



CIRCULAR ECONOMY APPROACH



INTRODUCTION

Football Clubs use a wide range of materials and resources, from kit and equipment to food, packaging and infrastructure. Traditionally, many of these resources are used once and then disposed of, contributing to unnecessary waste and environmental impact.

A circular economy approach focuses on keeping resources in use for as long as possible by reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling materials. For football Clubs, this means moving away from a “take, use, dispose” model towards more sustainable and efficient ways of operating.

This resource provides practical guidance to help Clubs adopt circular economy principles in a way that is achievable, cost-effective and aligned with the FAW Together Greener Programme.

This resource will support your Club to:

- Understand what a circular economy is and why it matters.
- Identify opportunities to reduce waste and improve resource use.
- Embed reuse, repair and recycling into Club activities.
- Make more sustainable purchasing and operational decisions.
- Align with best practice approaches promoted across football.





CIRCULAR ECONOMY

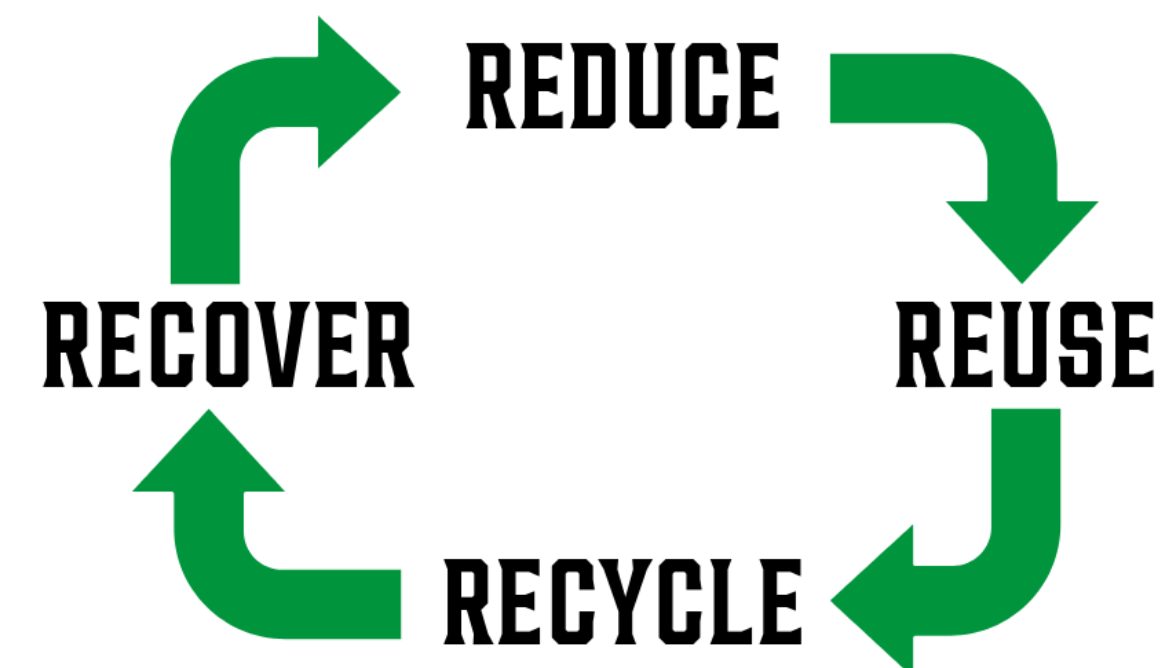
What is the Circular Economy?

A circular economy is an approach that aims to keep products and materials in use for as long as possible, extracting maximum value from them before they are reused, repaired or recycled.

In a Club context, this means:

- Reducing the amount of waste generated.
- Reusing equipment and materials where possible.
- Repairing items instead of replacing them.
- Recycling materials correctly at the end of life so that materials can be recovered where possible.

This approach reduces environmental impact while also helping clubs operate more efficiently and cost-effectively.





BENEFITS

Why is a Circular Economy Important for Clubs?

Circular economy principles are increasingly being adopted across football and are a key part of building a more sustainable future for the game.

Adopting a circular approach can help your Club to:

- Reduce waste and disposal costs.
- Extend the lifespan of equipment and materials.
- Save the Club money from a reduction of purchasing new equipment and materials.
- Improve sustainability performance.
- Support national environmental goals in Wales.
- Demonstrate leadership within your community.





