



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy



Office for Product  
Safety & Standards

# A Study into Second-hand 'Bricks and Mortar' Sales of Electrical and Electronic Products in the UK

# Electrical Safety First

The UK's electrical safety experts

Electrical Safety First is the UK charity dedicated to reducing deaths and injuries caused by electrical accidents. Our aim is to ensure everyone in the UK can use electricity safely. We campaign on behalf of consumers to improve safety regulation and ensure safety messages are appropriate, up to date and well communicated. We provide expert information and advice to assist the public in protecting themselves from faulty, damaged, sub-standard, and poorly maintained electrical installations and electrical appliances. Additionally, we offer expert advice to manufacturers and retailers on compliance, risk and other areas of safety. We are recognised by government and industry as the leading campaigning charity and technical authority on electrical safety.

Electrical Safety First was commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to undertake this research study project.

## OGL

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# 1. Executive summary

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) commissioned Electrical Safety First (ESF) to undertake a study of 'bricks and mortar' sales of second-hand electrical appliances via personal / private and business channels in the UK. This was to include an understanding of different types of markets, the products that were commonly for sale and any practices around product safety.

Businesses selling second-hand electrical products have a duty of care under the General Product Safety Regulations 2005<sup>1</sup> to ensure they meet legal safety requirements. The Regulations define a *safe product* as one which, under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use including duration and, where applicable, putting into service, installation and maintenance requirements, does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use. This requirement applies irrespective of the selling techniques, including distance and online sales.

A key aspect of the study required regional field visits to capture data on the type and range of second-hand electrical products being sold via **offline** sales channels.

The regions for the field study were carefully selected using specific criteria to ensure demographic and geographic variance. A pilot study was conducted to test the proposed field trip activity and the draft documentation developed.

A total of 222 second-hand sales outlets were visited in eight regions across the UK by seven ESF employed personnel. Outlets visited ranged from local independent charities to nationally represented retail chains to car boot sales.

We found 35% of the outlets visited sold or advertised electrical goods. A significant proportion of the visits where no electrical items were found, were to local mainstream retail outlets where advertising / noticeboards with private sales adverts are traditionally expected to be found. However, a total of five private individual seller advertisements were found across all the field study regions, in classified newspaper ads and noticeboards. This has demonstrated that this method of selling electronic second-hand goods is now quite rare, and it is assumed that many private second-hand sales have instead moved to online platforms or are donated / sold to retailers.

Items that were sold in private adverts included cumbersome items, such as arc welders, stair lifts and mobility scooters - these types of products not being of interest to most commercial or charity sales outlets.

54% of the second-hand market for electrical goods was found to be within the category of general electronic items, designed to be plugged directly into the mains or charged with a mains/USB charger, whether supplied with the product or not. Product types within this category included items such as mobile phones, PCs/laptops, TVs/monitors and games consoles.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1803/regulation/8/made>

Second-hand electrical equipment placed on the market prior to December 2016 may fall within scope of the 1994 electrical equipment safety regulations.

Overall, 'white goods' and 'household appliances' present as the second highest category of second-hand sales. 'Household appliances' includes the product type 'Lighting' - found to be the 5th most popular specific product type overall and the top non-electronic item sold second-hand.

There is clearly demand for white goods in the second-hand market, with 'fridge / freezer' being the most popular product type in the 'white goods' category.

Mainstream charity shops are more inclined to sell smaller appliances, with general 'household appliances' and 'kitchen appliances' featuring as the top two product categories.

At car boot sales and similar private sales channels, white goods did not feature at all. This is not surprising given the physical challenge of transporting large white goods to a boot sale.

Overall, the condition of electrical items found during the field study varied significantly; from nearly new unused items (in original packaging and user instructions provided) to very dated, damaged, worn and poorly maintained products.

A number of potentially unsafe electrical products were found, through both commercial and private sales. This ranged from non-compliant plugs fitted to appliances being sold in commercial outlets, to products being held together by sticky tape outside in the rain at car boot sales. This assessment was based on a visual check – testing of products was not in scope for this study.

Despite legally binding safety obligations imposed on businesses selling second-hand electrical products, only around half of the outlets visited claimed to undertake safety checks before placing items for sale.

Overall awareness of the need to check second-hand electrical goods against recall notices was low. Private sellers were least likely to check products for sale against current recall listings. Awareness was generally higher in nationally represented charity outlets, but when questioned, local staff were unsure as to how the checks were undertaken.

It is clear from this research that there is sustained consumer demand for purchases of second-hand electrical products via bricks and mortar sales channels.

There are directly applicable legislative instruments in place to mitigate the risk that second-hand goods may pose to consumers. However, this field study suggests that legislation alone does not ensure a high level of consumer protection.

## 2. Introduction

In February 2019, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) commissioned Electrical Safety First (ESF) to undertake a limited UK-wide field study of 'bricks and mortar' second-hand electrical appliance sales, to gain a better understanding of the market. The study specifically excluded web-based second-hand sales.

### 2.1 Scope and objectives

The study looked to profile the current market for second-hand sales via personal / private and business channels, to assess the scale of the market, the distribution of sales across different channels and provide an indication of quality/safety.

A key aspect of the study required regional field visits to capture data on the type and range of second-hand electrical products being sold via **offline** regional sales channels. E.g. newspapers, advertisement boards, cards in shop windows, display notices, recycling centres, auctions, car boot sales, charity shops, pawn shops, etc.

The product range to be included for data capture was specifically defined as **second-hand electrical appliances and electronic products intended to be plugged into the mains or charged with a mains/USB charger, whether supplied with the product or not**. There were no data capture limitations placed on the scope of products in respect to age, complete or sold for parts, functional or decorative (e.g. antique).

For private sales, a further element of the study was to conduct a telephone follow-up survey on a selection of adverts within 2-3 weeks to see if the product had been sold, i.e. does this type of advertising result in effective sales of second-hand electrical goods.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Region criteria and selection

Eight regions were visited for the field study, including one region visited as part of a pilot exercise. The eight areas were selected using a combination of the following criteria:

- UK Indexes of Multiple Deprivation.
- Proportional population size and age profiles from Census data.
- Geographic spread across the UK - representative of England, Scotland, Wales and N Ireland. So far as possible, a mix of inland / coastal, rural / urban.
- Demographic coverage - to encompass where possible other population characteristics. Such as student areas, age profiles, retirement areas, non-English speaking, etc.

Taken into consideration was a potentially lower data yield from the inclusion of rural areas having a lower population density. However, it was considered important to include two rural areas in the field study to understand any differences in how the second-hand market operated.

For the purpose of the field visits, each region was broken down into two distinct parts:

- District level –The district area geographically would encompass the selected region (electoral ward) and catch most second-hand goods outlets from nearby ‘feeder towns’ expected to be visited by the population of the selected region. Therefore, field visits would generally be limited to second-hand goods outlets within the district.
- Electoral ward level/Intermediate Data Zone – to provide population and demographic comparative data for the selected region.

The selected regions were required to satisfy the proportional population size criteria and be comparable in all other respects with the selection criteria in England, Scotland, Wales and N Ireland. To achieve this, the selected regions were defined as areas representing ‘Electoral Wards’ - or ‘Intermediate Data Zones’ in the case of Scotland - as this was determined to be the best geographical match to national variations in the format of census data ‘Output Areas’ and comparable population size.

During the region selection process, an assumption was made that second-hand goods sales and purchases would not be contained literally within the geographical boundary defined by an electoral ward. For example, consumers from outside the ward (neighbouring towns and villages) may visit second-hand outlets within the selected region, and vice-versa. This led to a further assumption being applied that this cross-boundary buying and selling would generally be limited to within the selected region’s district.

Furthermore, an important consideration to region selection was its ranking within the index of multiple deprivation. Selected regions overall would need to span across the deprivation ranking scale (from highest to lowest) to identify any correlation between deprivation levels and supply/demand for second-hand electrical goods.

Statistics from various sources were analysed to provide supporting data against each of the region selection criteria. Predominantly, statistics were obtained from bodies that produce

official statistics designated as national statistics as defined by the UK Statistics Authority<sup>2</sup>, such as the Office for National Statistics<sup>3</sup>, The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)<sup>4</sup>, the Scottish Government<sup>5</sup>, the General Records of Scotland<sup>6</sup> and the Welsh Government<sup>7</sup>. Other unofficial web-based sources (references of which were verified by ESF personnel) were used to complement official statistics and provide meaningful geographical data, such as “CityPopulation”<sup>8</sup> – An independent organisation that compiles statistics for countries worldwide, administrative divisions, cities, urban areas and agglomerations, interactive maps and charts – much of which is derived from official census data.

## 3.2 Field Visits

### *Pilot Study*

A pilot took place in Golf Green (Ward level) in Tendring, Essex. The pilot enabled the approach and data collection forms to be refined before implementing in the additional areas.

The areas chosen for this study were:

**Table 1.** List of regions visited.

	<b>Region</b>	<b>Ward</b>
<b>England</b>	Tendring Taunton Blackpool Newham	Golf Green Trull Highfield Green Street East
<b>Wales</b>	Caerphilly	Bedwas trethomas and Machen
<b>N Ireland</b>	Belfast	Legoniel
<b>Scotland</b>	Glasgow city Highland	Dennistoun Fort William South

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/types-of-official-statistics/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/about-us>

<sup>7</sup> <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.citypopulation.de/>



Figure 1. Map of the selected regions.



Four data capture forms were developed:

**Table 2.** List of data capture forms.

<b>Form type</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Private Sales Data Capture form.</b>	This form records details of the advertisement source and a description of the product as described in the advertisement. There is a section on the form to include a photograph of the advert.
<b>Commercial Sales Data Capture form.</b>	This form captures details of the sales outlet, the number of products on sale, quantity and type of electrical products on sale, the sales outlet policy regarding any safety checks performed before sale, the general condition / safety of the products on sale and the turnover of electrical goods. Photographs of the outlet and a selection of products seen can be included.
<b>Private advertisements follow-up form.</b>	To record details of follow-up calls with private sellers.
<b>Overall Regional Summary questionnaire.</b>	This form was developed to allow the person carrying out the visit to provide an overview of the region, their impressions, insights and any qualitative information of the region they visited.

Example illustrations of all the data capture forms and the regional summary questionnaire are provided in *Appendix I*.

Personnel carrying out the visits were provided with a script to use as a basis for introduction in each sales outlet they visited. A further script was created to facilitate follow-up calls with private sellers.

A copy of both scripts is provided in *Appendix II*.

The objective of the field visits was to cover as many sales outlets/events as possible during a two-day period. Car boot sales may have had many stalls to visit and take more time out of the schedule than a single visit to an individual retail outlet, but were collectively counted as one visit. Advance notifications were given to market or car boot sale organisers, where possible, to ensure transparency of our activities.

Internet searches had already been conducted for each area and listed potential premises for visiting, including charity shops, auctions, car boot/markets, recycling centres, associated shops and private second-hand shops, house clearance sales etc. These were listed, together with their addresses to make it easier for those carrying out the visits to organise routes for each day, work efficiently and ensure that key outlets were visited. It was also designed to make recorded routes for each region easier to visualise.

Those conducting visits were advised that, although the lists of potential visits were fairly comprehensive, they were only a guide and may not reflect the current second-hand sales outlets of the region. They were advised that they had the freedom to visit any other premises that they found within the region that fitted within the brief.

Actual routes taken were recorded using the GPS trail tracker application, with the exception of Legoniel, Belfast.

ESF personnel visiting shops/premises were instructed to capture the information on the forms with the co-operation of the business owner/manager and their staff, and perhaps to take photographs for later inclusion on the form. ESF personnel were reminded to use the agreed script to introduce themselves to shop staff and gain their approval to take photographs.

ESF personnel were encouraged to take photographs of products they believed to be either subject to recall or exhibit potential safety issues. Emphasis was placed on taking photographs of white goods so that they could be checked against product recall listings post visit.

The data capture forms were used to record details (and photos) of any potentially unsafe products identified during a visit. Any concerns were reported to the seller and a note taken of any action taken at that time to remove the hazard. Furthermore, procedures were in place for the ESF Technical Team to notify the authorities of a potentially unsafe situation, should the need arise.

The following list of product type was used to collect data on products for sale:

### **General Electronic**

TVs/monitors  
Satellite receivers/Wifi  
Radios/speaker systems  
Games consoles  
Computers/printers  
Mobile phones  
Battery chargers  
Toys with power supply or charger  
Hoverboard  
e-cigs

### **White Goods**

Dishwashers  
Washing machines  
Cookers  
Tumble dryers  
Fridges/freezers, ice-cream appliances and icemakers

### **Kitchen/Domestic Appliances**

Grills, toasters and similar portable cooking appliance  
Deep fat fryers, fryers, frying pans  
Kitchen machines (blenders, food processors, etc)  
Appliances for heating liquids (kettles, etc)  
Microwave ovens

### **Other Domestic Appliances**

Room heaters  
Fans  
Electric irons  
Vacuum cleaners  
Light fitting  
Table lamp

### **Hygiene/Cosmetic appliance**

Shavers, hair clippers and similar appliances  
Appliances for skin or hair care (hairdryers, etc)  
Electric Blanket

### **Outdoors**

Electric garden tools

**Other:** e.g. vaporisers, hand held heating tools, sunbeds, clothes airers, projectors, dehumidifiers, sewing machines, DIY tools, steam cleaners

The data retrieved from each field visit was summarised within a regional summary spreadsheet giving product type, product totals and an overall regional summary giving qualitative information.

