



**THE BENEFITS OF THE  
CIRCULAR ECONOMY  
FOR COMMERCIAL  
SPACES.**

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**active.**  
WORKPLACE GROUP

# TURNING OFFICE WASTE INTO OPPORTUNITY.



Active Workplace Group has an enviable reputation for delivering sustainable commercial projects including zero carbon relocations. Over our decades of experience, we have born witness to how the circular economy is transforming how organisations buy, use, and dispose of office furniture. Instead of the traditional “take, make, waste” model, a circular approach is keeping desks, chairs, storage units, and meeting furniture in use for as long as possible through reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and charitable redistribution. In our opinion, when a business is seeking to reduce their carbon emissions, cut waste, and increase social value, office furniture is one of the clearest opportunities they can act.

In the UK, the waste challenge is significant. Government figures show England generated around 32.6 million tonnes of commercial and industrial waste in 2023, while UK data continues to highlight landfill and residual waste as major environmental issues – all underlining the need to prioritise reuse before disposal. Office furniture is particularly suited to circularity because much of it has a long functional life. Desks, chairs, filing systems, acoustic pods, and tables are often replaced due to office redesigns, relocations, or branding changes rather than because they are unusable.

According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the UK discards approximately **1.2 million desks** and **1.8 million chairs** each year, with only **17% recycled**. Compare this to a recent Active project where 26 per cent of unwanted furniture was donated to charity, **53 per cent resold** and **21 per cent fully recycled** – zero landfill. It can be done and the environmental benefits are substantial. Reusing office furniture avoids the embodied carbon associated with extracting raw materials, manufacturing new products, packaging, and transport. It also reduces demand for virgin timber, metals, plastics, and foam – and of course landfill.

Active selects our supply chain partnerships according to the value that they can bring our clients and that includes working with companies such as **The Senator Group** that are able to offer some truly sustainable products and initiatives that ensure that office and estate managers are able to tread more lightly on the planet when it comes to furniture.

Below highlights the real impact of Senator’s sustainability initiatives:

- + **8,636** desk components were reused in their products
- + Recycled **3,388.72 tonnes** of material throughout the year
- + Fed **48,230 Kg** of material back into the manufacturing supply chain
- + Donated **3,866** items for reuse through their Wishlist Scheme

(Find out more here: [The Senator Group](#))

We also employ craftspeople, men and women that are highly skilled in repurposing existing furniture assets – from French polishing to expert joiners and carpenters that can make something fit into a space it wasn’t originally designed for. Where there is a will and a skill there is a way!

Charity partnerships make the circular model even more powerful by adding measurable social impact.

Surplus office furniture can be donated to charities, schools, community groups, training centres, social enterprises, and low-income households rather than sent to landfill. Reuse

Network reported in its 2024 social impact report that reuse charities across the UK **reused 2.55 million furniture and electrical items**, supported 1.5 million



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households, saved low-income households £321.2 million, and **prevented 92,566 tonnes of CO2** emissions. At Active we have an established network of local charities, but we also use the A Good Thing platform to distribute much needed furniture and equipment to good causes.

Ultimately, adopting a circular economy for office furniture is not just a sustainability gesture. It is a commercially sensible, carbon-conscious, and socially responsible strategy. Businesses that reuse, refurbish, donate, and partner with charities can reduce waste, cut emissions, support communities, and demonstrate real ESG progress – all while extending the life of valuable assets. If you would like to know where to start, then talk to us – we can help you achieve good things.

Ready to reduce waste and make your workplace more sustainable?

Get in touch with Active to explore smarter, more sustainable workplace solutions.



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