KEY PRINCIPLES

The circular economy is built on a set of key principles that help organisations reduce waste and make better use of resources. For football Clubs, these principles provide a simple and practical framework to guide everyday decisions, from purchasing and operations to events and facilities management. By applying these principles, Clubs can take meaningful steps towards becoming more sustainable while also improving efficiency and reducing costs.

Reduce

The most effective way to manage waste is to prevent it in the first place.

Clubs can:

- Avoid single-use items where possible.
- Reduce unnecessary purchasing.
- Plan events to minimise waste generation.
- Work with suppliers to reduce packaging.

Reuse

Keeping items in use for longer reduces the need for new products.

Clubs can:

- Introduce boot and equipment swap schemes.
- Reuse signage, banners and event materials.
- Encourage reusable bottles, cups and containers.
- Store and reuse equipment across seasons.



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Repair & Recycle

Repairing items extends their lifespan and reduces waste. When items can no longer be reused or repaired, they should be recycled correctly

Clubs can:

- Repair damaged equipment where possible.
- Maintain facilities and infrastructure to avoid replacement.
- Encourage a culture of fixing rather than discarding.
- Provide clear waste segregation systems.
- Ensure recycling bins are available and well labelled.
- Work with waste providers to maximise recycling rates.

Recover

Where materials cannot be reduced, reused, repaired or recycled, recovery is the final step in a circular approach. Recovery refers to extracting value from waste, typically through energy recovery processes such as waste-to-energy. While this is preferable to landfill, it should always be considered a last resort.

Clubs can:

- Work with waste contractors who prioritise recovery over landfill.
- Ensure non-recyclable waste is managed responsibly.
- Monitor waste streams to identify opportunities to move materials higher up the waste hierarchy.
- Continue to reduce reliance on disposal by improving earlier stages, such as reduction and reuse.





APPLYING PRINCIPLES

Applying Circular Economy Principles in Your Club

Applying circular economy principles within your Club is about turning ideas into practical actions. Every Club has different facilities, resources and activities, so there is no one size fits all approach. This section highlights key areas where circular thinking can be applied in a simple and effective way, helping your Club reduce waste, use resources more efficiently and embed sustainability into everyday operations.

Facilities and Operations

Consider how resources are used within your facilities.

Clubs can:

- Improve waste segregation across all areas.
- Reduce energy and water waste.
- Reuse materials for maintenance or improvements.

Events and Matchdays

Events are often a major source of waste.

Clubs can:

- Reduce single-use plastics and packaging.
- Introduce reusable or returnable cup systems.
- Plan for waste reduction and recycling at events.
- Work with vendors to use sustainable materials.





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Procurement and Purchasing

The choices clubs make when buying products can have a significant impact.

Clubs should:

- Choose durable and reusable products.
- Consider environmental impact when selecting suppliers.
- Reduce over-ordering and unnecessary purchases.
- Look for opportunities to buy recycled or sustainable products.

Equipment and Kit

Clubs can:

- Extend the life of kit and training gear.
- Reuse equipment across teams.
- Introduce repair and maintenance practices.
- Run swap or donation schemes.





NEXT STEPS

Engaging Your Club Community

A circular economy approach works best when everyone is involved.

Clubs should:

- Communicate clearly about sustainability initiatives.
- Encourage players, volunteers and supporters to participate.
- Share progress and successes.
- Promote a culture of responsibility and resourcefulness.
- Building awareness helps embed circular thinking into everyday club activities.

Starting Small and Building Over Time

Clubs do not need to implement everything at once. A circular approach can start with small, practical actions that build over time.

Examples include:

- Reducing single-use plastics at events.
- Introducing a boot swap scheme.
- Improving recycling and waste segregation.
- Choosing reusable alternatives in clubhouses.
- These actions can gradually lead to wider changes across the club.





FURTHER SUPPORT

Adopting a circular economy approach helps your Club move from simply managing waste to actively reducing it and using resources more efficiently. By focusing on reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling, clubs can lower costs, minimise environmental impact and create more sustainable practices.

You do not need to transform everything immediately. Start by identifying a small number of opportunities where circular principles can be applied and build from there.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Inform one of your Green Goals.
- Identify opportunities to reduce waste and improve resource use.
- Support your Club's Waste Action Plan.
- Engage your Club community in sustainable behaviours.

Even small changes, such as reusing equipment or reducing single-use items, can contribute to a more circular and sustainable future for football in Wales.

Further information on Waste can be found at www.faw.cymru/TogetherGreener-waste

If you require support with this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru