

SUSTAINABLE SPORTS APPAREL CHARTER



5THREAD

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Textile Industry

The environmental and social sustainability impacts of the clothing industry cannot be overstated.

- The textile industry has the fourth highest negative impact on the environment and on climate change and the third highest for water and land use.
- Contributing up to 10% of global emissions.
- Every year, 92 million tonnes of textile waste is produced globally.
- Annual textile production consumes approximately 93 cubic meters of water per year, equivalent to 37 million Olympic swimming pools.
- The textile industry is estimated to be responsible for 20% of global water pollution as a result of dyeing and finishing during production.
- Forced labour, unpaid wages and poor working conditions may be present within the supply chain.





**Every
second**

A truck load of
textiles is
incinerated or
sent to landfill



Globally

73%

Of the materials used
to produce clothing
are sent to landfill
or incinerated at
the end of their
life

More than

**\$500
Billion**

Of value is lost every
year due to clothing
being under-used
or under-recycled



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**22
Million**

tonnes of microfibres
are expected to enter
our oceans between
2015-2050

Clothing and
footwear
consumption
is expected to
increase by

63%

by 2030

WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH SPORT?

Sportswear is a significant and fast-growing part of the global fashion and textile industry. From elite competition kit to grassroots participation clothing, sport relies heavily on both technical textiles for performance and mass produced merchandise for commercial revenue.

These products sit within the same global supply chains as fashion, produced predominantly using polyester, which does not biodegrade and sheds microfibers.

For sports organisations, how they procure their kit and extend it's product life creates both a responsibility and an opportunity. Sport's cultural influence has a unique position to impact fan and athlete behaviour. The Charter has been developed with this in mind and aims to provide a practical framework underpinned by guidance and support.



SPORT ALSO FACES A SET OF UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Kit Procurement and Product Lifecycle

Value In Kind (VIK): VIK arrangements are common within sports procurement, often offering commercial benefits to sports organisations. However, these models can also create an incentive to order more stock each season, increasing the risk of overproduction and surplus kit that may never be used.

Materials: Performance requirements often prioritise synthetic fibres, coatings and finishes that are difficult to recycle.

Sponsorship: Short kit cycles driven by sponsorship and branding changes can accelerate overproduction and premature disposal. Contractual limitations can prevent kit from being reused or resold, leading to perfectly usable sportswear being stored or destroyed.

Ordering leadtimes: Kit orders often need to be confirmed months or even years in advance of competition schedules. In many cases, organisations must place orders before knowing whether a team has qualified for a tournament. This uncertainty can result in over-ordering, surplus stock, and procurement of highly specific branded kit that is never used.

Competition cycles: Short competition cycles mean kits are often designed for a single season or tournament, becoming obsolete after the event ends. Athlete-specific sizing and personalization, e.g. names and numbers can also significantly reduce opportunities for reuse.

Participation barriers: The cost of kit can be a barrier to participation, by reusing and redistributing kits there is an opportunity to reduce financial barriers to play and divert product from landfill.





98%

agreed sports and physical activity boosts confidence and playing in the right kit has a role to play in that.




87%

“strongly agreed” that families face financial barriers, to accessing kit, including footwear.

74%

young people were “less likely to participate” when they lacked the correct kit.



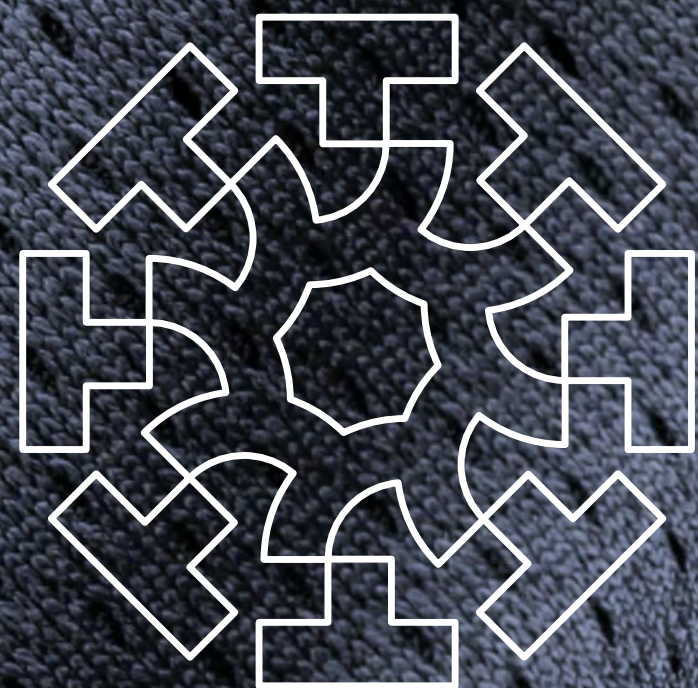
WHAT IS THE CHARTER?