### 3.3 Analysis of field data

The raw data for each region was entered into a 'Regional summary spreadsheet'.

Each regional summary spreadsheet provides a summary of the information retrieved from the data capture forms - under category headings aligned with the data input headings on the forms - for each outlet visited. This enabled the data to be analysed both regionally and collectively. In particular, it was possible to depict the type and volume of products for sale in the outlets visited for each region and across all regions.

Consideration was given to qualitative information obtained from the field study in order to contextualise (where possible) the findings from the raw data.

## 4. Findings

Generally, High Streets in rural wards are diminishing, but the types of shops found within these areas are dictated by various factors, including the demography of the area, local demand, the cost of retail rent and rates, overheads, PAT testing, availability of goods, transport options (of people and goods), cost and effectiveness of local advertising etc.

In some areas, there appeared to be a dominance of pawn brokers, charity and second-hand shops towards large town and city centres. However, there were some notable exceptions with some of the districts visited, such as Blackpool, where there appeared to be a prevalence of both charity and private second hand shops in outlying shopping parades/streets, and Tendring in respect to the abundance of private sales outlets for businesses associated with house clearances.

Whether it be in towns, city centres or in outlying districts, charity shops seemed to have a substantial presence in all areas visited, although a number of these had a policy of not selling electrical goods.

A number of areas visited had community second-hand shops, that had contracts to manage the recycling of electrical goods from Local Authority recycling centres. Whilst CeX, Cash Converters and other pawn shops appeared to monopolise the electronics market, the community second-hand shops generally specialised in household goods, kitchenware and white goods.

Table 3. Summary of the categories of second-hand retail outlets / sales channels and the number of those premises visited within each region.

Columns: 1 = Commercial second hand / 2 = Community outlets / 3 = Charity / 4 = Pawn / 5 = House clearance outlets / 6 = Market / 7 = Car boot / 8 = Notice boards + Adverts in shops for electrical goods.

		Categories of outlet visited where electrical goods found for sale							
Region (ward and district)	Total No. of Visits <sup>1</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Golf Green, Tendring	24	1	1	5	2	3	1	0	1
Highfield, Blackpool	40	12	1	4	3	0	0	0	1
Trull, Taunton	21	2	1	6	0	0	0	1	0
Green Street East, Newham	31	4	0	1	3	0	0	1	2
Bedwas Trethomas & Machen, Caerphilli	28	1	0	7	1	0	1	0	0
Dennistoun, Glasgow	40	1	0	4	1	0	2	1	0
Fort William South, Highland	17	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1
Legoniel, Belfast	21	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0

(NOTE 1) This figure represents the total number of sales outlets/events visited, including those where electrical goods were not found for sale.

Five regions had car boot sales, but two of these had been cancelled due to poor weather conditions. Car boot events were found to be a popular sales channel for private sales of

most electrical and electronic goods, but not white goods due to their physical size. Auctions themselves were also excluded by reason that they were often outside the catchment area itself and would sell to both consumers and businesses. Community outlets, although commercial, have been given their own column as they have a specific role within the community working with Local Authorities with regard to meeting recycling targets.

## 4.1 By region

### *Tendring (Golf Green)*

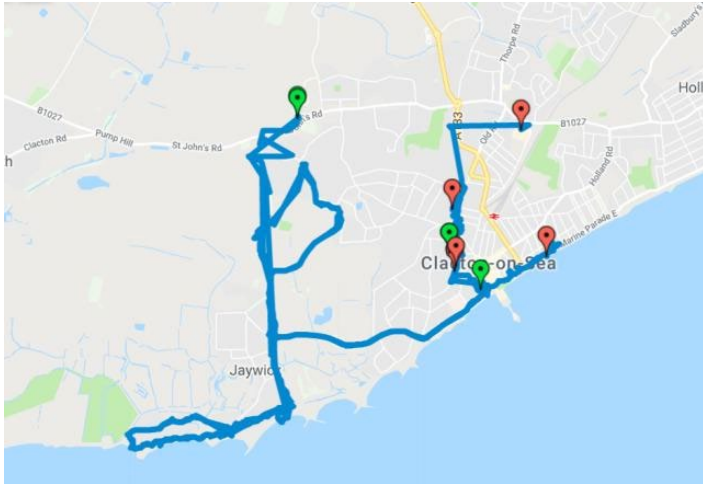
As the pilot study region, data for Tendring was collected and recorded in a slightly different way. However, the data collected for this region is comparable and consistent with the data collected for all other regions.

Figure 2. a map view of the Golf Green ward location (shaded area).



Golf Green is a coastal ward within the District of Tendring, which borders on the seaside town of Clacton-on-sea. The ward has an elderly population with a median age of 57.4 and 36.1% aged over 65. The ward has a deprivation ranking of 1, making it the most deprived area in England.

Figure 3. a GPS track of the route taken during the visit.



24 premises were visited:

- 5 supermarket/small grocery outlets
- 1 post office
- 1 newsagents
- 3 house clearance outlets
- 1 market stall
- 2 pawn shops (one specialising in electronic games, laptops, tablets and mobile phones)
- 9 charity shops
- 2 private second-hand shops (not dealing with house clearances), with one being a community enterprise

Of all the regions visited, the Tendring district had the highest incidence of second-hand clearance outlets. This is thought to be due to the relatively prominent elderly population.

Out of the charity shops visited, four did not sell any electrical appliances. When asked, this was because they did not have PAT testing facilities available. Of those shops that did sell electrical appliances, they had on average only five items on the shelves. Only one charity shop had as many as 12 electrical items, at least one of which appeared to be over 30 years old as it had no insulation on the L and N plug pins. The small local charities generally sold items with minimal checking (only functional testing was stated in one outlet).

Businesses operating as house clearance services ranged from being a 'man with a van' type business, to businesses that had shop outlets. Tendring was the only region that appeared to have shops linked directly to house clearance businesses. Generally all electrical items in these types of outlets appeared to be sold as functional, with only one lamp identified that had old wiring and no plug.

There was one 'community' second-hand outlet that had local council support with upholding its recycling policy. It offered an extensive range of recycled white goods, all of which were mended, refurbished and PAT tested at an out of town warehouse, workshop and further shop outlet.

One of the private second-hand businesses specialised in white goods. It was claimed that all the goods were safety tested, with stickers on the back. However, one of the Beko tumble dryers had a serial number matching that listed on the Beko recall notice.

Two pawn shops visited are associated with major chains that cite themselves in many town and city centers across the UK. They both sold electrical and/or electronic goods. They

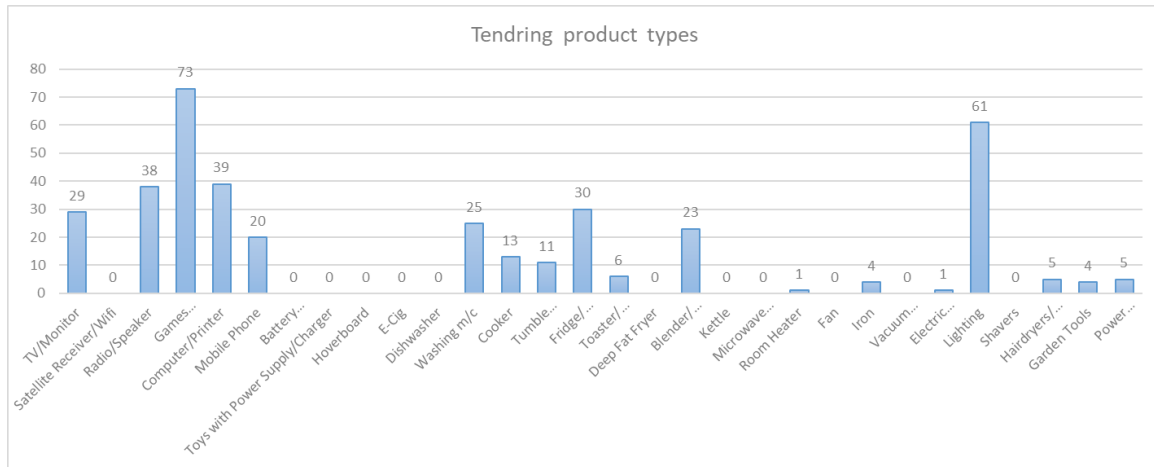
appeared to dominate the second-hand electronics market. There was one other independent business that sold computers (old and second hand).

The 'Clacton Standard' newspaper includes a classified ads section but there were no adverts offering private sales of electrical goods.

Private advertising on shop noticeboards and in shop windows also appeared to be uncommon. One advertisement was for a fridge that appeared on two noticeboards (the same fridge), and one selling an arc welder, but otherwise no other private adverts for electrical goods were found at the time of the visit.

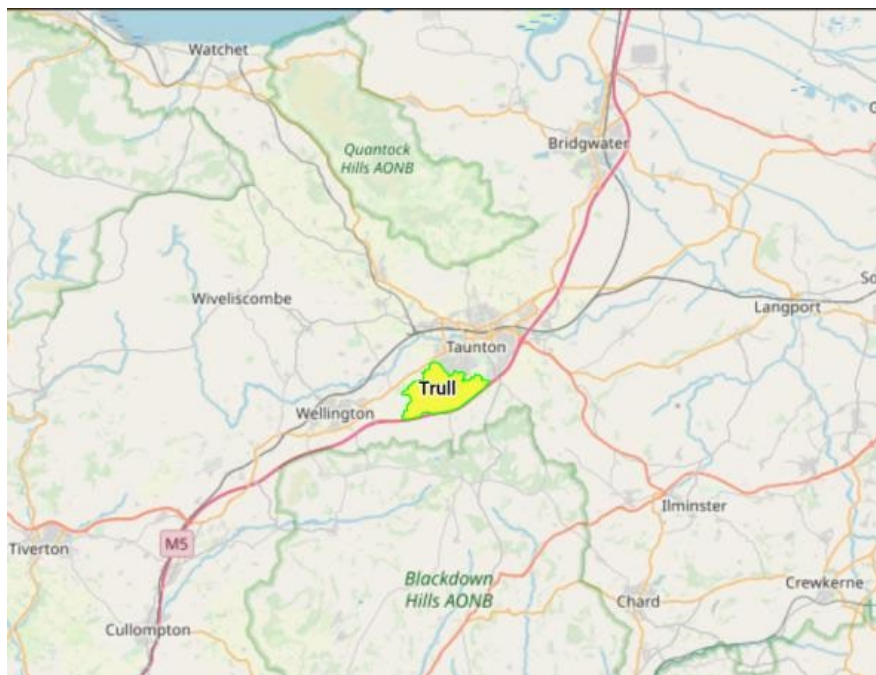


Figure 4. summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in the Tendring region.



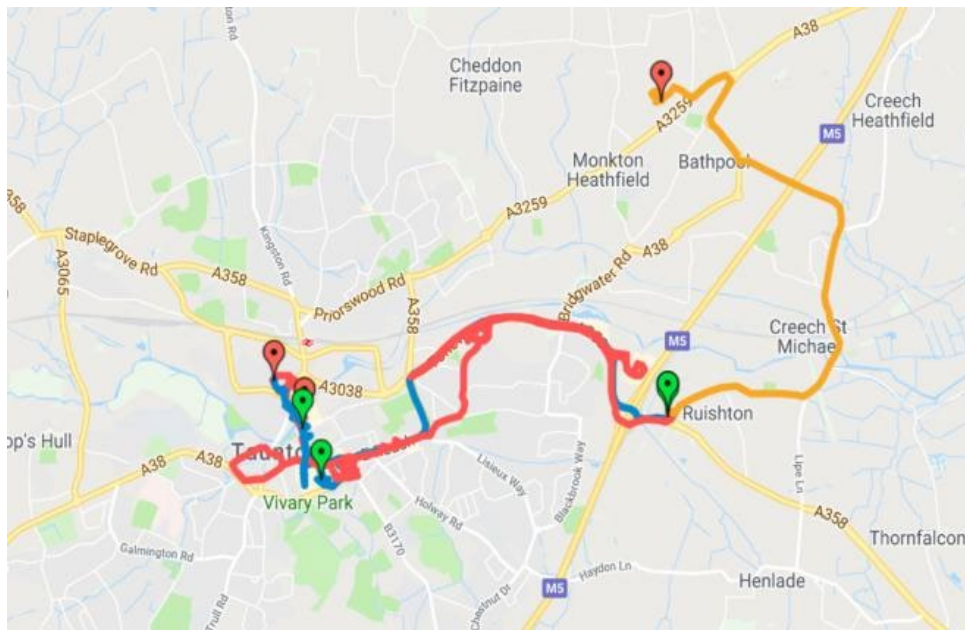
**Taunton (Trull)**

Figure 5. a map view of the Trull ward location (shaded area).



Trull is an inland rural ward located in the south west district of Taunton. The ward has a relatively high elderly population with a median age of 48 and 29.8% aged over 65. Trull has a very low deprivation ranking of 31,450, making it one of the least deprived areas in England. Ethnicity is 98.2% white.

Figure 6. GPS track of the route taken during the visit in Taunton.



21 premises were visited.

- 12 Charity shops
- 3 community/second-hand shops
- 1 car boot sale
- 5 supermarkets/post offices

Out of the charity shops visited, five had a policy not to sell electrical goods. Primarily the shops sold clothing with electrical items amounting to approximately 1% of stock. Those that did sell electrical items were mainly smaller appliances rather than white goods, although they all sold white goods. The British Heart Foundation had 2 shops in the area, one with a policy not to sell electrical items and another that specialised in selling electrical items.

