



HOW TO GUIDE

FOR BULKY ITEM REUSE IN PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES

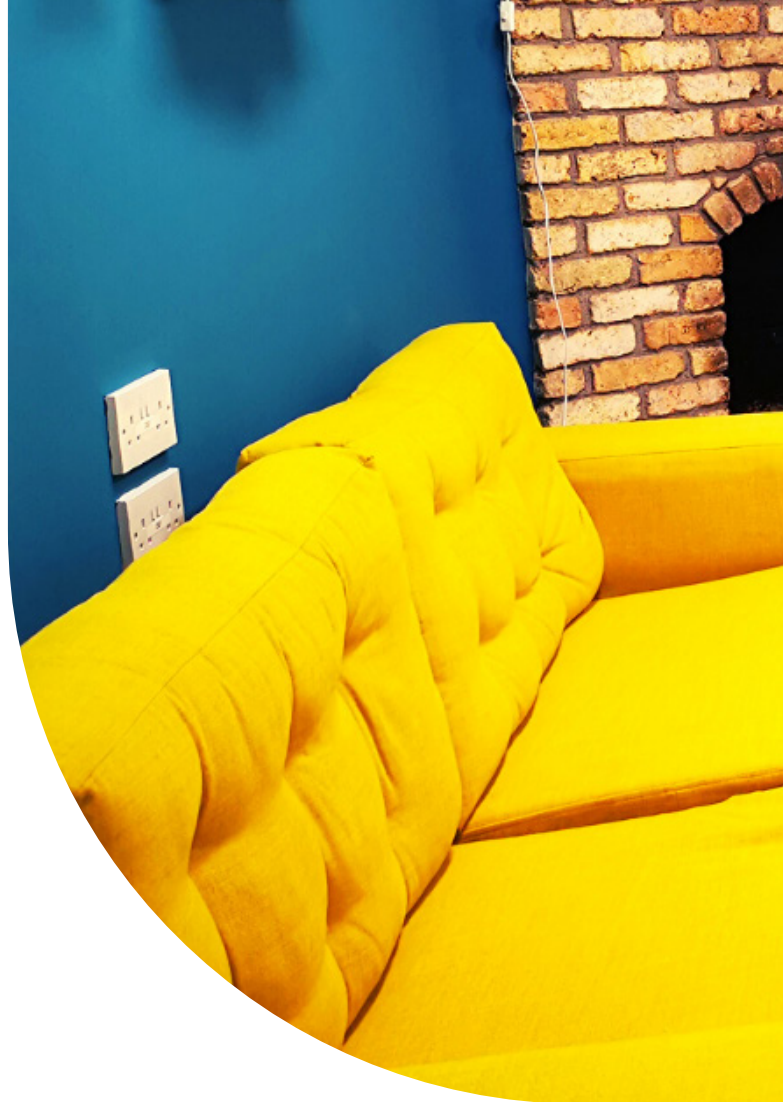


INTRODUCTION

This guide was developed as part of a CRNI research project Design of business models to encourage Public Sector Bodies to engage in the reuse/exchange of unwanted bulky items funded by the EPA under the Green Enterprise research programme.

Waste prevention activities such as reuse and repair are important in reducing carbon impacts associated with consumption and waste, and can support national climate and circular economy policies. However, to date reuse activities remain at low levels across the public sector.

Bulky item reuse schemes support the redistribution of unwanted bulky items to other public sector organisations or the Third sector. This not only reduces waste but, by prolonging the life of materials, supports carbon savings, sustainability initiatives and reduces costs.



WHY ESTABLISH A REUSE SCHEME?

- Improve your environmental impact. As a public sector body, you will have to report on your sustainability initiatives through Resource Efficiency Action Plans (REAPs) for Government Departments or Climate Action Charters if you are a local authority.
- Support the transition to a more circular economy and reduce the amount of resources being sent to landfill
- Reduce waste costs and procurement costs, where reuse is considered before buying new.
- Improve your social impact by partnering with charities and other not-for-profit bodies to provide them with unwanted bulky items.





WHAT CAN BE REUSED?

Bulky items refer to medium size items such as furniture, fixtures and fittings, garden and outdoor or other large fixtures. Items can be reused if they are unwanted but haven't already entered a waste stream, are of good quality and are in safe working order.

WHAT ABOUT INTERIM STORAGE?

Where at all possible items should be advertised in enough time to allow for the exchange to take place before the vacancy date (i.e. the date before item needs to be removed and is sent into a waste stream). Certain organisations may want to consider if they have storage space for high value furniture or equipment, however this should be looked at by organisations on a case by case basis.