The Charter provides a shared framework for sports organisations to address the environmental challenges associated with apparel. It recognises the specific realities of sport and focuses on practical, collaborative actions that reduce waste and extend product life.

Developed with sports organisations to reflect real operational and commercial constraints, the Charter is structured around seven key areas and 15 commitments. It is designed to be achieved within two years, with each commitment deliberately practical and embedded into existing ways of working through low- or no-cost actions requiring minimal time.

Organisations are supported through one-to-one guidance, practical resources, and opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion and knowledge sharing.



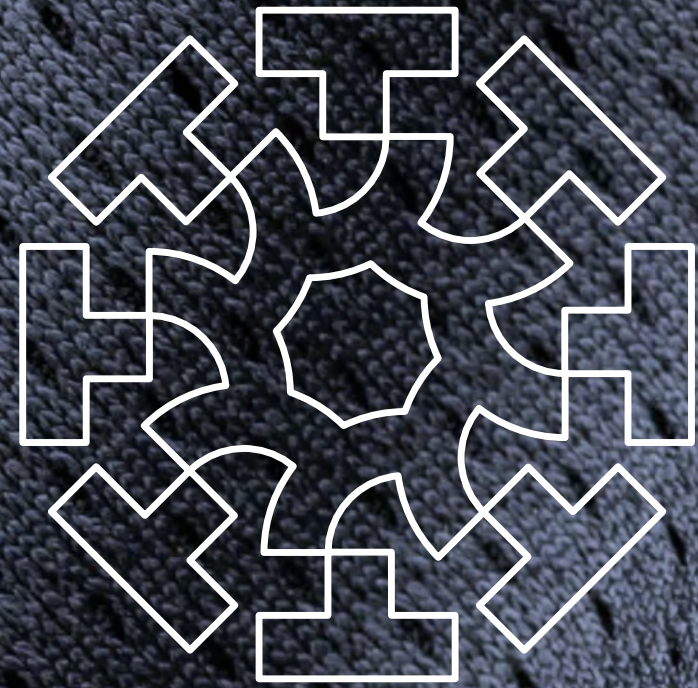


COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sustainability and Social Responsibility

1. We, the undersigned, commit to embedding sustainability into our operations, from apparel procurement and use. We will reduce our environmental impact by prioritising ethical sourcing, waste reduction, and community-centred reuse initiatives, while supporting social sustainability. This commitment will be publicly communicated by publishing it on our official website.





SUSTAINABLE SOURCING AND PROCUREMENT

Sustainable Sourcing and Procurement

2. Supplier Sustainability Audit: Partner with apparel suppliers who uphold ethical labour standards and fair working conditions. We commit to ensuring transparency throughout the supply chain, safeguarding human rights, and avoiding exploitation. We will request and retain up to date copies of factory audits.

3. Sustainable Materials: Prioritise the use of renewable, recycled, and biodegradable materials in sports apparel, where performance allows. We commit to mandating that on average 20% of all apparel merchandise uses recycled or biodegradable materials to reduce reliance on unsustainable resources. (Exempting items where this would be at the detriment to performance or safety.)

4. Weighted Tenders: From the next renewal of any apparel contract, all procurement tenders will include a minimum of 5% weighting on sustainability criteria. This incentivises suppliers to integrate and provide evidence of environmentally and socially responsible practices.

