

ELECTRICAL REUSE PROJECT



5 Tonnes

Total Donations

14

Community
Events

9

Give or Take
Events

116
Home
Collections


12

PAT Certified
Repairers

280
Volunteer
Hours


6

Repair Cafe
Partners

2853
Kg Recycled


57,012
Social Media Views


1610
Kg Reused


752
Items
Repaired


PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Electrical Reuse Project was delivered by Litter Free Dorset with funding from Material Focus, with the aim of exploring practical ways of reducing small household electrical waste and increasing opportunities for reuse and repair across Dorset. Small electrical items are one of the fastest-growing waste streams, yet many items still have functional value or can be repaired and redistributed, preventing unnecessary disposal and supporting a more circular economy.

The project utilised a range of collection and redistribution methods to capture reusable electrical items from residents before they entered the waste stream. A key component of the project was the development of the Dorset Repair Network, partnering with repair cafes to repair and PAT test small electricals, ensuring good working order for rehoming. The home collection service was designed to make reuse as accessible and convenient as possible, particularly for residents who may face barriers to accessing traditional recycling or reuse routes.

Items collected were then sorted and directed to the repair & reuse process or, where reuse was not possible, to recycling partners W&S. Electricals that were successfully repaired or already in working order were PAT tested and redistributed free of charge through welcoming "Give or Take" events, providing residents with an accessible alternative to buying new, while helping to reduce waste and household costs.

OBJECTIVES

IDENTIFY SIX TARGET TOWNS WITH REPAIR CAFES IN OPERATION



ESTABLISH DORSET-WIDE REPAIR NETWORK WITH REPAIR CAFES



PROVIDE PAT TESTING TRAINING TO REPAIR CAFE VOLUNTEERS



SET UP A HOME BASE FOR REPAIR AND SORTING ACTIVITIES



PROVIDE HOME COLLECTIONS VIA ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM



HOST GIVE OR TAKE EVENTS IN EACH TARGET TOWN



SORT, REPAIR, & RECYCLE DONATED ITEMS

BACKGROUND: WEEE PROVISION IN DORSET

Dorset Council currently operates 10 Household Waste & Recycling Centres (HRC's) via its contractor W&S Recycling, each offering WEEE recycling. Each site has a reuse area for household items that are in resalable condition (predominantly furniture), with items also redistributed via a partnership with Dorset Reclaim. However, WEEE items are not currently included in the reuse stream at HRCs, meaning all electricals dropped off are sent directly for recycling. Between April 2025 and January 2026, Dorset Council collected **2,154 tonnes of WEEE** via its HRCs, comprising small domestic appliances (1,466.22 tonnes), televisions (271.76 tonnes), and fridge-freezers (416.28 tonnes).

Alongside council provision, supermarkets and major retailers such as Currys and Robert Dyas operate in-store WEEE take-back schemes. Dorset Reclaim provides free collections of resalable unwanted household items, as well as paid-for disposal services, and operates retail units in Dorchester and Poole where items are sold on. Some Dorset-based charity shops such as Prama accept electricals in resalable condition, however the majority of charity shops do not accept electricals as they don't have the facility to PAT test. Donate IT also operates several public drop-off points for devices such as laptops and tablets, which are cleaned, refurbished, and redistributed.



Despite this range of services, current systems predominantly focus on recycling rather than reuse for electrical items. This reflects a wider “throwaway culture”, where many items are disposed of at the first sign of fault or simply replaced due to convenience or low-cost alternatives. It is likely that a significant proportion of electricals entering the waste stream are still functional, or could be made reusable with minor repairs or interventions. Capturing these items before disposal presented a key opportunity to extend product lifespans, reduce waste, and maximise the environmental and social value of electrical goods.

METHODOLOGY

COLLECTION METHODS

Service users were offered a range of methods to donate their unwanted small household electricals:

Home Collections: Free home collections were offered to residents in the six target towns. To book they simply headed to our website, entered their details and selected their collection slot. Instructions were given to either collect from a safe, dry place on their property or to meet the resident. Email confirmations were sent out to each booking and bookings could also be made via email or telephone.

Give or Take Events: held in each target town, following the local collections. People were able to bring unwanted electricals to these events, and also take away any items they wanted. Holding these on weekends, in centrally-located venues with plenty of space and parking, made these accessible to a wide range of people.

