



# TEXTILES: ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS NATIONAL SURVEY 2021

Management and Disposal of Textiles; Part 3 of 5 Series

EPA Circular Economy Programme and B&A

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## 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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Management and Disposal of Textiles: *Infographic*

## Charity shops

**57%**

of people use charity shops to manage unwanted clothes.

## Most likely to bin



Underwear, nightwear, footwear & accessories, bedding and household textiles are the top items people are more likely to put in their household waste bin.

## Most likely to reuse



People are more likely to donate, pass on or sell jumpers, coats, suits, dresses and bags, and to repurpose household textiles, bedding and t-shirts.

## Recycling bin

**10%**

of people report they most often dispose of unwanted clothes in the household recycling bin.

## Women over 50

**77%**

of women over 50 years most often donate unwanted clothes to charity shops.

## Women 35-49

**47%**

Women aged 35-49 years are more likely to pass on unwanted clothes to others.

## Men over 50

**58%**

of men over 50 years most often bring unwanted clothes to a bring bank.

## Bring banks

**47%**

of people use bring banks most often to manage unwanted clothes.

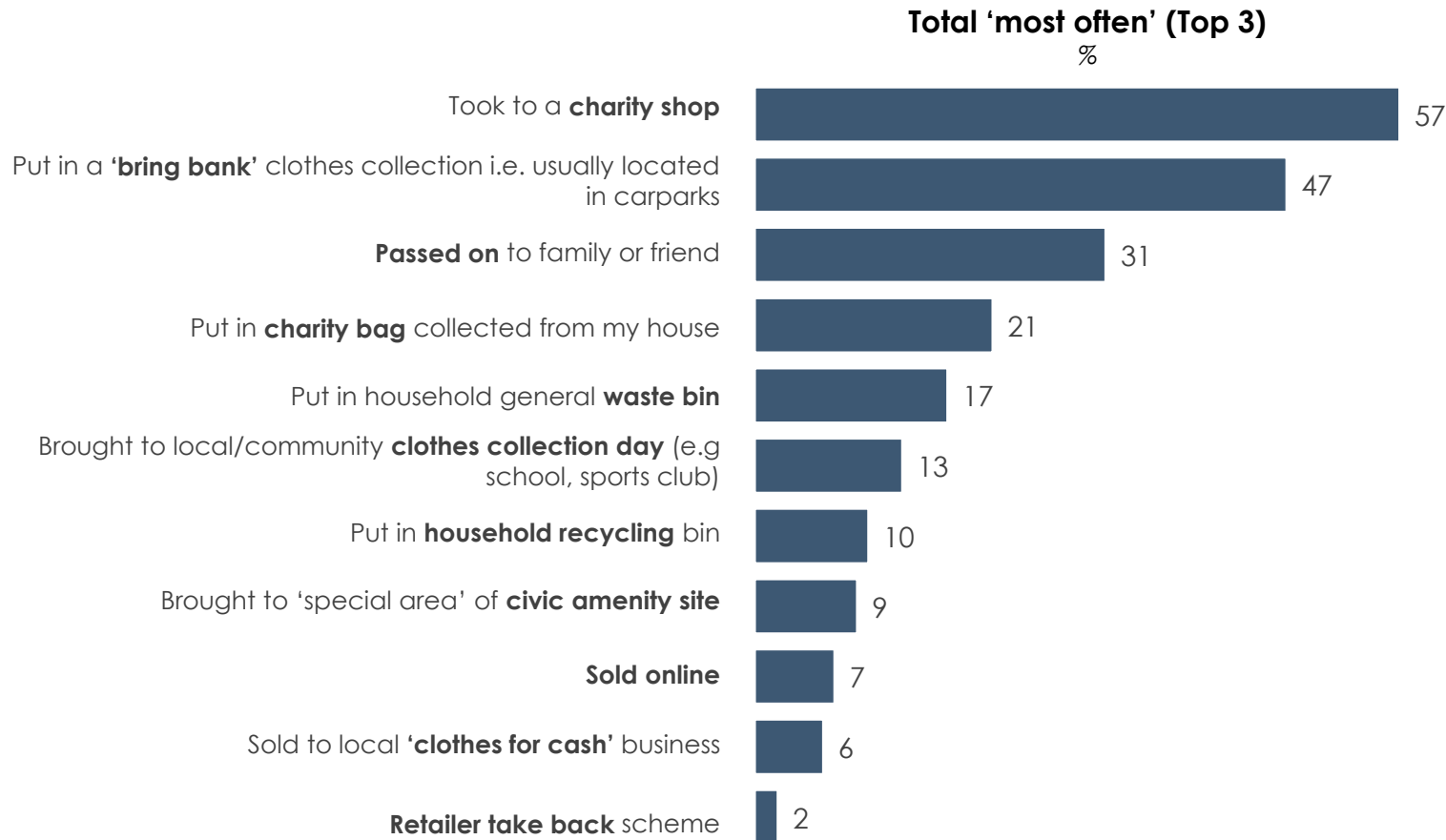
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## Management and disposal behaviours



