

# Brief 3:

## Future Fashion

How might we reinvent the way we produce, use or access everyday clothing items so that we design out waste?

### Background

- Our clothes protect us and allow us to express ourselves. No wonder many of us love fashion. Globally, the fashion industry is worth around \$1.3 trillion per year in sales.
- But fashion has a problem: the way fashion producers make clothes assumes that we can use whatever materials we want and that we can throw clothes away when we no longer want them.
- By doing this we are damaging natural systems. For example, growing cotton uses up a lot of water and the production of cotton clothes often uses large amounts of chemicals. Many man-made fabrics are produced from the same chemicals we use to make plastic and release small fibres into water as they are washed, adding plastic into rivers and oceans. Transporting clothes around the world, from China to the UK, for example, causes greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
- There is no such thing as throwing something 'away'. It must go somewhere and this often harms the environment. Every second, an amount equal to one truck of textiles is sent to rubbish landfill or burned.
- What if we saw waste and pollution as design problems and tried to prevent their creation right from the beginning of a garment's life? This is 'circular economy thinking'. When we design using a 'circular economy' approach we should ask: how might we design so that clothing is kept in use for longer? How might we design so that materials and resources can be easily recycled or reused? How might we design so that natural resources, like water and soil, are restored rather than damaged?

### How should you approach this brief?

Your design brief is to: **Design a proposal which can reinvent the way we produce, use or access everyday clothing items so that we 'design out' waste.**

- Focus on everyday items of clothing. This means items that are worn regularly and produced in large amounts, not ones that are worn only occasionally. You might consider: jeans, t-shirts, shirts, underwear, uniforms, basic shoes or wool jumpers.

- Think about the whole life-cycle of clothing, from the raw material (such as cotton) to the point where it is thrown away. You could draw the life-cycle, to learn about which parts have negative impacts, and then think about how you could change them.
- Talk to your friends and family about their reasons for buying clothes: is there pressure on people to keep up with the latest trends? Is social media affecting what clothes we buy or how many we buy? Is there a difference between older and younger people?
- Think about how people use clothes: how long do they keep them? Do they repair them if they get damaged? If they don't, what might be stopping them?
- Think about what happens to clothing when it is no longer wanted: where does it go? What impact does this have? Could clothes be designed differently so they don't end up as rubbish when one person has finished using them? Don't think just about recycling or reusing existing waste, think about how that waste could have been prevented in the first place.
- Remember, it isn't only clothes that need to be designed. Fabrics are also designed, the way we shop for clothing is designed, the way we share images on social media is designed. So, there are lots of places to apply design to make positive change to the fashion industry.

**Here are some examples of proposals that could meet this design brief:**

- a. A clothes-swapping service that makes it easy for people to exchange clothing that they no longer want rather than buying something new.
- b. A garment that can be worn in more than one way, suiting different environments and ensuring that it is kept for a long time.
- c. A set of workshops that help people become aware of fast fashion waste and teaches simple ways to repurpose clothing.