Drop Off: a dedicated drop-box for Dorset Council staff at County Hall reception, which was made available to the general public later on in the project.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Book Your Home Collection". At the top, there is a map of Dorset with several red location pins. To the right of the map, a text box states: "Home collections are only available within the local divided areas on the map. Check the map to see if your address is included in our collection area." Below the map, a note reads: "Where possible, please safely and securely pack up your electricals and leave them under cover outside your door for a quick collection." The form itself is titled "Wimborne Home Collections" and includes a note: "Fields marked with an * are required". The form fields are: "Postcode *" (text input), "Local Name *" (text input), "Email *" (text input), "Phone Number *" (text input), "Collection Date *" (dropdown menu with "Select the date you want to collect your items" as a hint), "Address *" (text input with a note "Please enter the address of where your electricals will be collected from"), "Postcode *" (text input), and "Additional details for collection (e.g. location of items)" (text input). A "Book" button is at the bottom right.

SORTING AND PROCESSING

All electrical items were sorted and processed at our dedicated workshop in Dorchester. It provided ample space to safely sort and store items and undertake repairs on electricals deemed suitable for reuse. An on-site skip was also provided for items that could not be reused and were sent for recycling, with collections managed by W&S. These facilities were provided to Litter Free Dorset by W&S for the duration of the project, and were absolutely fundamental to the project's success.

PARTNERS

Repair Cafes: Blandford, Dorchester, Gillingham, Sherborne, Weymouth, and Wimborne repair cafes supported the project with shares comms and promotion, attending events, and providing volunteers who played a crucial role in the project by carrying out repairs and PAT testing.

W&S Recycling: Provided technical advice and logistical support via collection of items for recycling, provision of container for drop off points, and workshop space.

Dorset Council Recycling Team: Supported project comms and provided staff support at Give or Take events, as well as operational guidance and advice.

Dorset Reclaim: Took surplus items that were not taken at events, to be redistributed via their reuse shops.

CanCrush: Took cables for recycling.

DonateIT: refurbished and redistributed donated devices.

CAMPAIGN PROMOTION

A targeted and approachable marketing campaign was developed to raise awareness of the project and maximise participation. Central to this was the use of Material Focus' "Hypnocat" branding, which provided a distinctive identity across both print and digital platforms. Its bold and memorable design helped the campaign stand out, reinforcing key messages around reuse and prompting behaviour change.

A range of communication channels was used, to help reach a wide audience; social media played a key role in promoting collection services, events, and success stories, allowing for regular engagement and updates. E-newsletters were also used to reach existing networks and stakeholders, helping to maintain visibility and encourage repeat engagement.



DorsetECHO

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Litter Free Dorset launch Electrical Reuse Project

15th May 2025 Recycling Environment Blandford Forum Dorchester Dorset Sherborne Weymouth Wimborne

Dorset VIEW

Blandford Forum, Dorchester, Exe & Environment, Weymouth, Wimborne / Posted on May 15th, 2025 / Return to news

New project to help Dorset residents recycle electrical items

Litter Free Dorset is urging residents to reuse and recycle their electricals, starting with a 'Give and Take' event this Saturday.

Edition 58 November 2025 Monthly, PRICELESS The West Dorset Magazine

There's a real buzz about unwanted electrical items

By EMMA TEASDALE
Litter Free Dorset Coordinator



Litter Free Dorset's Electrical Reuse Project is on a roll. Following home collections and community Give or Take events in Weymouth, Blandford, Dorchester, and Sherborne, over three tonnes of unwanted small electricals have now been rescued,

repaired, reused, and recycled. Last month saw our most successful Electrical Give or Take Day so far in Sherborne, with almost half a tonne of items donated and a further 132kg finding new homes with local people. We were delighted to co-host the event with Sherborne Repair Cafe, who held their monthly event alongside us. There was a great atmosphere,

with customers able to browse donated items while they waited for their repair – and delicious treats provided by Repair Cafe volunteers. Our Electrical Give or Take events have found new homes for hundreds of items, which will now be put to good use in Dorset households instead of languishing in a drawer or ending up in landfill. Come along to our next Give or Take Day in Gillingham on

Saturday November 29 from 10am-1pm at Riversmeet Leisure Centre, where you can donate unwanted small household electricals (anything with a plug, battery, or cable, up to microwave size) and browse items that have been repaired and PAT tested. ■ Head to litterfreedorset.co.uk/recycle-your-electricals for more information about the project.