### The most often used channels for managing unwanted clothes are reuse options

- **57%** of people use charity shops 'most often' to manage unwanted clothes.
- **47%** of people use bring banks 'most often' to manage unwanted clothes.
- **31%** of people pass 'most often' unwanted clothes to family or friend.

### Some unwanted clothes are disposed as waste

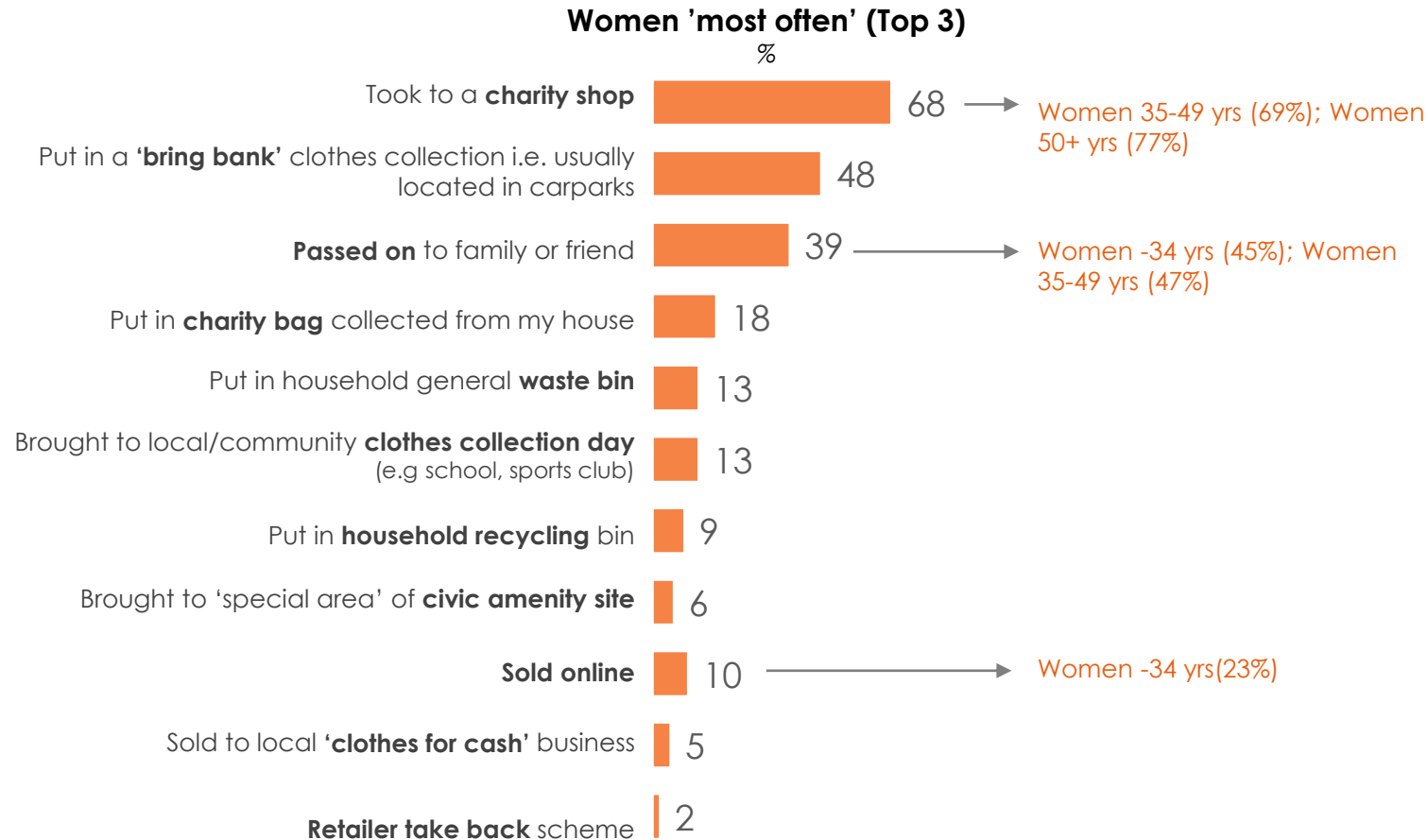
- **17%** of people 'most often' use their household general waste bin to dispose of unwanted clothes.
- **10%** of people 'most often' use their household recycling bin to dispose of unwanted clothes

