



TEXTILES: ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS NATIONAL SURVEY 2021

Reuse and Repair of Clothing; Part 2 of 5 Series

EPA Circular Economy Programme and B&A

CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMME

The Driving Force for Ireland's Move to a Circular Economy



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Overview of survey

Behavioural insight is a foundation of the EPA's Circular Economy Programme, providing evidence to inform policy, to inform behavioural change interventions and to inform awareness campaigns.

The EPA contracted Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A) to carry out this quantitative research which is the first nationally representative baseline survey on Irish citizens' attitudes, awareness and behaviours relating to textiles. The fieldwork for the online survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults ages 16+ was carried out in November 2021.

The survey topic areas are presented in a series of five reports:

1. Purchasing of clothes
- 2. Reuse and repair of clothing**
3. Management and disposal of textiles
4. Sustainable consumption and use I
5. Sustainable consumption and use II



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Reuse and Repair of Clothing: *Infographic*

REUSE



69%

of people wear clothes for at least a few years.

SECOND HAND



23%

of people bought a second hand or vintage clothing item in the past 12 months.

REPAIR



43%

of people repaired clothing in the past 12 months e.g., replaced a zip, darn or patch a hole.

DONATE



68%

of people donate clothes to charity shops or bring them to clothes banks while 42% pass clothes on to others to use.

RECYCLED MATERIALS



24%

of people bought clothing items with recycled or organic materials in the past 12 months.

SKILLS SHORTAGE



47%

of people would like to repair clothes but don't have the skills to do it; younger age groups particularly interested.

MOST DURABLE



People keep relatively more expensive items for longer e.g., dresses, suits & coats.

DISPOSED MOST QUICKLY



People keep T-shirts & short-sleeved tops, footwear & accessories, underwear, socks & hosiery for the shortest duration.



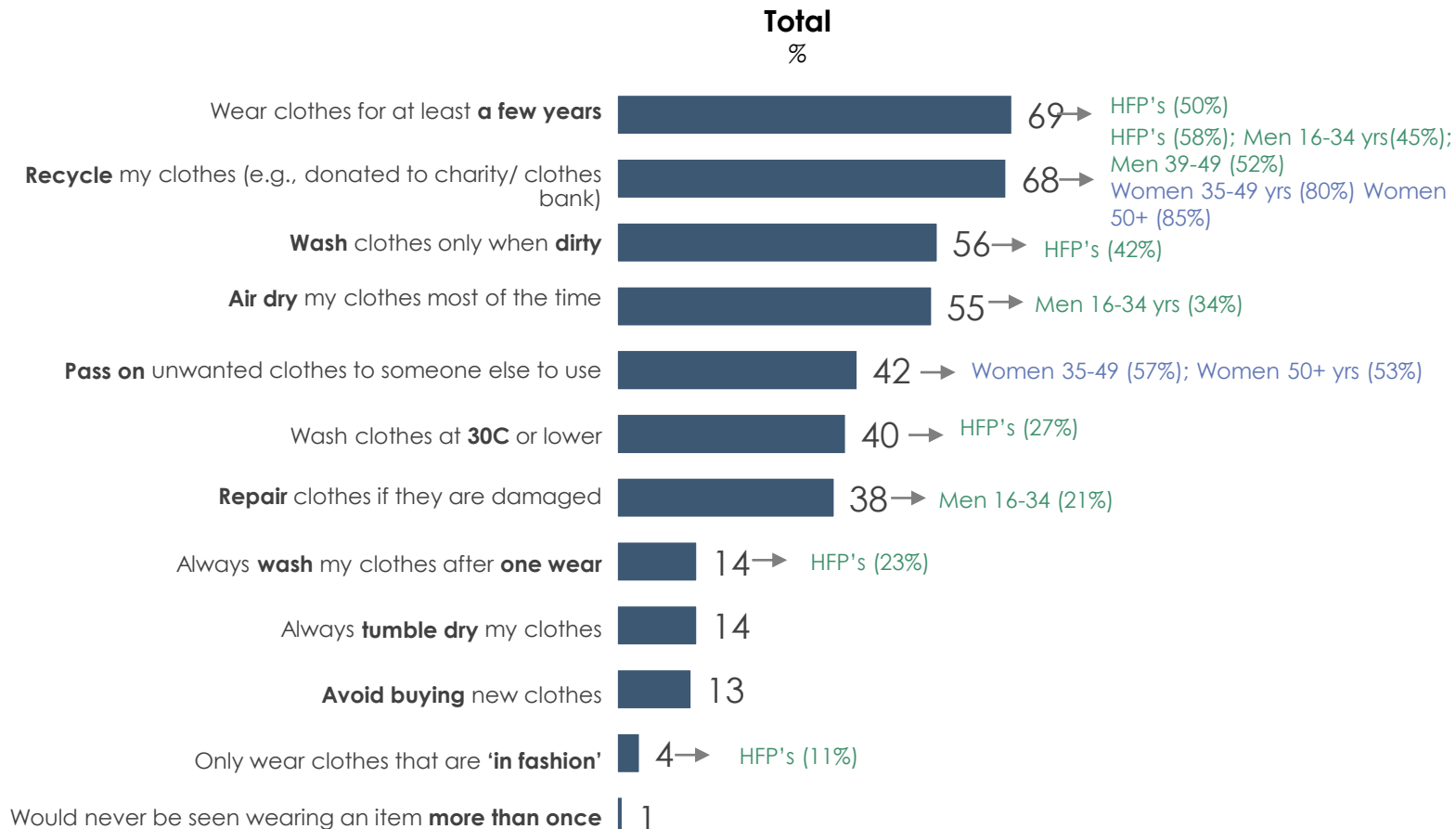
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‘When it comes to clothes, I...’



