

Charity Retail Association[®]

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Charity Retail Conference 2026
23-24 June, ICC Wales, Newport



Mark Russell, Chief Executive, The Children's Society



Tara Carlile-Swift, Co-Founder, FreckleFace

Our sponsors



Headline



BRAND NEW

The Networking Zone



Bursaries



Delegate badges



Tuesday 23 June

9.15am	Exhibition opens, refreshments served	Main hall
9.15am – 11am	Registration	Entrance hall
10.45am	Conference opens – welcome address	Woodland Suite
11am – 11.30am	Keynote 1 – The power of charity retail, Mark Russell, Chief Executive, The Children’s Society	Woodland Suite
11.30am	Focus session A	Various rooms
12.15pm	Exhibition and lunch	Main hall
1.30pm	Focus session B	Various rooms
2.15pm	Exhibition and refreshments	Main hall
3pm	Focus session C	Various rooms
3.45pm	Exhibition and refreshments	Main hall
4.15pm	Focus session D	Various rooms
5pm	End of day programme	
6.45pm	Drinks reception	
8pm – 10.30pm	Awards dinner and ceremony	Woodland Suite

Wednesday 24 June

8.30am	Exhibition opens	Main hall
9.15am	Keynote 2	Woodland Suite
9.45am	Exhibition and refreshments	Main hall
10.30am	Focus session E	Various rooms
11.15am	Exhibition and refreshments	Main hall
12 noon	Focus session F	Various rooms
12.45pm	Keynote 3 - Purpose before profit: how kindness creates loyal customers and thriving towns, Tara Carlile-Swift, Co-Founder, FreckleFace	Woodland Suite
1.15pm	Wrap up	Woodland Suite
1.30pm	Conference closes	Woodland Suite
1.30pm onwards	Take away lunch collection	Entrance hall

In each time slot you can also select ‘N/A – Stay in exhibition’ if you would prefer to not attend a focus session at that time and explore the exhibition more.

Workshop

A1: Using data-led decisions to drive the performance of your shop floor

Jennifer Sahadat, Commercial Performance & Category Manager, Cancer Research UK

This session will explore how to use data and metrics to make evidence based, data-led decisions to positively impact performance and KPIs. We will discuss how we monitor and analyse these metrics at a board, national level as well as the impact small data-led changes can make at a local level.

Session outcomes:

- To share best practice and examples of where data led decision have had a positive impact
- The importance of transaction level data and how to use it to review your business
- The impact that small data-led decisions can have over a long period of time.

Masterclass

A2: Menopause, culture & the workplace

Nicola Farndell, Women's Health & Menopause Specialist, Life Now Coaching

A strategic session for leaders, managers and people teams. This session explores why menopause has become one of the most significant – and often misunderstood workforce issues in a female-dominated sector like charity retail. Nicola will unpack how hormonal change can show up at work as brain fog, anxiety, fatigue, confidence loss and burnout, and how this quietly impacts absence, performance, retention and leadership pipelines. With increasing attention on menopause through the Employment Rights Bill, this session connects menopause to wellbeing strategy, culture and people leadership.

Session outcomes:

- Understand why menopause is now a critical workplace issue
- Recognise how menopause shows up at work
- Know what good menopause support looks like
- Feel more confident about what supportive leadership looks like.

Masterclass

A3: Simpler Recycling: what it means for charity retail

Mike Nicol, Head of Charity Partnerships, 1st Waste Management and Dawn Dungate, Sustainable Waste and Compliance Consultant

Simpler Recycling reforms in England began on 31 March 2025. In this session explore how the reforms have been working for charity retail. Learn how to comply with Simpler Recycling whilst also reducing waste costs and strengthening operational control by focusing on fundamentals: correct segregation, smarter systems, staff behaviour and data-led decision making. Waste management is one of the largest hidden costs in charity retail. Drawing on experience across both charity retail and commercial waste management, this session will challenge delegates to rethink how waste streams are managed, for the better.