*(Note: textiles are not a target material for the recycling bin and should not be placed in the recycling bin.)*

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.11b) conducted by B&A.  
Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N = 1,009



## Management and disposal behaviours by women



### Clear patterns by women in how they manage unwanted clothes

#### Most used channel

**68%** of women 'most often' donate unwanted clothes to charity shops.

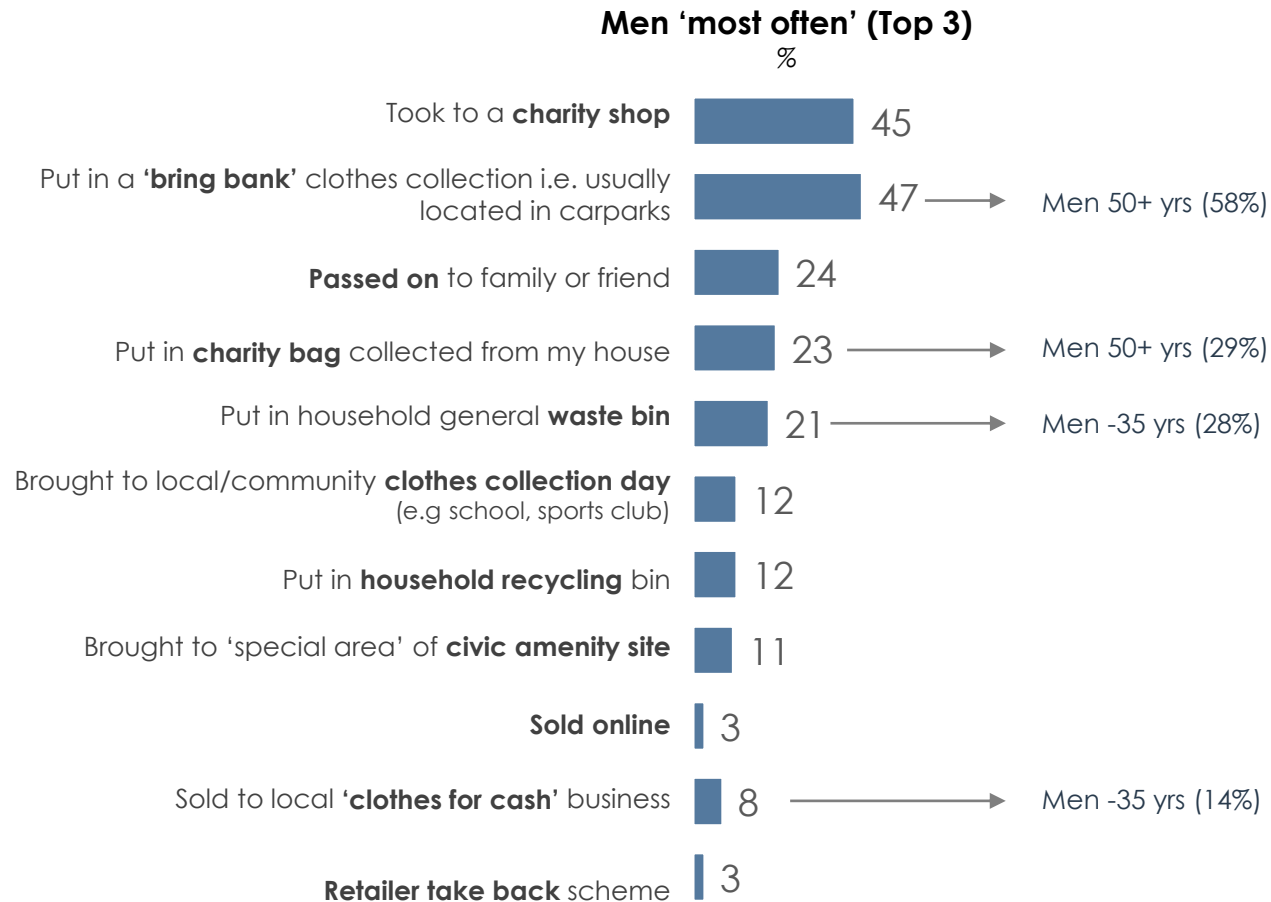
#### Variations by age

- **77%** of women over 50 years 'most often' donate unwanted clothes to charity shops.
- Women under 35 years (**45%**) and in 35 - 49 age group (**47%**) are more likely to pass on unwanted clothes to family and friends.
- Women under 35 years (**23%**) are more likely to sell unwanted clothes online.

