

OURS TO PROTECT

Circular Economy Programme



WHAT'S INSIDE

This week on Ours to Protect, show producer Ethna Quirke spoke to Warren Phelan, Manager of the Circular Economy Programme with the Environmental Protection Agency about latest recycling figures, which show that Ireland generated a whopping 1.2 million tonnes of packaging waste in 2021, with plastics presenting a serious challenge.

What is “The Circular Economy”? We live in a world where we take materials produced by the earth and make things that we may only use once before throwing them away. This ‘take, make, use and dispose’ system is known as the linear economy. Our focus now is to move from a linear to a circular economy.

About the EPA's Circular Economy Programme: The programme was established in 2021. It incorporates and builds upon the previous National Waste Prevention Programme to support national-level, strategic programmes to prevent waste and drive the circular economy in Ireland. The vision is an Ireland where the circular economy ensures that everyone uses less resources and prevents waste to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Here are some things we can do as consumers to support a circular economy and prevent waste:

1. Rethink Do I really need it? This is the first question to ask; wanting something and needing it are not the same thing! We've become used to replacing things because we feel like it, not because they've worn out; perhaps I can make do with what I have.

2. Repair Can I get it repaired? When we use our stuff so often, sometimes they can get worn down, parts can break and the item can no longer be useful, however, there are many ways we can repair the things we already have. Check www.repairmystuff.ie where you can search for your local repair service on goods such as clothes, home appliances, furniture and much more.

3. Reuse Maybe I could borrow or hire it, or perhaps share it with neighbour/friends. Whether we have a need to buy something or if we no longer need to use the stuff we have, there are great ways to give or look for items that can be reused. Whether it's with neighbours, or online, there are plenty of great quality previously owned items looking for a new home. Check out our partners Community Resources Network Ireland and the Rediscovery Centre to support reuse and upcycling near you.

4. Buy to last And when we do have to buy new goods, consider what the product is made of. Is the product over-packaged? Does it contain hazardous chemicals? Choosing products that will last long or can be repaired over single use items can help create demand for a circular economy. And when it is worn out, ask can it be recycled at the end of its life?

5. Recycle If we can't repair the goods we have, or if it cannot be repurposed or reused then you can check out www.mywaste.ie to learn whether it can be recycled and where you can bring it to be recycled.



Useful Resources

KCLR Ours To Protect

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