Session outcomes:

- Understand where unnecessary waste costs are most commonly created
- Be able to identify quick, practical changes that reduce disposal costs without compromising compliance
- Take away a framework for reviewing waste systems strategically, not reactively.

Workshop

A4: The power of creative visual merchandising

Kat Maclennan, Visual Merchandiser, The Charity Retail Consultancy

Exciting visual merchandising is your secret weapon for delivering an outstanding customer experience. It helps tell your charity's story, promote your sustainability values and create a welcoming environment that builds community and drives sales. In this session, Kat will guide you through practical, easy-to-implement strategies – from mapping the customer journey and creating compelling product stories to styling ideas that inspire customers to buy.

Session outcomes:

- Inspiration to look at your retail space with fresh eyes
- Inspiration to create standout visual displays that draw customers in
- Practical ideas to help drive sales through creative and effective visual merchandising techniques.

Workshop

A5: Charity ecommerce field notes: 5 ideas changing the sector

Stephan Hofmann, CEO, Minimist

Across the charity retail world, a new generation of ecommerce operations is emerging. In this session, we share five field notes from standout charities that are redefining how donated goods are sold online. We will explore how simple uses of AI and modern selling tools are making ecommerce more scalable and profitable. From faster listing workflows to "as-new" online listings standards, the ideas show how online selling is shifting from a secondary activity to a core engine of charity retail growth.

Session outcomes:

- Five practical models of high-performing charity retail ecommerce
- An understanding of how AI tools are making online selling accessible
- Insights into how charities can compete with leading ecommerce retailers
- A clearer view of how online selling is evolving
- Practical ideas to improve listing, speed and scale.

Networking

A6: Heads of Retail

Join fellow Heads of Retail in the Networking Zone

A specific networking session aimed at meeting new people in the sector, problem solving with peers in a similar role to you, and quick-fire decision making.

Session outcomes:

- Meeting other people in the sector in a similar role
- Understanding your role and its place in the sector
- Contacts and ideas to follow up post-conference.

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Discussion group

B1: Who pays for fashion's waste? Global lessons for UK charity retail

David Roman, Sustainability Manager, British Heart Foundation

Textiles EPR is coming – and charity retail must be at the table. This session unpacks how multi-million pound producer-funded systems elsewhere have reshaped collection, sorting, reuse and recycling – and what these models means for UK charities. We'll tackle the hard bits and spotlight the wins: funded collections infrastructure, national communications that drive donations, end-to-end traceability to protect reputation and handling fees that value reuse and repair.

Session outcomes:

- Understand core features of textiles EPR
- Take-aways from existing French, Dutch and Australian models
- Assess specific UK charity retail impacts
- Identify opportunities from investment, communications, traceability and financing.

Workshop

B2: Menopause & You: A guided, interactive session for midlife wellbeing

Nicola Farndell, Women's Health & Menopause Specialist, Life Now Coaching

This interactive session is designed for women navigating midlife changes while juggling work, life and caring responsibilities. Drawing on Nicola's work with women across a range of workplaces, the session explores what menopause actually is, why symptoms are so common, and how they affect day-to-day work and wellbeing. The session moves beyond awareness into practical support, introducing simple, evidence-based lifestyle foundations that help stabilise energy, mood and focus through menopause.

Session outcomes:

- Understand what menopause is
- Recognise how menopause can affect work, wellbeing and identify
- Feel reassured that you are not alone in your experience
- Learn practical lifestyle foundations that genuinely support menopause
- Leave with a clearer sense of what you can do next.

Workshop

B3: Worthwhile wardrobe: exploring innovations in circular charity retail

Dr Katherine Duffy, Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Prof Deirdre Shaw, Prof of Consumer Ethics and Sustainability, University of Glasgow

This session explores ongoing collaborative research (between the university and Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice) which examines the experience of building and introducing a circular business model into charity retail. We will draw on the experiences of the charity, supporting experts and consumers to highlight key learnings for the sector.