Printed materials complemented this digital approach. Posters and flyers were distributed at local events, repair cafés, and community spaces to reach audiences already interested in sustainability and reuse. Midway through the project, a targeted leaflet drop to households was introduced, which corresponded with a noticeable increase in user engagement and uptake of the service. This demonstrated the power of direct, location-based outreach in driving participation.

In addition, coverage in local magazines helped extend the project's reach to a broader demographic, including those less active on digital channels.

Overall, combining a strong visual identity with a diverse mix of marketing channels ensured consistent messaging and helped build awareness, trust, and participation over the course of the project.

THE REPAIR WORKSHOP



**12 VOLUNTEERS
COMPLETED PAT
TESTING TRAINING**

27 REPAIR SESSIONS

**280 VOLUNTEER
HOURS**

752 ITEMS REPAIRED

- Volunteer repairers were recruited from the six partner repair cafes.
- Repairers completed PAT certification training to ensure that items could be checked for safety before being offered for reuse.
- Early on in the project, it became clear that we would need a central hub for storing, sorting and triaging items, and carrying out repairs and PAT testing.
- Our recycling partner W&S offered the use of their site in Dorchester, which proved to be the perfect location for our workshop.
- Weekly repair sessions were held at the workshop, with volunteers able to sign up for sessions via WhatsApp, park on site, and attend at their convenience.
- Repairers also supported the Give or Take events with 'live' PAT testing as items were donated, enabling a swift turnaround for reusable items.



Alan, Dorchester Repair Cafe Volunteer:

"It was great to be involved with the electrical appliances repair and re-use project. Saving items from being scrapped and getting them back into use where the new owner gets a product they otherwise couldn't afford just makes me smile. The challenge of doing a quick, robust and safe repair was not always possible but it is amazing how many items are "donated" - thrown away - which have many years use left. I enjoyed the work and the company of the other volunteers. As a society we must get better at buying less and re-using more. The earth's resources are finite and not our generation's to finish off. We should be trying to leave the place in a better condition for those that follow."

