

How to Organise a Clothes Swap



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

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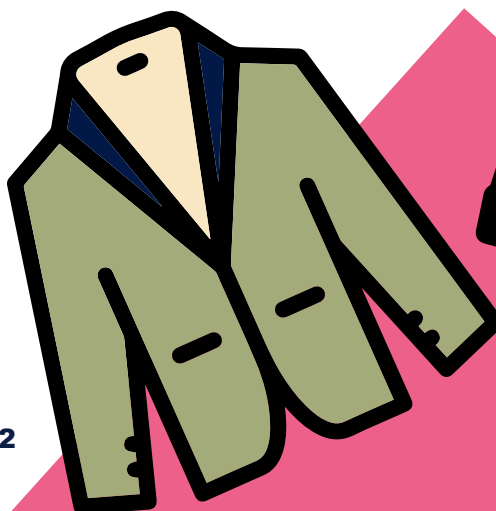
What is a clothes swap?

A clothes swap is a party or event. People bring the clothes they no longer wear and exchange them for clothes they will use. It is also known as swishing!

This guide provides a list of steps, tips and suggestions to help you plan and run your own successful clothes swap party or event.

What are the benefits of a clothes swap?

- **Help our environment:** organising a clothes swap is a positive environmental action. Swapping clothes keeps them in use for longer. It also stops good clothes going to waste. This can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save water.
- **Save money:** your guests can update their wardrobes without spending a fortune.
- **Give the gift of style:** everyone gets bored of wearing the same thing again and again. Clothes swapping is a fun and easy way to find something new to wear.



Great! How do I make my clothes swap plan?

You want your clothes swap to be fun, interesting and positive. To get the best out of it, take some time before your clothes swap to answer these questions.



Why are you having a swap?

Decide on the type of event you'd like to hold. This sets the tone and makes event planning easier. Perhaps you want to do something good for the environment, raise money for a cause or simply hold a stylish fashion party.

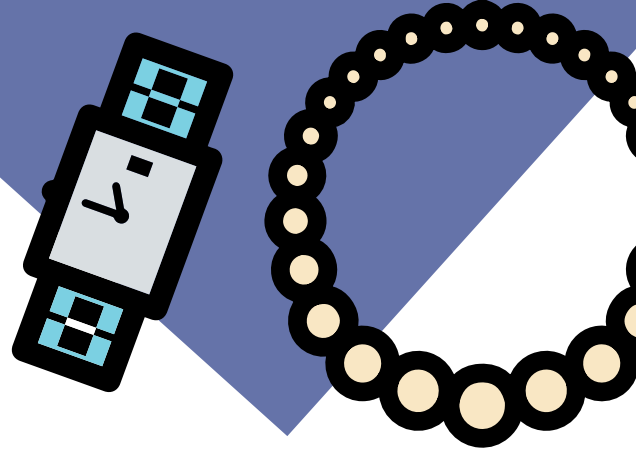
Who is the swap for?

- The answer to this question will help you answer some of the other questions about your swap.
- Is your clothes swap for family, friends or work colleagues? Would you like the wider community to come along?
- Will the people who come to swap also help set up before the swap and tidy up after? Or do you need to ask some people to volunteer to help?

Will it cost money to go to your swap?

- If you are swapping with friends, your clothes swap will probably be free. If you are raising money, you may want to charge to attend.
- When you advertise your clothes swap, you will need to include information about costs.





What will you swap?

Choose a theme and type of clothes for the swap.

For example, you may decide to focus on Christmas jumpers, going-out-out clothes, baby clothes, casual clothes, summer holidays or Halloween costumes.

Try to have something for everyone.

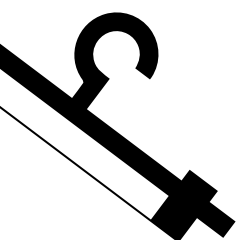
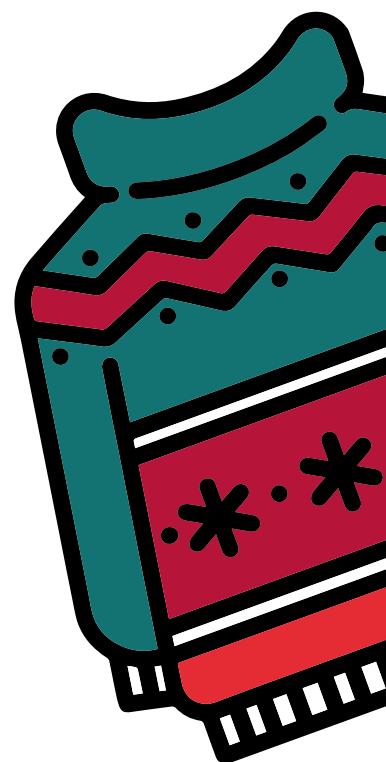
Jewellery, wallets, cufflinks, bags, purses, belts and scarves can add more choice. Ask for quality, not quantity. Ask people to bring good quality clothes that are clean, wearable and good quality.

