Next Door Repairs

Delivered by

TWIST & TURN

Lead Partner

A STATE OF NATURE

Funded by




Next Door Repairs
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Next Door Repairs is a peer-to-peer initiative that connects people with local repair resources, skills and services. As part of our six-month project, we developed a prototype of the Next Door Repair Map, an innovative tool designed to connect neighbours interested in offering or accessing textile repair within their local community.

We want to make it easier for residents to share and monetise their repair skills, promoting sustainability and reducing waste.

Team

TWIST & TURN

A creative studio focused on circular design, sustainable innovation, and community-driven solutions. We work at the intersection of research, design, and systems thinking to create meaningful change in how we produce, consume, and engage with stuff and each other.

Innovation & Development Lead:
Aniela Fidler-Wieruszewska

Research Lead:
Megha Chauhan

Design Lead:
Joasia Fidler-Wieruszewska

A STATE OF NATURE

A purpose-led clothing brand and workshop based in London, championing craftsmanship, repair culture, and regenerative business practices. A State of Nature blends traditional techniques with modern thinking to create sustainable meaningful and timeless fashion.

Business Lead:
Barbara Fidler-Wieruszewska

Technical Lead & Business Support:
Nick Eisa



WITH GRATITUDE

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the participants and local menders who generously shared their time, stories, and expertise throughout this project. Your contributions were invaluable in shaping the Next Door Repair Map.

This project was made possible through the support of Innovate UK, whose funding enabled us to explore new approaches to strengthening local textile repair networks.

UKRI Innovate UK

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Why Repair, Why Here?

From skilled craftspeople keeping textile traditions alive to everyday individuals patching a beloved garment, menders span all backgrounds, ages, and experiences. Yet their skills often remain hidden or underused. Meanwhile, those seeking mending services include sustainability-conscious consumers, cost-aware households, and people with emotional attachments to clothes they can't bear to discard. While their motivations vary, from environmental concerns to economic necessity, they share a desire to extend the life of their garments. Despite this natural alignment, the repair ecosystem remains fragmented. Opportunities to connect are limited, and local skills go unnoticed.

Why Repair?

Despite growing awareness, about 300,000 tonnes of clothing still end up in household residual waste bins across the UK every year, either landfilled or incinerated, often without first being reused or repaired. Repair offers a resistance to this wasteful cycle.

Repair is more than a sustainability solution; it's a radical act of care. It challenges fast fashion's disposable culture and reconnects us with the value of our belongings. Repair sites can be 'pop-up alternatives to the throwaway society,' where people gain agency over consumption and feel part of a shared, sustainable future.

Why Hackney and Why Non-Professional Menders?

East London is a borough defined by creativity, diversity, and community spirit. We came across multiple micro-hubs of activity, sewing groups, textile collectives, fashion brands, and community-led workshops. Yet, despite this energy, access to repair remains fragmented. Many residents struggle to find menders or opportunities to learn outside formal or commercial settings.

Hackney became a natural home for this project. With A State of Nature based there, we saw an opportunity to root the pilot locally. Their existing community connections, workshop space, and visibility offered a way to take on a more active, public-facing role in the repair landscape. This grounded approach allowed us to design with the neighbourhood, not just for it.

Non-professional menders are central to closing this gap. Often working informally, at home, in clubs, or across generations, they normalise repair as an everyday act of care. They're enthusiastic, eager to practise, and capable of building local momentum. But without infrastructure, their skills go unrecognised and underused.

By connecting non-professional menders with neighbours who want to learn or need repairs, we support a low-cost, community-rooted repair culture. This peer-to-peer approach expands access, boosts confidence, and helps grow East London's capacity for circular living.

Our Objectives

We view repair as a way of building relationships, imagining better futures, and reclaiming value. Next Door Repair was a design experiment rooted in Hackney, asking: what would it take to make local, peer-to-peer textile repair easier, visible, and more valuable? These objectives were the threads that pulled us through each stage of the project.

1

EMPOWER LOCAL ACTION

Create a digital platform and resources **empowering individuals** to share and monetise their repair skills.

Create opportunities for **upskilling** by delivering practical, repair-confidence-building workshops with menders.

2

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Build **lasting relationships** within the Hackney community through open, **ongoing conversations** about sustainability, care and craft.

Understand the **motivations and needs of non-professional menders** and their place in local repair cultures.

3

CHAMPION A CULTURE OF REPAIR

Promote sustainable habits by demonstrating how **repair benefits** individuals, their finances, and the planet.

Position A State of Nature as a **visible advocate for circular fashion** grounded in local action.

4

GROW AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Grow **community engagement** through in-person events and digital outreach.

Attract and **engage new audiences** who align with **repair values**, deepening A State of Nature's brand loyalty and broadening reach.

What Did We Deliver?

From digital tools to hands-on experiences, Next Door Repair translated its goals into real-world actions. These deliverables capture the tangible outputs of the project, things we designed, shared, and tested with and for our community.

DIGITAL TOOL

Next Door Repair Map (Prototype)
A peer-to-peer tool to help neighbours find, offer and exchange repair services locally.

IN-PERSON EXPERIENCES

Four hands-on repair workshops
Led by meding experts, the workshops focused on building repair confidence.

Live participant feedback + testing
Conversations with attendees captured community attitudes, needs, and usability insights.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Instagram polls, questions & content
Used to gather insight into local repair habits and share project updates.

Newsletters and callouts
Early conversations around repair while inviting residents into the project.

MENDING RESOURCES

Mender interviews & documentation
Short videos and articles showcasing personal repair techniques, motivations, and skills.

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Mapping the repair ecosystem in Hackney
Combined desk research with on-the-ground insight into commercial and informal repair networks.

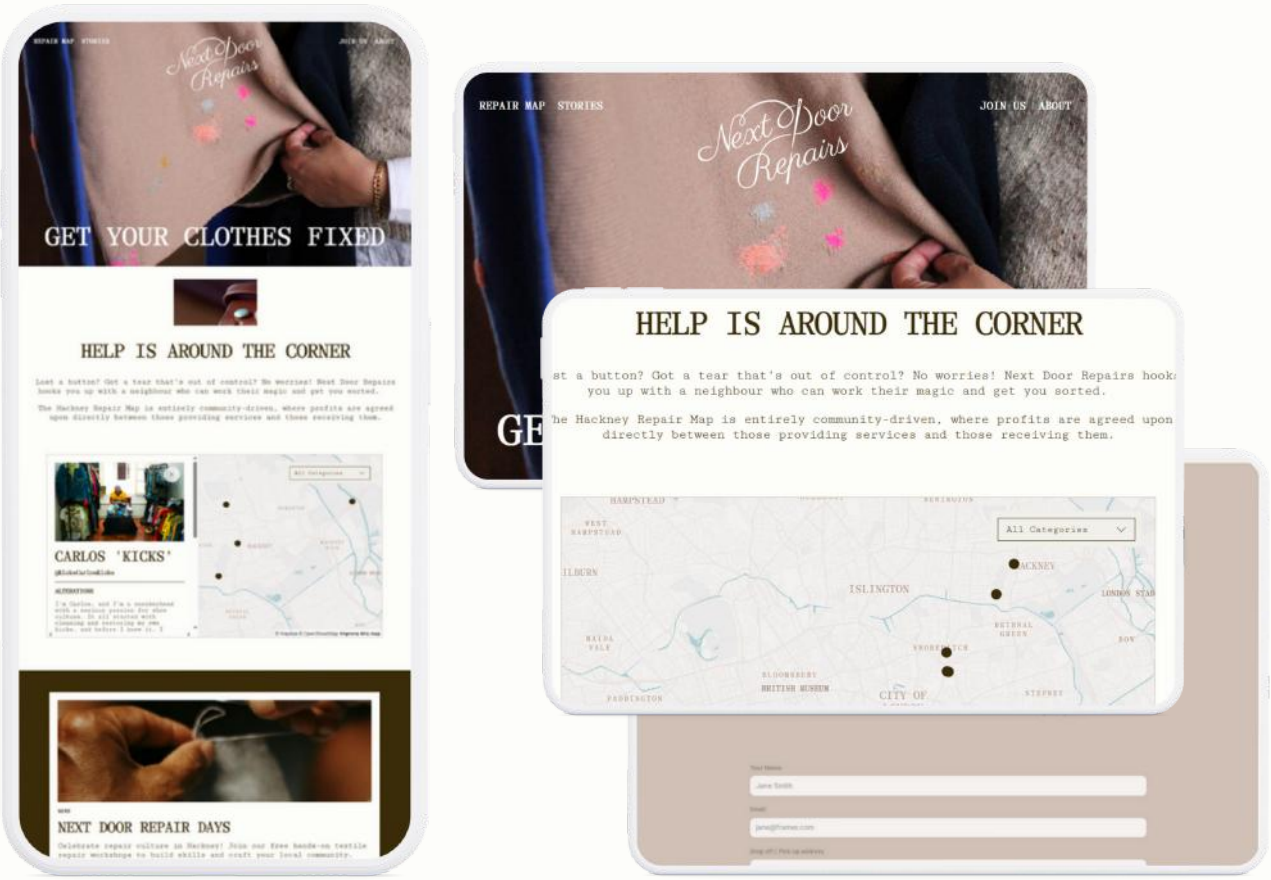
Post-workshop reflections & synthesis
Captured learnings to guide future iterations of both the platform and community engagement strategies.