Of the community/second-hand shops visited, all sold electrical items and were all aware of PAT testing. Overall, electrical items amount to approximately 20% of stock.

There were approximately 225 stall holders at a large car boot sale. About 30% of the stalls had electrical items. Some had just one or two products; some had over ten.

None of the noticeboards in supermarkets and post offices had advertisements for electrical items. The stores visited included large well know chains. Sainsbury's reported that they had not used a private notice board for sale of private items in the last five years.

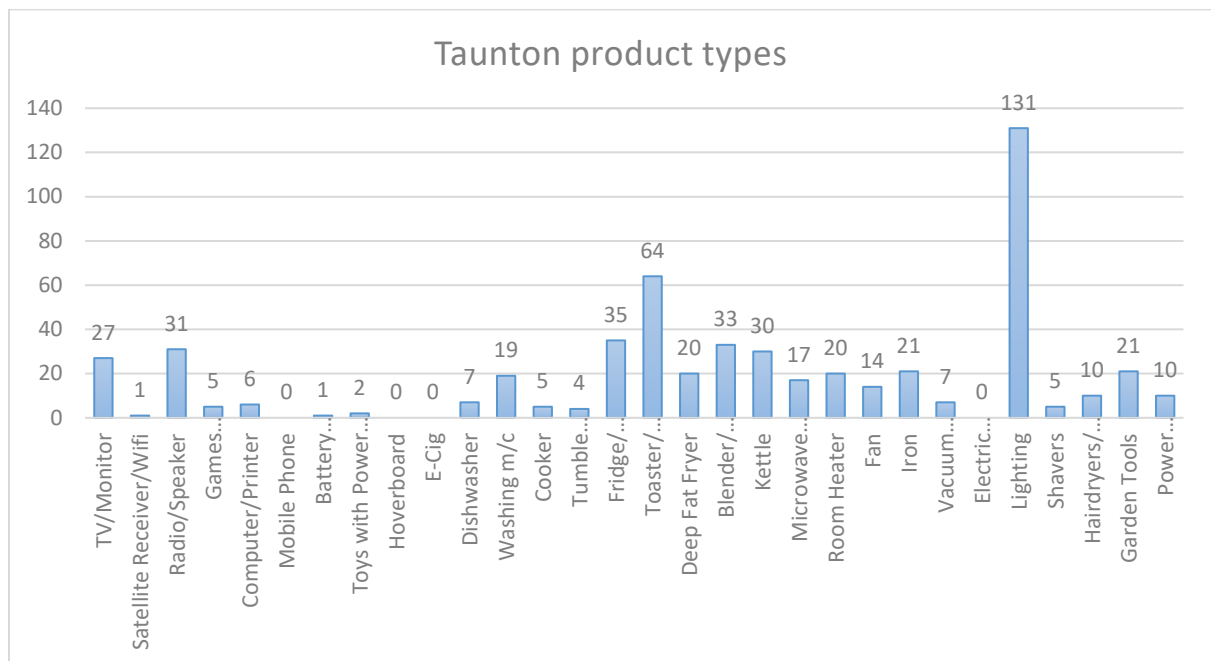
The Taunton district has both an affluent and deprived community. The Trull ward area being quite affluent with a large number of surrounding council estates. This was reflected in the shopping areas with Surridge Gallery selling paintings in excess of £10,000 and being located in a road containing 9 charity shops.

Figure 7. Taunton has a diverse range of shops in the same street.



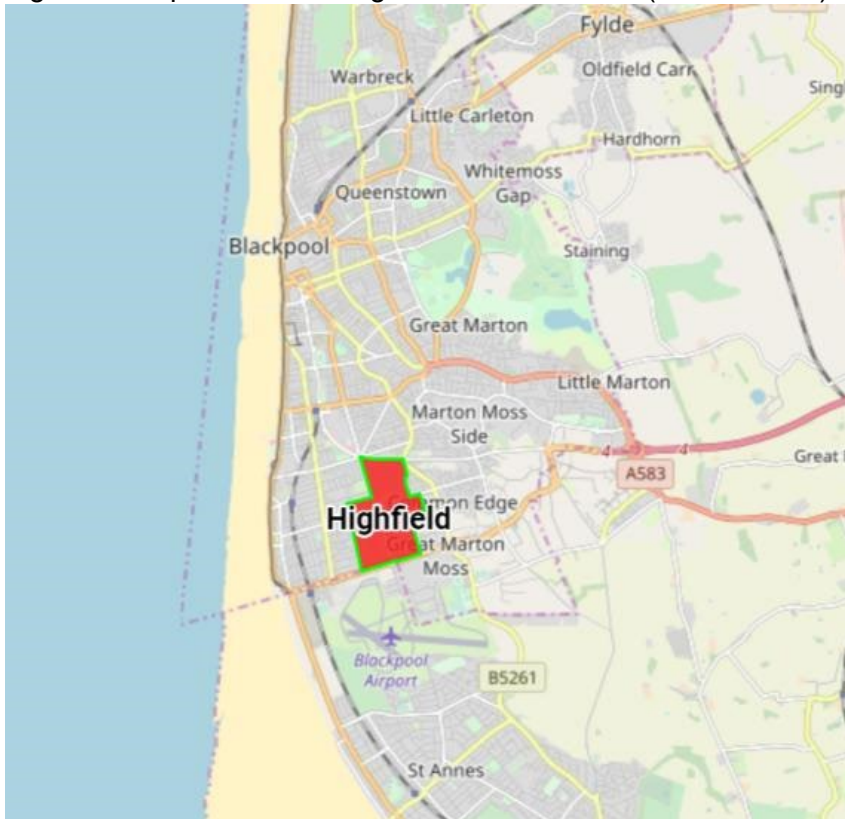
Reports from all outlets indicated that the demand for electrical goods was high and the turnover quite fast. It was suggested that this reflected the high number of more deprived areas within Taunton.

Figure 8. a summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in Taunton.



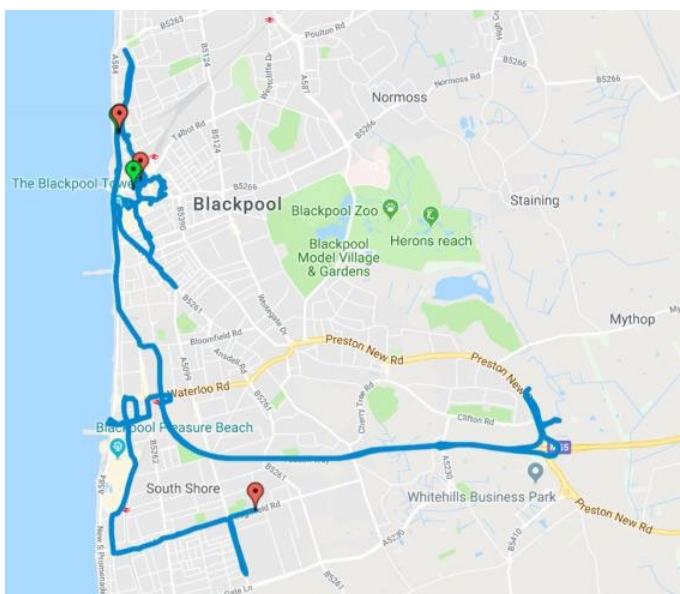
*Blackpool (Highfield)*

Figure 9. map view of the Highfield ward location (shaded area).



The Highfield ward is located in the Blackpool district of Lancashire. The county of Lancashire has the highest percentage of dwelling fires relating to electricity (Electrical fire safety report 2014-17 – Oct 2018 Hampshire fire service). Highfield has an average deprivation ranking of 13,185.

Figure 10. GPS track of the route taken during the visit to Blackpool.





Total number of visits - 39:

- 16 commercial second-hand shops
- 9 charity shops (although there were more but most closed on Sundays)
- 3 Pawn shops
- 1 Auction house. There are 2, the one contacted specialised in antiques and fine arts, the other one, Smythes, did house clearances
- 10 convenience type stores/post offices

The commercial shops are mainly tucked around the back of the seaside holiday resort areas, behind the promenade hotels. The premises on the front tourist strip and the heart of the town centre had rents and rates of typically £1000 pw, many aimed at the tourist trade. The trader's tucked out the back a little away from the centre, could typically pay only around £60-£80 pw, with most of the footfall being local residents. The high rents in the town centre have not deterred most of the charity shops, but Blackpool appears to be one area where these types of outlets are also springing up in the more peripheral shopping parades. In terms of second hand shops, while there was the one shop that was found to have closed down, at least five outlets were found to have opened up within the last 6 months.

Figure 11. One Shop up for rent near Blackpool's sea front that previously sold second-hand goods.



On the whole, charity shops and pawn shops appeared to be thriving. There were private as well as chain shops related to both these sectors, with pawn shops dominating the market for the second-hand sales of electronic goods such as mobile phones, tablets, play stations, music gadgets and instruments. There were several charity shops in the out-of-town shopping parades and not restricted to town centre locations.

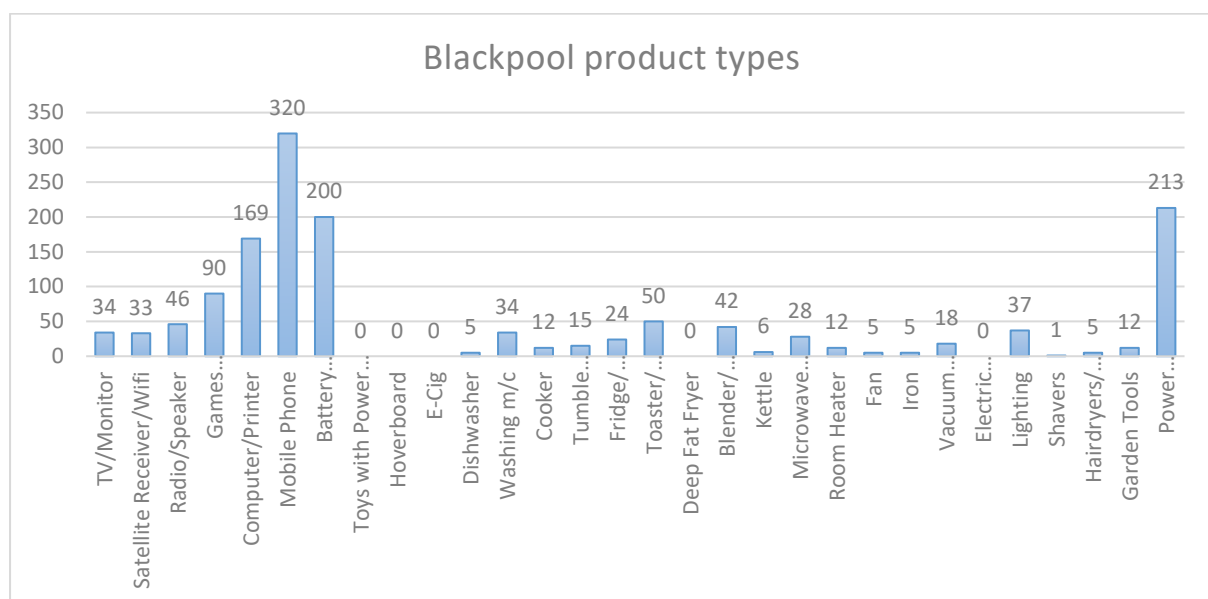
The second-hand market appears to be fiercely competitive, with one commercial outlet that had recently opened taking the decision not to sell electrical items, because they said of their proximity to another who sold predominantly electrical items who had been trading for many years. This may be indicative of commercial sensitivity in the area.

Only two general stores had noticeboards for private sellers. One of these only had adverts for residential property let, whilst the other had one advert for 3 items, including a vehicle, a stair lift and a mobility scooter (all high value).

Charity shops claimed that electrical goods sales were very buoyant, often selling within a day. One commercial shop owner complained that over the years he had seen a decline in his trade (mainly white goods). He believed that the downward trend was due to people selling privately over the internet, undercutting his prices by around £20 for white goods due to their lower overheads. He also had an online presence. Also noted were that his prices were still considerably lower than a competitor business, who claimed their sales to be buoyant and had a council contract for recycling.

Apart from lamps in two shops that were claimed to be for display purposes only, all electrical items seen were being sold for their functional purposes.

Figure 12. a summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in Blackpool.



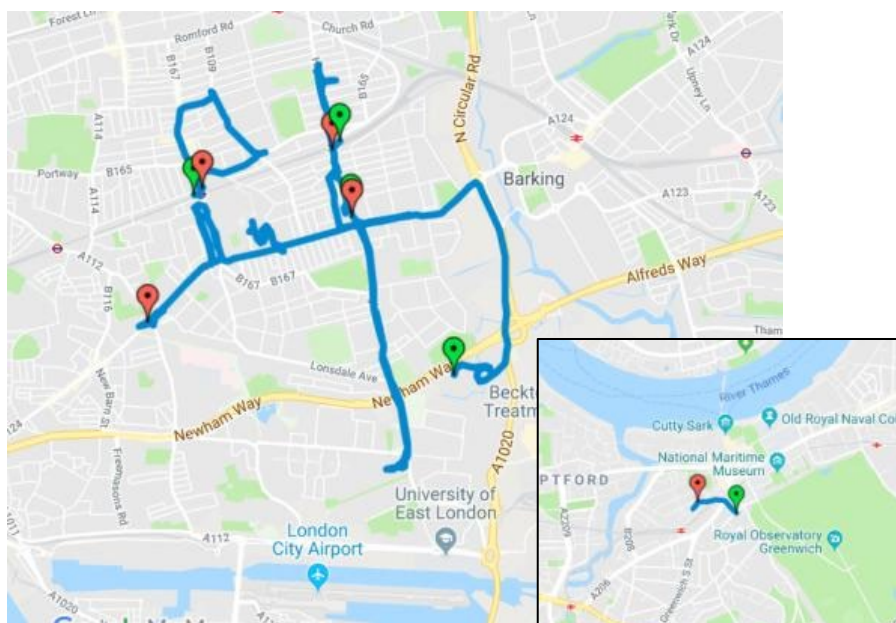
*Newham (Green Street East)*

Figure 13. map view of the Green Street East ward location (shaded area).