Overall national behaviours to reusing clothes are encouraging

Reuse

- **69%** of people wear clothes for at least a few years.
- **68%** of people donate clothes to charity shops or bring them to clothes banks while **42%** pass clothes on to others.

Care

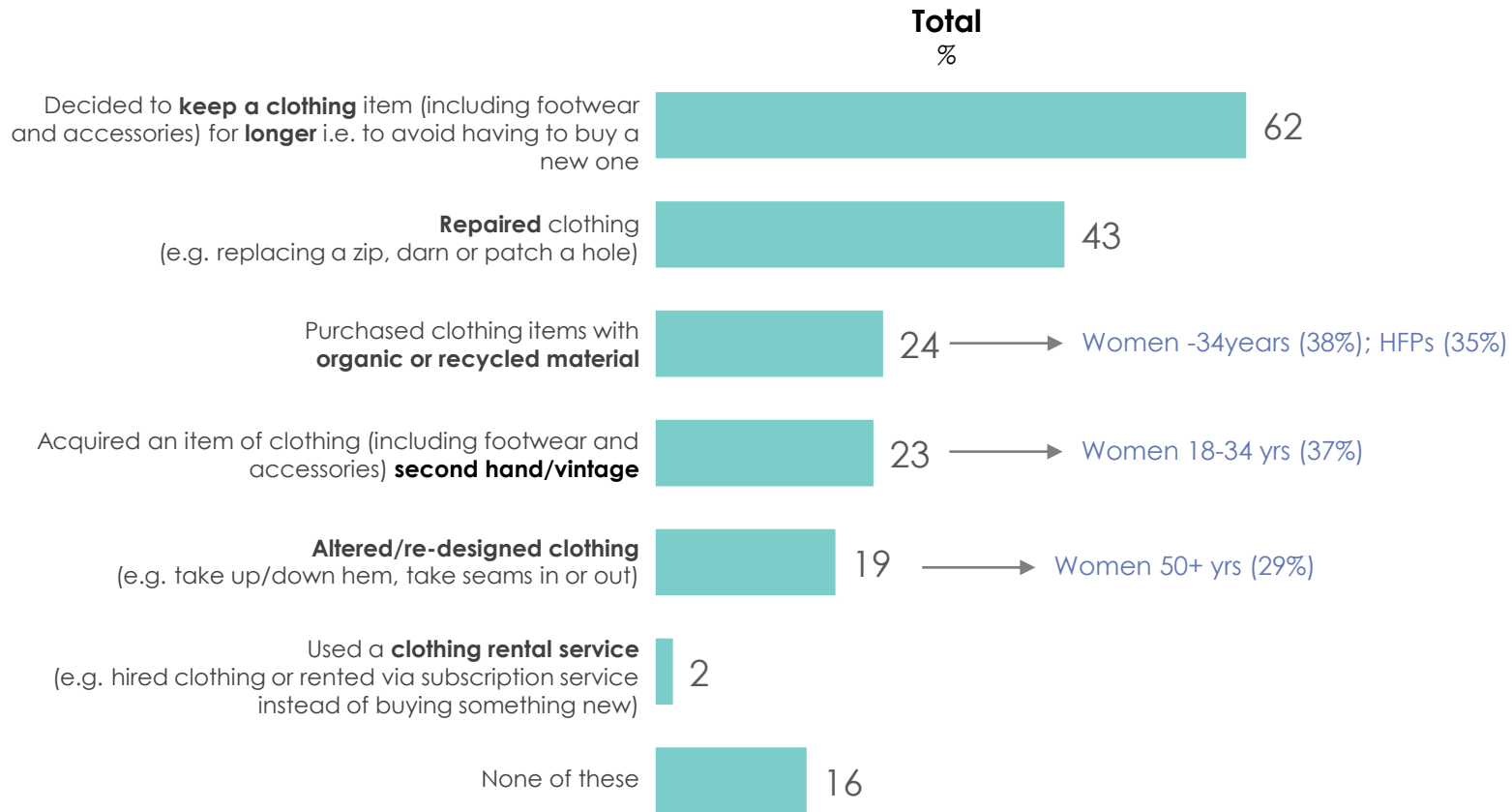
- **40%** of people wash clothes at 30°C or lower while only **14%** always wash clothes after one wear.
- **55%** of people air dry clothes most of the time while only **14%** always tumble-dry clothes.

