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Five good reasons to support your local charity shops

1. Reuse and recycling

The charity retail sector is able to sell or recycle around 90 per cent of donated clothing, 90 per cent of donated books and 85 per cent of donated electrical goods.

This diverts waste away from landfill – 327,000 of textiles in the last financial year alone – whilst improving recycling and re-use rates. This is of direct benefit to local authorities across the country, as it saves them significant sums in Landfill Tax, which from April 2018 was £88.95 per tonne.

2. Jobs

The charity retail sector provides over 24,000 jobs in the UK. We know from broader research that these employees are often closely integrated into their community. 70 per cent of charity shop managers are from the local area in which the charity shop is located and with 40 per cent having lived there for more than 20 years. These local jobs are also stable. A third of shop managers have worked in their charity shop for more than five years, and half of these have worked there more than ten years¹.

3. Employability

More than 234,000 people volunteer in charity stores nationwide – the largest single group of volunteers in the country. These opportunities can help boost their employability skills.

Volunteering in charity shops can help equip young people and the long-term unemployed with the skills they need to find full time work in the retail sector. 75 per cent of charity shop volunteers believe that volunteering has helped to learn new skills and valued this process¹.

4. Mental health

Volunteering can also help to combat social isolation and loneliness amongst older volunteers. 61 per cent of charity shop volunteers believe that volunteering has a positive impact on their physical and mental health and over 80 per cent think it improves their self-esteem and confidence¹.

This is why Community Service Volunteers (CSV) estimate that for every £1 spent on volunteers, £3.38 of value was created including through improved health outcomes.

5. High streets

It is extremely important to realise that charity shops are not direct competitors to commercial interests, but their partners on the high streets. The donated stock that our members sell is not available to other retailers.

Charity shops help to reduce vacancy rates and therefore keep the high street populated and busy, even during the recent severe economic downturn. This has a clear advantage to local economies.

Many shops are tightly woven into their local business economy and receive donations of end of season stock from nearby high street brands. Others provide a service that no one else can match.

¹ Shopping for good, by Demos: <https://www.demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Shopping-for-Good-the-social-benefits-of-charity-retail-pdf>