Key Output: Map Prototype

We designed and tested a prototype of the Next Door Repair Map for Hackney, our peer-to-peer digital tool that helps neighbours offer, find, and request textile repair services. Drawing on our secondary research into the local repair landscape and the needs of A State of Nature, the prototype was built using Framer and prioritised simplicity, allowing users to:

Browse local menders and s**ee what services they offe**r
Join and **create their mender profile through an onboarding form**.
Explore **location-based listings and community updates**

This prototype was used in our workshops for user testing. We gathered feedback and explored the practicalities of decentralised, trust-based repair networks.



Try the prototype!

Our Approach

Our approach to the prototype building and testing was values-led: people-first, circular, and locally grounded and driven by questions. We asked not just what a peer-to-peer repair tool could do, but how it should be built, and who it should centre.

PEOPLE-CENTRED

How might a peer-to-peer repair tool support everyday mending skills and informal networks?

We set out to bridge the gap between textile enthusiasts eager to share their skills and community members seeking simple, accessible repair help. Our focus was on non-professional menders and hobbyists, a vibrant yet often overlooked segment in local repair ecosystems.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

Can trust-based exchanges make small repairs accessible and more communal?

We explored whether a low-barrier peer exchange model could enable neighbours to offer or access help locally. Our workshops suggested that a community-led system can work, but only if trust, access and care are built in.

CIRCULAR BY DESIGN

Could small, everyday acts of repair shift how we value and use clothing?

We were curious whether repair-focused interactions could extend product life and support a more sustainable local economy. Our approach explored how building everyday repair skills might foster longer use and encourage circular habits.

CONVENIENCE

What if picking up and dropping off repairs were as easy as borrowing a book?

We prototyped practical enablers like location filters and drop-off points to reduce friction. Could a local shop, A State of Nature, or a trusted studio become a reliable hub for repair exchanges?

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

What motivates people to repair, and what helps them feel confident doing it?

We tested how hands-on learning builds both confidence and community. Through workshops, we mapped existing repair knowledge and identified barriers to participation. We asked: Can mending sessions attract contributors to a peer-based repair network?

How Did We Do It?

We combined research, design and live testing to understand how peer-to-peer repair could work in practice. These were the core activities that shaped the project:

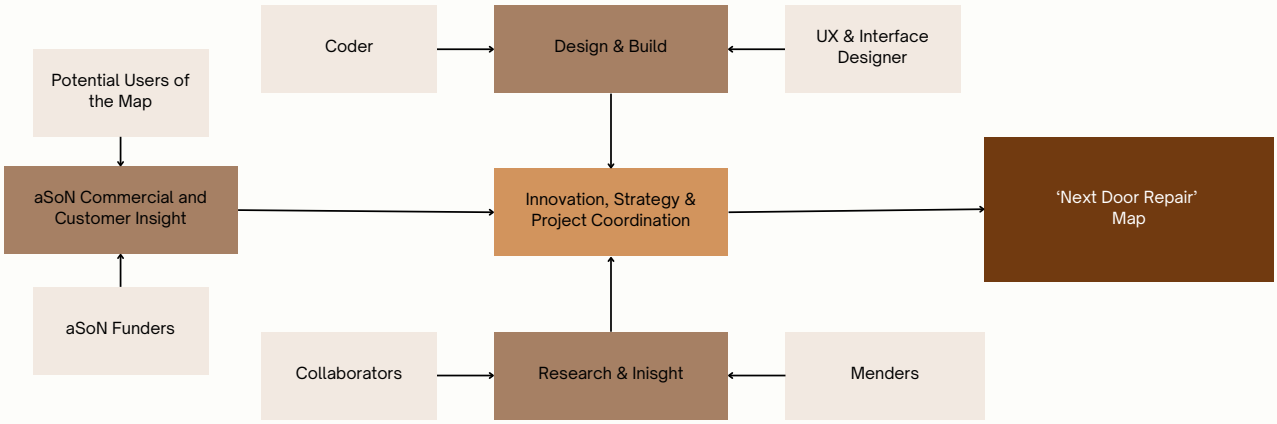
01 Delivered four hands-on mending workshops to explore learning needs, repair values, and design priorities.

02 Interviewed textile menders about their motivations, tools, and support needs to inform both platform features and content.

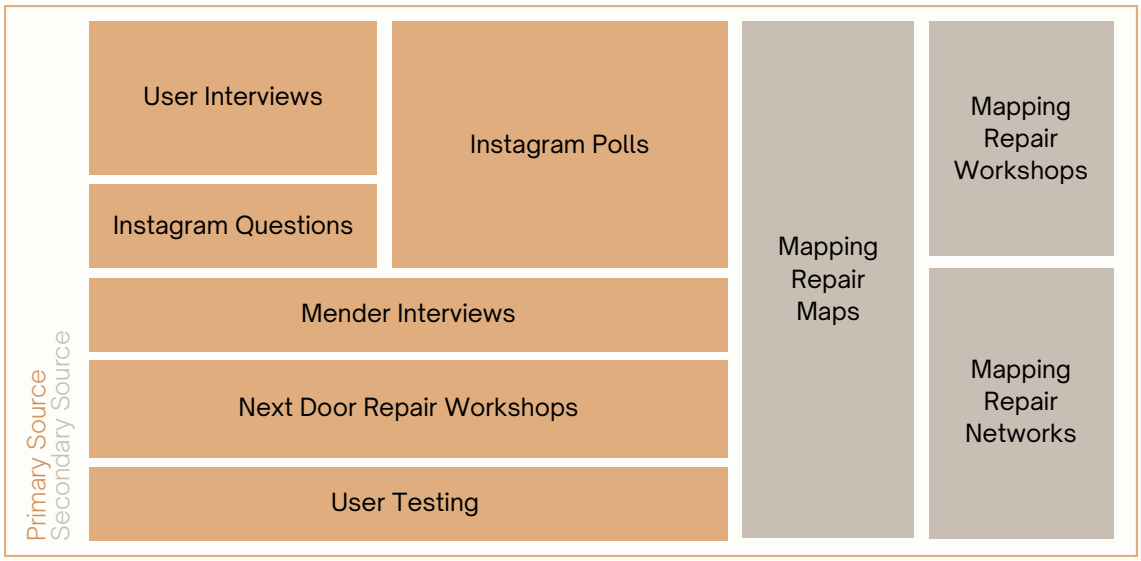
03 Mapped the repair ecosystem in Hackney, combining field research with insights from Instagram polls, user interviews, and community callouts.

04 Tested our map prototype during the workshop, gathering feedback on usability, trust-building, and service categories.

05 Explored drop-off and pickup solutions to support safe exchanges of garments between neighbours.



We drew from a mix of primary and secondary data sources to shape the platform's design and purpose:



JUNE

Project Setup
Defined project scope, outcomes and KPIs

aSoN Brand Analysis
Business Review; Evaluation of current Customer-Centric Approach; Exploration of New Revenue Streams; and Competitive Positioning

JULY

Visual Communication & Outreach Design
Visual Guide Design, Distribution Channel Identificatio, and Timeline for Visual Content Production

Community Insights
Collected photos and stories of garments, and conducted exploratory interviews with aSoN clients

AUGUST

User Interviews & Mender Interviews
Conducted deep-dive interviews to understand motivations, needs and local context

Secondary Research
Mapped repair workshops, informal networks, and incentive models

Digital Outreach Launch
Distributed newsletters and ran Instagram polls to gather community views

Repair Pickup Logistics
Developed and assessed drop-off/pick-up locker system and conducted health and safety review

SEPTEMBER

Data Synthesis & Mapping
Analysed feedback from earlier interviews and polls
Mapped Hackney's formal and informal repair landscape

Outreach & Material Prep
Printed and distributed Next Door Repair Days materials
Filmed 4 short videos with local menders

Infrastructure Setup
Finalised pickup/drop-off point design

OCTOBER

Platform Development Begins
Prototyped the Next Door Repair Map with the developer

NOVEMBER

Next Door Repair Days (Delivery Phase)
Hosted 4 workshops at A State of Nature
Tested the digital map with users
Collected live feedback for iteration

Repair Stories



Early Insights from the Community

We spoke with potential map users across East London to understand what repair means to them and explore their service preferences. We created detailed profiles capturing both practical repair needs and the emotional connections people have with their garments. These insights shaped our platform design and social media strategy.