5. Contracts for Reuse and Repurposing: All contracts will explicitly state which products can be reused and how, ensuring alignment with our goals for product reuse and waste reduction. Create enablement programmes with suppliers for reuse, repurpose and recycle options for the apparel and kit provided.



Waste Reduction and Circular Product Use

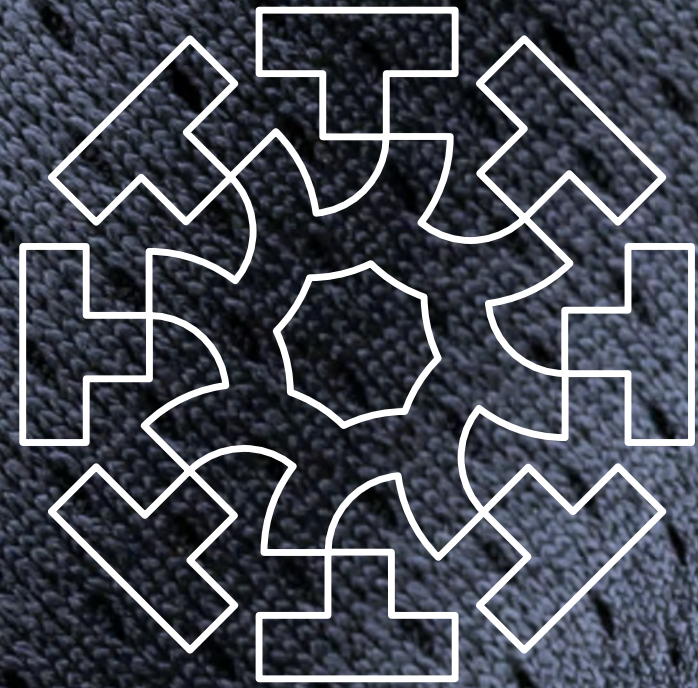
6. Nominated Partner Organisations:

A designated reuse, repurpose and recycle partner organisation will be listed on our official website, facilitating the collection and the redistribution of used sports apparel. This will enable responsible recycling, upcycling, or redistribution to communities in need.

7. Care Instructions for Extended Product Life:

We will provide instructions to educate users on how to properly care for key apparel items, promoting extended product longevity and waste reduction.





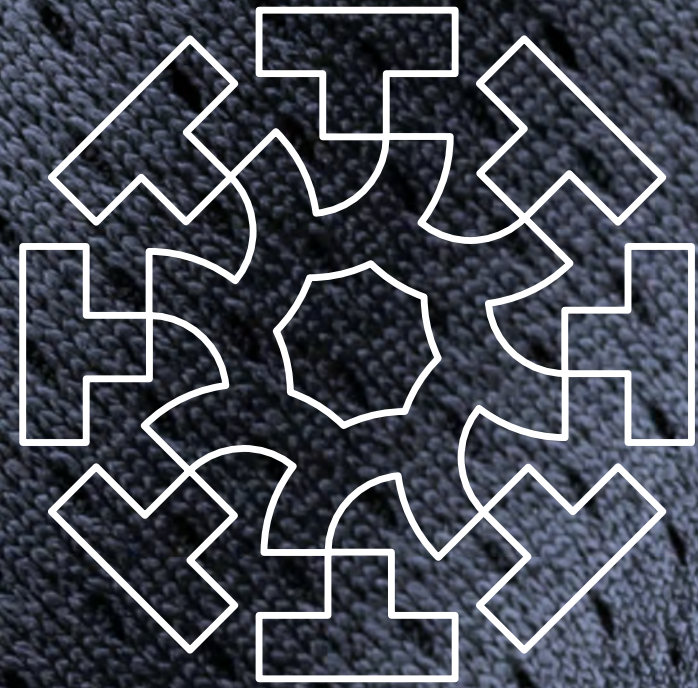
EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Education and Awareness

8. Internal Awareness and Education: Deliver education sessions for staff, athletes, and volunteers at least once every twelve months to raise awareness about sustainability practices and their role in reducing environmental impact.

9. External Awareness and Education: Use our platform to advocate for sustainability by engaging external stakeholders e.g. fans, athletes in campaigns and initiatives that promote waste reduction, reuse, and ethical consumption. Educational guidance will also be provided on our official website.





TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

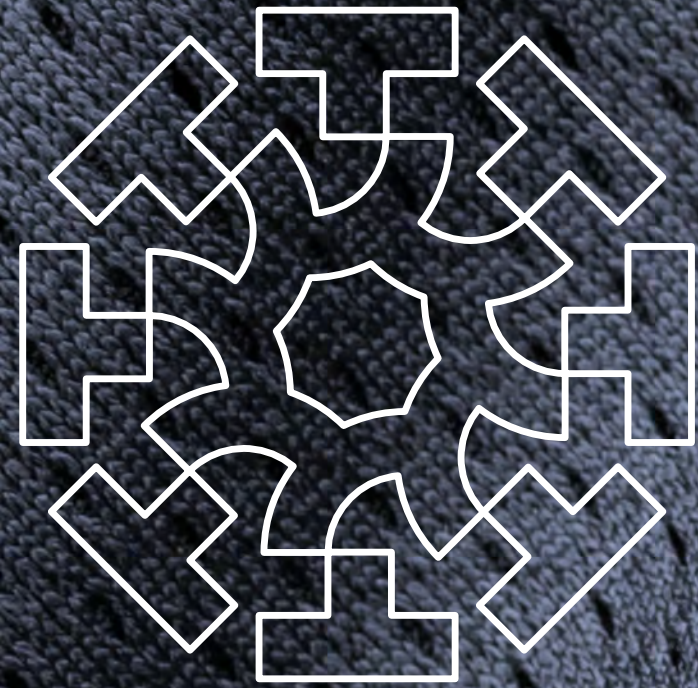


Transparency and Accountability

10. Reporting: Publish annual reports detailing our progress in sustainable procurement, waste reduction, and carbon footprint minimisation, including metrics such as material usage, product reuse rates, and environmental impact reductions.

11. Reporting: Transparently share our partnerships with organisations and provide regular updates on the amount of apparel that has been reused, repurposed and recycled through these collaborations.





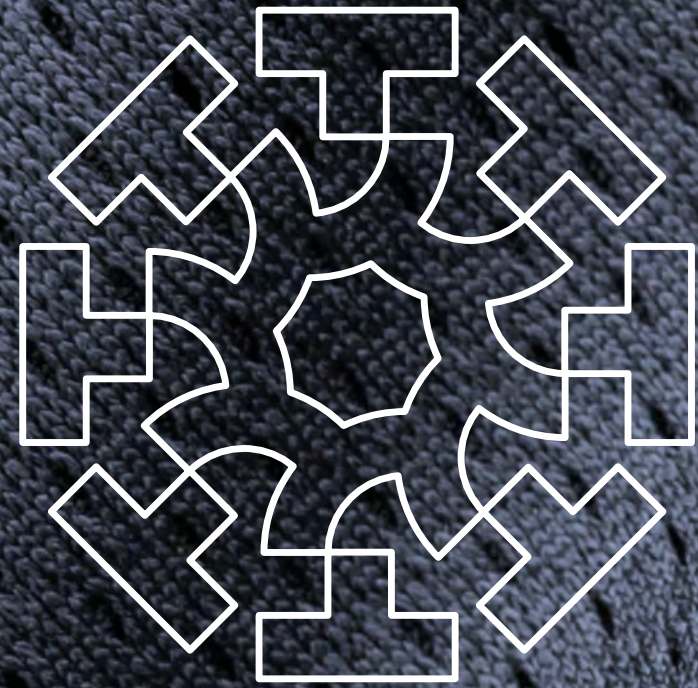
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Continuous Improvement and Innovation

12. Open Feedback Loop: Create feedback mechanisms where athletes, staff, and fans can share suggestions for improving sustainability efforts. Feedback will be continually reviewed and addressed through a working group.

13. Innovation and Best Practices: Stay informed about advancements in sustainable materials, products, and technologies to further reduce environmental impact.





LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Leadership and Advocacy

A soccer coach in a dark uniform is standing on a grass field, holding a soccer ball in his left hand and gesturing with his right hand. He is smiling and looking towards a group of young soccer players who are sitting on the grass in front of him. The entire image has a blue tint.

