

---

**Final Summary Report**

---

# Study into consumer second-hand shopping behaviour to identify the re-use displacement effect



WRAP commissioned this study into consumer second-hand shopping behaviour to identify the re-use displacement effect. Re-use displacement is defined as the quantity of second-hand purchases that have replaced what would otherwise have been a purchase of a new item.

**Project code:** MPD007-001  
**Research date:** June 2012

**Date:** February 2013

---

WRAP's vision is a world without waste,  
where resources are used sustainably.

We work with businesses, individuals and  
communities to help them reap the  
benefits of reducing waste, developing  
sustainable products and using resources  
in an efficient way.

Find out more at [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

**Written by:** Ann Stevenson and Ed Gmitrowicz, E&SP with Research by RMG:Clarity  
**Project managed by:** Melanie Chilton, WRAP

---

**Front cover photography:** Sale of new bags

While we have tried to make sure this report 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)

# Executive summary

WRAP commissioned the “Study into consumer second-hand shopping behaviour to identify the re-use displacement effect” to identify the re-use displacement values for priority material streams which are; textiles, electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and furniture. This executive summary provides a synopsis of the key findings in relation to re-use displacement values for Britain. Re-use displacement in this study is defined as “*the quantity of second-hand purchases that have replaced what would otherwise have been a purchase of a new item*”.

The study included a survey of over 3100 consumer shoppers who had frequented a range of different second-hand sale venues. 1791 interviews were in England, 713 were in Scotland and 682 were in Wales. Interviews were completed within, or just outside 566 different venues. Of the total venues 412 were charity shops, 150 were private second-hand shops, and four were at car boot sales and household waste recycling centres (HWRC). Overall, 4359 second-hand items were purchased (2525 in England, 893 in Scotland and 941 in Wales).

A separate study was conducted by WRAP in parallel to this research which identified the re-use displacement rate for online second hand sales. The results are referenced within this study. The online displacement rate is much higher than from in-venue purchases, although it should be noted a significantly different methodology was used to obtain the survey responses so comparisons should be made with caution.

In addition to determining re-use displacement values for a range of products, data was also obtained within this study in relation to second-hand item purchasing behaviours, including information on venue choices and awareness and use of product labels, standards and warranties.

Although some variation in results is noted across nations and products, the differences are generally within the 95% confidence level and as such the average re-use displacement value for Britain covering all items is 27%. However, the differences between the re-use displacement values for the regions of England and Scotland are statistically significant and are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Average re-use displacement values for Regions of England and Scotland

Region	Number of interviews	Average re-use displacement value			
		Overall	Textiles	EEE	Furniture
<b>England</b>					
London	274	41%	34%	52%	45%
North East	46	33%	*	*	*
North West	205	32%	31%	39%	25%
Yorkshire and Humber	181	29%	37%	19%	25%
West Midlands	159	26%	24%	36%	22%
South East	340	22%	29%	29%	17%
East of England	213	22%	21%	22%	17%
East Midlands	120	21%	24%	21%	21%
South West	253	21%	27%	17%	27%
<b>Scotland</b>					
Highlands and Islands	99	48%	52%	58%	40%
Clyde	142	43%	35%	47%	40%
Mid Scotland	102	40%	34%	32%	49%
East Scotland	119	32%	43%	31%	25%
South Scotland	84	13%	17%	13%	19%

Forth	167	10%	11%	6%	8%
-------	-----	-----	-----	----	----

*\* Sample size too small to determine values*

In England the highest value of 41% is for London compared to 21% for the South West of England. Scotland has the highest regional displacement value of 48% for the Highlands and Islands and the lowest of 10% for Forth. Scotland also has the largest differences between the re-use displacement values for each priority material stream for the regions including a 52% difference for EEE items between Forth and the Highlands and Islands. There are no significant regional differences for Wales.

A comparison of re-use displacement values for priority material streams, material subcategories and key reasons for purchase for each of the nations was carried out. Generally, Scotland returned the highest average re-use displacement values and Wales the lowest. These differences between nations are not, however, significant at the 95% confidence level.

Age, gender, reason for purchase and type of item purchased show an influence on the average re-use displacement values, however the variations are limited and generally fall within a 95% confidence limit for the parameter.

There is little difference in the average re-use displacement value for women and men and although average re-use displacement values are generally lowest for the youngest and the oldest age bands compared to other age groups, the differences are not statistically significant.

This report also identified other points of interest:

- Based on the purchase of 4359 items, the average number of items purchased per transaction is 1.37 across Britain, meaning most consumers buy between 1 to 2 items at a time.
- Charity shops were identified as the primary route for the purchase of second-hand items with car boot sales identified as the second most popular route.
- In relation to renting or hiring equipment, less than 2% stated they had ever rented or hired a product within the key product categories (EEE, textiles and furniture).
- Less than 30% of people would buy large household appliances, soft furnishings, small household appliances or IT and telecommunications equipment second-hand. The main issues identified by respondents (55%) are the quality and durability of items, and the lack of guarantees available.
- Respondents were asked whether they would purchase additional items if they made financial savings from the purchase of the second-hand items. The majority said they wouldn't. The main reason given by respondents as to why they had bought the item second hand instead of new (at 33% of all responses) was because people like "getting a bargain"
- 80% of respondents stated that warranties are important when buying new items compared to 31% stating they are important when buying second-hand purchases.
- In all instances awareness of a variety of labels and standards was significantly higher than the number of respondents that actually looked for the labels when purchasing a second-hand item.

To read the full report [click here](#)

---

**Waste & Resources  
Action Programme**

The Old Academy  
21 Horse Fair  
Banbury, Oxon  
OX16 0AH

Tel: 01295 819 900  
Fax: 01295 819 911  
E-mail: [info@wrap.org.uk](mailto:info@wrap.org.uk)

Helpline freephone  
0808 100 2040

[www.wrap.org.uk/re-use](http://www.wrap.org.uk/re-use)

