



One Person's Trash is Another Person's Treasure Part IV: The Right to Repair Movement - U.K. Update

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By Bonnie Hassanzadeh and Noel Courage

In part III of this series, we discussed the steps that the European Parliament has taken to further the goals of the right to repair movement and improve the efficiency of electric and electronic goods that are manufactured in Europe. In the fourth installment of this series, we will provide an update on some of the recent developments that have taken place in the U.K.

The U.K. Follows E.U.'s Footsteps

On July 1, the majority of the provisions in the U.K.'s Ecodesign for Energy-Related Products and Energy Information Regulations 2021^[1] came into effect. Through introducing these new rules, the U.K. government set out to match the measures implemented by the E.U. earlier this year and meet its Carbon Budget and Net Zero targets.^[2] The U.K.'s right to repair rules require manufacturers to provide spare parts to consumers and third-party repair companies for 7 to 10 years after the model has been discontinued. They also obligate manufacturers to provide information regarding repair and maintenance to third party repair service providers within 2 years of launching a new product. Manufacturers will also have to incorporate reparability into their products in order to comply with the new rule^[3] Through these new measures, the U.K. government has set out to reduce the 1.5 million tonnes of e-waste that it produces each year.^[4] Similar to the law introduced in the E.U., the U.K. law aims to extend the life span of electronic goods and target the issue of premature obsolescence that many consumers face a short few years after purchasing their gadgets. Although the new rules cover appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines as well as "televisions and electronic displays", they exclude smartphones, tablets, and laptops, hence seemingly shielding large technology companies from having to comply with these new obligations.^[5] The new measures in the U.K, similar to the E.U. regulations, fail to fully address the serious harm caused by electronic waste as a result of lack of access to repair since gadgets such as smartphones and laptops make up a large portion of electronic devices for which consumers seek repairs. According to a policy paper published by Green Alliance, the U.K. generates the second highest amount of e-waste per person each year. ^[6] With climate change and excessive waste production posing more urgent threats than ever, critics of the recent law introduced in the U.K. say the new measures do not go far enough to address these pressing issues. Repair advocates argue that more comprehensive measures aimed at big tech companies will be required to adequately address the difficulties that consumers face in maintaining their devices. We will watch with interest to see the [impact](#) of the new UK rules, as well as any new follow-on rules with regard to combatting the growing issue of electronic waste.

[1] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/745/contents/made>

[2] <https://www.globalcompliancencews.com/2021/08/05/eu-and-united-kingdom-uk-implements-new-right-to-repair-rules-for-household-products-to-align-with-eu-ecodesign-requirements21072>

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2021/06/new-right-to-repair-laws-introduced-what-do-they-actually-mean-for-you/>

[5] <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/right-to-repair-uk#:~:text=What%20does%20the%20right%20to,by%20up%20to%20ten%20years.>

[6] https://green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Design_for_a_circular_economy.pdf

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