

How to ... Swish

Swap don't shop!

A Swish, or Clothes Swap is an event where people bring clothes, shoes and accessories they no longer need, want or don't fit and swap them for something 'new to them'.

The Waste Education Team has clothes rails, hangers, a changing screen and mannequins for you to borrow at no cost. Get in touch at wasteaware.council@westlothian.gov.uk



Why?

235 million items of clothing were sent to landfill in the UK in 2017. The global fashion industry produced 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon emissions in 2015. (www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-45745242)

A government Environmental Audit Committee report states that 3 in 5 items of clothing end up in landfill or incinerators within 1 year.

Choosing to reuse instead of buying new helps stop 'fast fashion' ending up in landfill.

How does it work?

To swish, participants will need to bring at least one item of clothing in good, clean condition. Items are swapped for swishing tokens, which can then be used to 'purchase' other items.

Who?

A swish could be a ladies only night, a babies and toddlers' event or a mix of men, women and children's clothes, whatever you think would work best in your area.

You could even have a special evening wear event close to Christmas or a prom event in conjunction with a local high school.



Where?

Your Swish could be a night in with friends, a public event for charity or a fun lunchtime in the office. For bigger events find out if you could use a local community hall.

Think about space for people to try items on, car parking, toilets, disabled access etc.

Venues will often have terms and conditions you will need to follow, for example, a limit to the number of people allowed in the building and some will ask that you have your own public liability insurance.

How?

Enlist friends or relatives to help or ask a local environmental group to help. It's best to have at least three people helping with hanging and giving out and taking in tokens.



If you're raising money for a charity ask if they have volunteers who could give you a hand. You will need a few weeks to organise your swish to allow time for finding a venue and advertising and to give people time to sort through their wardrobes.

You may also choose to sell tickets for your swish – either to limit numbers, raise extra money for

charity or to be able to supply drinks and nibbles.

Make sure people know where they can buy a ticket from. It might be a good idea to use www.eventbright.co.uk to sell tickets however they do take a percentage of your proceeds.

Timings

Depending on your target audience a swish can be held in the evening, at a weekend or through the day. This is a basic outline of how an event could work –

6pm – Items are checked in and swapped for tokens.

6.30pm – Guests can be entertained with drinks and nibbles, while clothes are hung and displayed.

7pm – The swish opens and participants can browse and swap.

8pm – The swish closes.

This is just one way to hold your swish, you could collect items in advance and have them hung and displayed for people arriving, or have half an hour browsing and trying on time before anyone is allowed to swap.

Tokens

You can either swap one token for one item, or rate items in 3 groups. Designer brands are worth 3 tokens, good quality high street brands are worth 2 tokens and cheaper brands are 1 token. If you decide to rate items, you will also need to label them so allow extra time for this.

Publicity

- Social media is a great free way to promote events, but traditional posters and flyers work too.
- Local papers and newsletters often have a 'what's on' sections and you can send a press release to local newspapers too.
- Remember to check printing deadlines in advance.
- Email your poster to as many people as you can and ask them to send to all their friends.
- Community groups will often have mailing lists which they may be able to send it out to.

Things to consider...

- You may want to limit the number of items people can bring.
- Check items carefully to insure they are clean, in good condition and that zips and buttons are intact.
- Ask people not to bring items like underwear, swimwear or night wear.
- The lending kit doesn't include any mirrors, so you will need to bring your own or borrow from friends.



- To stop one person getting lots of the best items you could swish in rounds where each person can take one item at a time per round.
- Towards the end of the swish, if anyone has run out of tokens, you could ask for donations of £2-£5 per item with the money going to your chosen charity.
- You could have someone doing hair and make-up or at a children's swish games and face painting.
- Keep track of the number of tokens you give out and how many you receive back in, so you can work out how many items were swapped.
- Make your guests aware of what will happen to the items that are left at the end – given to a local charity shop... or saved for your next swish!

Let us know if you need any help or advice and how many items you save from landfill –

wasteaware.council@westlothian.gov.uk