Session outcomes:

- To explore alternative clothing models
- Analyse the benefits and challenges through the perspective of the consumer
- Consider key learnings and explore future recommendations.

Workshop

B4: Superstores – a full 360 review

Bel Fry, Director of Retail, Regenerage and Gavin Anderson-Terry, Director of Retail, Weldmar Hospicecare

A deep dive into the logistics, sign-off process, pitfalls and things to consider around taking on such a large unit, especially from running predominantly small stores and leaping into a huge Superstore without any previous experience. It will look at commercial property fundamentals, governance considerations, sustainability implications and financial controls that determine success or failure. This will explore to secure sign-off, manage risk and ensure that scale delivers sustainable surplus, not strategic strain.

Session outcomes:

- A balanced view on the reality of 'going large'
- What not to do: learn from our mistakes
- What to do to get ready to launch
- Avoiding operational pitfalls and achieving positive outcomes.

Panel

B5: Show me the money!

Sonia Fletcher, Head of Customer Success, Eproductive

The session will feature four practical case studies highlighting how charity retailers are increasing income from existing customers and donors. 1 Loyalty schemes – what defines an effective scheme and the potential revenue uplift, 2 Round up and add on donations – do short campaigns outperform permanent prompts, 3 Coupons – 90% of consumers use coupons, so how can you use them strategically to sell surplus stock and 4 Gift aid – see what others are doing to grown this income stream.

Session outcomes:

- Clear tactics to boost income
- Evidence on which approach generates the best returns
- Insights into how customers respond to different prompts
- Benchmarks to compare against their own performance.

Networking

B6: Shop-based roles

Join fellow shop-based colleagues in the Networking Zone

A specific networking session aimed at meeting new people in the sector, problem solving with peers in a similar role to you, and quick-fire decision making.

Session outcomes:

- Meeting other people in the sector in a similar role
- Understanding your role and its place in the sector
- Contacts and ideas to follow up post-conference.

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Workshop

C1: eBay Live

Jonathan Cage, Online Operations Manager, Barnardo's

In this session Barnardo's will share their journey into maximising profit with eBay Live, discussing the challenges and successes they have encountered along the way. This session will include a live selling demo.

Session outcomes:

- Understanding new ways of selling online
- How to maximise profits in ecommerce
- How to develop confidence in hosting and build rapport with potential clients.

Masterclass

C2: Building personal resilience and wellbeing

Terry Streater, Founder, Oakwood Training

During this session Terry will provide strong action points, insights and practical tools on managing stress, preventing burnout, building personal resilience and looking after wellbeing that people can start putting into practice straight away. This session is accompanied by a resource page with further insights, tips and resources.

Session outcomes:

- Understanding the links between stress, wellbeing and performance
- Practical tools for managing stress, preventing burnout and building personal resilience
- Self-care and looking after your own wellbeing during challenging times.

Masterclass

C3: The customer of the future

Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive, British Retail Consortium

The retail customer of the future is already reshaping how and where people chose to spend their money. In this session, Helen Dickinson will explore how the market is changing, customer expectations are evolving – from values-led spending and emotional connection to the role of physical stores as places of experience, trust and belonging. Drawing on insights from across the industry, this session will examine what 'delight' now truly means. Delegates will be challenged to rethink stores, brand and customer experience to encourage loyalty, advocacy and repeat visits in a rapidly changing retail landscape.

Session outcomes:

- Understand the shifts shaping the future retail customer and their expectations
- Consider how other retailers are adapting stores, experiences and brands
- Use a simple framework to assess how well your own retail offer meets future customer needs.

Masterclass

C4: Successful charity retail is all about people and stock

Paul Guest, Head of Retail, Trinity Hospice

In this session Paul will unpick the two things that are key to our sector – stock and people. You need to get both of these right for success in your retail chain. He will talk through the impact having the right people and the right stock will make – whilst considering volume, discount and other store models.

