

The lifecycle of ethical clothing

Each of us can make better choices at each stage of the lifecycle of our clothing. Below are a few tips to try.

Buying

- Charity shops – my favourite charity shop spots are Headingley, Harrogate and Ilkley.
- Vintage shops and fairs – in Leeds there are quite a few vintage shops, a complete list can be found: <https://leeds-list.com/style/uncover-retro-treasures-at-these-amazing-vintage-shops-in-leeds/>. There are also regular vintage fairs and kilo sales organised, keep an eye on Leeds List and the Zero Waste Fashion Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ZeroWasteFashionLeeds/>
- Ethical retailers – mostly online. www.projectcece.co.uk/ is an online site where you can buy from over 150 ethical brands. There is a list of some of our favourite UK brands overleaf.
- Apps such as Good On You (new) and Depop (second hand) are good for helping you make an ethical decision about what clothing you choose to buy.
- High streets shops – none achieve as well as retailers committed to ethical production and supply, but the best to head for include H&M, M&S and Gap. Patagonia is the leading outdoor brand for ethics and Adidas and Reebok for sportswear.

Caring for your clothes

- Try to reduce how often you wash and iron your clothes
- Wash at a lower temperature
- Dry outside or inside on a drying rack instead of using a tumble dryer
- Repair your clothes as much as possible
- Take your clothing to the Leeds repair café: first Saturday of each month, between 12pm-4pm, at the Old Bridge Street Church, LS2 7QZ.

Getting rid

- Charity shops are great for clothing that can be worn again
- Clothes swaps – organise one yourself for your friends or go to a pre-organised one, (the bonus is you get rid of what you no longer want and get some new items for yourself!) Leeds Community Clothes Exchange organises monthly swaps in Woodhouse. <https://www.facebook.com/LeedsCommunityClothesExchange>
- WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme) www.wrap.org.uk which covers food & clothing waste. It produced a report in 2017 called 'Valuing our clothes, the cost of UK fashion'.
- For clothing that is not wearable again, textile bins around Leeds will take rags and some will take shoes.
- Zero Waste Leeds have created an amazing map of textile banks, charity shops, repair shops, sewing classes and clothes exchanges: <https://www.zerowasteleeds.org.uk/posts/zero-waste-fashion/>
- Project 333 (wear 33 items for 3 months) and the Capsule Wardrobe Challenge (never own more than 37 items) help people to buy less by demonstrating how easy and stress-relieving it can be to have a clearer, 'capsule' wardrobe.

Learn more and take action

- **Fashion revolution:** <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/> A global organisation that focuses on making systemic change, they have loads of resources and information.
- **Fashion footprint,** discover yours: <https://www.thredup.com/fashionfootprint>
- **Clean Clothes Campaign** is an international campaign movement focusing on workers conditions and rights. In the UK their activity is undertaken by **Labour behind the Label**.
- **New Standard Institute** is an international initiative aiming to transform the standards within the fashion industry, transforming it into a force for good by unifying and driving it to achieve critical, science-based environmental and social objectives. Founder Maxine Bedat has a clear and accessible TEDx talk on You Tube about what the global fashion industry needs to be transformed.
- **High streets shops** – transparency in the production and supply chain is one of the big things that lobbyists focus on, but other issues commonly considered include: workers' rights (including gender equality), sustainability, animals, toxic chemicals There are several reports published annually which grade brands. They use different methodologies and have slightly different focuses; here are a couple to look at if you want more detail:
<https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/fashion-clothing/shopping-guide/high-street-clothes-shops>

Online ethical fashion brands and retailers:

Rapanui

People Tree

Komodo

Thought

Monkee Genes

MUD jeans

Natural Collection

Frank and Faith

Know the Origin