14. Advocating for Change: Actively promote sustainability within the sports industry by collaborating with other governing bodies, communities, and environmental organisations to advance best practices in procurement and product use.

15. Influencing Stakeholder Behaviour: Lead by example by demonstrating sustainable apparel practices in both the sport and daily life. This should be modelled by key leaders within the organization, such as the Senior Management Team and athletes.

WHY IS IT DIFFERENT?

Low/No cost actions: Grounded in the belief that finance should never be a barrier to action, the Charter has been developed with low- to no-cost practical actions that can be adopted by organisations of all sizes and budgets.

Time-bound: With a clear two-year period from sign-up to verification, the Charter is built on a clearly defined timeframe. From the point of signing up, organisations have regular check-ins across the two years to ensure momentum is maintained against the agreed commitments.

1-1 Support: Organisations receive dedicated one-to-one support through regular check-in meetings, this provides access to sustainability expertise, particularly valuable where there is no in-house sustainability role.

Designed with rather than for: The Charter has been developed with the support and collaboration of a number of National Governing Bodies. Their input has ensured the Charter reflects the real operational context organisations are working within.

Working group: A working group is in place to support participating organisations. This provides a space for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.

Straightforward & impactful: The criteria are intended to be intentionally straightforward, enabling it to be understood and applied across an organisation, not just by sustainability specialists. Even where there is little to no sustainability expertise, teams should be able to engage with the Charter and clearly understand what action is required.



PLEDGE AND SIGNATORY PATHWAYS

PLEDGE PATHWAY:

For organisations beginning their sustainability journey with the intent to become Charter signatories. Designed to prepare organisations for full Charter signatory status within 24 months.

Includes:

- Start-up Pack: First-step guidance and practical set-up sheets
- Onboarding Call: One-hour 1:1 session
- Ongoing Support:
 - Ad hoc email support
 - Check-ins at 6, 12, and 18 months (one-hour each)
 - Final Review (24 months)

£250 flat fee, two-year commitment
(paid at time of pledge)

CHARTER PATHWAY:

For organisations formally committed to the Charter roadmap and verification process. Designed to support delivery of the roadmap and achieve verified, visible impact.

Includes:

- Quarterly 1:1 Check-ins (8 in total one hour each)
- Tailored Expert Support:
 - Ad hoc email support
 - Help with roadmap delivery, challenges, and integration
 - Training guidance for staff, athletes, and volunteers
- Recognition & Visibility:
 - Inclusion in annual Charter Review document
 - Public case study opportunities and best-practice features

£625 flat fee, two-year commitment
(paid at Charter signing)



FAQ

How is it verified?: Charter progress is monitored through regular check-ins throughout the two-year timeframe. At the end of the two years, there is a formal verification process where organisations review and report on the progress they've made against the Charter criteria.

How much does it cost: The Charter's costs are subsidised to keep them as low as possible. The cost for signatories is £625 and £250 for pledges, this is a flat fee and covers the two year period and includes the verification and 1-1 support. Fee waivers are available on a case-by-case basis in exceptional circumstances.

Who can join the Charter?: Any organization related to the procurement or use of sports apparel from grassroots clubs to national governing bodies will be considered.

How long does the Charter commitment last? The commitment runs for two years from the date of sign-up, with the option to continue or recommit at the end of the two-year period.

What support is provided? Pledge and Signatories receive tailored one-to-one support to help overcome specific challenges and access sustainability expertise.