Session outcomes:

- Understanding the basics of this business – people and stock
- How to build confidence in your retail chain
- Coming away with an 'I can do this' mentality.

Masterclass

C5: Retail Safety and Loss Prevention

Adam Gergis, Regional General Manager, Duress UK Ltd

In this session Adam will explore how you can use technology to keep frontline and lone-workers in stores and in the community safe against violence or aggression from customers, as well as reduce theft and loss. He will explore how to de-escalate situations and get priority police response when needed.

Session outcomes:

- Understand how to keep staff safe with 24/7 backup and priority police response
- How to improve staff retention and reduce incidents of violence and aggression
- The positive impact and reduction on opportunistic theft
- How to implement efficient incident reporting.

Networking

C6: Area and Regional Managers

Join fellow Area and Regional Managers (and equivalent roles) in the Networking Zone

A specific networking session aimed at meeting new people in the sector, problem solving with peers in a similar role to you, and quick-fire decision making.

Session outcomes:

- Meeting other people in the sector in a similar role
- Understanding your role and its place in the sector
- Contacts and ideas to follow up post-conference.

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Workshop

D1: Creative solutions – one year on

Invited speakers from the audience

At the 2025 Charity Retail Conference we ran an interactive session called 'Creative solutions', where delegates shared their 2-minute elevator pitch on one thing that had made a huge difference to their retail operation. Following the overwhelmingly positive feedback of this session last year, this session is back again in 2026. It will include tips, tricks and insight from a range of charity retailers sharing some of their most 'creative solutions' from the last 12 months.

Session outcomes:

- Insight from a wide range of charity retail members, large, small, national, a hospice – there will be something for everyone!
- A written take-away of all the ideas generated from the session
- An understanding that a small change can make a big difference to your operation, bottom line or other area of retail.

Masterclass

D2: The inclusion dividend: how EDI drives income and what exclusion is costing your charity

Charlotte Greenwood, Associate Consultant, The Charity Retail Consultancy

Charities rarely calculate the financial impact of exclusion – but it's already hitting their income. From volunteer churn and customer walk-aways to missed donations and reputational damage, even small moments of bias can create significant, invisible losses. This session reframes EDI as a strategic revenue driver, rather than simply compliance. We will explore how inclusive cultures strengthen volunteer retention, widen donor reach, improve customer experience and increase retail performance.

Session outcomes:

- A clear understanding of how EDI directly influences revenue, footfall, donations and volunteer retention
- Awareness of hidden financial costs of exclusion
- Practical inclusive leadership behaviours that strengthen team culture and performance.

Masterclass

D3: UK retail market overview

Steve Ringham, Business Assurance Partner, BDO LLP

A general overview of the UK retail landscape with a focus on recent trends within the various sectors, consumer sentiment and where we see resilience and pressure across the market. This session will also include an overview of the current state of the market and the challenges expected on the horizon.

Session outcomes:

- Understanding of retail market trends and expectation for the future
- A chance for members to see the bigger picture
- Understanding of how charity retail can embed these trends and stay current, whilst strategically planning for the future.

Workshop

D4: The art of the possible – community engagement by rag repurposing

Rowena Midgley, Head of Retail and Katy Hancock, Head of Communications, Dorothy House Hospice

Ever had an idea but never followed it through? This session tells the story of how we did – and how Threads for Care was born. What started as a simple idea became an opportunity to rethink waste, creativity, and community. We'll share our journey from concept to delivery, the challenges and opportunities we discovered along the way, and how we worked with our community to co-create clothing from rag waste. It's a story about taking a chance, learning as you go, and turning an idea into something real and impactful.

Session outcomes:

- Gain insights into the opportunities and lessons learned along the journey
- Feel inspired to take a chance on new ideas
- Explore the power of co-creation and community engagement.