Green Street East ward is a densely populated urban area located within the London borough of Newham. It is near to the University of East London. The median age is 31.4 with only 7.3% in the over 65 years age group. There is a significant Asian population at 74.9% of all ethnic groups. 31.2% of households have English as their main language.

Figure 14. A GPS track of the route taken during the visit to Newham.



29 outlets were visited over the course of the two days spent in Newham (as well as a boot sale in Greenwich). The breakdown was:

- 6 Supermarkets
- 5 Post Offices
- 5 White Goods “Showrooms”
- 3 Pawnbrokers
- 5 Charity shops
- 6 Closed down or no evidence of listed outlet
- 1 Boot Sale

Focusing on the central Green Street East ward area, most of the shops are small, independent retailers. The national supermarkets present in the area tend to be “Express” style branches and while there are a high number of post offices - these are very small. A significant number of the outlets listed online have now actually closed down; either boarded up or having no trace.

The five shops specialising in white goods were within fairly close proximity to each other, probably more so than in other areas of London, where it would be expected not to see as many. The fact that two of them were only a few doors apart suggests that there is a strong market for second hand/reconditioned appliances in the area.

The national charity shops did not carry electrical goods and most of the local ones were so small that their focus was on clothing and toys. The one charity shop that did sell small electrical appliances probably had the least kerb appeal as it had a chaotic display outside and the interior was packed with clothes and toys that were not displayed with any sense of order. Electrical products were low down by the window, so not a sales priority.

Figure 15. Charity shop with outdoor display. The only one in Newham to sell electrical goods.



Newham was the only region visited with pawn shops (three out of three) that had a policy of not selling electrical goods.



In Newham, the sale of second-hand electrical goods is generally restricted to specialist shops that focus on white goods, with just the one charity shop stocking a few smaller items. Most of these shops are not on the main road but on residential streets a short walk from the main shopping area, so they would not attract casual customers. People would be more likely to visit these specialist commercial outlet with a specific purchase in mind, rather than browsing, which is probably expected for larger white goods purchases.

The showrooms all said that they have a quick turnover of goods with new ones coming in every day. The electrical goods in the charity shop looked as if they had been there for some time. They are clearly not the priority as most of the stock was clothing or toys.

Of the commercial outlets, around 20-25% of the goods on sale are electrical; the figure enhanced by the showroom style outlet as there were hardly any to find in the other types of shop.

Figure 16. Typical commercial second-hand electrical store in Newham.



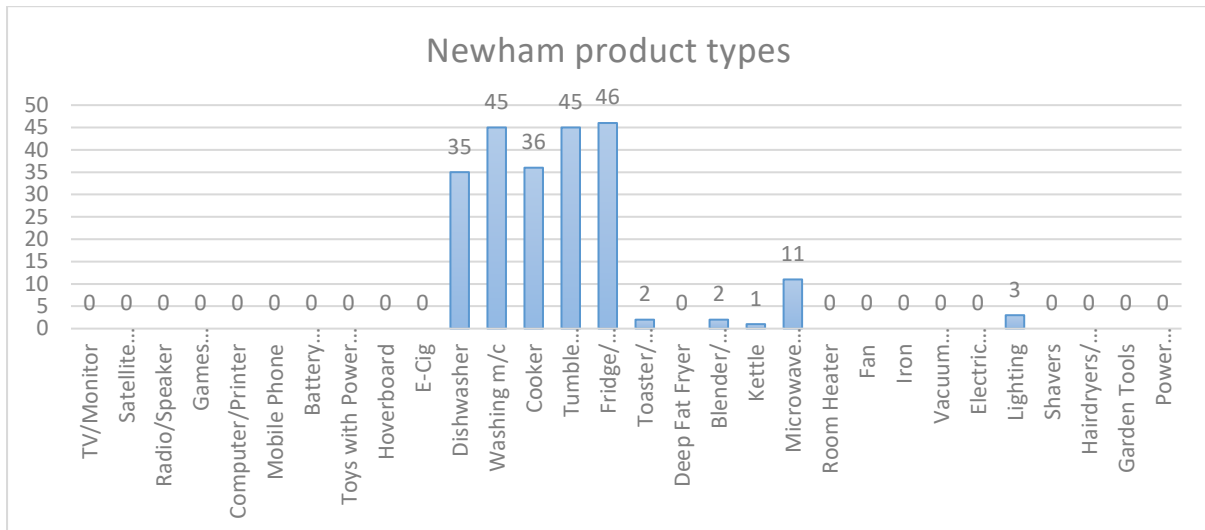
There were very few noticeboards in any of the outlets. None of the post offices carried advertising.

The supermarkets in the central ward area did not carry advertising beyond one or two community noticeboards that had very little information. Visits were undertaken to larger supermarkets that were a couple of miles out of the central area and the only noticeboards were for community events/groups rather than classified advertising. Independent supermarkets (mostly Halal) also did not carry advertising.

There were two local newspapers with classified adverts in Newham. One publication had four advertisements for electrical goods, three of which were placed by the same seller. The other had three advertisements from two different sellers.

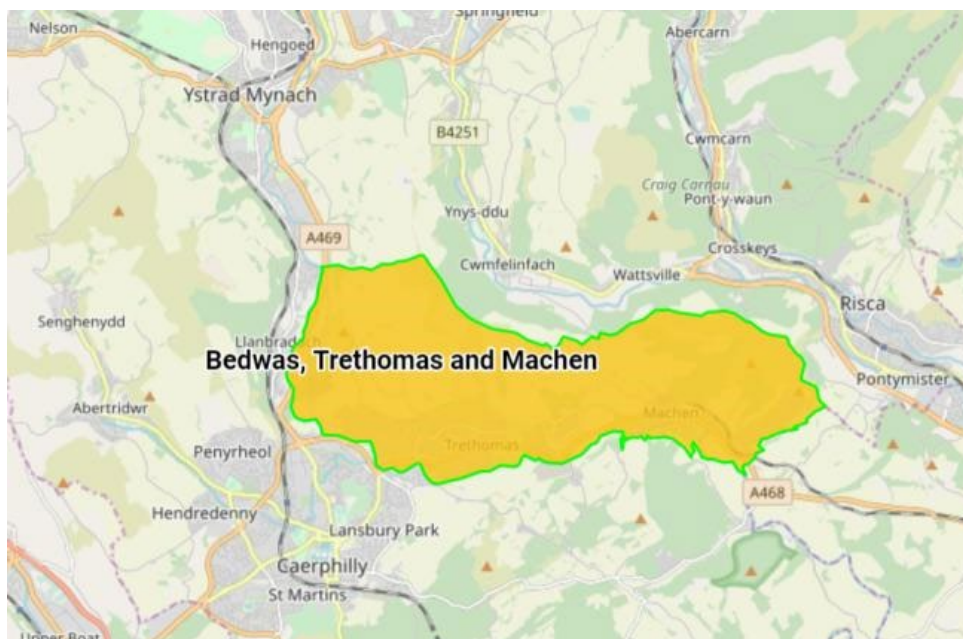
No outlets visited were selling vintage electrical items for decorative purposes. Any that were seen on sale were being sold as functional items.

Figure 17. summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in this region.



*Caerphilly (Bedwas trethomas and Machen)*

Figure 18. a map view of the Bedwas trethomas and Machen ward location (shaded area).



Bedwas trethomas and Machen ward is a low density populated area located on the northern boarder of Caerphilly town centre. This rural ward has a predominant white ethnic

population (98.7%) with average age and average deprivation ranking at 997 on a scale of 1,909 Welsh regions.

Figure 19. GPS track of the route taken during the visit to Caerphilly and surrounding areas.



It can be seen from the GPS track that the study had to be slightly extended to outside the Caerphilly district due to the limited number of second-hand goods sales outlets available. Additionally, this is the only region in Wales included in the study. In this rural area, it is not uncommon to travel further afield in order to find second-hand suppliers.

13 outlets were visited in the immediate District area:

- 6 Charity shops; one of which sold electrical goods (Ty Hafan), which counted for 1% of their stock
- 1 Recycling store that had recently closed down and according to their Facebook page they are to open an eBay shop soon.
- 1 Indoor market that had a computer repair stall that was selling old computers and monitors, 90% of items on sale were electrical.
- 1 Pawn shop that did not sell second-hand electricals.
- 4 Supermarkets – which did not have noticeboards, and if they did there were no places for private sales of goods. Only advertisements for local events and charities.

With the lack of second-hand outlets in the region, it became clear as the search for second hand electrical goods needed to be extended to encompass a wider area to capture any demand for second hand electrical goods.

Getting nearer to Cardiff on the second day revealed the following:

18 outlets were visited:

- 3 Charity shops – The British Heart Foundation had a dedicated electrical goods area.
- 15 retail stores - A mixture of newsagents, general stores, electrical shops. No general stores had advertisement for electrical goods, only services.

The electrical shops in Cardiff all sold brand new products; there were no second-hand options displayed.

Noticeboards seen were all advertising for local events and charities. Over the entire two days of visits, none of the noticeboards advertised electrical or other goods for sale.

Turnover was hard to determine given the lack of items available in the selected region itself. One shop within the district notified that their trade had transferred online and re-established in a new town. In the more rural areas, it appears that shop outlets struggle to justify their existence and there is a move to sell online instead.

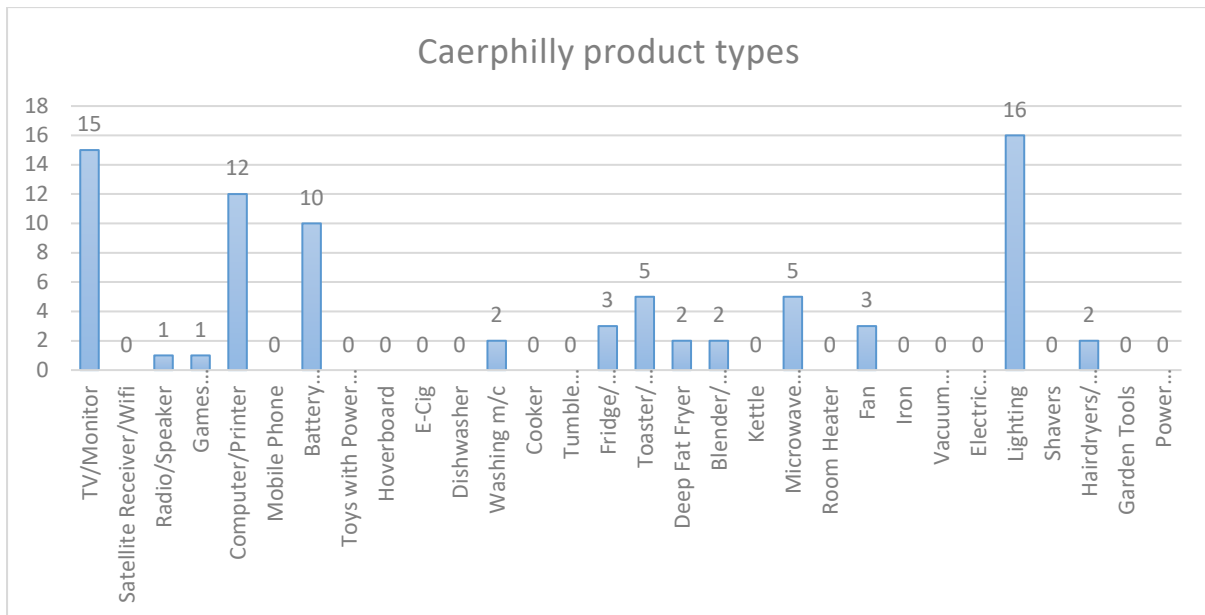
Figure 20. Second-hand store in Caerphilly closed as sales move online.



In Cardiff there were six commercial outlets, representing 18.33% of the visits. The British Heart Foundation charity shop dedicated to selling electrical goods was very busy and staff reported that stock was replaced on a daily basis. It would therefore seem that, as you get nearer to Cardiff, the more viable it is to sell second-hand electrical goods from bricks and mortar stores. Inner cities like Cardiff, where a substantial population of students and people on low incomes seem to attract more demand for second-hand goods.