What Happens After the Two-Year Charter Term? At the end of the two-year verification period, organisations have three options:

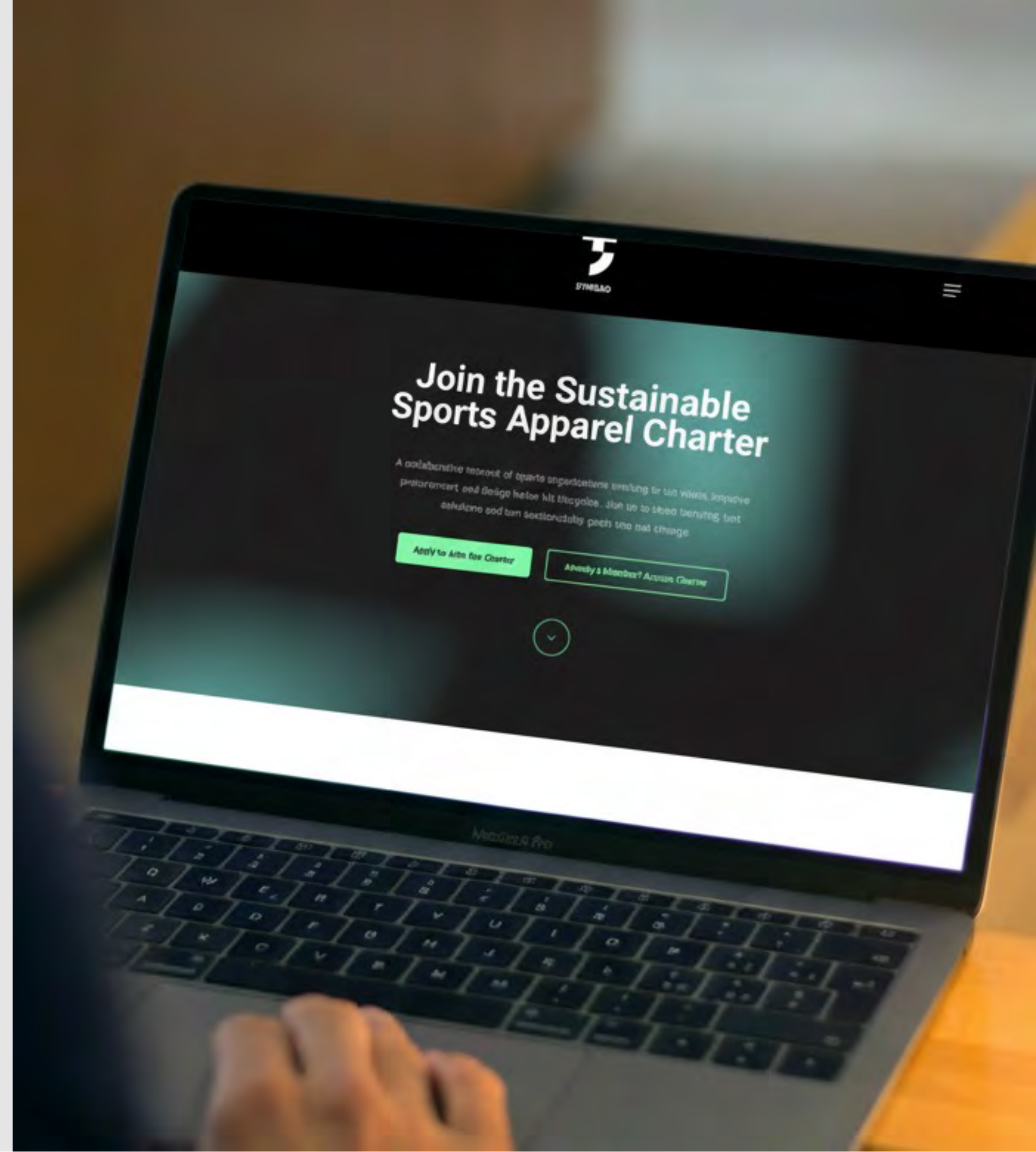
- i. Maintain Verified Charter Status: Pay a £250 renewal fee, payable every two years. Includes high level annual review, continued use of the Charter badge, and listing as an active signatory
- ii. Recommit to New Roadmap. Re-enter full Charter cycle with updated roadmap and targets. Full Charter fee (£625 flat fee for two years) applies.
- iii. Exit the Charter. If no renewal is made, organisations will be moved to "Alumni Status" and no longer publicly listed as active Charter members.



HOW DO WE JOIN?

Next steps...

To learn more about the Charter, and to sign up, visit 5thread.com for full details. Alternatively, feel free to get in touch with me directly if you'd like to discuss it further jo@5thread.com





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