List the items that cannot be swapped.

Ask people not to bring these items: swimwear, earrings and underwear. This is for health reasons.

Make the event fair.

Set a minimum and maximum number of pieces that people can bring to swap. Usually, **5 – 10 items** works well.





Will you have other activities at your clothes swap?

Think about other entertainment.

Will there be a guest talk, raffle or a coffee morning?

Think about inviting a local alterations service.

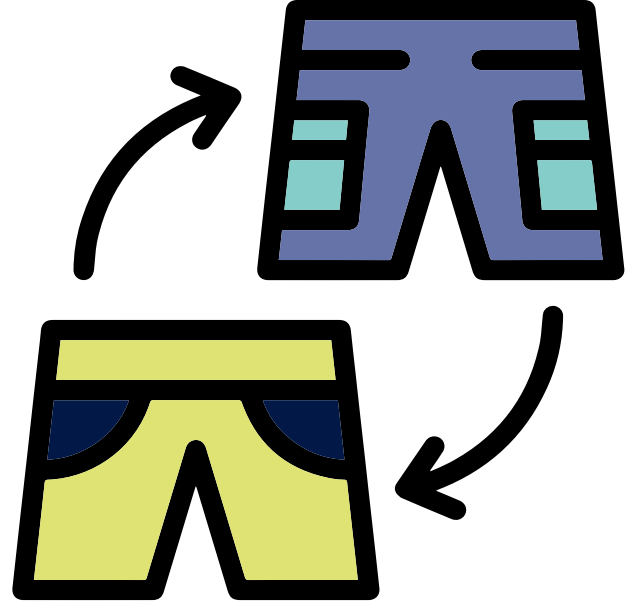
They could demonstrate how to make simple repairs. They may also be able to do repairs at your clothes swap. Talk to them about how much this would cost. Play upbeat music. Lively music helps create a good atmosphere.

When will your swap be?

Pick a time that suits the people who will come to your swap.

- If your clothes swap is at the weekend, hold it in the late morning or early afternoon. At the weekend, many people are busy at night.
- Think about things that might clash with your event, such as working hours, school holidays, and festivals or sports events.
- Choose a start time and a finish time. The time you choose will also influence the room or venue for your clothes swap.





Where will it be?

If your swap is small with friends, it can be in your **home**.
If it is larger, you may need to hire a room or a venue.

For a large, community event:

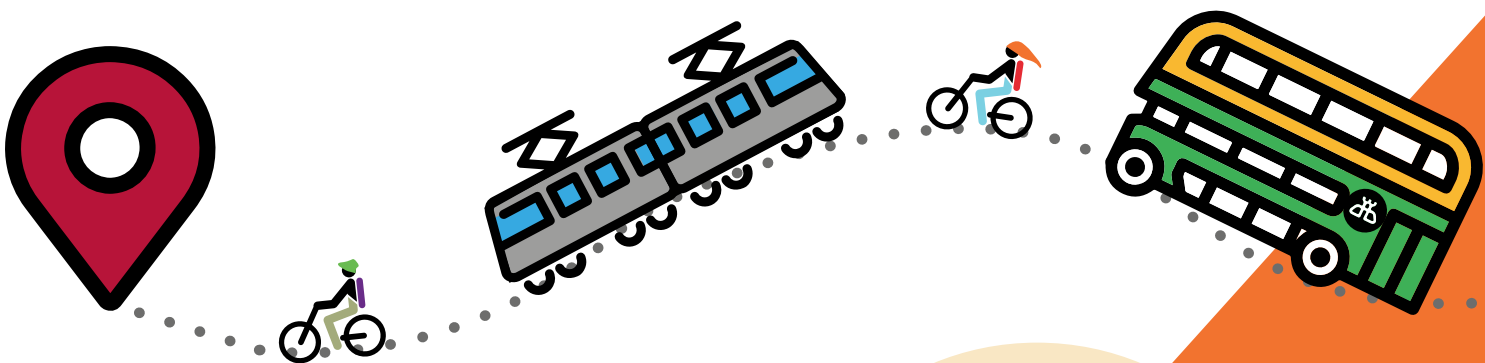
Think about hiring a room in your local community centre, parish hall or local business.

Check that the venue:

- has public liability insurance. (If you are advertising an event to the public, insurance is important.)
- has a bathroom, and
- is accessible to all.

How will people get to your clothes swap?

Your guests need to be able to get to your event easily. Is there is a bus stop, Luas, DART or train station, bike stand or car parking?



What do you need at your room or venue?

If you are having a small swap at home, you can probably decide where things go just before or during the swap.

If you are having a larger swap, **make a map** or plan for your room or venue.