Clothing reuse behaviours vary demographically and are typically higher among women over 35 years and are lowest among young men and those who purchase clothes more frequently 'High Frequency Purchasers' (HFPs).

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.6) conducted by B&A.
Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N – 1,009



Past 12 months



Reuse and repair activities in focus

Most frequent

- **62%** of people decided in the past 12 months to keep a clothing item for longer to avoid buying a new item.
- **43%** of people repaired clothing in the past 12 months

Least frequent

- **19%** of people altered or redesigned clothing in the past 12 months.
- **2%** of people used a clothing rental service in the past 12 months.

Purchasing of clothing with organic or recycled material and buying second hand or vintage clothes were undertaken more frequently in the past 12 months by women under 34 years.

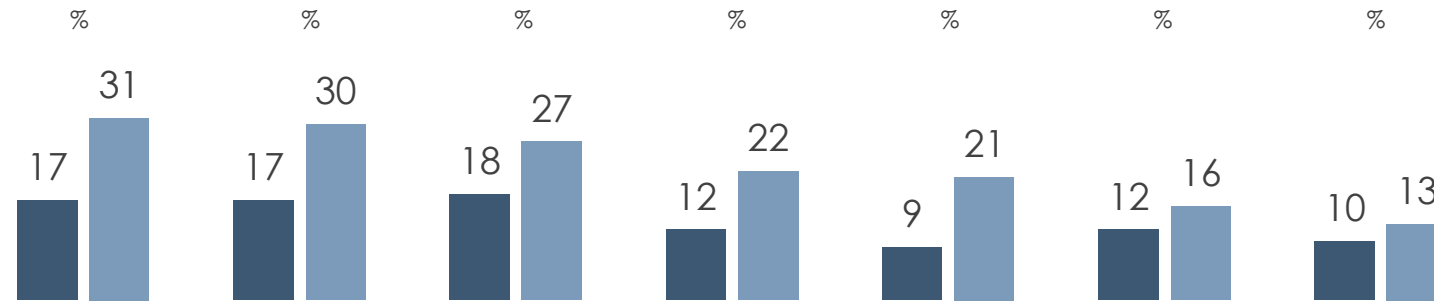
2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.8) conducted by B&A.
Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N = 1,009



Attitudes to repair

Strongly agree
 Somewhat agree

I would like to repair/alter some clothes, but I don't have the required equipment to do it	I would like to repair/alter some clothes, but I don't know how to do it	I pay to have clothes repaired/alter ed by a professional	I tend to ask friends or family members to repair/alter my clothes for free	I would like to repair/alter clothes, but it is too expensive	I just don't see myself as the type of person who would repair/alter clothes	I am not interested in repairing or altering clothes
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Any Agree	48	47	45	34	30	28	23
Any Disagree	31	34	38	50	43	52	59

