-use tracking

Re-use tracking and  
Links to other products

Communicating  
links to other  
products

George. **wrap**

**WRAP's vision** is a world where resources are used sustainably. It works in partnership with governments, businesses, trade bodies, local authorities, communities and individuals looking for practical advice to improve resource efficiency that delivers both economic and environmental benefits.

**Disclaimer:**

While we have tried to make sure this case study is accurate, we cannot accept responsibility or be held legally responsible for any loss or damage arising out of or in connection with this information being inaccurate, incomplete or misleading. This material is copyrighted. You can copy it free of charge as long as the material is accurate and not used in a misleading context. You must identify the source of the material and acknowledge our copyright.

You must not use material to endorse or suggest we have endorsed a commercial product or service. For more details please see our terms and conditions on our website at [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk) Case studies were generated as a result of specific trials carried out by WRAP and the named organisations during January to July 2015

**Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through:**

- **re-inventing** how we design, produce and sell products;
- **re-thinking** how we use and consume products; and
- **re-defining** what is possible through recycling and re-use.