

How to run your own Swap Shop

Why not try running a Swap Shop event with your friends, community group or school. Swap Shops are the perfect opportunity for re-homing unwanted goods and pick up something useful instead.

This information sheet offers tips on how to run your own Swap Shop, it is by no means a definitive list and you may like to try out your own ideas.

Planning

Allowing plenty of time to make all the arrangements and producing all the publicity for the event is crucial. To make the planning stress-free, it is good to have a number of people to share the responsibility.

Finding a venue

Location is very important. Decide who you want to attract – is the Swap Shop open to a whole community or is it just for a small group of people? Maybe try community centres, school halls or religious meeting places.

Staffing

You will need people to help you run the swap shop, to do publicity, set up the venue, greet and direct swappers, erect signage, sort items, count attendees, sort leftovers, help clear up, take down signage, maybe take photographs and maybe serve refreshments.

Publicity

In order to get people to attend your event you will need to publicise it widely. You can produce posters and leaflets and distribute them locally, but remember this can be costly. Advertise in your parish magazine or newsletter. Speak to your local newspaper and try to get them to cover the event, invite them along to take photos. Also try your local radio station.

Let Worcestershire County Council know about your swap shop, we may be able to assist with signage, posters and other promotional items (for groups within Herefordshire and Worcestershire).

Extras

Offer refreshments, this will attract more people. Make sure that volunteers are given a break and a drink. Background music will create a good atmosphere and inviting other groups to have displays will all add to the event.

Monitoring

If you want to know how much waste your Swap Shop has diverted from landfill you will need to weigh the swapped items as people leave. This requires kitchen scales or / and larger hanging scales. You may also like to count the people attending.

Leftovers

Make sure you know what you will do with the leftovers. Can they be stored somewhere for a future Swap Shop? Can they be taken to local charity shops?

It is a good idea to get a local charity shop on board at the planning stage to take some of the leftovers.

Can some items be offered on the Freecycle website? Make sure that you have transport to move leftover items.

It is important to specify what type of items can and can't be brought to the event. This will help avoid having to deal with unsuitable items. For example faulty items would not normally be suitable or a 15 certificate DVD would not be appropriate when children are attending.

Generally speaking leftovers are not a big problem, but it is important to have plans in place to deal with leftovers.

Larger items

Encourage people to bring photos of larger items for display on a notice board. This way you will not have to find them a home if they are leftover at the end of the event.

Holding a small Swap Shop

A small Swap Shop can be a fun event to hold with your friends. Maybe you could choose a theme for your Swap Shop, for example attendees could swap baby toys and clothes, ladies clothes or books. Maybe you could set up a uniform swap at school.

If there are only a few of you, you could hold a Swap Shop in your home with friends. Encourage each of your friends to bring along one of their friends, that way you will have lots more items to swap.

Disclaimer

Persons taking part in the swap shop do so at their own risk. Worcestershire County Council accepts no responsibility for items swapped and gives no warranty as to the condition, suitability or provenance of any item swapped. Please take all reasonable measures to check the condition, suitability and provenance of any item swapped for your own protection. Worcestershire County Council accepts no liability for any claim or loss resulting from any transaction taking place at the Swap Shop."

It is recommended that a sign displaying similar information replacing Worcestershire County Council's details with that of your own organization.