Overall national attitudes to repair are modestly positive

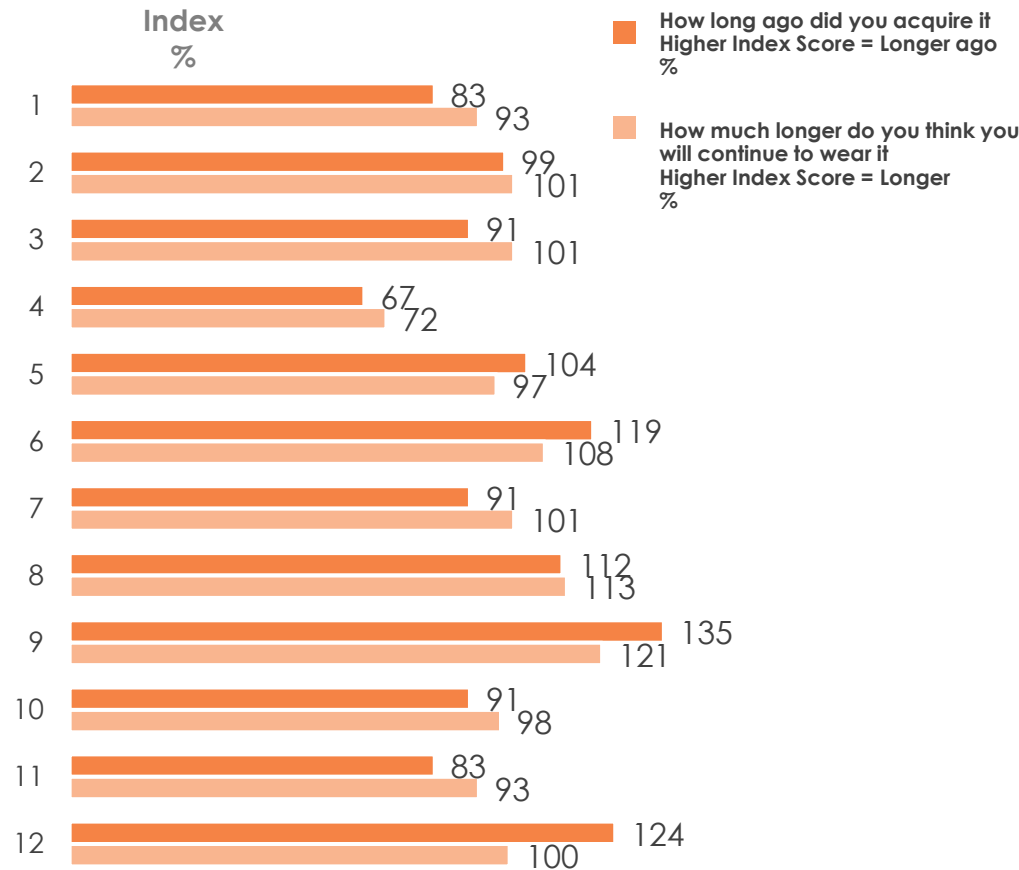
- **45%** of people pay to have their clothes repaired or altered while 34% ask family or friends to repair or alter clothes for free.
- **47% - 48%** of people would like to repair clothes but don't have the equipment to do it or don't know how.
- **Only 23%** of people agree they are not interested in repairing or altering clothes; being most prominent among those who purchase clothes more frequently and young men.

Attitudes towards the repair of clothing are strongly related to age. Barriers to repair such as lack of equipment or skills, are more apparent under the age of 50 years.

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.9) conducted by B&A.
 Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N – 1,009



Length of use of clothing: index



The length of time various clothing items are kept varies considerably

Most durable clothing items kept by people based on oldest acquisitions and longest remaining use are relatively more expensive items such as:

- uniforms, dresses, suits, jackets and coats.

Clothing items most quickly disposed of are:

- t-shirts & short-sleeved tops, footwear & accessories, underwear, socks & hosiery.

Footwear & accessories are typically kept for a shorter duration than the average clothing item.

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.7 a & b) conducted by B&A. Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N – 1,009

* Index scoring as follows for Q.7a How long ago did you acquire it: Past 6 months 10/ 7-12 months ago 20/ 1-2 years ago 30/ Longer ago 50. For Q.7b How much longer do you think you will continue to wear it: For the Next 6 months 10/ For the Next 7-12 months 20/ For the Next 1-2 years 30/ Longer ahead 50.





NATIONAL TEXTILES SURVEY 2021

TO FIND OUT MORE:

Download Excel Survey data [here](#).

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