Workshop

D5: Safer recruitment in charity retail: The role of Basic DBS checks

Dom Le Roy, Head of Commercial Marketing, Disclosure & Barring Service

This practical and informative session will help charity retailers understand how Basic DBS checks can support safer, fairer recruitment. Covering what a Basic DBS check is, what it can reveal, key facts and figures, and where it may be appropriate in a charity retail setting, the presentation will give delegates a clear and accessible overview of the essentials. It will also explore how Basic checks can be introduced into recruitment processes in a proportionate and lawful way, helping organisations build trust, reduce risk, and recruit with confidence.

Session outcomes:

- What Basic DBS checks are
- Key facts and figures
- How long they take
- How you can introduce them to your recruitment process.

Networking

D6: Director and C-suite roles

Join fellow Directors and C-suite colleagues in the Networking Zone

A specific networking session aimed at meeting new people in the sector, problem solving with peers in a similar role to you, and quick-fire decision making.

Session outcomes:

- Meeting other people in the sector in a similar role
- Understanding your role and its place in the sector
- Contacts and ideas to follow up post-conference.

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Panel

E1: Defining and implementing a sustainable future for Cancer Research UK retail – a fireside conversation

with Julie Byard, Director of Trading, Jo Mewett, Head of Retail Operations and Alex Swaby, Trading Strategy, Planning and Change Lead

Threats precipitated by the macroeconomic environment continue to challenge charity retail, however opportunities exist. In October 2025, CRUK announced big changes in their retail operation, responding to the changing external and retail landscape. They developed a new retail plan to raise more money for life-saving cancer research and give customers, supporters, staff and volunteers a better experience. This session will share their key learnings and provide an open opportunity to ask questions and discuss as a sector.

Session outcomes:

- To share key learnings from CRUK
- An opportunity for insight and discussion
- To develop future collaboration opportunities.

Workshop

E2: Creative recruitment

Lesley Kennedy, Income Generation Manager, RSPCA Derby & District

Discover how we've transformed our recruitment process in this practical, hands-on session. Learn how the use of social media has significantly extended our advertising reach and attracted a more diverse pool of candidates. We'll explore how our interview sessions are designed (and you'll experience some of these interactive activities too!) We will share our successes, the unexpected benefits we've seen and the lessons learned along the way. You'll leave with ideas, inspiration and time to plan how creative recruitment approaches could work in your own charity.

Session outcomes:

- How to advertise roles creatively to reach a wider and more diverse pool of candidates
- How to design and deliver engaging, interactive interview days
- How to assess values, potential and skills beyond a traditional interview format.

Masterclass

E3: A warm welcome – charity shops and the growing movement of community spaces

David Barclay, Director, The Warm Welcome Campaign

An introduction to the Warm Welcome Campaign and the resources and support on offer to charity shops. This session will explore the history of Warm Welcome and how charity shops can get involved to their benefit.

Session outcomes:

- Understand more about the campaign – its history, vision and mission
- Insight into how charity retail can engage with and benefit from this campaign
- Example case studies with ideas to take away.

Discussion group

E4: Managers of the future – succession planning

Marie Egerton, Director of Commercial Development, St Rocco's Hospice

This session will showcase how investing in a trainee programme can promote succession planning. Utilising other resources within the charity such as volunteering, fundraising, HR and clinical teams – along with a structured training plan provides a well rounded manager when opportunities arise, or growth is part of the strategy.

Session outcomes:

- Succession planning success
- How to increase morale in your team
- How to reduce vacancies and the dip in shop performance that is linked to this.

Workshop

E5: Running a shop without control: the operational reality of charity retail

Dr Esther Pugh, Leeds Beckett University; Dr Zixuan Mia Cheng, University of Sussex

Charity shops may appear to operate like conventional retailers, however their day-to-day management is shaped by unpredictable forces - donations, volunteer labour, community expectations and organisational performance targets. Drawing on in-depth interviews with charity shop managers, this presentation explores the tensions created by balancing and juggling these competing demands and the realities of running a shop with limited control over stock, staffing and operations. The session offers insight into how charity shop managers feel about their hidden labour, and it makes practical recommendations for improving communication with donors, volunteers and customers, and gaining back control.