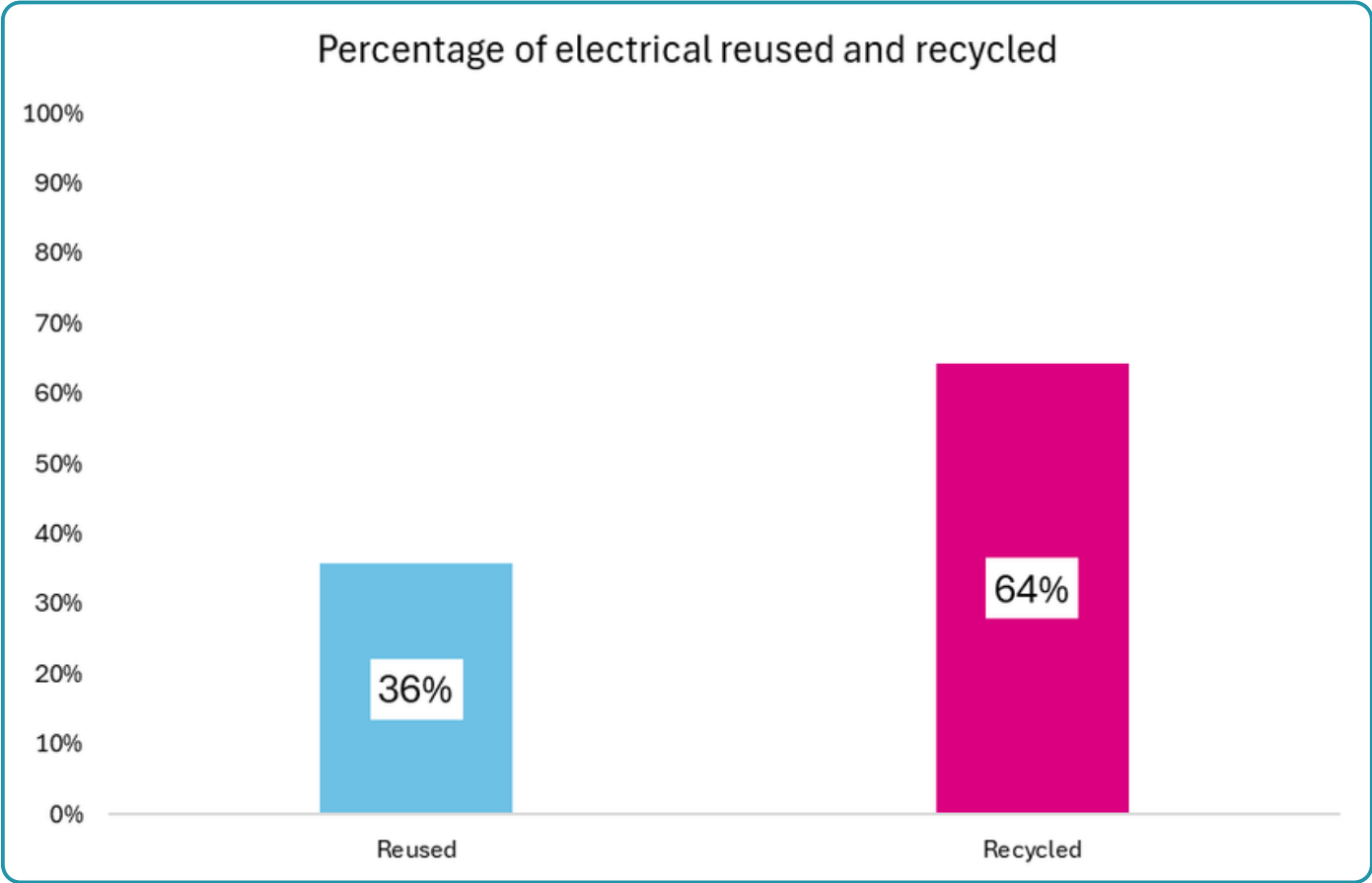
RESULTS

Headline Data

- 116 home collections were provided across Dorset
- 14 community events were held, including 4 dedicated giveaway-only events
- 4,918 kg of small household electricals were collected through the project

Reuse and recycling outcomes

- 1,610 kg (705 items) of electricals redistributed and reused
- 147 kg of laptops, tablets, phones & consoles donated to Donate IT
- 309 kg of cables recycled through CanCrush, with profits donated to charity
- 2,853 kg of electricals were sent for responsible recycling



Reuse includes items donated to Donate IT. Recycling includes cable recycling via CanCrush.

COLLECTION METHODS

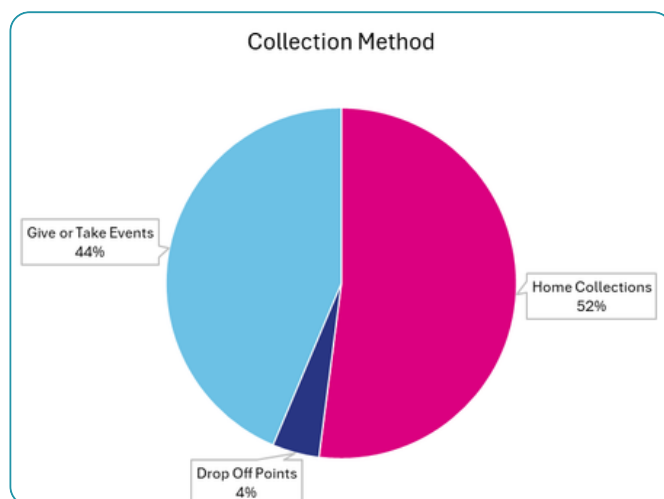
Over the duration of the project, a total of 4,918 kg of electrical items were collected through a combination of home collections, community Give or Take events and drop-off points. Engagement and tonnage grew considerably as the project progressed.

By collection method

Home collections were the largest contributor, accounting for 2,556 kg, reflecting the importance of doorstep services in capturing material that might otherwise remain unused or enter the waste system.

Community Give or Take events yielded 2,142 kg, demonstrating their effectiveness in engaging residents and generating high-volume collections in short timeframes.

Drop-off points contributed a smaller but steady 220 kg, primarily through County Hall and Open Workshop locations.

