

Specifications for “Charity Shop Grade” clothing and household textile collections from UK charity shops.

These quality specifications have been drawn up by the Textile Recycling Association (TRA) and refer to “charity shop grade” that consists of used clothing and textiles (including shoes, handbags, curtain and bedding) which has been donated by the public to charity shops, but which end up not being sold in store and instead is sold onto used clothing and textile collectors/processors.

In some cases, bags have been found to contain items that can only be considered as waste and are therefore sent to landfill. By following these guidelines, charity shops can ensure a more environmentally friendly way of removing such waste at source.

Charity Shop Grade specifications have been published annually by the TRA since 2002 and are reviewed periodically. This latest revised specification has been published in November 2014.

The TRA recommends that charity shops take steps to meet these specifications if they wish to obtain a value for their used clothing which is comparable with the prevailing published market prices for charity shop grade clothing. Charity shops should make sure that their items are clean and dry, include a cross-section of all types of donated clothing and household textiles, are donated from UK sources and are packed in water-resistant sacks at a weight convenient for shop handling, storage and collection.

Specifications:

1. Used clothing and household textiles picked up from charity shops should be donated from UK sources, not from imported clothing brought into UK by the charity, from landfill sites / rummage sales or suppliers of uniforms. Nor should this grade include clothing that has obviously been rejected by cash for clothing businesses.
2. The standard quality should also reflect all the categories of all items after the charity has removed the donated clothing and household textiles that it can retail to the general public through its shop(s). This means that if all the highest quality “cream” items have been removed (for example – by selling these separately to another used clothing and textile collector/processor) then the charity shop grade specifications will not have been met.
3. Unless previously agreed with the merchant, the goods should not be pre-sorted with sections removed for sale separately.
4. The bags should contain lots of mixed UK donated clothing and household textiles. Only wearable paired shoes left over after retail sales from the charity shops are acceptable. Shoes should all be paired (tied together or fastened with an elastic band).
5. All items should be clean and dry, and should exclude pillows, cushions, duvets, carpets, balls and cones of wool, offcuts from manufacturing process and unfinished garments, hard toys, books and bric-a-brac, coat hangers, sharp objects and single odd shoes.

Revised in November 2014

6. Packing: water-resistant sacks (for example polythene) at a weight convenient for shop handling, storage and collection (usually 8-10kg), unless specifically agreed that an alternative packing method is more suitable, such as hessian sacks supplied by the merchant.
7. Used clothing, curtains and bedding, shoes and handbags should all be packed separately.