

Introducing circularity of PPE through contract management

Recycling Lives is a UK recycling and waste management business founded on the principles of creating social value through employment for disadvantaged groups, and delivering environmental innovation. The company has been in operation for over 40 years and today is the UK's largest car recycling processing business, while also continuing to work in other areas of recycling.

The aim of the pilot is to bring greater circularity to an existing PPE (personal protective equipment) supply contract. This will be carried out through BITC undertaking research on behalf of Recycling Lives to identify a range of circular options for different PPE types and making recommendations as to how these can be implemented in the contract.

There are a number of challenges to circular procurement of PPE, some of which are systemic challenges and some which are specific to this pilot. These include:

- PPE design is highly regulated and prioritises safety of the user, this can be to the detriment of sustainability
- The issuing of PPE items to employees is not monitored, doing so could be perceived to be compromising safety if employees begin to feel uncomfortable asking for new equipment.
- The nature of Recycling Lives' business (dismantling cars to be recycled) means that PPE becomes highly contaminated with oils etc., potentially reducing recycling options

Impact

The impact of this project will be that Recycling Lives PPE supply contract will be amended to incorporate greater circularity. This is expected to result in changes being implemented for example to incorporate recycled content, to increase the recycling of end of life products, and to increase time in use per item. Key findings will be shared with other organisations that use PPE to increase wider adoption.