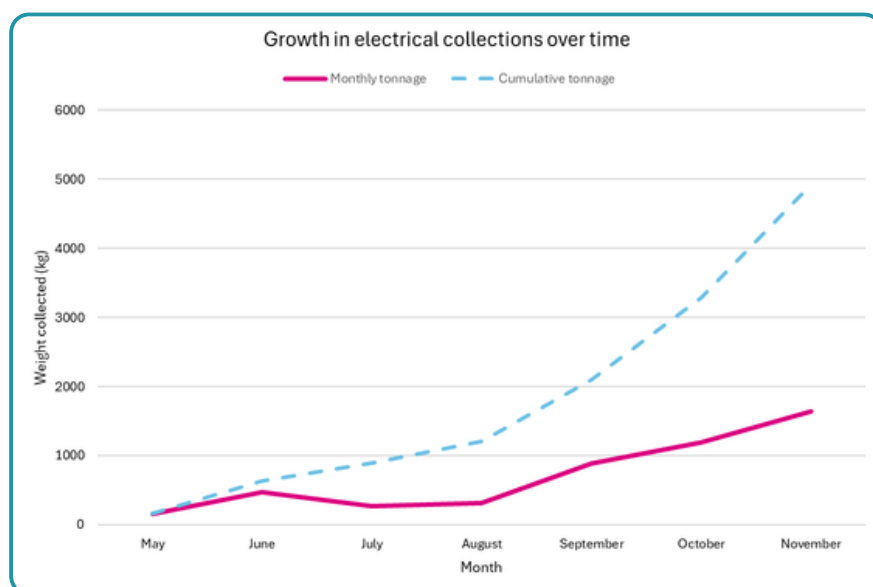


While home collections made the largest contribution to the amount collected, they were considerably time-intensive and resource-heavy. Despite being highly popular, accessible, and convenient to service users, they do not present a sustainable long-term option for gathering waste electricals, from an operational and logistical perspective.

By month

Collection volumes grew steadily over the year, with lower totals during the early pilot phase. Activity increased significantly from September onwards, suggesting a strong demand in line with increased awareness of the project.

MAY: 160 KG
JUNE: 470 KG
JULY: 265 KG
AUGUST: 313 KG
SEPTEMBER: 890 KG
OCTOBER: 1,185 KG
NOVEMBER: 1,636 KG

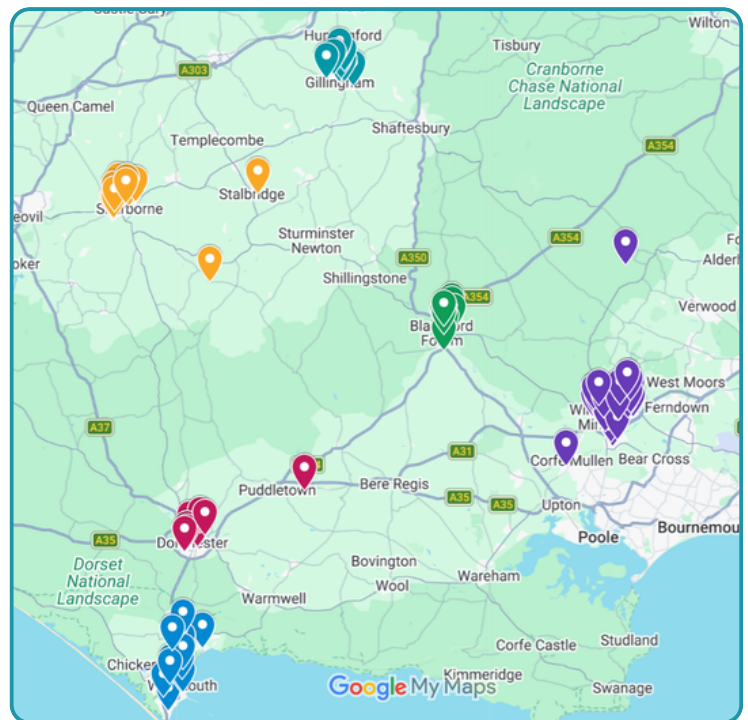


HOME COLLECTIONS

Home collections were provided across six target towns: Blandford, Dorchester, Gillingham, Sherborne, Weymouth and Wimborne.

In total, 116 home collections took place across all locations, with good uptake in each town. Wimborne proved to be the most popular location, with particularly high demand for the service. An initial 44 home collections were carried out in Wimborne during October, followed by an additional six collections in November in response to extraordinary demand. This may be due to a combination of factors including the popularity of Wimborne Repair Cafe and the local press coverage we received.

Overall, 50 home collections in Wimborne resulted in 1,134 kg of electrical items being collected.



HOME COLLECTIONS FEEDBACK

Survey responses show very high satisfaction with both the booking system and the collection process. All respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied, with no neutral or negative responses recorded.

All surveyed users reported that they would use the service again if available and would recommend it to a friend or neighbour.

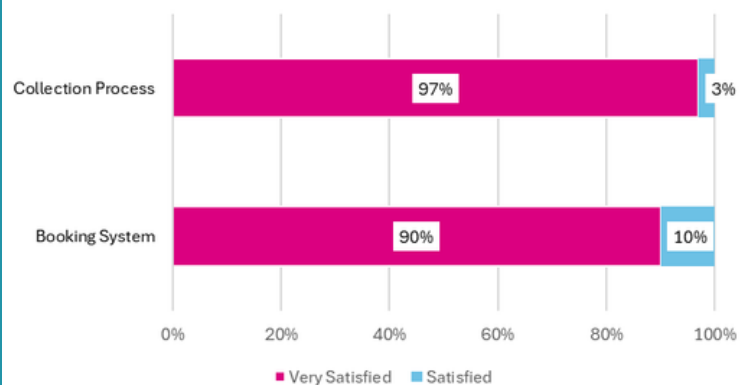
"WONDERFUL IDEA AND SO GOOD TO SEE THINGS BEING REPAIRED AND REUSED"

"WONDERFUL SERVICE. HAVE AND WILL RECOMMEND TO FRIENDS."

"DELIGHTED WITH THE IDEA OF RECYCLING, COLLECTED FROM MY NEIGHBOURS WHICH HELPED THE MORE ELDERLY TO RECYCLE THEIR GOODS, VERY PLEASED"

"I DONT HAVE A CAR SO HOME COLLECTION IS IDEAL"

Satisfaction with booking and collection processes



"WORKED WELL, VERY SEAMLESS."

"I CAN NOT PRAISE THE SERVICE HIGH ENOUGH."

100% would recommend the service to a friend

100% would use a WEEE home collection service again

69% would use a WEEE drop box/bring bank if it were available

GIVE OR TAKE EVENTS

Community Give or Take events proved extremely popular, collecting 2,142 kg of electrical items and enabling members of the public to take away a further 1610kg/705 items, demonstrating their effectiveness in engaging residents and generating high-volume attendance in a short period.



Whilst highly successful for the purposes of this project, Give or Take events are labour intensive and require a considerable level of planning and logistics both before and after the event itself. Multiple volunteers and staff are required to effectively manage each event, and the logistics of handling an unknown quantity of electrical items can be challenging.

Overall, they were a crucial part of the project and enabled direct engagement with the public as well as practical collaboration with the Repair Cafes. as such, we recommend their use to facilitate community engagement in any future reuse system for WEEE.

COLLECTION INSIGHTS

HOME COLLECTIONS

Home collections attracted fewer participants, but yielded far more per household, with an average of 22kg per household compared to 1.3kg per household donated via community events.

Potential reasons for this are that:

- a home collection is much easier for the user and doesn't require them to transport the items.
- home collections enabled households to donate larger, more cumbersome items that they weren't able to take to events.
- home collections were booked at the user's convenience.
- some of the households that attended community events came just to take away items, not to donate.
- in buildings of multiple occupancy, residents are able to pool items and book one communal collection.

DROP-OFFS

- Drop-offs are convenient as there is no time constraint, but its impossible to monitor the number of households taking part or yield per household.
- People keen for their items to be reused would not choose a drop-off as they are perceived to be less secure, unmonitored, and could damage the item.

GIVE OR TAKE EVENTS

- 9 Give or Take events were held across the duration of the project, including open workshop days and an educational event at Prince of Wales School in Dorchester.
- Community Give or Take events yielded 2,142 kg of electrical items
- Members of the public took away 1610kg/705 PAT tested items for reuse.
- They are accessible and foster community spirited, but labour intensive.

CONCLUSIONS

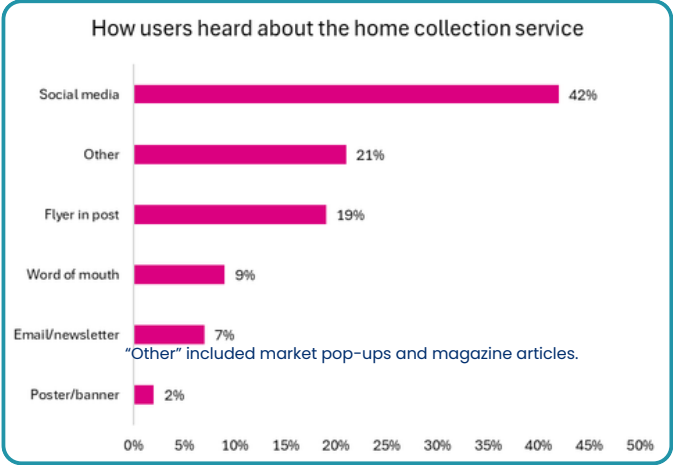
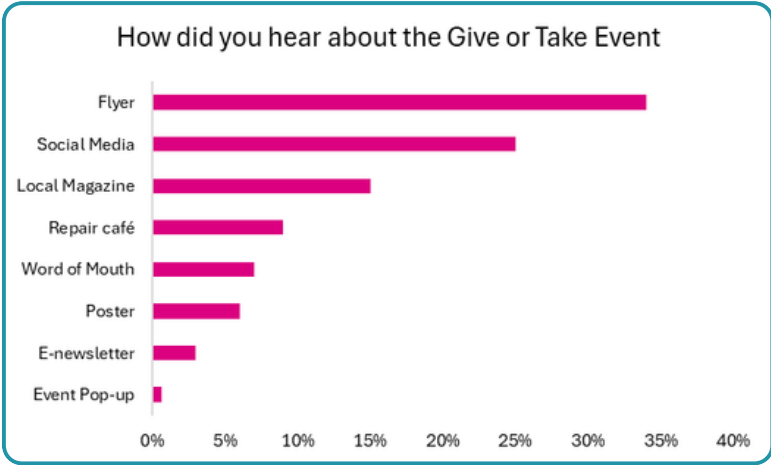
- Home collections require the same level of promotion as community events and drop-offs, but far more logistics and organisation ahead of time, not to mention the physical labour, transport needs, and time commitment of operating the collections.
- Community Give or Take events are the most successful way of both collecting WEEE and facilitating reuse, as well as fostering community, encouraging repair, and enabling all of this to happen in one place.

MARKETING INSIGHTS

PRINT & PR

12 NEWS ARTICLES
3 RADIO INTERVIEWS

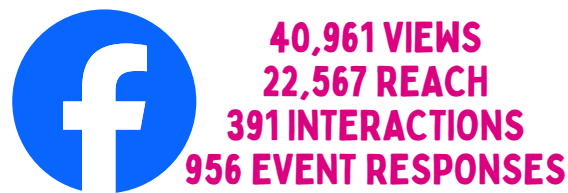
14206 LEAFLET DROPS
4 BIN LORRY PANELS



SOCIAL MEDIA

21 FACEBOOK POSTS
12 FACEBOOK EVENTS

30 INSTAGRAM STORIES
25 INSTAGRAM POSTS



"GREAT IDEA, WELL DONE
CREATING THIS PROJECT"

"BRILLIANT
INITIATIVE."

"LOVELY
IDEA!"

"IT'S SUCH A FANTASTIC WAY TO CLEAR OUT WHAT WE DON'T
NEED AND HELP OTHERS IN THE PROCESS!"

"EVENTS LIKE THIS MAKE RECYCLING FEEL FUN AND SOCIAL. DROPPING OFF AN OLD TOASTER
AND MAYBE COMING HOME WITH A LAMP SOUNDS LIKE THE BEST KIND OF TREASURE HUNT."

WIDER IMPACTS

CARBON SAVINGS

- Assuming CO₂e from WEEE disposal is 21.28kg/tonne*, the 1.6 tonnes reused by the project represents a CO₂e saving of 34kg.