TRUST DRIVES ENGAGEMENT

People need confidence in both people and process. Word-of-mouth and clear communication build essential trust.

REPAIR IS EMOTIONAL

Garments hold memory and meaning, not just function. This changes how people evaluate cost, care and value.

CONVENIENCE IS KEY

Location, turnaround time, and ease of use shape engagement. Simple logistics make or break the experience.

DIGITAL CAN HELP (WITH CARE)

Technology should enhance human connection, not replace it. Platforms must feel inclusive to all community members.



AMAN

Trust comes first

Aman prefers repairers he knows or businesses with a good track record, especially for sentimental items. While happy to pay more for complex jobs, he's looking for budget-friendly help with simple fixes.



OPHELIA

Clarity and convenience matter

Ophelia wants transparent pricing and clear communication (before/after pics). She's used to dry cleaners but finds them inconvenient, ideally, repair would be just around the corner.



GAELLE

Community connection is the key

Working in sustainable fashion, Gaelle prefers word-of-mouth recommendations over online platforms. She dreams of a warm, chatty repair space where older, skilled people aren't left out.



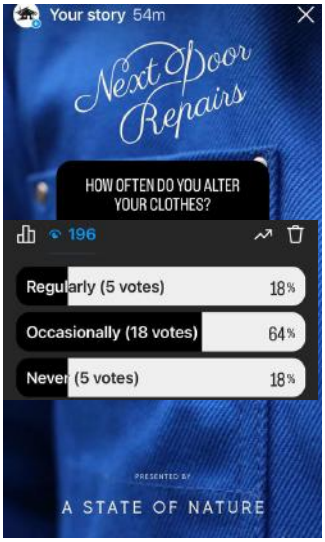
Repair Sentiment

Digital Outreach

Instagram Polls

We ran an Instagram poll to learn more about A State of Nature's audience's mending habits in Hackney. Here's what the community shared:







REPAIR HABITS ARE STRONG

63% of people said they always mend their clothes when they're damaged, and 64% occasionally alter their garments.

BUT SERVICES AREN'T EASY TO FIND

Only 34% said they could easily access professional menders. More than half (52%) found repair difficult due to cost or convenience.

MENDING ISN'T JUST FOR EXPENSIVE CLOTHES

68% disagreed with the idea that only high-end clothing is worth repairing.

COST IS A CONCERN, BUT NOT A DEAL-BREAKER

While 31% said mending can be expensive, most people (69%) felt it's worth the investment.

QUALITY OVER SPEED

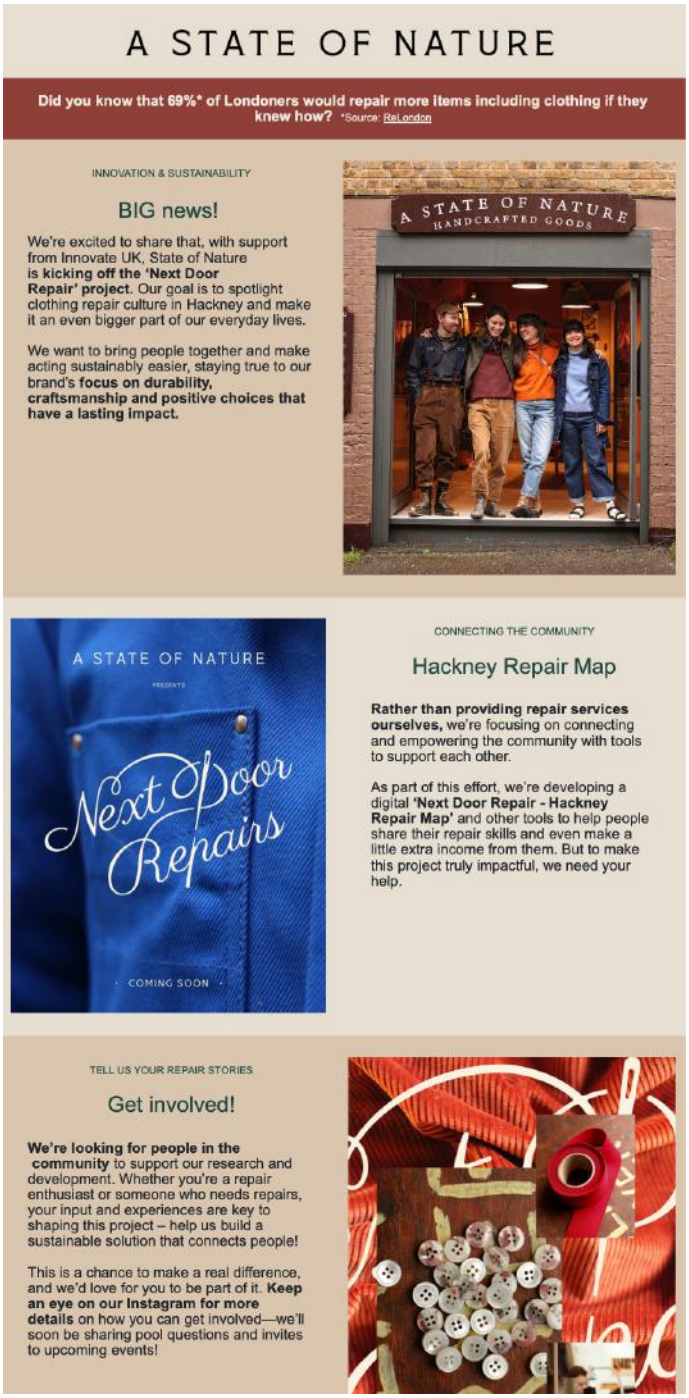
55% said quality was the most important factor when choosing a mending service, with none prioritising a fast turnaround.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPAIR COMMUNITY

- Bridge the 29% gap between repair interest and service access
- Highlight quality craftsmanship in communications, as it is the most valued trait.
- Expand repair culture beyond expensive items
- Positioning mending as affordable and worthwhile, reinforcing positive perceptions.

Newsletters and Call Outs

Through newsletters and social media callouts, we invited East Londoners into early conversations around repair. This outreach helped us gauge interest, build connections, and begin gathering insight into what people want and need, from local repair services.







At the Repair Table

Conversations with Those Who Stitch, Darn and Care

We spoke to three menders with diverse practices and perspectives, each offering valuable insight into the role of repair in their lives and communities. Their reflections highlighted how mending supports not only sustainability but also well-being, creativity, and connection.







In conversation with
Madeline Tanoto | *Make Do Mend*

'I took a lot of solace in that slow, calming craft. It allowed me to see mending not as a chore but as an incredible art form.'

EARLY CONNECTION TO MENDING

Madeline Tanoto turned to mending during a period of personal burnout, finding comfort in its slow, meditative rhythm. 4What began as a personal practice grew into a public offering when she received a grant to set up a mending station in Lewisham Shopping Centre.

REPAIRING KNITWEAR

Madeline specialises in knitwear repair, particularly moth-eaten wool, but also works with a range of materials, including acrylic. She adapts each project to the needs of the garment and client, from invisible mending to visible, expressive repairs. One standout project involved restoring a Christian Dior mohair cardigan for a client who hoped to pass it on to her daughter, reflecting the emotional legacy of repair.

TEACHING AND COMMUNITY

Her workshops often attract those newer to mending, and she notes a strong appetite for accessible, broad-ranging methods. Rather than focusing on one school of technique, Madeline encourages inclusive approaches that are welcoming and meditative.



THOUGHTS ON THE NEXT DOOR REPAIRS

Madeline sees strong potential in peer-to-peer platforms like Next Door Repair to connect skilled makers with local repair seekers. For her, repair is about trust, memory, and care, not just fixing. Reflecting on digital discovery, she adds, "Instagram helps, but with algorithms, you often don't see what you really want. This platform could offer that personal touch - connecting people who can actually meet and learn from one another.'

