



The Clothing Exchange

The Beginning:

Laura Stubbs first connected with the New Wortley Community Centre in 2023. At the time, Laura was already deeply involved in her local community, working part-time and running a social media business. Her commitment to making a positive impact on climate change and reducing waste led her to explore the idea of creating a clothing exchange. This initiative aims to provide good quality, second-hand clothing to local residents, thereby reducing the environmental impact of fast fashion and clothing families in New Wortley.

Laura's journey began with an initial conversation with Victoria Kortekaas, a Community Builder from the New Wortley Community Association. Victoria introduced Laura to the principles of ABCD and the Small Sparks Fund, which could potentially support her initiative. Although Laura was initially unsure about the need for funding, she soon realised the potential of the Small Sparks Fund to help her project grow.



"Thanks to the Small Sparks Fund we were able to take a small idea and turn it into something the whole LS12 community can benefit from..."
Laura Stubbs



The Journey:

With the support of the New Wortley Community Centre and the Small Sparks Fund, Laura launched the Armley Community Clothing Exchange. The project quickly gained traction, with Laura organising several well attended and successful events at the local church, highlighting the benefits of working together and sharing.

The Small Sparks Fund provided Laura with the means to purchase storage and display equipment, allowing her to take the Clothing Exchange on the road. This mobility enabled the initiative to reach more people across the LS12 area, including events like the Armley Festival and New Wortley Festival. The professional appearance of the pop-up events helped change perceptions, making the Clothing Exchange a respected and eco-friendly way to access fashion.

Throughout this journey, Laura found invaluable support from other community connectors Lindsey and Jessica. Their commitment and enthusiasm played a crucial role in the success of the Clothing Exchange.



The Impact:

The impact of the ABCD support on Laura and The Clothing Exchange has been profound. The initiative not only provided a sustainable solution to the fast fashion problem but also fostered a sense of community and mutual support. Laura's efforts have raised awareness about the environmental issues associated with excessive consumption and promoted responsible fashion choices. Together, they managed to save over 1,000 items of clothing and shoes from landfill, giving them new homes and reducing waste.

The Clothing Exchange has become a vital resource for local residents, offering free, good quality clothing during a cost-of-living crisis. The initiative has also created opportunities for people to dispose of old clothing responsibly. Laura's ability to engage and inspire others has been instrumental in the project's success, making it a model for community-driven change.

Looking ahead, Laura plans to continue expanding the reach of The Clothing Exchange. She aims to maintain the initiative's community focus, ensuring it remains accessible and beneficial to local residents. Laura is also exploring potential collaborations with other community-led projects, such as the LS12 uniform exchange, to further enhance the impact of her work.

"Laura's passion and dedication have been the driving force behind The Clothing Exchange. Her ability to engage the community and promote sustainability is truly inspiring." Victoria Kortekaas
NWCA



"Being part of The Clothing Exchange has been a rewarding experience. It's amazing to see the positive impact we're making on the environment and the community." Lindsey (Connector)