MONETARY SAVINGS

- Savings from reuse: Assuming average replacement cost of £30 per item, with 705 items reused this constitutes a £21,150 cost saving to Dorset households.
- Savings from proper recycling: If the weight of WEEE that was recycled through the project (2853kg) had gone into general waste (£130/tonne) instead, this would have cost the local authority an additional £371.
- Total savings from proper recycling: If the weight of all WEEE collected through the project (4918kg) had gone into general waste instead, this would have cost the local authority an additional £639.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS & PROJECT LEGACY

- Strengthening community connections through Give or Take events, home collections, and Repair Cafés.
- Providing meaningful volunteering opportunities that enable people to use their skills to benefit their local community.
- Increasing access to repair, reuse, recycling, and free electrical goods for lower-income households, deprived communities, and those with limited mobility.
- Supporting collaboration between Repair Cafés and strengthening partnerships with Dorset Council.
- Raising awareness of local repair, reuse, and WEEE recycling services, including facilities available at Household Recycling Centres and retailers.
- Promoting a culture of repair and reuse by encouraging residents to recognise the value of unwanted electrical items and reduce unnecessary waste.
- Increasing public confidence in local authority efforts to improve recycling and reuse rates and addressing lack of trust around recycling rates at HRC's.

IN CONCLUSION

The Electrical Reuse Project has demonstrated that a coordinated approach to repair, reuse and recycling can deliver significant environmental, social and community benefits. The growth observed throughout the project indicated a clear demand for repair and reuse services and highlights the importance residents place on ensuring electrical items are managed responsibly at the end of their life, whether they remain in working order or not. By creating new opportunities for residents to donate, repair, reuse and responsibly recycle unwanted electrical items, the project has helped to divert valuable materials from the waste stream while extending the lifespan of products that might otherwise have been discarded.

The project relied on strengthening partnerships between Dorset Council, Repair Cafés, community organisations and waste and recycling providers, which resulted in a more connected local network that supports the circular economy. Through Give or Take events, home collections and enhanced promotion of repair and reuse services, more residents have been able to access facilities and opportunities regardless of location, income or mobility.

Alongside measurable waste reduction and reuse outcomes, the project generated wider community value by supporting volunteering, sharing skills, fostering community connections and increasing awareness of the environmental and financial benefits of repair and reuse. It also helped to build public confidence in local recycling and reuse infrastructure and encouraged residents to think differently about unwanted electrical items, recognising them as valuable resources rather than waste.

The project has helped to embed a longer-term shift in attitudes towards WEEE by encouraging residents to consider the lifecycle of electrical items before both purchasing and disposing of them. Through increased awareness of repair, reuse and responsible recycling options, more people are now likely to seek opportunities to repair or pass on unwanted electricals before replacing them, and to ensure items are disposed of correctly when they reach the end of their useful life.



“THIS IS THE KIND OF SIMPLE IDEA THAT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.”

THANK YOU

This project was a labour of love, borne out of an idea that we could integrate existing repair cafe activities into the waste system in order to facilitate the reuse of small electricals.

The success of the project is thanks to the work of all the partners whose efforts made this idea a reality.

- To our amazing volunteers who worked tirelessly to sort, clean, and repair hundreds of electrical items in your own time, and did it with boundless enthusiasm – thank you, the project could not have happened without you.
- Having a safe, secure, and spacious site for our workshop proved absolutely crucial to the overall success of the project, and this could not have been possible without the support of W&S. W&S' willingness to collaborate on Litter Free Dorset's projects is a testament to their commitment to the environment and embedding reuse within the waste system across Dorset.
- The Repair Cafe teams in Gillingham, Dorchester, Sherborne, Blandford, Wimborne, and Weymouth supported this project from the start. Thank you for every post you shared, all the support at Give or Take events, and for promoting this project within your communities.
- Thank you to the Dorset Council Recycling Team who allowed us to learn from their hugely successful Give or Take Days, and provided their expertise and staff to support our events.
- Thank you to CanCrush, Dorset Reclaim, and DonateIT who all supported the project by taking surplus and specialised items for recycling or redistribution.
- To the LFD Team who handled more cables, chargers, toasters, kettles, and lamps than we ever imagined and did it with a smile – thank you!