Watch Mad's Sashiko YouTube Short here!
- Part 01
- Part 02


SILVER REED







In conversation with Alice Morell Evans

'Repairing for people around me... we'll share a meal, and I'll take care of the repairs. It's a way of building relationships.'

EARLY BEGINNINGS AND PASSION FOR REPAIR

Alice began stitching at age four, learning the craft from her grandmother, a former designer, and the business side from her grandfather, who taught her to value her skills from a young age. This early exposure shaped both her technical ability and understanding of repair's worth.

CHALLENGES IN REPAIRING KNITWEAR

Invisible mending is often requested, especially for sentimental or high-value items. Alice notes that while natural fibres like wool respond well to this technique, synthetics such as acrylic are more difficult to work with. Managing expectations is key, as not all fibres yield the same results.

ADVICE FOR KNITWEAR CARE

She recommends starting with basic darning to reinforce holes, especially in natural fibres. By catching laddering stitches early, beginners can extend a garment's life with no advanced skills needed.

THOUGHTS ON THE NEXT DOOR REPAIRS

Alice sees huge potential in platforms that connect makers and communities. Beyond business, she values repair as an act of care and sees these networks as a way to nurture relationships. For her, local mending feels like an extension of family traditions of looking after one another.

Watch Alice's Darning Video Tutorial here!





In conversation with
Skye Pennant | *Slow Stitch Club*

ORIGIN AND PASSION FOR KNITWEAR REPAIR

Skye's interest in knitwear repair began at university, shaped by internships with knitwear brands and a chance encounter with a darning loom in a vintage shop. This discovery sparked her fascination with mending, which she later shared widely through social media.

CHALLENGES IN KNITWEAR REPAIR

Moth damage is a frequent issue, often more severe than clients realise. Skye addresses this with preventative steps like freezing garments and tailoring each repair to high-wear areas for durability and visual harmony.

MEMORABLE PROJECT

One standout repair involved a cardigan with over 100 moth holes. The client, an artist, requested colourful, visible mends, offering Skye an opportunity to experiment with vibrant darning styles, matching the client's personality.

ADVICE FOR EXTENDING KNITWEAR LIFE

Skye recommends simple preventative steps, like using cedarwood or freezing, and advises beginners to match the thread closely to the garment colour for strong, subtle repairs.



THOUGHTS ON THE NEXT DOOR REPAIRS

Skye views platforms like Nextdoor Repair as key to revitalising the repair culture. By connecting local menders with communities, they support sustainability, encourage care over consumption, and build trust-based, local economies.

Watch Skyes' Darning Video here!
- Part 01
- Part 02



What's Already Working

A Look at Existing Community Repair Networks

Repair Networks

Brands, Menders, Businesses and Communities connect everyone in the clothing-repair ecosystem. By mapping these touchpoints, we looked into where skills, tools and communities overlap. Many of these networks not only offer repair services but also run workshops, provide repair kits, or share tutorials, making it easier for people to find help, learn techniques, and keep their clothes in circulation.



WORKSHOPS

Both in-person and corporate workshops are conducted, providing hands-on training in repair skills. These are often seen as more effective than kits or tutorials because they offer practical training and community engagement.

REPAIR KITS

Many organisations provide repair kits to help people repair items at home. While they support independence, kits often rely on self-guided learning and may not work well for everyone, especially when skill levels vary.

ONLINE TUTORIALS

Digital content, like videos or step-by-step guides, makes repair learning more accessible to wider audiences. These resources are especially valuable for people who can't attend in-person workshops.

Repair Workshops

We mapped repair workshops across Hackney to see what's already available and how they help people fix things locally. This showed us what services exist, what's missing and where new repair options could work best. By finding out what's already there, we could spot gaps in services, see opportunities for new workshops, and connect with local repair businesses, all helping to build a stronger network of places where people can get things fixed.

WORKSHOP TYPES

DIY/Skill-Based: Hands-on sessions where people learn basic repair skills like sewing, darning, patching or machine stitching.

Collaborative/Community: Group spaces that focus on social repair, where attendees learn together and often share knowledge.

Professional Services: Led by trained repairers, offering more advanced or specialist skills such as tailoring, dyeing, or alterations.

WORKSHOP HOSTS

Independent Menders/Designers: Often small, locally-based repairers or designers who may also advocate for sustainable fashion.

Community Organisations: Non-profits, local councils and social enterprises running workshops as part of wider programmes and community development efforts.

Commercial Enterprises: Businesses offering repair as part of their customer engagement or branding strategy.

TARGET AUDIENCE

General Public: Open to anyone interested in learning to repair.

Specific Groups: Some workshops focus on certain demographics for example, students, older adults or low-income households.

Skill Levels: Sessions vary from beginner-friendly to intermediate or advanced.

ACCESSIBILITY

Cost: We noted whether workshops were free, low-cost or paid.

Location & Time: We looked at when and where workshops were held, evenings, weekends, etc., to see if they were accessible to different groups.

CHALLENGE

Funding & Support: Many workshops face challenges in securing long-term funding or support to continue or grow.

Insights from Repair Practitioners

We spoke to six individuals and groups involved in local mending initiatives. These conversations revealed both the strengths and ongoing challenges faced by community menders working in Hackney and beyond.

WORKSHOP CULTURE & PARTICIPATION

Many workshops are small and intimate, often attended by women, particularly mothers attending daytime sessions. Facilitators noted difficulty engaging male participants, even when workshops are open and inclusive.

ONLINE COMPETITION & ACCESSIBILITY

Several menders noted that demand for in-person workshops has declined due to the availability of free online tutorials (YouTube, social media). While digital tools extend reach, one repair initiative, a world map of menders, shared that limited tech skills and funding have impacted their ability to improve their offering.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Mending is rarely a financially viable profession on its own. Many practitioners rely on other income sources, such as full-time jobs or commissions through social media. One interviewee highlighted the commercial pressure introduced by app-based services, which can undermine the slow, intentional ethos of mending.

STIGMA

Drop-off services are available at some local stores but uptake can be low. One provider mentioned clients often feel embarrassed to ask for help with repairs, worrying that their lack of repair knowledge will be judged,

Locating Repair, Digitally

We reviewed existing mapping platforms to understand both their limitations and their potential to support local repair ecosystems, highlighting what they do well and where they fall short.

LIMITED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Most textile-focused maps (e.g. Baukjen, Hackney Council, Fixing Fashion) are not open source, restricting user contributions and excluding local communities from the mapping process.

LACK OF FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

These maps do not track engagement or impact, making it hard to assess their effectiveness or improve their design.

OUTDATED OR INACCESSIBLE INTERFACES

Aesthetic and usability issues limit the reach and relevance of existing platforms, especially for non-technical users

FALLING FRUIT AS A MODEL

This open-source map allows for user-generated content, offering an adaptable framework for NDR.

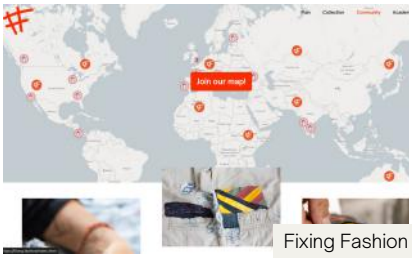
PRECIOUS PLASTIC AS INSPIRATION

Built by developers without mapping tools, this project shows the power of digital infrastructure in scaling engagement, even if the model exceeds our current technical scope.

By learning from these examples, we aimed to create a collaborative repair map with user input at its core, helping build stronger community participation in clothing repair.



Baujken



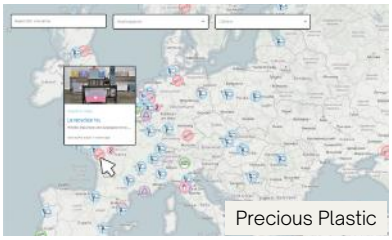
Fixing Fashion

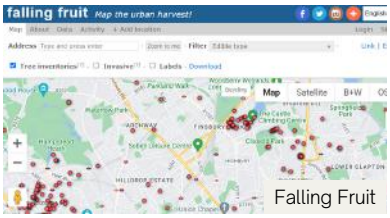

Hackney Council



Visible Mending

Fashion Focused


Precious Plastic



Falling Fruit

Beyond Fashion



What's Next Door Repairs

Peer-to-Peer Map Prototype

How the Map Was Made

DESIGN ROLE

Joasia Fidler- Wieruszewska (Twist & Turn) led the UX/UI design and development of the Hackney Repair Map, focusing on a user-friendly interface and intuitive navigation. She created and coded a form for local menders to easily join the map, ensuring it remained dynamic and community-driven. Features like search filters and interactive elements were tested in workshops, with user feedback directly shaping improvements in functionality and experience.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community feedback was central to the map's development. During the workshops, participants were encouraged to engage with the map and share input on its design, ease of use, and the services they wanted included. This feedback allowed the team to make iterative adjustments, refining the platform to better serve Hackney residents. Usability testing also revealed the map's potential to connect people with local services, with participants suggesting ways to make it more user-friendly, such as adding service ratings or appointment booking. This input is vital to ensuring the map remains relevant and evolves with the community's needs.