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.11b) conducted by B&A.  
Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N = 1,009



## Management and disposal behaviours by men



2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.11b) conducted by B&A.  
 Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N = 1,009

**Clear patterns by men in how they manage unwanted clothes**

**Most often used channel**

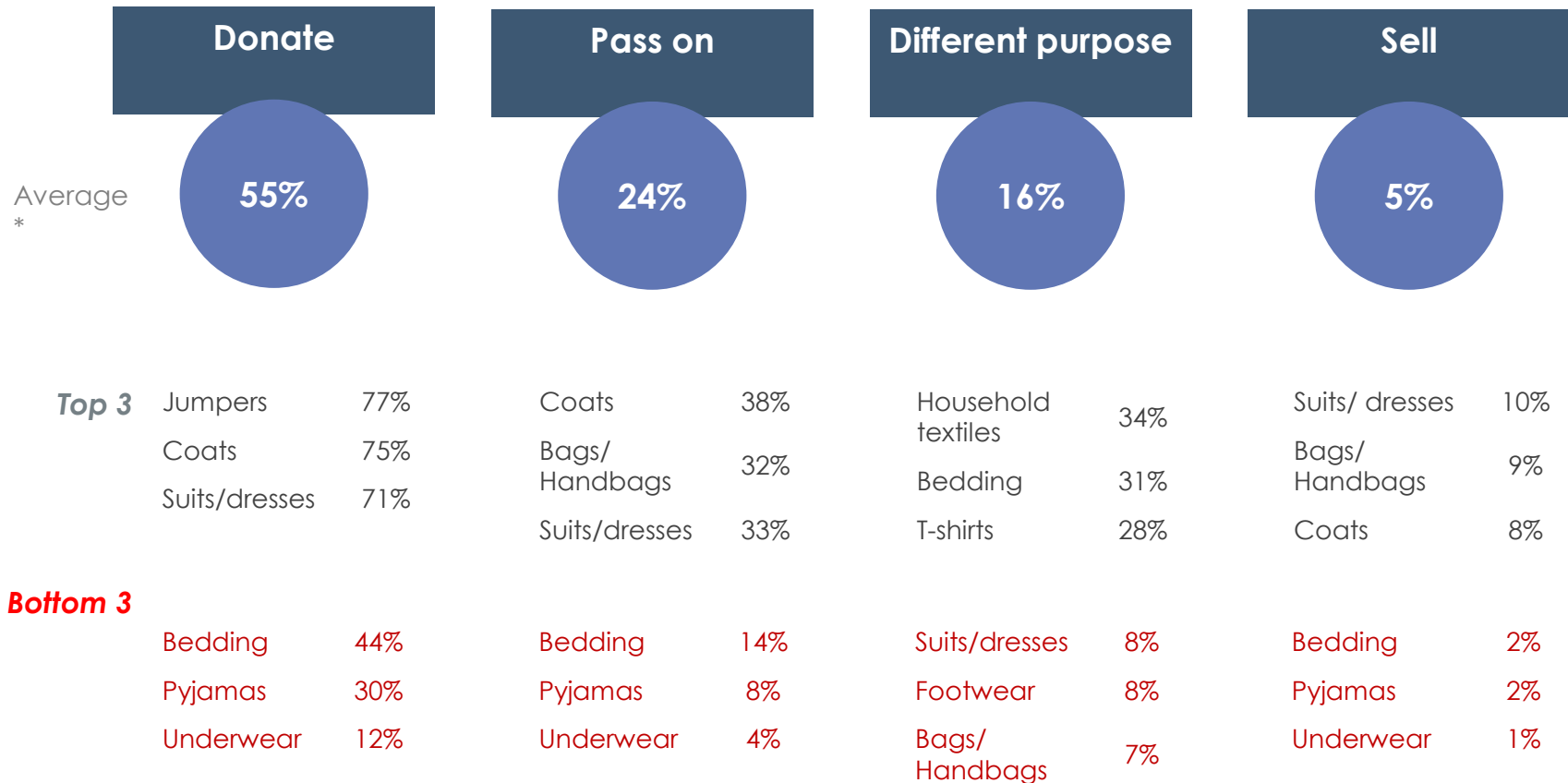
- **47%** of men prefer bringing unwanted clothes to a bring bank.

