



Cash for clothes isn't money for old rope

There are several options to check out if you'd like to get some money for unwanted garments, but to get a better return a little effort is required

FIONA REDDAN



YOU'VE HEARD of "cash in the attic" or "cash for gold", but are you ready for the latest money-generating scheme - "cash for clothes"? By selling unwanted clothes that may no longer fit or are simply out of fashion, you could replenish your wallet and maybe make enough to stave off the impact of the forthcoming budget.

But how much might those old pairs of Levis make for you - and might there be a more charitable destination for your unwanted garments? And what are the other options for "monetising" your wardrobe?

Over the past 12 months a number of operators have opened up such shops all around the country, including Cash for Clothes, which operates from a depot in Sallins, Co Kildare; Get Cash4Clothes, which has numerous branches in Dublin and around the country, including in Nenagh, Athy and Ennis, and We Buy Clothes, which has 30 branches across the country.

Typically, you can expect to

bring along bags of unwanted clothes, get them weighed in the shop and walk out with some cash. Many of the shops also offer to collect clothes, but they might require you to have a minimum weight for collection or, if not, you can expect to be paid less.

You will need a significant amount of clothes if you want to boost your income, given that you can expect to make anywhere from just 50 cent up to €1 for 1kg, depending on where you go.

If you don't have any idea what various items might weigh, Pricewatch has weighed some typical items to give you an idea of how much you might get for them.

A leather handbag, for example, weighs about 1kg, a pair of jeans is about 600g and a pair of runners comes in at about 800g.

Based on these prices, 10 pairs of jeans might earn you the grand sum of between €3 and €6.

Pillows and duvets are typically excluded, but most shops take in a

wide range of items including soft toys, belts and sheets. If you're looking to boost your return, a pair of old curtains for example might be a good idea, given how heavy they can be.

If you have too many clothes and other goods, there can be a dual upside to selling them - decluttering your home while making some money. Beforehand, however, you might also want to consider where your goods actually end up.

Given the buoyant second-hand clothing market across eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, these are frequent destinations for unwanted Irish goods, as

is Asia. Typically, depending on the condition, clothes might be either completely broken down and recycled, or sold on as is.

With such a proliferation of outlets, you can expect that buyers of your goods are making a tidy margin on their purchases. Pricewatch asked one operator where the goods he bought ended up, but was told the final destination of the clothing was "sensitive information" that he "wouldn't like to divulge".

Another consideration to bear in mind - particularly if you might only make €3 from a couple of handbags - is that by selling on your goods in this way, particularly those in better condition, you might be depriving charity shops of some much-needed stock they can turn into cash.

"The cash-for-clothes operations that have sprung up all over the island [are], of course, affecting the level of stock donations we are receiving," notes Trevor Anderson, Oxfam Ireland's director of retail.

While the charity "fully supports the right of the consumer to choose between selling and donating the clothing they no longer need", its Make Space for Oxfam campaign hopes to diminish the impact of this trend

by encouraging people to think of **Oxfam** first.

You can still use the cash for clothes outlets for a charitable purpose by organising a clothes drive involving a school or other community group and then selling the clothes collected.

Another option you might consider if you're keen to monetise your wardrobe is to look to online markets such as eBay.ie or done.deal.ie. However, to achieve sales on these platforms your unwanted goods will need to be in good condition and desirable.

With Done Deal, you can place an advert in its fashion section for €1. With Ebay, while you might be able to access a global market, you can expect to pay more, and the costs can add up.

For example, a listing or insertion fee starts from 25 cent up to €3, while the website also takes 10 per cent of the value of goods that sell. In addition, if you opt for additional features such as a reserve price – that below which you will not sell – you can expect to pay 2 per cent of that reserve.

It's important when using eBay to sell high-value goods to indicate a reserve price. Otherwise you could find yourself having to sell that too-small pair of Tory Burch flats bought in the Brown Thomas sale for a bid of just €20.

Key to effective selling online is the inclusion of attractive photos of products along with as much information on them as possible.

If you're using eBay, any attempt to oversell your goods might come back to hurt you. Also, given that buyers can review each seller after a sale, any bad comments can quickly end your online selling career.

If you would prefer to sell in person, another option is to offload your clothes at a local car boot sale or flea market.

Dublin's Flea Market runs on the last Sunday of every month in The Co-op on Newmarket Square, Dublin 8.

It costs €40 to take a stall for the day, and 40 of these stalls are allocated on a rotating basis.

After that initial outlay, how much you earn will be up to your sales skills.

Wardrobe clear-out:
by selling unwanted clothes that may no longer fit or are simply out of fashion, you could raise some cash

CASH FOR CLOTHES WHAT YOU CAN SELL

- Clothes
- Curtains
- Bedding (except duvets & pillows)
- Towels
- Handbags
- Belts
- Soft toys
- Hats, caps, ties and scarves
- Paired shoes and trainers
- Baby clothes
- Pyjamas