HOW CAN IT BE REUSED?

Different approaches can be taken to establishing a reuse scheme within your organisation, depending on your requirements. Some options identified through the CRNI research project are outlined in the following pages:



INTERNAL REUSE/EXCHANGE

An internal reuse/exchange process is established within an organisation. The organisation selects a suitable platform to advertise, manage and report unwanted bulky items – this may be an **online platform** or a **manual system** depending on the resources available.

Staff members are invited to upload or claim unwanted items via the platform. In some cases these may be screened or uploaded by an internal resource. Internal resources are required to oversee the management of the system, screen the unwanted bulky items listed, liaise with internal item owners / claimants (staff), arrange staff training and compile metric reports (cost savings, CO₂ saved, tonnes diverted). They should also manage those items not claimed within a fixed timeframe. Depending on the process, this may be one person's role or part of an existing person's role.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Organisations can get started as soon as possible, if they have upper management buy-in.	A small network limits the capacity to exchange items
Possible low cost of implementation and no coordination / promotion required with external stakeholders	Without any external stakeholder involvement, the scheme relies on internal buy-in and engagement.
As all exchanges are internal there are limited liability or storage barriers	It requires an internal resource to take the initiative to establish a reuse platform within the organisation

Examples of this type of model in use: University of Ulster





EXTERNAL REUSE/EXCHANGE WITH THIRD SECTOR

A Reuse/Exchange scheme is established internally within the organisation. Staff members are invited to upload or claim unwanted items via the platform. However, if items aren't claimed after e.g. 2 - 4 weeks, they are **donated to the Third Sector** (schools, charities). **An online commercial system** is recommended for this model to facilitate communication with Third Sector partners.

A **dedicated staff member** is required to oversee management of the online platform, screen the unwanted bulky items listed, organise staff training, compile metric reports and liaise with internal item owners (staff) and with claimants (Third Sector).

Advantages	Disadvantages
With the Third Sector involved, the number of potential claimants increases, which can reduce turnaround times and the need for storage.	Additional coordination / promotion required with Third Sector stakeholders
Third sector claimants arrange and pay for their own transport	It requires an internal resource to establish / manage a reuse platform within the organisation
Improve your social impact by partnering with charities and other not-for-profit bodies to provide them with unwanted bulky items.	Cost associated with implementation of a commercial platform.

Examples of this type of model in use: University College Dublin Estate Services



REUSE/EXCHANGE WITHIN REGIONAL CLUSTERS

A Reuse/Exchange scheme is established between organisations who agree to be part of a **regional cluster**, led by a champion(s) who brings them together. A suitable online commercial platform is selected and implemented by all organisations in the cluster. Staff members from all participating organisations are invited to upload or claim unwanted items via the platform. The group decides if unclaimed items are kept internally or passed onto the Third Sector.

A letter of commitment should be obtained from management of each organisation that they will assign ownership to a suitable member of staff and actively participate in the cluster. This **reuse champion/point of contact** will either take up a FTE or part of an existing person's role. Their responsibilities should include screening the unwanted bulky items listed, organising staff training, compiling metric reports, liaising with internal item owners (staff) and with external claimants (Third Sector) if required.

Advantages	Disadvantages
A cluster of organisations widens the reuse network which should facilitate more exchanges, while minimising transport requirements.	Requires initiative of a lead public body to establish and maintain the cluster.
It provides internal reuse champions with peer to peer support and the connections with local stakeholders could help maintain momentum.	Additional management buy-in, coordination and promotion required with cluster participants especially by lead organisation
There could be an opportunity for one or several of the organisations involved to sponsor the reuse scheme.	Cost associated with implementation of a commercial platform (likely to be the simplest format for exchange).

Examples of this type of model in use: University College London (UCL)

REUSE/EXCHANGE FOR AN OFFICE REFURBISHMENT OR RELOCATION PROJECT

This model is suitable for public sector bodies who want to trial an element of reuse/exchange without significant investment, and define how reuse could work for their organisation. For the purposes of a once-off office refurbishment or relocation project it wouldn't be recommended to implement an online software platform.

From the outset, the organisation will have to define the following factors:

- Does the project include donation of bulky items only, or will it also include the procurement of upcycled or reused items;
- Will the reuse element apply to the full project, or will just one room or floor in the building be considered;
- Who are the potential claimants – internal only, other public sector bodies or the Third sector

A **project champion** is assigned to review the list of upcoming refurbishment or office move projects within their organisation and gets buy-in to apply this model. This champion could be from the green team, facilities or procurement department.

