# Company Shop Group saves 109 million surplus items in 2023, reshaping retail waste solutions



Company Shop Group’s recent campaign, “Wanted, Not Wasted,” exemplifies a growing movement towards rethinking surplus goods in retail. Designed to engage major retailers, the campaign aims to demonstrate that surplus products can be redirected effectively rather than discarded, reinforcing that these items—often flawed by minor discrepancies—remain safe and valuable.

The campaign’s creative approach utilises playful imagery and clever copy to capture attention, featuring quirky products like potato smileys and Jammie Dodgers. This strategy not only showcases the potential of what is typically deemed waste but also seeks to educate partners on the financial, community, and environmental benefits of surplus redistribution. By diverting surplus items to Company Shops, retailers can support local economies while contributing to sustainability efforts.

In a major highlight of its operations, Company Shop Group reported a staggering 109 million surplus items saved from waste in 2023, equating to about 41,445 tonnes of food. Such achievements have significant implications; for context, this figure suggests the environmental equivalent of removing approximately 28,000 cars from UK roads. Over a decade, the company has facilitated £200 million returned to the industry in surplus stock purchases, underscoring its pivotal role in enhancing sustainable practices across retail.

Further testimony to the campaign's relevance was echoed in December 2023, when CSG reminded stakeholders that surplus issues are not confined to the festive season. They reported redistributing over half a million turkeys and a multitude of other items in just three years, projecting that they would manage more than 12,000 tonnes of surplus throughout winter 2023. With each redistribution, at least £11.5 million is expected to be returned to the industry, proving the economic viability of managing surplus effectively.

Company Shop Group’s commitment extends beyond their own campaign efforts; the company has launched “The Surplus Effect,” a year-long initiative aiming to showcase the transformative impacts of surplus redistribution. This campaign seeks to narrate the journey of surplus goods while also spotlighting the benefits to businesses, individuals, and the planet. This holistic approach echoes a communal ethos, reinforcing the notion that no surplus product should go to waste.

The partnership with Biffa plc, a leader in sustainable waste management since their acquisition in 2021, has further strengthened CSG's capabilities in tackling surplus. This collaboration is geared towards advancing circular economy practices within the food manufacturing and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sectors, demonstrating a comprehensive strategy that addresses waste reduction alongside social responsibility.

Moreover, initiatives such as the partnership with the food surplus app Too Good To Go illustrate CSG's innovative strategies in combating waste. By offering ‘Magic Bags’ of products nearing their Best Before dates, they not only alleviate waste but also facilitate community support through the proceeds benefitting their social enterprise, Community Shop. This organisation plays a crucial role in empowering individuals through skill-building and providing access to essential goods, thereby strengthening the fabric of local communities.

Ultimately, Company Shop Group’s campaigns and initiatives reflect an evolving understanding of waste and surplus in our society. The emphasis on turning excess into opportunity not only aligns with pressing environmental objectives but also opens a pathway for retailers to rethink their practices—truly embodying the message: surplus is indeed “Wanted, Not Wasted.”

### Reference Map

1. Lead article
2. Related developments and data
3. Seasonal relevance of the campaign
4. The Surplus Effect initiative
5. Biffa acquisition context
6. Partnership with Too Good To Go
7. Overview of surplus solutions offered

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://lbbonline.com/work/135360> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.companyshopgroup.co.uk/news/company-shop-group-announces-record-redistribution-figures-saving-109-million-surplus-items-from-needlessly-going-to-waste> - In March 2023, Company Shop Group announced record-breaking annual redistribution figures, saving 109 million surplus items from going to waste. The company redistributed 41,445 tonnes of food, equivalent to removing 28,000 cars from the road. Over the past decade, £200 million has been returned to industry partners for surplus stock purchases, highlighting the company's commitment to sustainable practices and community support.
3. <https://www.companyshopgroup.co.uk/news/surplus-isnt-just-for-christmas-and-for-company-shop-group-its-all-wanted-not-wasted-stock> - In December 2023, Company Shop Group emphasized that surplus isn't limited to Christmas, promoting its 'Wanted, Not Wasted' campaign. The company redistributed over 500,000 turkeys, 100 miles of wrapping paper, and nearly 1.3 million mince pies in the past three years. They expect to handle over 12,000 tonnes of surplus during the winter months, returning at least £11.5 million back to the industry on otherwise wasted stock.
4. <https://www.companyshopgroup.co.uk/the-surplus-effect/> - Company Shop Group's 'The Surplus Effect' campaign aims to showcase the transformative power of surplus redistribution. Launched amid Food Waste Action Week, the campaign features a film narrating the journey of surplus products and their impact on businesses, people, and the planet. The initiative spans 12 months, celebrating the company's mission to create a world where no surplus product goes to waste.
5. <https://www.companyshopgroup.co.uk/news/company-shop-group-joins-forces-with-biffa-to-boost-uk-corporate-surplus-responsibility> - In February 2021, Company Shop Group was acquired by Biffa plc, the UK's leading sustainable waste management company. The acquisition aims to deliver a unique circular economy proposition to the food manufacturing and FMCG sector, helping UK operators unlock sustainable value from the 141,000 tonnes of quality surplus waste produced annually. The partnership strengthens Biffa's position in the UK circular economy and supports customers' waste reduction and recycling targets.
6. <https://www.companyshopgroup.co.uk/news/company-shop-group-and-too-good-to-go-announce-partnership-aimed-at-preventing-unnecessary-waste-and-supporting-local-communities> - In September 2021, Company Shop Group partnered with food surplus app Too Good To Go to prevent surplus food from going to waste and support families in need. The partnership involved selling 'Magic Bags' containing perfectly good items approaching their Best Before date in Company Shop stores. The proceeds funded the expansion of Community Shop, the group's social enterprise supporting communities across the UK.
7. <https://www.companyshopgroup.co.uk/surplus-solutions/why-redistribute-with-us/> - Company Shop Group offers innovative solutions for handling surplus products, providing financial, social, and environmental returns. In 2022, they paid back £39 million to the industry for surplus products, demonstrating their commitment to sustainable practices. Through their award-winning social enterprise, Community Shop, they support tens of thousands of people in the UK, building stronger individuals and more confident communities by redistributing surplus stock.