Potential Mender Profiles

We imagined profiles that reflect the diverse skills, styles, and stories of potential menders on the map. These fictional accounts bring to life the personalities and preferences of non-professional menders, offering a glimpse of who might show up on our local peer-to-peer platform.

LARA GREENFIELD

message me on IG: @LaraStitchSip

ALTERATIONS

I'm Lara, and I've got a soft spot for knitwear in need of a little TLC. I specialize in delicate knit repairs—fixing small holes in wool sweaters, reattaching unraveling cuffs, and bringing well-loved pieces back to life, stitch by careful stitch. I actually started mending knits as a hobby, and now I offer my help casually to friends and neighbors in Hackney who don't want to part with their favorite knits just because of a little wear and tear. I also host "Stitch & Sip" nights, either in my flat or at cozy local cafes, where I teach simple darning techniques in a relaxed, friendly setting. Everyone's welcome to join, whether you're learning to mend for the first time or just looking for good company while you work. We keep it low-key—tea, cake, and a few laughs while we repair together. If you've got a sweater or scarf that's seen better days, feel free to reach out. I'd be happy to give it the care it deserves!

E5 8LW



CARLOS 'KICKS'

@KicksCarlosKicks

ALTERATIONS

I'm Carlos, and I'm a sneakerhead with a serious passion for shoe culture. It all started with cleaning and restoring my own kicks, and before I knew it, I became the go-to guy for sneaker repair here in Hackney. I can fix just about anything, from worn-out soles to re-stitching torn uppers—if it's got a problem, I can usually revive it and keep it looking fresh. I also love customising sneakers with unique paint jobs and designs, often drawing inspiration from Latin American street art and hip-hop culture. There's something special about turning a standard pair of sneakers into a one-of-a-kind statement piece.

E8 4PH



TAYO ADEKUNLE

IG me @Tayo164282991

UPCYCLING

Hey, I'm Tayo – people around here call me 'the denim guy' I have a thing for fixing up ripped jeans and fraying jackets, especially when I can turn them into something unique. I started out as a skateboarder, and back then, I was constantly tearing my clothes. So, I learned to mend them myself, and over time, I got pretty good at it. Now, I repair denim for others in the community, and I try to make each piece stand out with a bit of character-like visible mending, colorful patches, and stitched designs that make rips feel intentional. For me, it's not just about fixing clothes; it's about keeping things going, giving them a story, and connecting with people who want to make their stuff last.

E9 5PF



RUBY "PATCHES" THOMPSON

Just WhatsApp me a picture of what needs repairing at 03045397192

ALTERATIONS

I'm known in my neighborhood for turning damaged clothes into wearable art. A self-taught sewer, i love finding innovative ways to bring new life to old garments, often adding colorful patches, embroidery, or visible stitching to give each piece a unique flair. i host monthly "Mend & Make' sessions in local parks or cafes, where neighbors drop by to stitch, swap ideas, and learn basic repair techniques. If you have a pair of jeans that need patching or a jacket with a tear, i'M the one to add that special touch.

E1 6BT



ANITA ROSARIO

Ask for me in the Hackney Library.

STITCHING

Hi, I'm Anita! I'm a retired teacher and spend my days sharing my love of sewing at the Hackney Library. I'm happy to help anyone who needs a quick fix—whether it's reattaching a button, mending a torn seam, or adjusting a hem. I've been sewing since I was a teenager, and nothing makes me happier than seeing people keep their favorite clothes going a little longer. I believe that every little stitch can bring us closer as a community, and I just love the conversations that unfold over a bit of mending. I see people of all ages—students, parents, pensioners—each with a story to tell about their garment. Sometimes, folks are nervous to ask for help with something small, but I always say, bring it in! No repair is too minor. I also run free workshops for anyone wanting to learn the basics. I know sewing can feel daunting if you're new to it, but I'm here to make it easier and hopefully a bit fun. So if you're ever nearby, come say hello at the library—I'd love to see you, whether you have a garment to mend or just want to chat.

E8 1GQ



AHMED "QUICK FIX" KHAN

email me at Ahmed.KQickfix@gmail.com

STITCHING

Hey there! I'm Ahmed, the guy to go to if your favorite hoodie or jeans have a tear or need a quick adjustment. I actually learned all my sewing skills from my grandmother, who was a real pro. Now, I like to share what I know with the community here in Hackney. I try to keep things laid-back and approachable. If you're curious, I'm more than happy to show you how to patch yourself or do some other basic repairs. I figure the more people know, the less we need to toss out—and that's good for everyone, right? Say hello if you're ever around!

E1 6JE

User Suggestions

During our workshops, participants shared thoughtful suggestions to improve our prototype's design, usability, and impact. This feedback highlighted what users need, from filters and directories to pricing guidance.

USER INTERFACE ENHANCEMENTS

Add an FAQ section to support beginners. Increase font sizes for categories and bios; consider adjustable or pop-up bios for readability.

REPAIR TYPES AS CATEGORIES + FILTERS

Categorise services by material (e.g., leather, woodwork, garments). Add postcode filters to help users find nearby services.

PROMOTION SUGGESTIONS

Promote the map via local libraries, town halls, and community centres. Provide printed onboarding material for accessibility.

MATERIALS & SKILLS DIRECTORY + SUPPLIER DIRECTORY

Include a directory to help users find menders by skill. List recommended suppliers or haberdasheries frequented by menders to make the map a comprehensive resource.

TRANSPARENCY & GUIDANCE

Add information on how menders are selected to build trust and make profiles less intimidating for beginners.

INDICATIVE PRICING

Show price ranges to help users understand typical costs.

AVAILABILITY

Including a 'next available' option for menders to indicate their schedule (e.g., can they take on work this week, next week). Add a feature indicating whether a mender is open to commissioned work.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

List community spaces for tool-sharing. Let menders tag profiles with skill level or experience. Include a counter to show completed projects via NDR.

COMPLAINT & FEEDBACK MECHANISM

Allow users to report issues or leave feedback to maintain service quality.



Next Door Repairs Workshops

06 - 09 Nov 2025

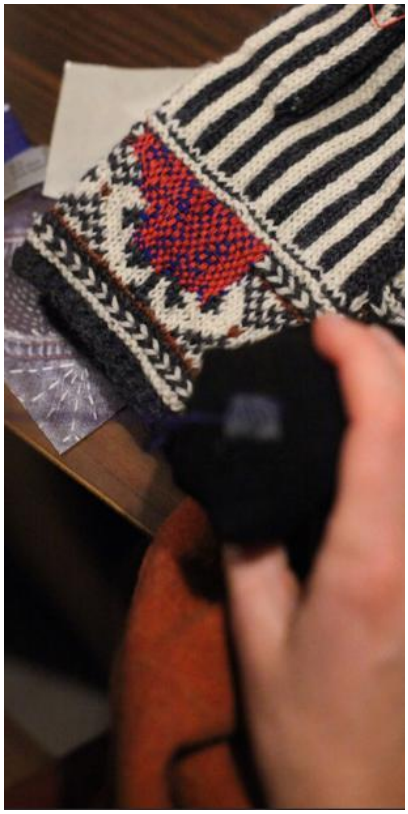
We hosted four repair workshops at A State of Nature, each limited to eight participants. These small-group sessions combined hands-on mending with open discussion, creating space to explore local repair habits and gather in-depth feedback to inform the development of the Hackney Repair Map prototype.



Sashiko Stitching
Madeline Tanoto (Nov 6)



Leather Repair
Nick Eisa (Nov 7)



Darning I & II
Skye Pennant (Nov 8–9)

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

Throughout the workshops, there was a strong emphasis on community-building. Participants not only learned valuable skills but also had the opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas and connect with others who are passionate about sustainability and repair.

