



Ellie Walters

ReFunk

Ellie Walters is the co-founder and COO of ReFunk Upcycling, which she set up with her three co-founders in 2020. The team were taking part in a weekend-long hackathon during their masters with the theme of 'Sustainable Cities' and were shocked by the statistic that 10 million tonnes of furniture is discarded in landfill annually in the EU. This inspired them to create ReFunk, a one-stop reCommerce platform that facilitates donating, upcycling and selling of second-hand furniture, promoting the circular and gig economies.

By 2025, the global second-hand furniture market is estimated to be approximately \$16bn and ReFunk aims to capitalise on this by targeting the 72.5% of the European population that live in cities with their innovation. Their strategy is to use Dublin as a test market and scale into the first international market in 2023, with all of the learnings from optimising the business in Dublin.

As a team they have achieved a great deal in their short time working together, from being featured in the Independent's 30 Under 30 in November 2021, to taking part in Web Summit 2021 where they were highlighted as an impact start-up, and now taking part in the Starting Strong programme. The team aims to emulate the success of circular fashion giants Depop and Vinted in the largely untapped circular furniture market, with the help and support of their Starting Strong cohort.

www.refunkupcycling.com