- Where do people come in? Is there a reception area there?
- Do you need a waiting area?
- Do you need a bar or refreshments area?
- Where will the changing area be?
- Where will you put tables, rails and chairs to display clothes and accessories?
- How many hangers, coat racks and rails do you need?
- Is there enough space for people with buggies or wheelchairs to move around?
- Will there be mirrors in other places? Put full-length mirrors in the changing area.
- Will you display items by size, colour or type?
- Where will you put signs? Signs showing clothes type or size are very helpful.
- Where are your volunteers working? On reception, in the changing rooms, cleaning up after the swap, or sorting and displaying clothes?



What will you do with leftover clothes?

Plan what you will do with any leftover clothes.

- Will you donate them to a local charity shop?
- Will you pack them away for the next clothes swap?
- Will you recycle them?

If you would like to recycle these clothes, Dublin City Council has a network of free clothes recycling bins throughout the city (visit www.dublincity.ie).

What else do people need to bring?

- Should people bring food and drinks to share?
- Should people bring reusable cups?
- Should people bring their own bags or do you provide them?

How will people swap?

Plan how your swapping system will work.

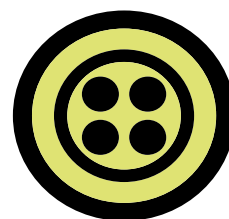
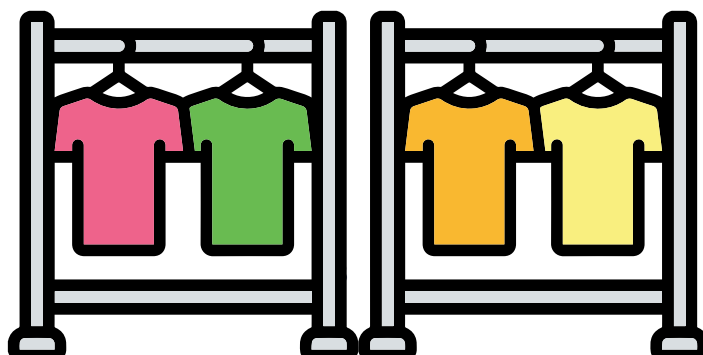
A simple token can act as a substitute for money. You could give one token for each item brought to the event. Buttons work well as tokens.

Decide if you will give a different amount of tokens for different items. Write out this price list. For example, a belt is one token and a dress is two tokens.

The tokens can be used to 'buy' a new piece of clothing or accessory.

Remember to record how many tokens each person receives so everything is fair.

If you are raising money at your clothes swap, people could buy extra tokens. This money could go to your cause.



How do I invite people to my clothes swap?

If your swap is small, your invites might be simple: a few phone calls or a message to a WhatsApp group.

If your event is larger, you might want to put it on Eventbrite or a social media platform such as Instagram, TikTok or Facebook. You might want to put flyers in local shops.

Here is what to include in your invite:

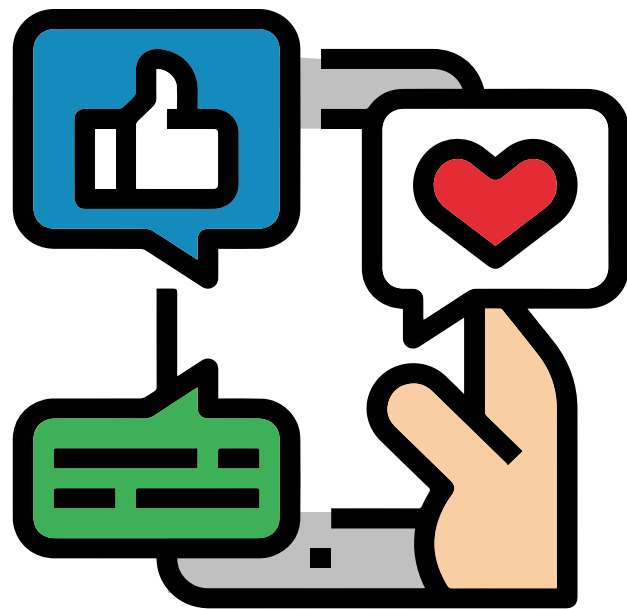
- The time, date and location of the event
- The cost of the event if there is a cost
- Contact details and a booking link if you are advertising online
- A reply-by date or a final date for booking so you know how many people are coming
- The type and number of items accepted
- Information about other things people should bring, such as bags, reusable cups or snacks
- Information about how the swap will work

Try to invite people two to **four weeks** before your clothes swap. If you are advertising online or on messaging apps, send a reminder a day or two before your clothes swap.

We had a great time. How do we share our success?

Every item swapped at your event reduced the need to buy new items. Swapping reduced greenhouse gas emissions, prevented waste and saved water. This is something to celebrate!

Send a follow-up contact to your guests. Let them know how many items were given a new life!





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