



Policy statement

Kerbside collections

Introduction

The BHF's charity shops provide a vital part of our income. Donations of good quality items from the public raise money for our life-saving work.

Across the UK we have over 700 shops. We're the biggest second-hand furniture and electrical retailer in the UK, with 130 dedicated Furniture and Electrical stores.

There are a number of routes for the public to donate goods to the BHF including over the counter at one of our shops, through our free collection service and via our book and clothing banks. We have also been working with local authorities to carry out kerbside collections.

Policy statement

BHF charity shops prevent over 25,000 tonnes of textiles and furniture going to landfill each year.

As a major reuser and recycler, the BHF supports measures from local authorities to reduce the amount of household waste going to landfill. Kerbside collections offer a convenient way for householders to dispose of their unwanted items.

However, the BHF believes that local authorities should maximise the societal benefit of kerbside recycling schemes by contracting with charities rather than commercial organisations where possible.

When the British Heart Foundation has worked with local authorities in this way, we have also passed on associated savings to other local charities. A partnership approach to kerbside collections therefore meets the twin aims of reducing environmental impact and supporting local communities.

Charity shops re-use or recycle over 360,000 tonnes of textiles each year and are responsible for nearly half of the total number of textiles being reused and recycled in the UK.

Background

The funds raised by BHF charity shops are a vital part of our fight against heart disease. The goods that are donated to our shops prevent 25,000 tonnes of textiles and furniture going to landfill every year.

It is estimated that the charity shops sector re-uses or recycles over 363,000 tonnes of textiles each year and that charity shops are responsible for 47% of the total number of textiles being reused and recycled in the UK¹. In the UK, approximately one million tonnes of unwanted clothing is discarded every year, half of which ends up in landfill².

Charity shops deliver significant savings for local authorities. The Charity Retail Association estimates that the textiles reused or recycled by charity shops save local authorities over £17million a year in avoided landfill tax³.

Clothing accounts for around half of the items sold by charity shops⁴. They also make a significant contribution to waste reduction through reuse of books, furniture and bric-a-brac.

Textile reuse and recycling

Recycling and waste collection is one of the most valued services that local authorities run. Although the choice of which waste and recycling scheme to use remains a matter for local authorities to determine, an increasing number of local authorities are making use of kerbside textile collection recycling schemes to help them meet waste reduction targets.

A 2009 report noted that while kerbside collection of used textiles has substantially increased over the last decade, it is still only at half the level of kerbside collection of glass, plastic and metals⁵. Given that considerable levels of high quality textiles have been identified in residual waste there is significant potential for growth in this area. In 2005/06 local authorities in Scotland collected 14,377 tonnes of textiles for recycling⁶.

Householders are keen to make use of recycling schemes as long as these are understandable and properly explained. They also want to know where their materials go to be assured that recycling is actually taking place⁷.

Policy context

Textile recycling has been recognised by policymakers as an important area for waste reduction. The UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) launched the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap in 2007 with the aim of improving sustainability across its lifecycle, including recycling and reuse. This led to an action plan agreed in 2010 with the clothing industry and other supporting

¹ http://www.charityshops.org.uk/faqs_environment.html

² Defra (2011) Sustainable Clothing Roadmap Progress Report 2011

³ Calculation based on the 2010 landfill tax of £48 per tonne <http://www.charityshops.org.uk/reuse.html>

⁴ http://www.charityshops.org.uk/faqs_environment.html

⁵ Defra (2009) Maximising reuse and recycling of UK clothing and textiles: A research report by Oakdene Hollins Ltd

⁶ <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/ways-recycle-textiles>

⁷ WRAP (2009) Choosing the right recycling collection system

organisations⁸.

Responsibility for the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap has now passed to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which works on waste reduction with business and local authorities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. WRAP has ambitions to reduce the quantity of packaging, textile, furniture and electrical waste sent to landfill by 5% by 2015. To support this aim, WRAP will develop standards to build confidence in reused textiles, electrical goods and furniture⁹.

The Department for Communities and Local Government in England has created a £250million challenge fund to support weekly bin collections. The fund is open to bids from local authorities that wish to introduce, retain or reinstate a weekly collection service which demonstrates an improvement in environmental performance, such as through increased recycling rates¹⁰.

The Scottish Government published Scotland's Zero Waste Plan in 2010¹¹. The plan sets a long term target of 70% recycling and a maximum 5% to landfill by 2025 for all Scotland's waste. The carbon metric guidance accompanying the plan identifies textiles as having the greatest environmental benefit if they are removed from the waste stream¹². The Scottish Government intends to bring forward regulations on waste during 2012 including a requirement for businesses and local authorities to present recyclable materials for collection and a new requirement to remove key recyclables from residual waste prior to incineration¹³.

The EU Waste Framework Directive sets out definitions of waste, recycling and recovery and sets out waste management principles including requiring waste to be managed without harm to health, without causing a nuisance and without harming the countryside or other areas of special interest¹⁴. In 2011, Defra and the Welsh Government were subject to a judicial review on the basis that the regulations to transpose the directive into English and Welsh law do not reflect the requirement for different kinds of waste to be separately collected or to be sorted at the kerbside during collection^{15 16}. Defra will be amending the regulations and these will come into effect from 2015.

The EU Landfill Directive set targets for reducing the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill, which includes food and garden waste, and paper and paperboard. The 2010 targets were met in all four UK nations and there are further targets set for 2013 and 2020¹⁷.

BHF activity

We are running a six month kerbside collection trial with Elmbridge Borough Council, collecting clothes, shoes, books, CDs & DVDs. All items collected are donated to the BHF. As the collected items are being reused or recycled, there will also be savings on disposal costs for the local authority which are passed on to other local charities.

⁸ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/03/30/pb13206-clothing-action-plan/>

⁹ http://www.wrap.org.uk/wrap_corporate/about_wrap/our_priorities.html

¹⁰ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/local/wastecollection/>

¹¹ <http://scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/314168/0099749.pdf>

¹² <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/carbonmetric>

¹³ <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/road-zero-waste-regulations>

¹⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/index.htm>

¹⁵ http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=eb76e7a5-2512-4a05-82d1a84a2bef3a57&groupId=10161

¹⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2011/9780111506462/part/6>

¹⁷ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/09/08/landfill-directive-target/>

The nominated local charities to receive donations from the trial are the Princess Alice Hospice and The Royal Cambridge Home¹⁸.

We worked with Birmingham City Council and the University of Birmingham in 2011 to reduce the landfill from students vacating their accommodation at the end of the academic year. This include daily kerbside collection of BHF bags as well as clothing and book banks sited in halls of residence and a furniture collection service for landlords. Overall, the pilot was very successful, diverting over 2500 items from landfill and generating £10,000 worth of stock for BHF charity shops. In addition, the BHF has been given permanent bank and bin sites within halls of residence which will continue to generate stock in the future. We are seeking to repeat the initiative in 2012.

In 2010, we took part in the *Donate, Don't Waste* campaign run by the Association of Charity Shops. The campaign sought to raise awareness of the environmental benefits of donating unwanted goods to charity shops and to encouraged people to donate all their unwanted clothing¹⁹.

For more information please email policy@bhf.org.uk

¹⁸ <http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/envcare/recycle/clothes.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.charityshops.org.uk/donate.html>