**Variations by age**

- **58%** of men over 50 years 'most often' bring unwanted clothes to a bring bank.
- Men over 50 years (**29%**) are more likely to put clothes in charity bags collected from home.
- Men under 35 years (**28%**) are more likely to put unwanted clothes in their household general waste bin.
- Men under 35 years (**14%**) are more likely to sell to a local 'clothes for cash' business.



## Reuse channels ever used in focus



**Relatively more expensive clothing items are managed for reuse**

Looking at a range of 16 types of clothing and textile items:

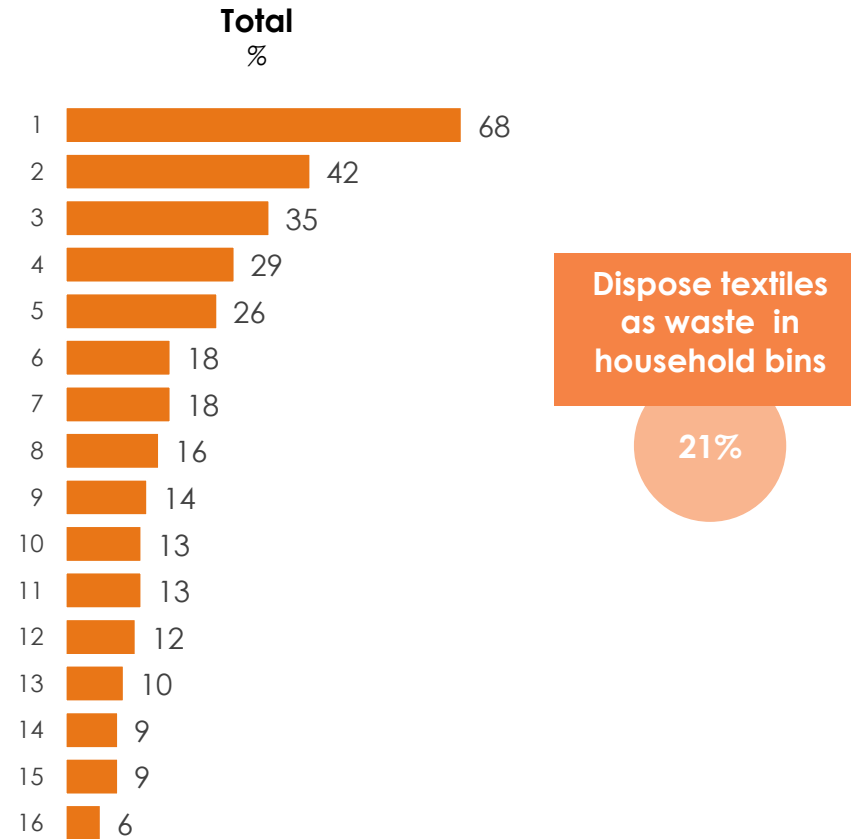
- People are more likely to have managed unwanted clothes for reuse by donating to charity (**55%**), passing on to others (**24%**) or selling (**5%**).
- People are more likely to have donated, pass on or sell jumpers, coats, suits, dresses, bags and handbags.
- People are more likely to have repurposed household textiles, bedding and t-shirts for a different use e.g., make rags.

**Bedding, nightwear and underwear are less likely to be managed for reuse.**

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.10a) conducted by B&A.  
 Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N – 1,009



## Most often put in waste bin in focus



Many clothing and textile items are disposed of in household bins

Looking at a range of 16 types of clothing and textile items:

- 21% of people have most often disposed of unwanted clothes as waste in household bin.
- Underwear/socks/hosiery, nightwear, and footwear & accessories are the top three items people are more likely to put in their household waste bins.
- Suits/ensembles/dresses are the items least likely to be put in household waste bins.

2021 nationally representative textiles behaviour and attitudes survey (Q.10b) conducted by B&A.  
Base: All adults living in Ireland aged 16+; N – 1,009







## NATIONAL TEXTILES SURVEY 2021

### TO FIND OUT MORE:

Download Survey Excel data [here](#).

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Check our website: [www.epacirculareconomy.ie](http://www.epacirculareconomy.ie)

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