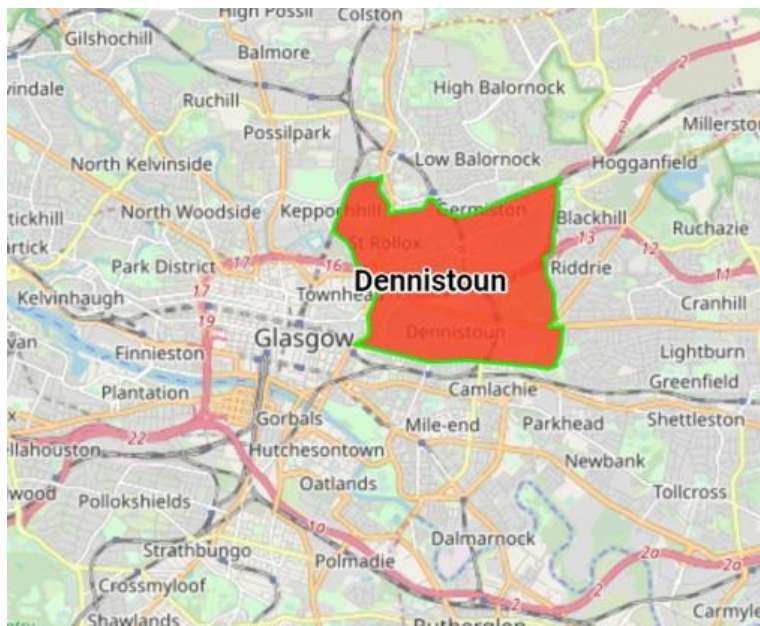
Free local newspapers, such as the Caerphilly observer did not have a classified ads section. Paid for newspapers had a classified section but no electrical goods for sale.

Figure 21. summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in the Caerphilly region.



*Glasgow city (Dennistoun)*

Figure 22. Map view of the Dennistoun ward location (shaded area).



Dennistoun is located on the outskirts of Glasgow city. The ward itself it ranked as average (2,993 out of 6,976) on the deprivation scale but adjacent to wards with much higher and lower deprivation ranking. The ward borders on three university establishments within Glasgow city and which may explain the age distribution – 25% of the population are aged 20-29 years.

Figure 23. GPS track of the route taken during the visit to Glasgow City.





Dennistoun is considered an up and coming area in Glasgow with a high number of students now renting in the area. The majority of the shops in the area are located on Duke Street with a high number of newsagents and small convenience stores on nearby Alexandra Parade.

The shops visited included:

- 8 charity shops
- 1 Commercial second-hand furniture shop
- 24 general stores/off licences and newsagents.
- 3 markets as well as a car boot sale
- 2 pawnbrokers

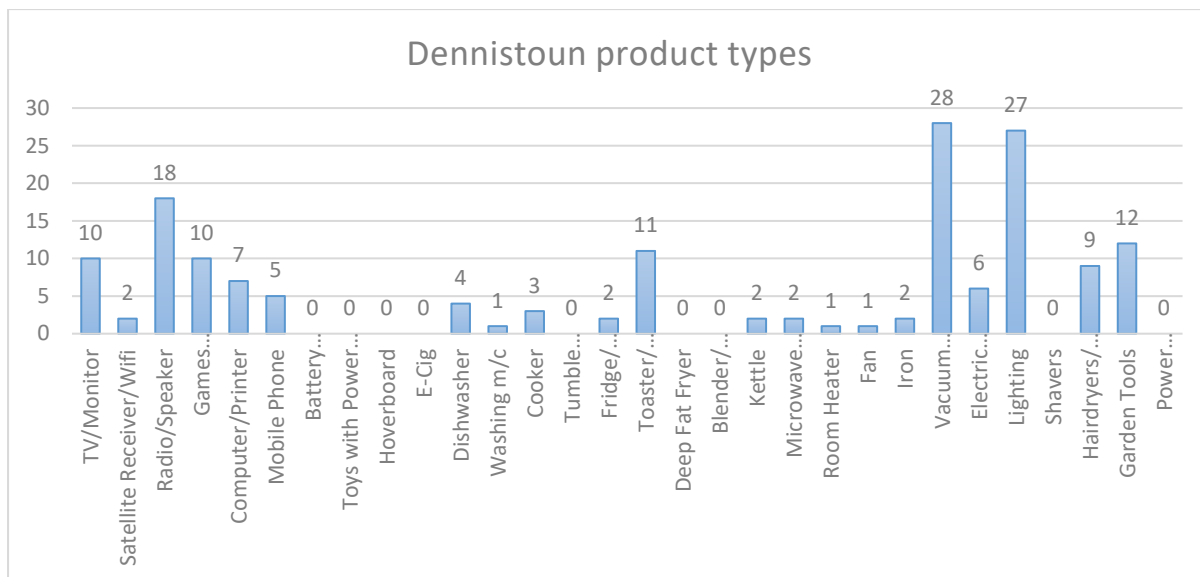
There is seemingly a small appetite for the sale of second-hand goods in Dennistoun, even at the car boot sales, which appeared to have the majority of second hand electrical goods for sale. The closest car boot sales/weekend markets to serve Dennistoun are located at The Barras Market and Blochcairn Car Boot Sales, which were both visited.

The Barras Market runs at the weekend and consists of private and commercial sellers. The organisers claim the site is inspected regularly by Glasgow Council Trading Standards.

In the commercial outlets, about 5% of the stores were dedicated to sales of electrical goods. The markets competed with charity shops for sales of small electrical items and half of the charity shops had a policy of no electrical sales. A couple of the larger charity shops sold electrical items but the majority of these products were found for sale at The Barras and Blochcairn Car Boot Sale. Turnover was low in most cases, with electrical items being a minority product for sale.

None of the general stores, newsagents or post offices had noticeboards, which means that consumers were not selling any goods through notice board advertising.

Figure 24. summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in the Dennistoun region.



*Highland (Fort William South)*

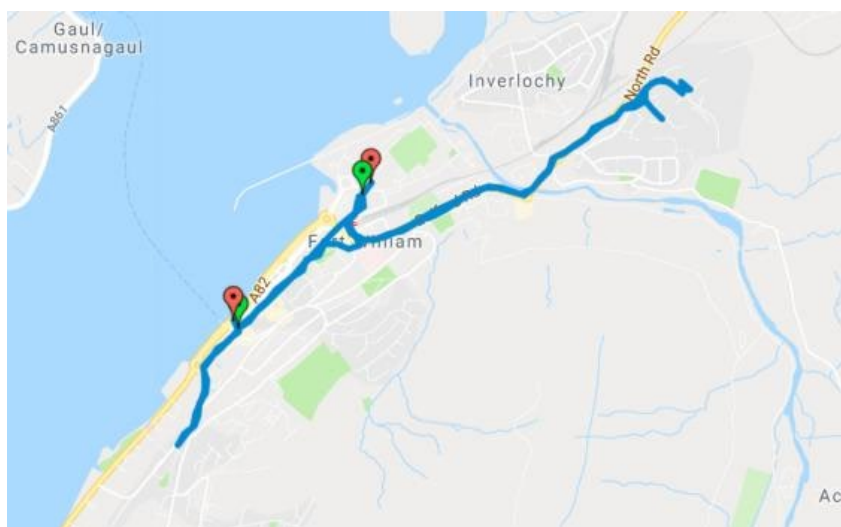
Figure 25. map view of the Fort William South ward location (shaded area).



Fort William South is located within the predominantly rural Highland Council area, it is isolated from main towns and cities. It has a relatively small population of 5,706 and an average deprivation ranking. Fort William itself is the second largest settlement in the whole of the Scottish Highlands.

Fort William is a major tourist centre in Scotland, with Glen Coe just to the south, Ben Nevis and Aonach Mòr to the east and Glenfinnan to the west, on the Road to the Isles. It is a centre for hillwalking and climbing due to its proximity to Ben Nevis and many other Munro mountains.

Figure 26. GPS track of the route taken during the visit to Fort William.



Fort William has one main high street in the town centre which consists of a variety of shops and businesses.

Visits were undertaken to:

- 6 charity shops
- 9 general stores/shopping centre
- 1 council recycling centre

The six charity shops seemed to dominate in a small town where there are a significant number of tourist and outdoor type shops (i.e. for hillwalkers etc) to cater for the high number of visitors who stop at Fort William to shop before going further north in the Highlands.

Four of the six charity shops had a policy not to sell electrical items, although one of these was found with a phone and charger on sale.

Perhaps unusual for such a small place, Fort William also has a variety of bargain discount retailers including B&M and Home Bargains which may have an impact on the demand for second-hand electrical items for sale in the area.

Turnover for second hand electrical goods was low in most cases.

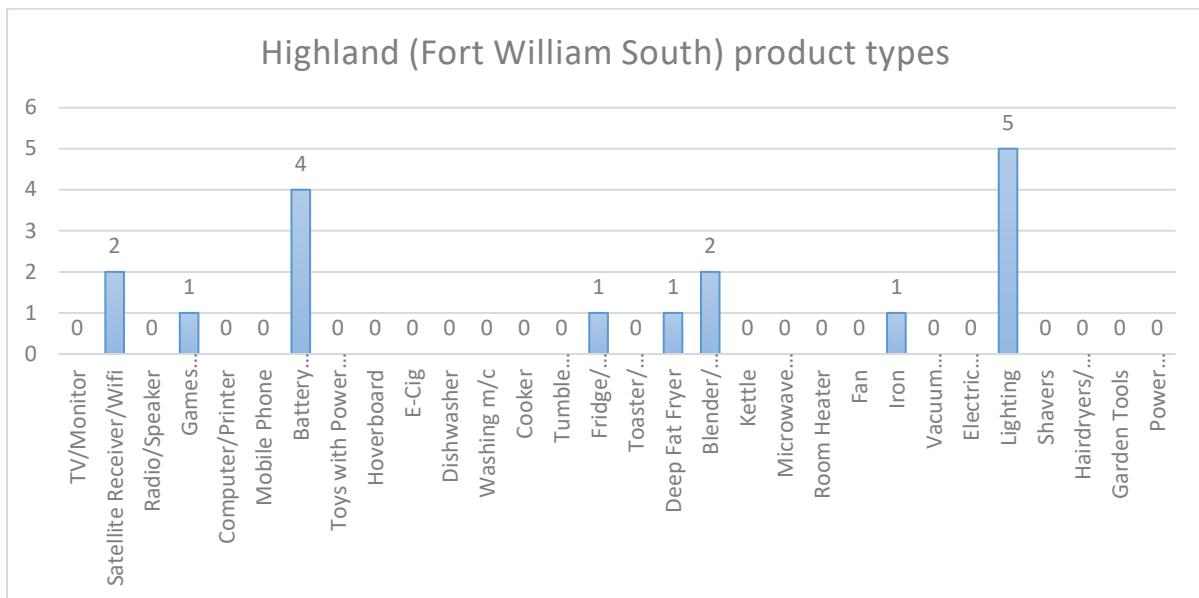
'ILM Highland' has the contract for re-sale of recycled items from the recycling centre, and sells refurbished items from its retail outlets in Alness and Glasgow. Neither of these outlets are close enough to be within the catchment area of Fort William. ILM Highland also works in



partnership with other charities and social enterprises, providing a supply of refurbished items, but there was no evidence of this at the charity shops in Fort William.

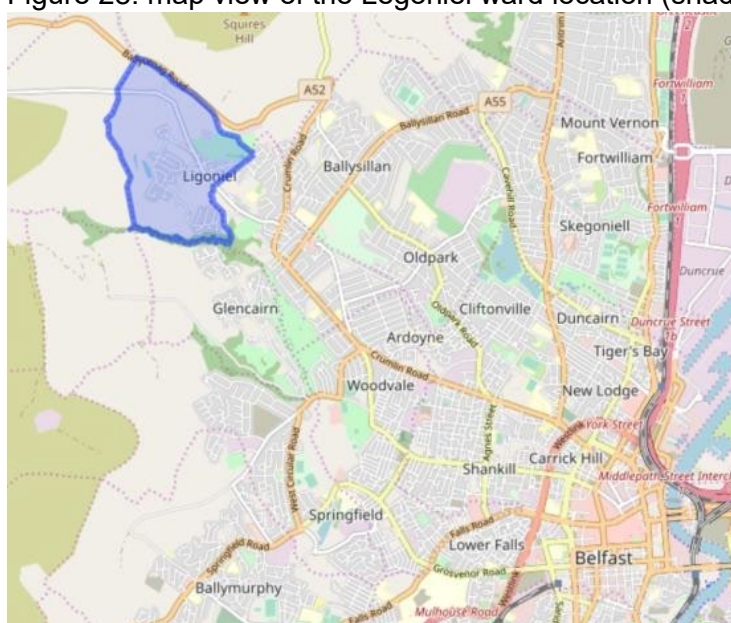
In terms of private advertising, none of the general stores or the shopping centre had noticeboards that advertised second-hand goods. It doesn't seem to be a method of selling second hand electrical goods in Fort William. However, out of the 2 local newspapers, one had a classified section that consumers could use for advertising goods for sale. At the time of the visit, there was only one advertisement for a Fridge Freezer.

Figure 27. summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in the Fort William region.



### Belfast (Legoniel)

Figure 28. map view of the Legoniel ward location (shaded area).



Legoniel is located within the rural upper Belfast district. 95.49% are from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group. This ward has a relatively low deprivation ranking (44 on a scale of 462).

Ten stores were visited in the Legoniel ward and OldPark District Electoral Area that serve the community of Legoniel directly, and 11 stores were visited in the city of Belfast.