MAP FEEDBACK

Participant feedback played a key role in shaping our map. By sharing their experiences with local repair services, attendees helped identify ways to improve clarity, navigation and relevance. Their input led to clearer service listings and a more user-friendly platform, making the map more accessible for beginners and local menders alike.

Sashiko Stitching



Madeline Tanoto - Mads Do Mend
Workshop 01

Participants were introduced to sashiko, a traditional Japanese decorative stitching technique. This session focused on the aesthetic and practical benefits of using sashiko to repair fabric.





LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Participants brought in personal garments to practise visible mending, showing eagerness to apply skills beyond the workshop.

REPAIR IN FAMILIES

One participant shared her experience of mending at home and sparked discussion on the idea of ‘designated menders’ within families.

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

A participant reflected on community stitching gatherings in Italy, where people would sew together while telling stories or singing. This suggests that mending can foster not only practical skills but also a sense of cultural and social connection.

‘I usually mend clothes at home for my family... just simple alterations. I’ve never done visible mending before, so I wanted to try it.’

LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORKS

Some participants felt disconnected from family and expressed a desire to find a local "granny', someone they could turn to for everyday repair needs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The poster campaign in Hackney successfully attracted residents, existing clients of A State of Nature, and non-locals connected to Hackney through work or community groups, like Hackney City Green Woodwork.

Leather Repair



Nick Eisa - A State of Nature
Workshop 02

Participants learned techniques for restoring leather goods, focusing on repairing bags, shoes, and other leather items, helping to extend their lifespan.





'I fixed my jacket and watch. They've got sentimental value, that's what keeps me going. I'd mend for friends but not for money.'

REPAIR WITH SENTIMENTAL VALUE

Participants shared stories of sentimental repairs, highlighting how personal connections can be a strong motivator for repair, rather than financial gain.

NEED FOR SPECIALISED REPAIR

Kevin struggled to find a service capable of replacing the waterproof zip on his high-quality bag, highlighting a gap in the community for specialised repairs beyond visible mending for stains.

BUILDING TRUST

A participant chose not to bring his leather bag, preferring to observe the skills first. His experience highlights how trust is crucial, especially when repairing high-value or sentimental items.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Participants appreciated the social aspect of the workshop, comparing it to a modern-day 'sewing centre' that could combat isolation.

INTEREST - MAINTENANCE + LEATHER REPAIR WORKSHOPS

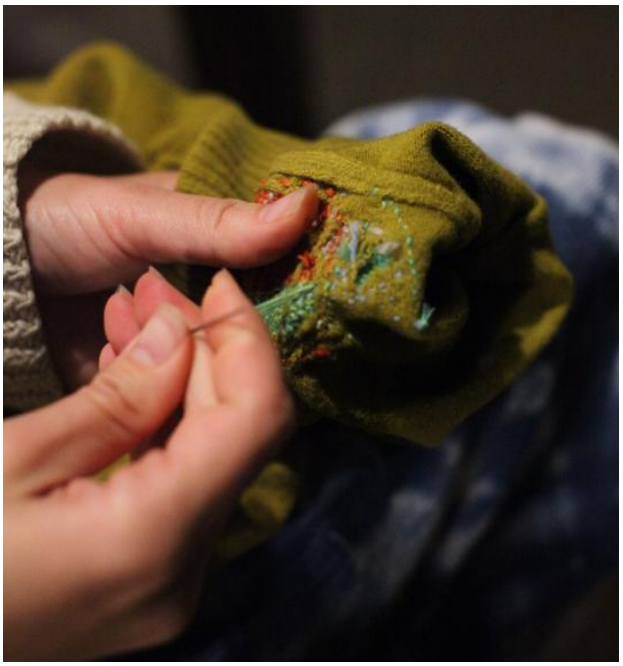
Of the three activities offered, polishing drew the most interest, highlighting a need for maintenance skills alongside repair techniques. Several participants expressed a desire for regular leather workshops, indicating community interest in recurring, skill-specific repair sessions.

Darning



Skye Pennant - Slow Stitch Club
Workshop 03 + 04

Participants learned practical darning techniques to repair holes and tears in fabric. These hands-on sessions provided the tools and knowledge needed to repair and maintain garments.





DESIRE FOR DURABLE REPAIR TECHNIQUES

Participants expressed interest in learning long-lasting repair methods. Stefana, who learned hoop darning from her grandmother, shared her experience and eagerness to explore more durable techniques.

NEED FOR CONFIDENCE-BUILDING RESOURCES

Some participants felt unsure about their repair skills and said they would need more confidence before joining the map as listed menders, highlighting the need for beginner-friendly support and resources.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIVITY

Participants noted the role of community groups, like WhatsApp, in facilitating local interactions.

'You drop off cake,
I'll drop off your socks.'

SKILL SHARING CULTURE

Many participants showed interest in bartering repair skills for other services. Some suggested trading food-making skills like banana bread for mending help, while others mentioned swaps like meals or tattoos, highlighting the strong appeal of skill-sharing within the repair community.

INTEREST IN COMMUNITY & SHARED SPACES

Participants recommended featuring shared spaces, like tool libraries or community centres, on the map as places to access sewing machines and equipment. Some shared their story about a local initiative where neighbours exchange food and services.

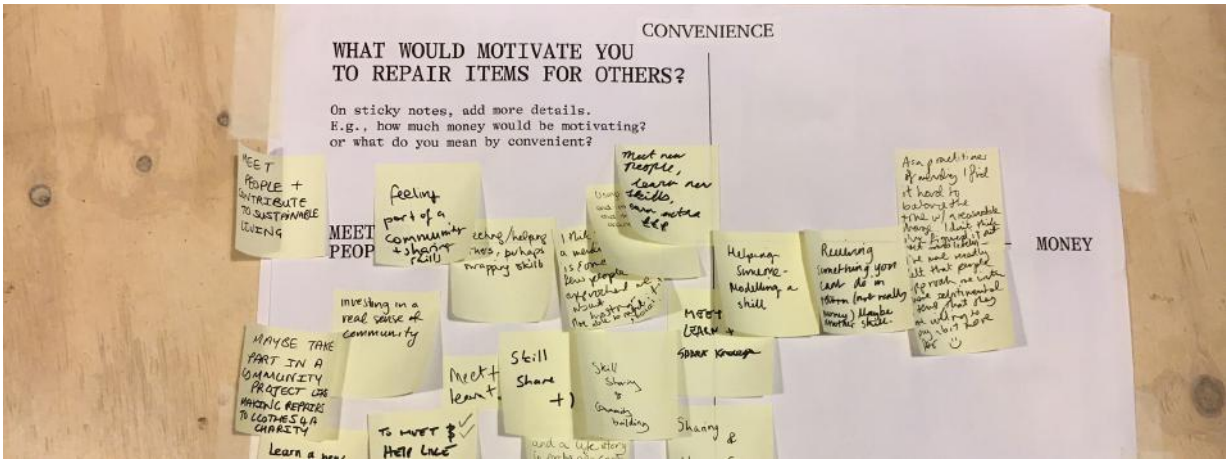


Learning to Mend

Workshop Insights

What Drives Repair?

Participants mapped their motivations to repair, ranging from skill-sharing to community ties. Their reflections offer insight into why repair matters beyond just fixing.



LEARNING & SKILL EXCHANGE

Many participants view repair activities as opportunities to learn and share skills. The workshops address an identified need for both skill acquisition and exchange, highlighting the relevance of hands-on mending sessions.

EMOTIONAL FULFILMENT & MEANING

Repair offered more than utility; it gave garments a 'second life' and participants a sense of purpose. Many described the process as emotionally fulfilling, highlighting repair as a meaningful, not just practical, act.

RECOGNITION & VALUE OF LABOUR

Repair is often undervalued, both economically and socially. Participants shared that the time, skill and care required aren't always recognised.