Approx 4-6 weeks before the upgrade is due to commence, the champion advertises the unwanted items via existing channels – internal email or existing platforms (e.g. OPW Accommodation officers' network, SEAI Energy Link, CRNI network). The reuse activities should be written into the tender document for the refurbishment project to ensure project management team buy-in to the process. This will specify if multiple claimants are allowed and if transport / repair / storage services are provided.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows organisations to trial an element of reuse/exchange without significant investment, and define how reuse could work for their organisation.	No network of potential claimants established - identifying claimants likely to take longer
No costs associated with software and staff resource is project based only	Does not involve wider organisation, staff training or developing a reuse culture within the organisation.
If successful this could be used as a basis to establish a permanent reuse scheme	Limited impact as relates to single project only

Examples of this type of model in use: Public Health Wales in which 45% of the items were re-used, 49% were re-made and 6% were sourced from new stock, with 41 tonnes being diverted from landfill.



STEPS TO ESTABLISH A REUSE SCHEME:



1. BUY-IN OF UPPER MANAGEMENT

Obtain upper management buy-in as a first step as this demonstrates it as a priority and will help raise awareness of the scheme across the organisation.

It will also ensure the necessary budget is made available and the necessary resources are assigned to the scheme.



2. BUY-IN FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Conduct internal meetings and workshops to get buy-in from other heads of departments – particularly procurement, facilities, training, marketing and IT teams. It is important that each manager agrees to support the reuse system and champion it within their departments.

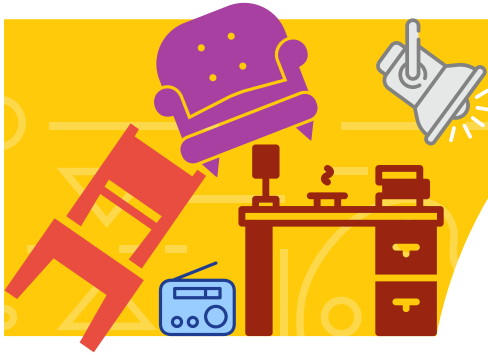


3. CREATE AN INTERNAL REUSE PROCESS

Items to be considered are:

1. What platform will be utilised to manage the reuse scheme (manual or online)? Some examples of commercial platforms include warp-it.co.uk and globechain.com
2. What items can be reused/exchanged?
3. What is the required turnaround time / how long in advance should the items be advertised?
4. What happens to items that haven't been claimed?
5. Who can items be exchanged with – internal only, public sector cluster or external / Third sector if unclaimed internally after a certain period?
6. Who is responsible for management of the platform?
7. Who is responsible for cataloguing and advertising the items?
8. Who is responsible for liaising with the claimant and ensuring the exchange happens?
9. How does it integrate with existing waste management policies?
10. Can items be claimed by multiple claimants?
11. Are transport, storage or repair services available and what are the associated costs?

Process flow diagrams should be created to show how the system works for both waste managers and general users of the scheme.



4. PLAN FOR AVAILABLE STORAGE

It is not recommended to facilitate interim storage especially in the initial stages of setting up a platform. The need for storage can be avoided by setting minimum periods for bulky items to be advertised both internally and with external partners (Third sector) to ensure they have been claimed before the vacancy date. However, organisations may consider providing storage for high value furniture or equipment, on a case by case basis.



5. AGREE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

Arranging the exchange of the item(s) is an important step in the process and it is important that both the donor and claimant clearly understand how the process works.

Make sure it is agreed ahead of time who is responsible for meeting the claimants, who will cover the transport costs and the logistics of the meeting to exchange the item.



6. LINK TO PURCHASING SYSTEM

It is important that this system aligns with procurement policy for bulky items. Arrange meetings with the procurement team to agree how best to do this.

7. COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF

Make sure that staff are aware of the platform and the associated benefits with a reuse scheme. It is also essential that they know how to engage with the process.

Regular engagement is recommended either via an Intranet page, social media, staff newsletters or CEO/upper management regular updates. These should include updates on KPI's including how much waste has been diverted from landfill, carbon savings, procurement and waste cost savings.



7. GATHER FEEDBACK

It is important to gather feedback from both donors (generally staff members) and other claimants from the Third sector. This should be done after it has been in operation for about 12 months.





FOR MORE INFO on setting up reuse systems or to connect with CRNI members as potential third sector claimants or refurbishers, please get in touch with info@crni.ie or visit crni.ie/bulky-item-reuse.

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