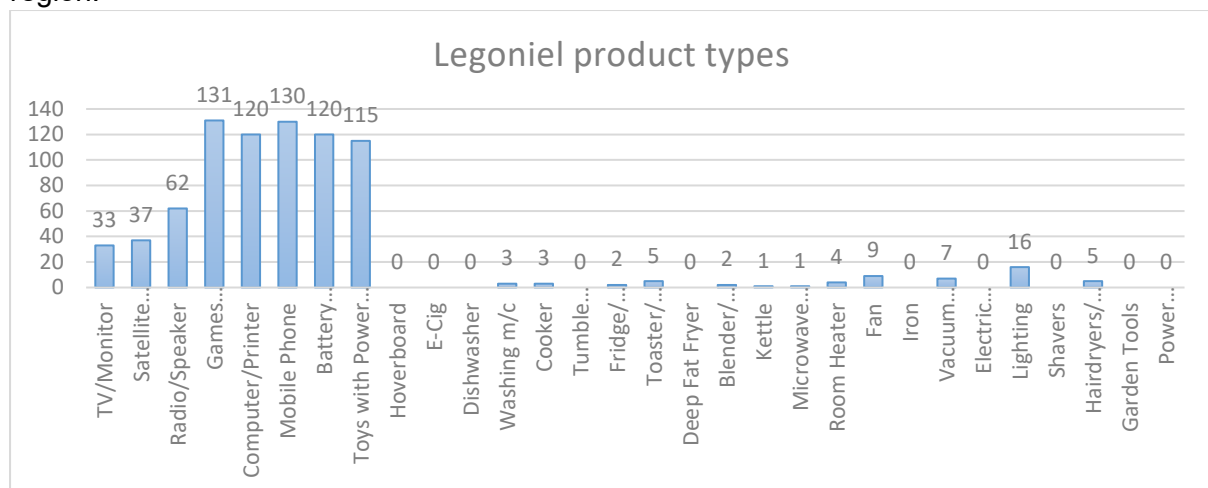
The rural nature of this ward means that the local community itself is poorly served by charity shops, which instead appear to gravitate around the city centre, where they make up 18% of the premises visited. Commercial outlets also reported a low turnover of electrical goods. Demand for electronic goods was dominated by large high street Chains such as CeX and Cash Converters, which is a common theme for most of the regions visited except the more rural locations where these stores did not exist.

By far the largest outlet selling second hand electrical goods, particularly white goods, was the ReStore shop in East Belfast. It is a project of the Methodist Church in Ireland and is a social economy “not-for-profit” project as income is used to sustain and further develop social and environmental aims within an organisation rather than being distributed to financial investors. Turnover is steady, with many low-income families and landlords purchasing their white goods here. Delivery is also available, and it seems that these stores serve the entire Belfast area.

Similar to some outlets in mainland UK, ReStore will take donations directly from the public as well as having close partnerships with councils in Belfast, Larne, North Down, Craigavon, Banbridge and Antrim, working to reduce goods sent to landfill. ReStore has a van dedicated to collecting bulky waste from recycling centres at various locations. Some good quality goods are taken straight to a number of retail outlets or taken to a depot for refurbishment first.

In terms of private consumer sales, almost all the convenience stores visited had noticeboards, although none had any advertisements for electrical goods. Most adverts were for local service providers such as gardeners, handy men etc. When staff were asked, most pointed us in the direction of online listing sites such as Gumtree and Facebook marketplaces, but recommended ReStore for larger items. There were no private sellers in the local newspaper classifieds.

Figure 29. summary of the quantity and type of electrical products found in the Legoniel region.



## 4.2 Product sales by category and type

To better understand the overall distribution of electrical product sales in brick and mortar second-hand outlets, the raw data for each region was combined as illustrated in figures 30, 31 and 32 below.

Figure 30. Total number of products by type (all regions).

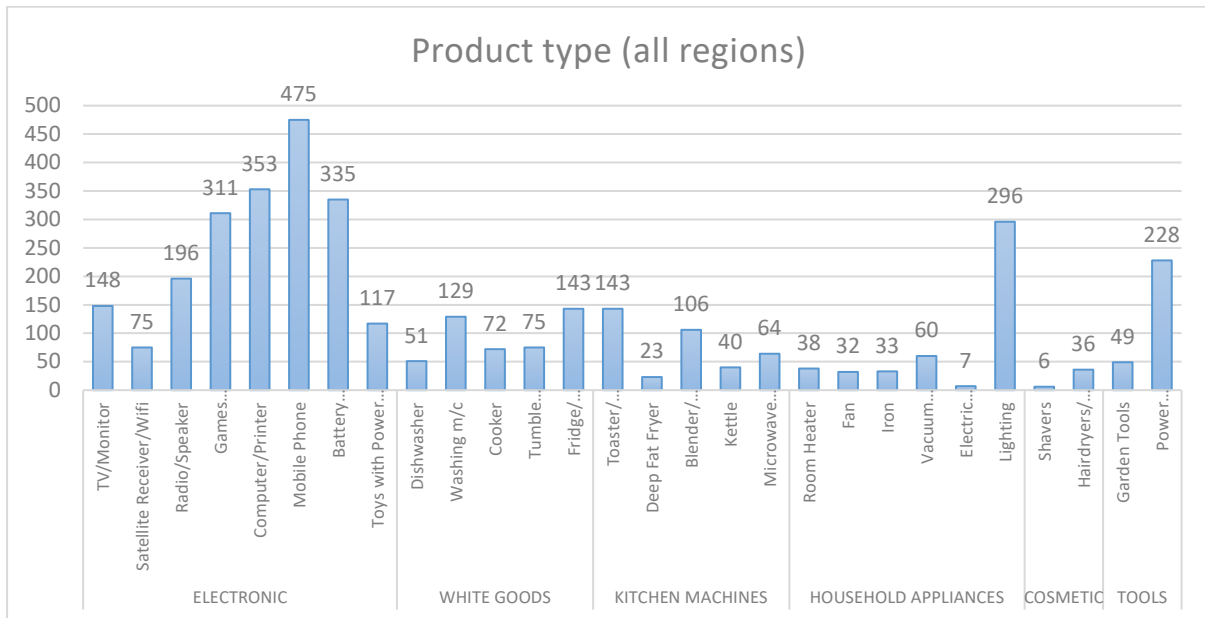


Figure 31. Total number of products by type (all regions) descending order of frequency.

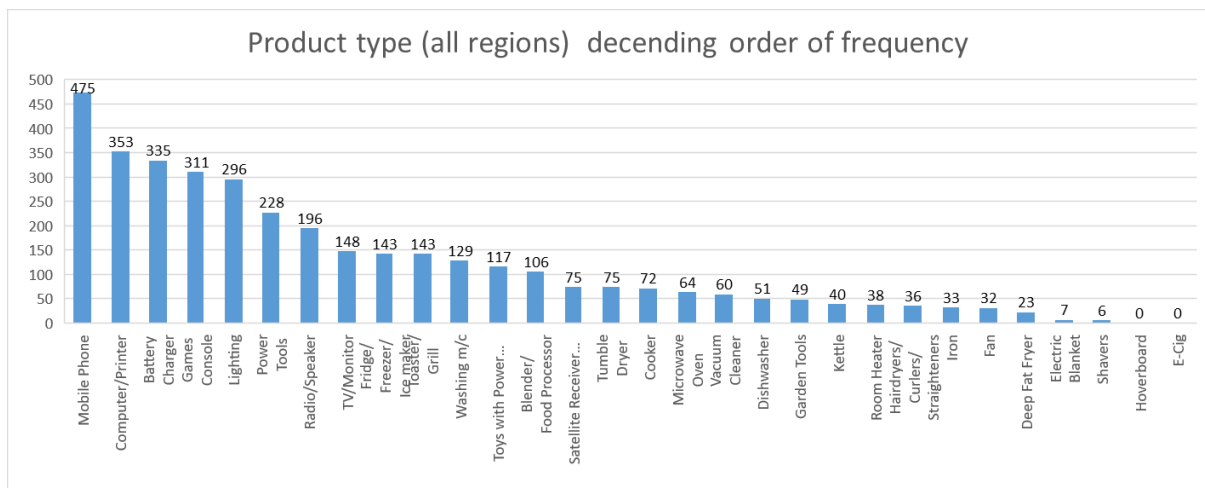
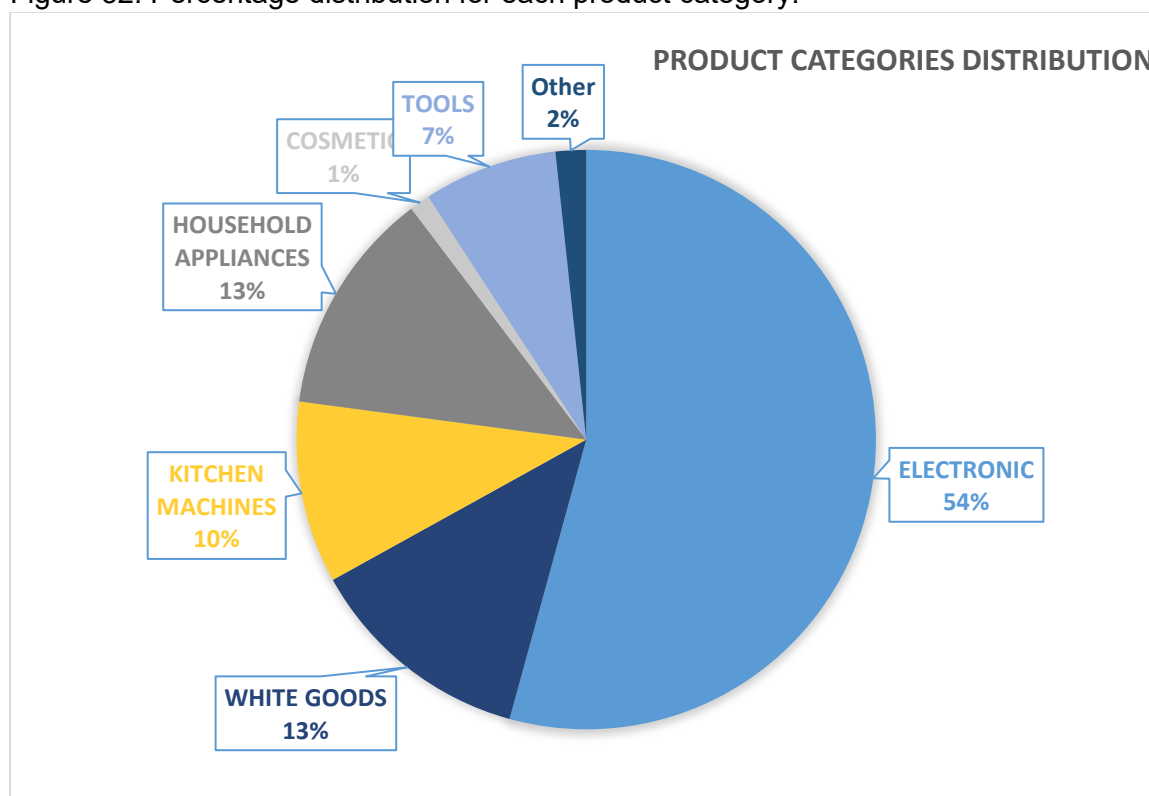


Figure 32. Percentage distribution for each product category.



The 'Electronic' product category, at 54% of the second-hand market, largely includes smaller items sold in specialist pawnbroker outlets, such as mobile phones, computers and chargers. The significance of the electronic second-hand market may be a result of a number of factors, such as:

- A reflection of the number of electronic items per household and high personal usage.
- Purchases are likely to be additional, not just replacement.
- Cost benefit of buying second hand over brand new (high new price with rapid depreciation).
- Consumer demand for, and accessibility to, state of the art technology.
- Higher purchase rate at which new improved models become available on the market

Overall, 'white goods' and 'household appliances' present as the second highest category of second-hand sales. 'Household appliances' includes the product type 'Lighting' - found to be the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular product overall and the top **non-electronic** item sold second-hand.

There is clearly demand for white goods in the second-hand market, with 'fridge / freezer' being the most popular product type in the white goods category. Second-hand sales of refrigeration appliances are likely to be more attractive as the average age and lifespan is expected to be higher than most other appliances<sup>9</sup>.