Session outcomes:

- Gain insight into the operational realities of running a charity shop
- Identify the key challenges managers face when balancing donations, volunteers and retail performance
- Take away realistic and practical solutions that can help improve communication and operations.

Networking

E6: Hospice colleagues

Join fellow hospice retail colleagues in the Networking Zone

A specific networking session aimed at meeting new people in the sector, problem solving with peers in a similar role to you, and quick-fire decision making.

Session outcomes:

- Meeting other people in the sector in a similar role
- Understanding your role and its place in the sector
- Contacts and ideas to follow up post-conference.

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Discussion group

F1: Rescue & Repair: how Shelter use community-powered retail to launch a new sustainability initiative

Jemma Laing, Marketing Manager and Richard Hudson, Head of Marketing and Insight, Shelter

Rescue & Repair was launched in September 2025 with the aims of raising more income for Shelter and Shelter Scotland, saving more textiles from landfill or export and educating and upskilling customers in mending whilst saving them money. In this interactive session, find out more about the product and learn how the team embedded the initiatives in shops using the power of community both in-person and online. This session will include a Q&A and facilitated discussion on the challenges of dealing with large quantities of low-quality stock donations.

Session outcomes:

- How to get local communities involved in shop-based activations
- How to harness the power of online communities to amplify campaigns
- How to build/prove ROI on a sustainability initiative
- Swap ideas and discuss challenges with other charity retailers.

Masterclass

F2: Modern volunteer management

Daniel Franzmann, Volunteer Lead, Fight for Sight

This session will cover the changing way we manage all aspects of the volunteer journey from recruitment, onboarding and training and engagement. How can we use a modern volunteer management approach to prevent burnout in the role while being as affective as possible for our organisations in terms of results and overheads.

Session outcomes:

- Effective use of technology to deliver outcomes
- Ensuring you make the most of your VMS investment
- An understanding of how we can use basic technology to train and engage volunteers
- A full overview of modern recruitment methods.

Masterclass

F3: Structure to strategy: organisation design as a lever for growth and resilience

Dan Upward, Q5 Partner – Head of Retail, Consumer & Leisure, Q5 Ltd

This session will explore how senior retail charity leaders can look to use Organisation Design as a key strategic lever for change, whether this be to address increasing cost pressures, workforce challenges and skills, to leadership effectiveness. Join us, where we will bring and deploy rich industry insight across the wider retail sector and applying this to key challenges being faced in the charity retail area, understanding key tensions and trends, along with practical areas to consider for application across your organisation.

Session outcomes:

- Identifying key structural barriers limiting performance in operating models
- Understanding how Org Design is a vehicle through which organisations can be optimised for delivering strategy
- Insight into common pitfalls across Org Design and how to avoid them.

Panel

F4: How small retail chains thrive

Range of invited panellists

This panel session will focus on small retail chains and what success looks like. Topics will include the impact of having small fundraising and marketing teams on retail performance, how to use limited resources to complete on the High Street and other best practice. Come with your questions to this insightful session.

Session outcomes:

- How small retail chains can use limited resources to compete and thrive
- Sharing best practice for small retail chains
- The positive impact of a thriving retail team on your wider charity.

Workshop

F5: Selby Shop for the future

Matt Fisher, Community Development Lead, Up for Yorkshire

Delegates will gain insight into the journey of Shop For The Future, learning how charity shops, independent retailers, and local partners are driving high street vibrancy, reducing waste, and building a stronger sense of place. The session highlights real data, real impact, and the future vision for a thriving Selby.

Session Outcomes:

- Understand how a community anchor is leading the campaign
- Gain insight into key findings from market research, visitor data, and community engagement activities
- Learn practical approaches for building partnerships, amplifying sustainable retail, and strengthening resilience.