'As a practitioner of mending, I find it hard to balance the time with a reasonable charge. I don't think we've figured it out yet (probably) - I've heard recently that people approach me with more sentimental items, that they are willing to pay a bit more for :)'

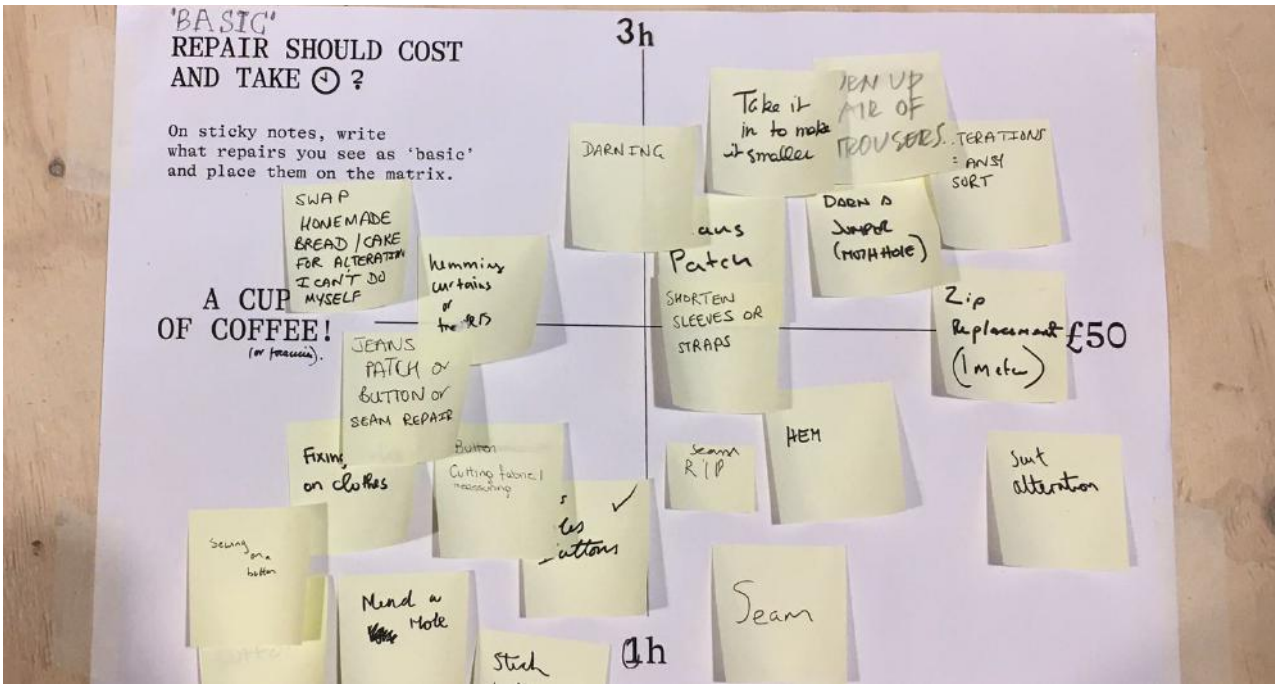
COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

For many participants, repair was as much about people as it was about mending. The workshops became a space to meet people, share skills and contribute to something larger than themselves. Whether repairing garments for charity, learning together, or exchanging ideas, participants described a strong sense of connection and shared purpose.

Repair was not seen as a purely functional act, but as a collective and socially meaningful experience, one that fostered relationships, belonging, and community-led action.

How We Value Repair?

Participants mapped the perceived value of repair, focusing on time and cost. This surfaced key insights around how basic repairs are priced, recognised, and valued, and what this could mean for the future of community mending.



TIME VS COST MATRIX OBSERVATIONS

Participants categorised ‘basic’ repairs based on two main axes: the time required to complete them (ranging from 1–3 hours) and the associated cost (nominal to ~£50).

VALUE PERCEPTION & RECOGNITION

Participants value repair work for emotional and communal reasons but barriers around the recognition of its time and effort remain. Higher-cost repairs, like zip replacements, signal opportunities for menders to monetise their skills, aligning with the Hackney Repair Map's objectives to connect repair providers with repair seekers.

‘BASIC REPAIRS’ & ACCESSIBILITY

The findings confirm that basic repairs (sewing buttons, fixing holes) are viewed as simple, accessible tasks. This creates a strong entry point for engaging low-skill menders and broader community members.

Repair Pick-Up & Drop-Off Point Feedback

During our workshops, we asked participants how they would prefer to exchange items for repair. Their responses revealed a range of comfort levels and practical considerations. Below is a summary of the options, ordered from most to least preferred.

"It would make more sense to have a dedicated area associated with makers, not cafés. It can be dodgy or tricky to find the maker and you might risk meeting the wrong person."

INDIRECT EXCHANGE VIA LOCAL DROP-OFF/PICK-UP POINT

Most preferred

This was considered the most practical, secure, and widely accepted option.

- Favoured for its neutrality, scalability and ease of access.
- Suggested collaboration with Hackney Council for drop-off points.
- Ideal for broader community use and cost-effective in the long term.

SHIPPING TO/FROM YOUR LOCATION (VIA POST)

Mixed

Participants were divided. Some found the postal exchange convenient, while others had concerns about cost, effort and sustainability.

- Useful for a few, but not suitable for widespread adoption
- Best suited for specific contexts rather than everyday use

IN-PERSON DROP-OFF/PICK-UP IN PUBLIC (E.G., LOCAL CAFÉ)

Moderately favoured

Participants appreciated this option, though some were unsure about using cafés.

- Structured or dedicated spaces were preferred over casual settings
- Seen as a good fit for learning opportunities alongside the exchange
- Would benefit from clearer coordination and defined locations

IN-PERSON DROP-OFF/ PICK-UP (E.G., AT HOME)

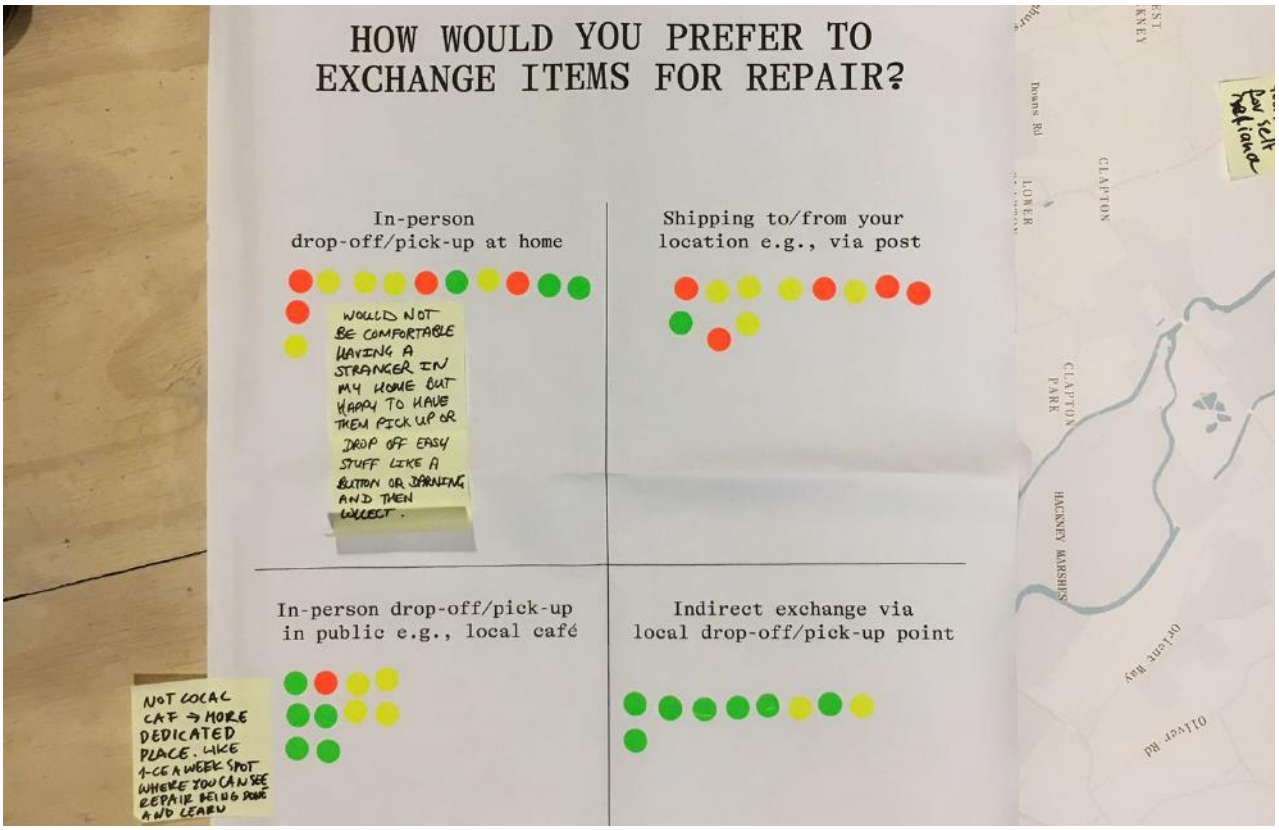
Least preferred

This option raised privacy and safety concerns.

