

depop



UNDERSTANDING SECONDHAND FASHION

We can make fashion more sustainable by changing the way we shop – but it isn't always easy to understand the impact of our small choices on the bigger picture.

To get there, we break down five questions about circular fashion – so you can be part of shaping a new fashion system that's kinder to people and to the planet.

1. IS SHOPPING SECONDHAND BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

2. IS THERE ENOUGH SECONDHAND CLOTHING TO GO AROUND FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT?

3. HOW DOES DEPOP FIT INTO THE SECONDHAND FASHION SYSTEM?

4. WHO IS SECONDHAND FASHION FOR?

5. HOW CAN I DRESS SUSTAINABLY?

1. IS SHOPPING SECONDHAND BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

There's no perfect solution to buying clothes more sustainably. Learning about the impact of our shopping choices is the first step.

The fashion industry contributes up to 10% of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined.

On the other hand, extending the life

of a piece of clothing by an extra 9 months reduces its carbon, waste and water footprint by 20-30% – which means shopping more mindfully and buying secondhand is one of the best ways we can reduce fashion's impact on the environment.

"Shopping secondhand is a good alternative to buying new because you're not buying something that consumes virgin resources such as water, petroleum and cotton. Creating more demand in the secondhand market helps to divert clothing from landfill. The best way to shop more sustainably is to buy mindfully and find items that you love, that you can wear for as long as possible. This helps to reduce waste and demand for new clothes."

- Tasha Lewis, PhD., Cornell University, Dept of Fiber Science & Apparel Design

"Increasing the number of times clothes are worn could be the most powerful way to capture value, reduce pressure on resources and decrease negative impacts."

- Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Many Depop sellers upcycle, recycle or create their own items. Here are a few you can support right now:



 @MULCARE



 @SOULANDFLARE



 @THEMARCONCOURTPROJECT




 @EUGENASJEWELRY

Most Depop sellers source stock from a variety of different locations, including wholesalers, rag houses, online marketplaces, charity shops, vintage shops, car boot/garage sales, friends and family and their own wardrobes.

Check out our video with Top Seller @guccig11 – AKA Johnny Grummons – as he shows us his favourite rag house thrifting spot.



 @GUCCIG11

2. IS THERE ENOUGH SECONDHAND CLOTHING TO GO AROUND FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT?

There are too many clothes on the planet – so much so that there is enough already in existence to dress the next six generations of the human race. And a lot of this goes to waste.

73% of unwanted clothing is still incinerated or landfilled.

production of new clothes is increasing, too – the fashion industry has doubled its production in the last 15 years and every day, over 270 million items of clothing are made.

The demand for secondhand items is nowhere near keeping up with this - on average, the number of brand new items manufactured every day is nearly 2,000 times greater than the number of items listed on Depop every day.

Charity shops in the US and UK can usually resell

10 -30% of clothing that gets donated

- the remainder is often sold to textile processing centres for wholesale or recycling.

When it's not sold domestically, the US and the UK – the biggest exporters of secondhand clothing in the world – ship large quantities of wearable secondhand clothing overseas.

The only way to tackle this is by increasing demand for secondhand - and reducing production of new items. At Depop, we are focused on increasing the demand for unwanted clothes - and slowing the demand for new - by encouraging a wider audience to sell and buy secondhand.

"In the vast majority of suburban or urban settings, charity shops receive far more donations than they can sell locally. When I managed a charity shop, we literally didn't have the room to put out a large proportion of the clothing that was donated. There's simply enough to go around."

"I'd advise anyone concerned about this to always shop considerately, being mindful of the dynamics of your local secondhand outlets. At the same time, remember that there are plenty of people who shop secondhand because they need to, even if they don't fit a particular stereotype. "

- Leah Wise, sustainability blogger and former charity shop manager, [Stylewise](#)

Learn about how we're using our platform to promote a more circular and inclusive industry on page 12 of our sustainability plan [here](#).

3. HOW DOES DEPOP FIT INTO THE SECONDHAND FASHION SYSTEM?

Without the limitations of shop floors, Depop makes secondhand fashion more accessible for everyone. We're part of a secondhand fashion movement on a global scale – and we work alongside others in our ecosystem to encourage everyone to buy and sell secondhand.