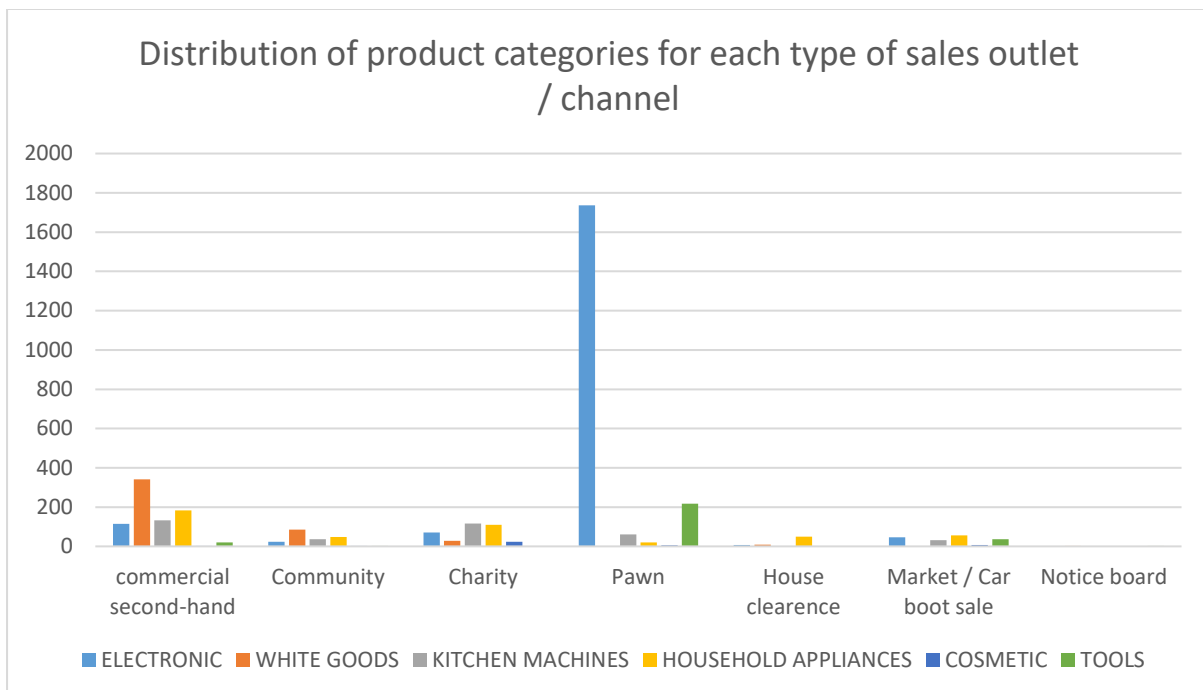
<sup>9</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/275484/electricity\\_survey\\_2\\_tuning\\_in\\_to\\_energy\\_saving.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275484/electricity_survey_2_tuning_in_to_energy_saving.pdf)

### 4.3 Sales outlet / channel type

For the purpose of data analysis, the commercial outlets and other channels (noticeboards, car boot sales, etc.) visited during the field study were categorised as follows:

- **Commercial second hand** – Independent commercial outlets, usually (but not always) specialising in a particular market. i.e. computers, white goods, etc.
- **Community outlets** - Working in partnership with local councils
- **Charity** – local and national charities. E.g. British Heart Foundation
- **Pawn brokers** – e.g. CeX
- **House clearance outlets** - Independent commercial outlets specialising in house clearance.
- **Market / Car boot** – private and commercial sellers.
- **Noticeboards/adverts** in shops and newspapers

Figure 33. summary of the distribution of product categories across each sales outlet / channel type.



In order to illustrate more clearly the distribution of product categories across the different sales outlet / channel types, it is necessary to separate out “Pawn brokers” as the quantity of electronic products disproportionately skews the graphic.

Figures 34. and 35. illustrate the distribution of product categories across the different sales outlet / channel types. Note the quantity scale difference with the sales outlet type “pawn brokers”.

Figure 34. Distribution of product categories for each type of sales outlet / channel (excluding Pawn brokers)

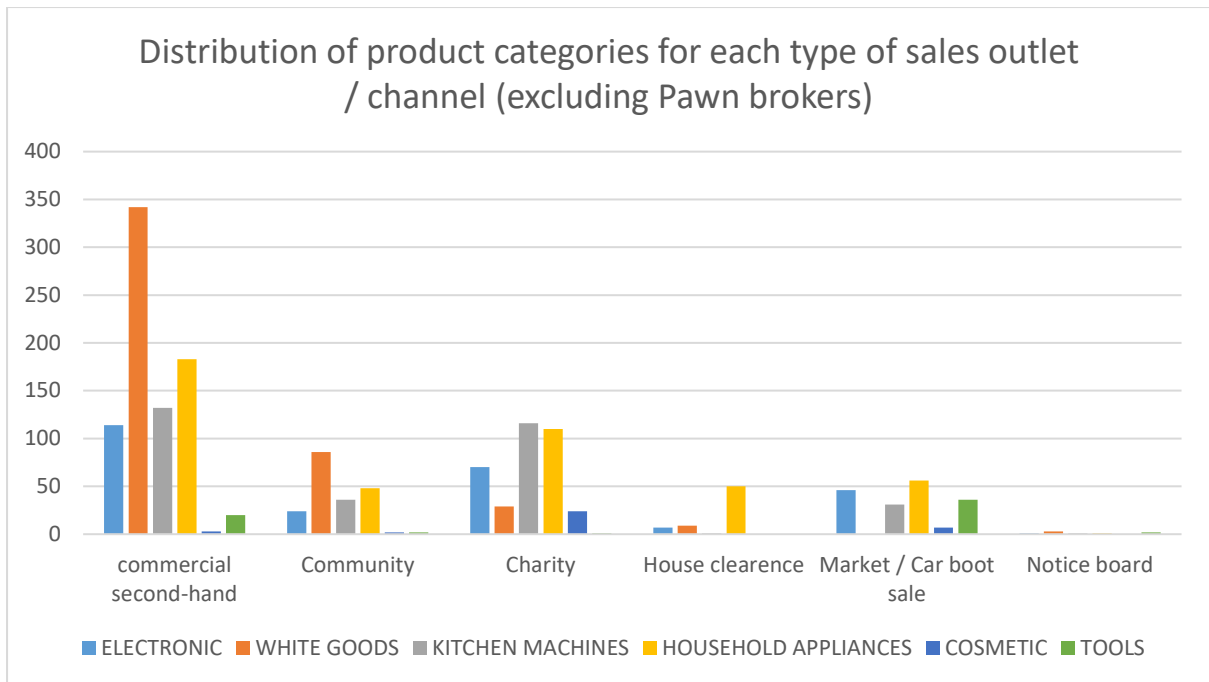
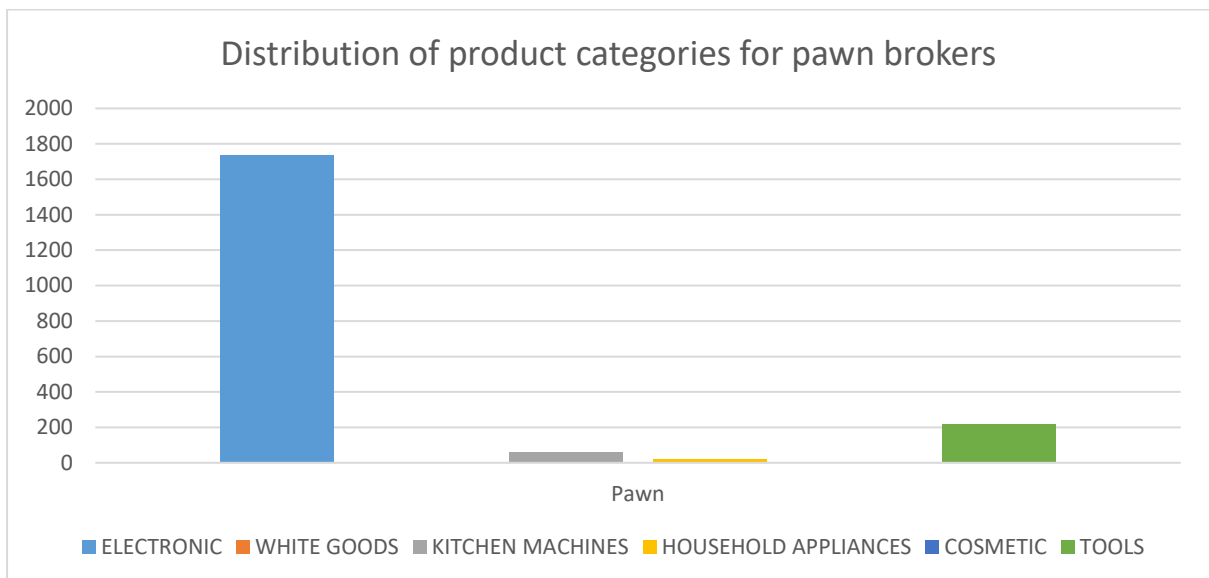


Figure 35. Distribution of product categories for pawn brokers



The product distribution profiles of both “Commercial second-hand” and “Community outlet” are similar, in that white goods feature as the top product category, and that household appliances are 2<sup>nd</sup> and kitchen machines 3<sup>rd</sup> in popularity.

Mainstream charity shops are more inclined to sell smaller appliances, with general “household appliances” and “kitchen appliances” featuring as the top two product categories.

It is also worthy of note that ‘lighting’ was found to be the top product type for the majority sales outlet / channel categories (four out of the seven categories).



For car boot sales and similar private sales channels, white goods do not feature at all. This is not surprising given the physical challenge of transporting large white goods to a boot sale. Private sales of more cumbersome items, such as arc welders, stair lifts and mobility scooters are reserved for a more traditional notice board advertising sales channel – these kind of products not being of interest to most commercial or charity sales outlets.

#### 4.4 Condition

Overall, the condition of electrical items found during the field study varied significantly; from nearly new unused items (in original packaging and user instructions provided), to very dated, damaged, worn and poorly maintained products.

An important factor that has an impact on condition (and safety) is the sales environment. A number of electrical items at an outdoor car boot sale were found to be unprotected from the rain, and potentially water damaged. See figure 36.

Figure 36. Electrical items at a car boot sale in the rain.



For the most part, the condition of electrical items varied less by region and more by sales outlet / channel type.

From the field study results, it is not possible to generalise on the condition of products for each sales outlet type. However, it is possible to **estimate the likelihood** of finding products in better or worse condition.

Electrical items seen in nationally represented charity and pawn broker chains were found to be generally in a good state of repair, and functional. It is likely that such national chains have established central policies and control measures to regulate the condition (and safety) of marketed products.

For independent commercial and community sales outlets, the condition of products varied from one outlet to the next; a variance which did not appear to be related to the regional selection criteria – i.e. demographic, deprivation ranking, etc. It is likely that the sales policy applied in each outlet has more significance to the condition of products for sale. For

example, in the selected region of Blackpool, one business (Outlet A) has an arrangement with the local council and has been in existence since 2001. It has 2 warehouses and 3 retail outlets. Specialising in electrical goods, including white goods, the business is aware of electrical safety and repairs and PAT tests in house using qualified staff. It guarantees its appliances, many of which retail at a higher price than average for second- hand electrical goods.

Conversely, one small business (Outlet B) in the same region was selling mainly un-furnished electrical goods. The shop owner was aware of PAT testing, but stated that they did not do this, only checking to see if items were functional. The field visit operative was invited to plug any item in at the store to see if it was working, which was politely declined. All items were priced under £10 and their general state of repair was poor.

Figures 37. and 38. below illustrate the comparison between the two outlets (A and B) described above.

Figure 37. Outlet A – Electrical products PAT tested and sold with guarantee



Figure 38. Outlet B - Electrical products unchecked and priced £10 or less



The quality and condition of **private sale** electrical items were found to be less predictable. At a car boot sale in Taunton, a very wide range of appliances were seen; mostly of a reasonable condition, with most stall holders claiming their electrical products to be in working order and some hardly used.

Conversely, some of the items found for sale at the Barras and Blochairn Car Boot Sales in the Glasgow region looked potentially unsafe, particularly the items on display outside in the rain. With examples of an old radio with a sign on it stating 'works but no sound' fitted with a plug having no insulated sleeves on live pins, and a vacuum cleaner outside in the rain that was held together with sticky tape.

Figure 39. Vacuum cleaner held together with sticky tape in the rain at a boot sale run by a service provider to Glasgow City Council.





Despite the product safety concerns, the market is run by a contracted service provider to Glasgow City Council. Sellers are required to register their contact details on arrival so buyers have redress available if a product is faulty or damaged. Sellers are also required to confirm they are aware of the relevant licencing laws.

The apparent lack of private sales through notice board / newspaper advertisements made it very difficult to gauge product condition through these sales channels. However, expressions used in advertisement descriptions, such as “sold as seen” does not inspire confidence. One advertisement was for a Stannah Stair lift that was originally fitted in the 1980’s. The seller relied on the purchaser dismantling and the product instructions were not provided.

#### 4.5 PAT testing

Outlet staff were asked if there was a policy to carryout PAT testing. This was not qualified by assessing any records of inspection and testing at the time of the visit.

It can be seen from table 4. below, around half of the businesses that sell electrical goods claim to have them PAT tested prior to placing on sale.

Table 4. Categories of outlet visited where it is claimed electrical goods were PAT tested  
Columns: 1 = Commercial second hand / 2 = Community outlets / 3 = Charity / 4 = Pawn / 5 = House clearance outlets / 6 = Market / 7 = Car boot / 8 = Notices in shops/ Ads in newspapers

Outlet Type/Area	No. outlets selling electrical goods	Categories of outlet visited where it is claimed electrical goods were PAT tested							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Golf Green, Tendring	14	1	1	3	0	2	0	-	0
Highfield, Blackpool	21	3	1	3	0	-	-	-	0
Trull, Taunton	10	1	1	6	-	-	-	0	-
Green Street East, Newham	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bedwas Trethomas & Machen, Caerphilly	10	1	-	2	0	-	1	-	-
Dennistoun, Glasgow	9	0	-	4	0	-	1	0	-
Fort William South, Highland	3	-	0	1	-	-	-	-	0
Legoniel, Belfast	6	-	1	3	2	-	-	-	-

Table 5. Percentage of outlets visited where it is claimed electrical goods were PAT tested, by category.

Percentage of outlets visited where it is claimed electrical goods were PAT tested, by category.							
Commercial second hand	Community outlets	Charity	Pawn	House clearance outlets	Markets	Car Boot	Notices in shops/Ads in newspapers
38%	100%	65%	16%	67%	50%	0%	0%

*As the tables state, the figures are based on the claims made by the outlet staff at the time of the visit. Therefore, there may be an element of discrepancy compared to the actual arrangements in place.*

Community outlets top the table, with Four out of the four community outlets across all regions visited claiming to undertake PAT testing.

The 35% of charity shops that did not undertake PAT testing were mainly local independent outlets as opposed to nationally recognised chains.

Excluding the “Car boot” and “Notices in shops/Ads in newspapers” - categories which are predominantly used for private sales - pawn shops were least likely to undertake PAT testing. This is likely to be due to mostly holding of stock of electronic items.