- A few saw value in doorstep pickup for minor repairs
- Overall, participants preferred neutral, public locations over home-based exchanges


Locker
System Pilot
Our local Drop-Off/Pick-Up Point

As participants expressed a clear preference for accessible, neutral drop-off points, we piloted a locker system to explore how this might work in practice. Designed to streamline repair logistics, the system aimed to make exchanges more flexible, allowing users to participate without relying on standard shop hours.



Nick (A State of Nature, Technical Lead & Business Support) developed a prototype locker system designed to support flexible repair logistics. It offered a secure, self-service method for dropping off and picking up repair items, removing the need to coordinate directly with menders or visit a physical location during standard hours.

FEASIBILITY ISSUES

While the concept aligned well with participant preferences, the pilot revealed key challenges. Administrative costs were significantly higher than expected, while returns were too low to justify long-term use. This cost–benefit imbalance made the model unsustainable in its current form.

RECOMMENDATION

Although this pilot was not scalable as-is, the concept showed promise. Participants welcomed the convenience it offered. With further refinement, such as public funding or council-operated infrastructure, the model could be developed further to enhance local access to repair services in future iterations.

Key Learnings

Reflecting on our Progress

Reflecting on our Progress

Following the workshops and feedback sessions, we revisited our initial project goals to assess what we achieved and where there's room to grow. These KPIs helped guide our design, testing, and community engagement. Here, we reflect on how far we've come, what exceeded expectations, and what still needs development.

MAP DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

We created a basic outreach design to engage participants in R&D activities.



We developed and tested two versions of the Next Door Repair prototype, a preliminary concept and an improved version based on community feedback.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

We gathered feedback from 24 community members on the preliminary version of the Hackney Repair Map, far exceeding our original target of 6.



EARLY ADOPTER ENGAGEMENT

We aimed to onboard 10 early adopters, low-skill repair providers, to test a second version of the platform. This target remains unmet and highlights an opportunity for future engagement.



PUBLIC POLL RESPONSES

We aimed to gather 300 responses through Instagram polls on repair culture. We reached 87% of our target, offering valuable early insights into community sentiment and awareness.



REPAIR SECTOR INSIGHTS

We spoke to 6 local collaborators (community groups, organisations, and menders) and 12 potential non-professional menders about their views on the economic value of repair.



SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS

We hosted 4 hands-on workshops focused on essential textile repair skills, meeting our target for delivery and scope.



EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

We produced 4 expert-led repair videos, designed to support learning for low-skill menders and tested for accessibility and difficulty level.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

We gauged skill improvement in 5 participants through pre- and post-workshop conversations. While not formally measured, we noted a clear increase in confidence and practical ability, aligning with our goal of supporting early-stage menders.



What held us back?

While most of our goals were met or exceeded, we struggled to onboard low-skill repair providers to test the Next Door Repair Map. Here we reflect on the key barriers we encountered, from design issues to trust-building, and outline what we've learned to improve future iterations.

EARLY PROTOTYPE LIMITATIONS

01. Interface not intuitive for low-tech users
02. Visibility and filter features still in testing
03. Workshop feedback has informed improvements

TRUST & AWARENESS STILL BUILDING

01. Some hesitated due to unclear impact or value
02. Providers are unsure if the platform would benefit them
03. Future outreach and council endorsement could help build long-term trust.

NO IMMEDIATE INCENTIVES

01. No rewards or motivation to register early
02. No visible user base yet
03. Next iteration may include council partnerships or local promotions

LACK OF ONBOARDING SUPPORT

01. No step-by-step walkthrough for new users
02. Informal providers lacked confidence
03. A future version will include simplified registration



LOOKING AHEAD

The next version of the map will be more intuitive, better supported, and clearly communicate value, making it easier to engage low-skill providers and build community trust.

Recommendations



Economies of Repair

Repair work offers value that often isn't reflected in money. Most menders don't earn a steady income, don't work full-time, and rarely have visibility or support. To support them, we need new forms of economic thinking, ones rooted in care, cooperation and community need.

Challenges For Menders

LOW FINANCIAL INCENTIVE

Many small, community-focused repair services struggle to generate consistent income. Without a reliable customer base or external support, it isn't easy to make repair work financially sustainable.

MARKET FRAGMENTATION

Repair services are often small and dispersed, lacking economies of scale or visibility to attract a larger customer base.

LACK OF FORMAL RECOGNITION

Repair is often seen as a DIY activity or niche hobby rather than a professional service, limiting its economic potential.

What Could Work?

COMMUNITY FUNDING MODEL

Crowdfunding and micro-donations could help resource local menders, materials or outreach, especially if integrated into the platform's design.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OR NGO PARTNERSHIPS

Subsidies or support from councils or charitable organisations could offer stable funding for community-based repair initiatives and services.

SHARED ECONOMY OR CO-OPERATIVE MODEL - CRAFT SCHOOL

A co-operative repair model, where menders pool space, tools, or visibility, could reduce costs, support knowledge exchange, and increase financial viability.

Rethinking Revenue

We build on the previous reflection about economic barriers for menders, turning the lens toward how the platform itself could remain sustainable without replicating models that don't fit. In summary, traditional revenue models such as transaction fees and subscriptions do not seem to be suitable for the repair service landscape. Instead, focusing on community-building and attracting advertisers might provide a more sustainable and profitable pathway for the future.

Challenges for the Platform

REVENUE FROM REPAIRS IS INSUFFICIENT

Interviews with menders and AStoN show that income from repair services alone is too low to support a sustainable business. Most orders don't cover overhead or platform costs.

TRANSACTION FEES ARE UNFEASIBLE

Charging a commission per repair wouldn't generate enough to cover overhead costs. Pricing is often negotiated directly between mender and client, based on skill, time and job complexity. A platform fee would feel intrusive and be difficult to scale.

SUBSCRIPTION MODEL LIMITATIONS

Most menders don't earn enough to justify monthly fees. Those with additional production work are often too busy to participate + non-professional menders are unlikely to pay at all.

What Could Work?

ADVERTISING SPACE

Sell ad space on the platform to mission-aligned businesses (e.g., sustainable fashion, home repair or local tools). Add a voluntary donation option for users who find the tool valuable.

CAPITALISING ON KNOWLEDGE

License or sell the platform's code and methodology to interested partners, especially boroughs, councils, or circular economy initiatives.

COMMUNITY & SPONSORSHIP

The most viable long-term model may come from building a strong network of engaged users and supporters. Through events, workshops, and partnerships, the platform can become a trusted space, attractive to funders aligned with sustainability, repair and care.

What's Next for Next Door Repairs?

The pilot phase of the Next Door Repair Map revealed a strong appetite for learning, mending, and connection. But it also revealed that lasting success depends on ongoing community engagement and trust-building. Work is still needed to strengthen relationships, support economic viability, and design with inclusion in mind. Below are some ways forward, informed by participants, partners, and the Hackney community.

COLLABORATION WITH HACKNEY COUNCIL

Hackney Council is a critical partner in building credibility and trust among residents. Their support could offer visibility, subsidies for repair services, and help align the map with wider community goals like waste reduction, economic inclusion, and access to local services. Collaborating through Council-run channels or sustainability initiatives would ensure deeper and longer-term impact.

ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

To be effective, the map must reflect real repair needs across the community and remain easy to access and use. This means not just designing user-friendly features, but also co-creating with residents through workshops, feedback sessions, and local events. Community-facing efforts like repair meetups and skill-sharing workshops can strengthen connections and make residents feel invited to contribute, not just use, the platform.

INTEGRATING WITH LOCAL INITIATIVES

The map should grow within the fabric of Hackney's sustainability efforts, from local businesses and community centres to council-led programs. Integrating with these existing initiatives will expand the platform's reach and relevance. A user-driven approach, shaped by local expectations, will ensure the map becomes a trusted resource that supports repair, community care, and sustainable living.

The Map grows with You...

Are you a **mender**? We'd love to put you on the map for our next edition.

Are you a **brand, researcher, or repair group**? Let's share ideas and explore ways to work together.

Are you a **local council** excited about a menders' map for your borough? Let's make it happen.

Are you a **funder**? Your support can help this community-powered work keep on growing.

Want to **host your version of Next Door Repair**? We can help you get started.

Get in Touch


Next Door
Repairs
Thank You