We partner with brands like **GANNI**, **Adidas** and **Benetton** to create and

promote reworked, vintage or more responsibly manufactured lines. Lots of charities have their own shops on Depop too, so they can reach a larger demographic with a wider offering than they can on their shop floors. This helps them with their primary goal – to raise money for important social causes.

"We have been delighted by the response to our Depop account and feel like we have been truly embraced by its online community. It has been the ideal platform for us to sell trend-led donated items and attract a new audience of fashion focused shoppers, who are passionate about sustainability. Since launching, we have become one of the top sellers on the site, with a five-star rating and now have 14,000 followers, who have helped raise £28,000 for the charity's vital research into heart and circulatory diseases."

- Allison Swaine-Hughes, Retail Director at the British Heart Foundation

Here are a few charity shops you can support on Depop right now:



 @OXFAMFESTIVSHOP



 @THEBHF



 @CANCER_RESEARCH_UK



 @GOODFINDSCFL

As well as making secondhand fashion more accessible for buyers, resale can provide economic opportunities to people from all walks of life. Many Depop shops are run by committed people who make a creative and sustainable living by offering an alternative route to traditional fashion.

As part of our [2022 Sustainability Plan](#), we've pledged to provide educational resources and mentorship opportunities to help entrepreneurs, creatives and small businesses from underrepresented groups grow their businesses sustainably.

Click the links to learn more about our [mentorship](#) and [education](#) programmes, where we've supported entrepreneurs like Josephine Philips, founder of clothing repair app Sojo.



4. WHO IS SECONDHAND FASHION FOR?

Secondhand fashion is for everyone – and we want to make it more inclusive, more diverse and less wasteful. This means more choice and better access to unique styles – whether you're shopping on a budget, browsing for inspiration or making a once-in-a-lifetime purchase.

Secondhand fashion can be vintage, reworked and one of a kind – all at

different price points. The majority of listings on Depop are priced very accessibly, at less than £20. And it's easy to find the item you're looking for by price when you search on the app and Depop.com. In your search results, go to Filter > Price, then pick your range. You can also filter by size, condition, brand and location.

"By shopping secondhand, you're helping prevent the mass discarding of clothing – and often supporting a social cause or a small business in the process. We all need to rethink how we shop – and shop differently – to drive the large-scale change the fashion industry needs."

*- Justine Porterie
Depop's Global Head of Sustainability*



5. HOW CAN I DRESS SUSTAINABLY?

Here are a few tips to get started:

- Look for higher quality items – you'll get more wear out of them since they're more likely to last longer.
- Opt for timeless styles you know you'll wear and love. Sell it on Depop when you no longer reach for it – or find someone who might want to upcycle it.
- Look after your clothes. Read care labels, line dry when possible, and fold things that may stretch if stored on hangers. Wash your clothes only if they're dirty, and use a lower heat setting on your washer when you do.
- Repair and restyle your wardrobe to give it a second life. Style two items you wouldn't normally wear together for a totally new look and feel. If your clothing needs repair, learn how to mend it, fix it with new detailing like a patch or find a local repair business.
- Tell your friends about your secondhand obsession. The best way to make shopping secondhand fun and relatable is to spread the word about it.

"If an item can be upcycled, try and give it a new lease of life before it goes to the trash. Dye it, cut it, or mend it. The number of scarves I've re-hemmed, holes I've sewn and stains I've removed has definitely had a positive impact on my shop."

Depop seller @iamdionyves

Some things are worth mending. If you felt terrible when a button fell off a favourite top, or when you dropped ketchup on your jeans – don't give up on them. New buttons and stain removal are easy, and so are iron on patches – and there's a YouTube tutorial for everything you need to fix. Swapping with friends and family is also a great option. It keeps clothes in use rather than sitting sad and unworn at the back of our wardrobes.

- Love Not Landfill

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Charities, non-profits and campaigns:

[Ellen MacArthur Foundation:](#)

[Council for Textile Recycling](#)

[Fashion Revolution](#)

[Love Not Landfill](#)

Books and blogs:

[Loved Clothes Last](#)

[The Conscious Closet](#)

[How to Break Up with Fast Fashion](#)

[StyleWise](#)

Documentaries and podcasts:

[The True Cost](#)

[Wardrobe Crisis](#)

[Style with Substance](#)

On social:

[@climateincolour](#)

[@theslowfactory](#)

[@intersectionalenvironmentalist](#)