## 4.6 Recalls

Overall awareness of the need to check second-hand electrical goods against recall notices was low. Private sellers were least likely to check products for sale against current recall listings.

Awareness was generally higher in nationally represented charity outlets, but when questioned, local staff were unsure as to how the checks are undertaken.

Many independent commercial outlets claimed that recalls were checked by the electricians undertaking PAT testing, but no evidence was presented by any outlets that a recall check had been carried out.

One commercial outlet in Tendring that specialised in white goods claimed that all products are PAT tested and any necessary repairs are carried out before being placed on sale. PAT testing labels were found on all the appliances checked during the field visit. However, a Beko tumble dryer in the showroom had a serial number matching that of a current product recall listing. The sales assistant agreed to remove the dryer from sale pending further investigation.

Figure 40. Tumble dryer found for sale in Tendring with a serial number matching that of a product recall listing.



Another factor that can affect checking for recalls, and potentially lead to confusion, is the action that should be taken by the second-hand retailer when one is found. The term 'recall' is used generically to describe a number of corrective actions that could apply. For example, a recent product recall instigated on a range of tumble dryers was dealt with by the manufacturer through implementing a product repair programme. The recall did not require the product to be returned by the consumer or retailers. With this in mind, one commercial outlet trader in Blackpool explained that, as all products are repaired and refurbished prior to

putting on sale, any safety concerns (including the cause of a product recall) are resolved. However, this is contrary to the corrective action required as specified by the manufacturer.

## 5. Conclusion

Although the scale of this research was limited in duration, and to a field study of eight relatively small geographical regions, the findings are useful in understanding bricks and mortar second-hand sales of electrical products in the UK, including demographic and geographic variances.

It is clear from this research that there is sustained consumer demand for purchases of second-hand electrical products via bricks and mortar sales channels. However, in Fort William, it was found that there are a lot of charity shops, but the vast majority do not sell electrical items. Fort William also had a variety of bargain discount retailers including B&M and Home Bargains who sell *new*, comparatively priced goods, which may have an impact on demand for second-hand electrical items for sale in the area.

Furthermore, this field study found a number of outdated electrical items for sale that did not appear to comply with current safety standards. This may lead to circumstances where the consumer does not benefit from the latest safety provisions incorporated into a current-line product. In most cases, product safety standards are amended to eliminate previously unforeseen and/or unacceptable risk, and to ensure they continue to fulfil the overarching objectives of safety legislation. In a worse case, a product may have been manufactured to a previous edition of a standard considered to be deficient in law, and subsequent amendments / safeguard measures have been applied through appropriate legal mechanisms.

Figure 41. an example of a dated and potentially hazardous plug, with no insulated sleeving on the live pins, fitted to a hair straightening appliance.



The appliance illustrated in Figure 41. was found in a second-hand community outlet in Tendring. The proprietor of the outlet gave assurances that safety was important, and all

products are checked to ensure they worked before being placed for sale. Despite these best intentions, there are clear gaps in their understanding of their responsibilities and obligations as a retailer under safety legislation.

During a visit to a national charity chain outlet in Fort William, we were informed that the branch has a policy of not selling electrical items. During the field study, adoption of this policy was found to be widespread; to save having to establish procedures to deal with safety checks, disposal, etc. However, two electrical items were found on sale in the outlet. This may have resulted from inadequate policy control measures, or lack of understanding of what would be regarded as an 'electrical appliance'. Either way, the business is not fulfilling its obligations under consumer protection law, and potentially exposed to litigation.

The importance of safety and traceability information is often underestimated. Manufacturers are legally obliged to ensure that electrical products placed on the market are accompanied by instructions and safety information in a language which can be easily understood by consumers. Such information is often critical to ensure products are used and maintained safely, and used as intended by the manufacturer. For traceability purposes, manufacturers are legally obliged to ensure electrical equipment bears a type, batch or serial number or other element allowing its identification, together with their name, registered trade name or registered trade-mark and the postal address at which they can be contacted. The latter requirement is also mandatory for importers. Manufacturers can provide safety and traceability information on packaging and accompanying documentation, but second-hand electrical goods are frequently seen for sale without instructions or original packaging.

Alongside the legal obligations, there is an expectation from consumers that products (both new and second-hand) sold by a business will be safe<sup>10</sup>. The same legal obligations do not apply to consumers selling electrical products privately. Therefore, private sales arguably pose a high risk of injury to consumers, and from what was found at car boot sales during this field study, there is some cause for concern.

A further potential risk are products that were originally designed and intended for professional use (by skilled and instructed persons) but subsequently 'migrate' on to the consumer market. Two examples of this were found in private advertisement sales in the form of a stannah stairlift and arc welding equipment – both items were being sold without instructions.

There are directly applicable legislative instruments in place, to mitigate the risk that second-hand goods may pose to consumers. However, this field study has proven that legislation alone does not ensure a high level of consumer protection.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-attitudes-to-product-safety>

# Appendix I. Data capture forms

**COMMERCIAL SALES**  
**Data Capture**  
QUESTIONNAIRE – 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS



Region					
Name/Date					
Visit Number					
Sales outlet type/size					
Outlet Address					
<del>Approx</del> Number Items on Sale	< 50	>50 but < 100	>100 but < 500	> 500 but < 1000	over 1000
<del>Approx</del> % Items that are electrical					

PRODUCT TYPE	QUANTITY
<b>Electronic</b>	
TVs/monitors	
Satellite receivers/Wifi	
Radios/speaker systems	
Games consoles	
Computers/printers	
Mobile phones	
Battery chargers	
Toys with power supply or charger	
<del>Hoverboard</del>	
e-cigs	
<b>White Goods</b>	
Dishwashers	
Washing machines	
cookers	
Tumble dryers	
Fridges/freezers, ice-cream appliances and icemakers	
<b>Other Kitchen/Domestic Appliances</b>	
Grills, toasters and similar portable cooking appliance	
Deep fat fryers, fryers, frying pans	
Kitchen machines (blenders, food processors, etc)	
Appliances for heating liquids (kettles, etc)	
Microwave ovens	
<b>Other Domestic Appliances</b>	
Room heaters	
Fans	
Electric irons	
Vacuum cleaners	
Light fitting	
Table lamp	

## COMMERCIAL SALES

### Data Capture

#### QUESTIONNAIRE – 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS

<b>Hygiene/Cosmetic appliance</b>			
Shavers, hair clippers and similar appliances			
Appliances for skin or hair care (hair dryers, etc)			
Electric Blanket			
<b>Outdoors</b>			
Electric garden tools			
<b>Other:</b> e.g. vaporisers, hand held heating tools, sunbeds, clothes <del>aprons</del> , projectors, dehumidifiers, sewing machines, DIY tools, steam cleaners			
Specify:			
<b>SALES OUTLET POLICY ELECTRICAL 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS</b>			
Will sell electrical goods mains and charger operated	Yes	No	N/A
Must be PAT tested			
PAT test records available			
Other information: Test stickers on appliances			
Is product being sold for parts only?			
Turnover of electrical goods how quickly do they sell:			
Is a product on sale considered dangerous? (give details below) E.g. subject to product recall, exposed wires or non-compliant plug, etc?			
Advice given to seller on dangerous product:			
<b>Any further information that may be useful</b> e.g. connections with other businesses or local authority (waste management/recycling), repair centre off site, business start-up, general appearance of the shop and goods for sale etc.			



## PRIVATE SALES ADVERTISEMENT DATA CAPTURE

### QUESTIONNAIRE – 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS

Region	
Name/Date	
Advertisement Source	
Visit number	
Advertisement Address	
How long are adverts displayed?	
Product Description	
Power Source	
Product Cost £	
Make and Model	
Ref No for follow up	



DETAILS GIVEN IN ADVERT	Yes	No	N/A	N/S
Mains operated				
Is product being sold for parts only?				
Safety extra low voltage (supplied by a charger or external power supply)				
Power supply/charger provided				
Compliant plug				
New condition				
Used condition				
Described as good working order				
Photo given				
Age of product				
Packaging included				
Instructions included				
Recently refurbished/serviced				
Faults identified				
Photo of product included				
PAT tested/safety checks				
Other information:				
Followed up				

**PHOTO OF ADVERT – Include sellers contact details**

## PRIVATE SALES ADVERTISEMENT FOLLOW UP

### QUESTIONNAIRE – 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS

Region	
Name/Date	
Visit number	
Dates/Times of call back	
Product	
Make and Model if not given in Advert	
Age of product if not given in the advert	
Has the product been sold	



DETAILS OF FOLLOW UP CALL	Yes	No	N/A	N/S
Product in full working order				
Ever repaired				
Safety checks/PAT testing				
Recently refurbished/serviced				
Instruction available				
Packaging available				
Details of any Repairs:				
Details of any safety checks/PAT testing:				
Other Information:				



## OVERALL VISIT SUMMARY

### QUESTIONNAIRE- 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS




Region	
Name/Date	
<p><b>This form is designed to capture a summary of your overall insights and thoughts on your visit to the area designated to you. Please record in free text your impressions, summary and any qualitative information using the following headings as a guide.</b></p>	
<p><b>OUTLET SUMMARY</b> Include total number and % of outlet type. Give your view on why there may be a prevalence of a certain type of outlet.</p>	
<p>For commercial outlets, the average % of items on sale that are electrical.</p>	
<p><b>ADVERTISEMENT SUMMARY</b> Give a summary of the number of advertisement notice boards you have seen and an estimate of the % covering electrical goods. Give your views on the popularity of using this method of selling and any reasons why this may be.</p>	
<p><b>ELECTRICAL SAFETY AWARENESS</b> Give a view on the overall knowledge of outlet owners to: PAT testing/PAT testing records/electrical safety/condition of electrical goods.</p>	

## OVERALL VISIT SUMMARY

### QUESTIONNAIRE- 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS

<p>Give an indication of turnover of electrical goods - how quickly do they sell?</p>	
<p><b>ELECTRICAL GOODS USE</b> Give a view on the overall advice given by outlet owners regarding selling electrical goods for parts or decorative purposes only.</p>	
<p><b>CONDITION OF ELECTRICAL GOODS</b> Give an overview of the general condition of the electrical goods you have seen. Where they generally in good or poor condition, new or old or was there a wide variety of condition and state of repair.</p>	
<p><b>OTHER IMPRESSIONS</b> Please give any other views and impressions that you have picked up following your visit relating to the sale of second hand electrical goods.</p>	

**OVERALL VISIT SUMMARY**  
QUESTIONNAIRE – 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS

<p><b>PHOTOGRAPHS</b> If you have a photograph or two that in your opinion best portrays your area, please attach.</p>	
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## Appendix II. Field visit scripts

### COMMERCIAL SALES DATA CAPTURE VISIT SCRIPT SHEET QUESTIONNAIRE– 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS



You have a questionnaire to complete that will require a short discussion with the sales outlet staff and also that you capture some photographs of any products on sale if appropriate. We would like our approach to be open and so suggest that when you visit the outlet you introduce yourself and ESF and gain their approval to gather information. Probably it is best to have a business card available in case they ask for some ID. We have suggested a script below that you can use as a format. |

#### VISIT SCRIPT EXAMPLE

**“Good morning/afternoon. My name is \*\*\*\*\* and I am carrying out some consumer research into the sale of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand electrical goods. I work for an organisation called Electrical Safety First, we are a recognised leading consumer safety charity on electrical safety. We are carrying out this research on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The purpose of the research is to understand the size of the second hand market and we are visiting a selection of outlets to get a better picture of the scale of the market nationally. Would you be able to tell me if you sell electrical goods or if you have any policies relating to the sale of electrical goods?”**

**[If they do]**

**Would it be OK to have a look around your shop/stall/showroom and gather some information and photograph some products please? Thank you for your help.”**

#### **ASSURANCES ABOUT THEIR DATA [if requested]**

All of the responses given and data collected will be entirely anonymous. Your name and address will not be given to anyone else. All of your details will be deleted once the project has been completed.

**PRIVATE SALES  
ADVERTISEMENT FOLLOW UP  
TELEPHONE SCRIPT  
QUESTIONNAIRE– 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND GOODS**

**Staff note:**

*Thank you for participating in our 2<sup>nd</sup> hand goods project.*

*This activity requires a telephone call follow up with the seller in a response to the advertisement they placed. The advertisement data capture form is allocated a reference number and this number needs to be transferred to the follow up form. Reference numbers allocated refer to where the advert was placed, who captured it, the product and the date.*

**EXAMPLE: TCFH2602**

*Is T - ~~Tending~~ (place) CF - Carolyn Flynn (who) H – Heater (product) 2602 - Date*

*This is a guide to the suggested script to follow. The aim is to capture as much of the information about the product from the seller that is laid out in the follow up form as possible. This applies even if the product has been sold.*

|

**CALL SCRIPT EXAMPLE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is ..... and I work for a consumer safety charity called Electrical Safety First. We are carrying out some research on the sale of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand electrical goods on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

We would like to ask you some questions relating to your recent advertisement placed in the..... where you have a .....for sale. Would that be ok?

Please can I speak to (named person from advert). The questions will only take a few minutes to complete and all the information we collect will be used for research purposes only, and no selling is involved.

**ONLY READ OUT IF SEEK ASSURANCES ABOUT THEIR DATA**

All of the responses you give will be entirely anonymous. Your name and address will not be given to anyone else. All of your details will be deleted once the project has been completed.

*If the seller is happy to continue answering questions, please use the follow up questionnaire as a basis for your questions.*



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