



**Combating poverty, working for social inclusion and environmental sustainability since 1994.**  
**Registered Charity no. 1048093**

**What does Furniture Now! do?**

- Furniture re-use: taking re-usable furniture out of the waste stream and supplying it at very low cost to those in housing need and on low incomes and deliver NVQs while doing this
- Training Centre: unique, nationally accredited vocational training programmes helping people with enduring mental health needs or who are otherwise socially excluded to acquire new skills, improve their health and move-on to volunteering and employment.
- Community recycling: kerbside recycling services utilising eco-friendly electric vehicles.
- Composting of food waste

**Poverty, Homelessness and Waste: an integrated solution**

By supplying re-used furniture to those in need at as low a cost as possible, FN!'s Furniture Services enable those lucky enough to access 'four walls and a roof' to equip and build 'a home', thus playing a crucial role in combating poverty and homelessness. Around 20% of our clients have experienced homelessness within the previous 5 years. Recent client Mr W. of Barcombe told us: 'I was re-housed with 4 kids and nothing else. If it wasn't for this place, we'd have no furniture at all'.



As well as enabling those on low incomes to maintain an acceptable home environment, FN! provides essential help at key transition points where vulnerable people are most at risk. The loss of employment, debt, family breakdown, domestic violence, homelessness, resettlement or independent living, mental or physical health deterioration, all produce increased pressures which can at least be partially alleviated by our help in creating and maintaining a comfortable home.

Furniture re-use is concerned with creating wealth out of waste: actually collecting the raw material for meeting these welfare and housing needs has a huge environmental benefit too.

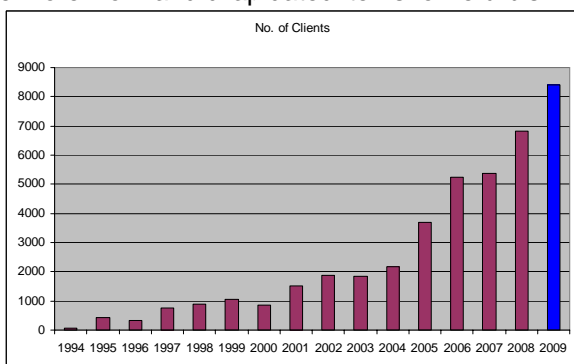
'Approximately 35% of all waste disposed of (at Civic Amenity Sites) consisted of furniture, upholstered furniture and domestic appliances'. ('Recycle, Re-use, Bury or Burn?'. Anderson. Sofa 1999).

Most furniture is manufactured to last a lifetime and as a result, furniture very rarely wears out. Obsolescence through rapidly changing fashions contributes to the growing mountain of redundant furniture...The scope for furniture recycling is huge' ('Sustainable Waste Management; The Stakeholders' Guide', Environment Council, June 2000)

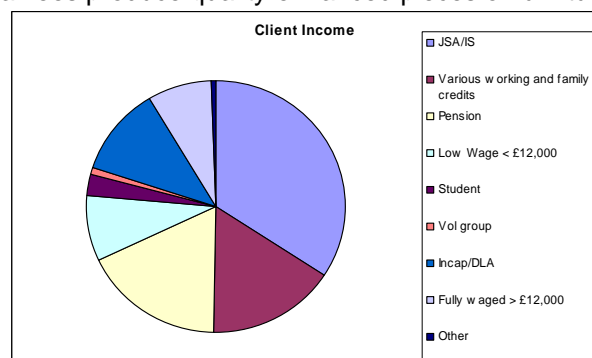
**The Furniture Service – Eastbourne & Lewes**

This is the foundation of all FN!'s work, serving communities across Lewes District, Brighton & Hove also Eastbourne and Wealden. Based on two floors at both our Lewes and Eastbourne premises, the Furniture Service houses the stock of furniture and some electrical items. Here, clients are able to view and select the items they require. Staff and volunteers work with clients to ensure they get the support they need in equipping their home, and arrange for the delivery of their furniture. The Furniture Service also deals with the enormous number of offers of donated furniture: assessing the suitability of items, co-ordinating the free collection service and maintaining storage and display operations. We use two diesel vans for long-distance work, offering free delivery, though clients can take their items away themselves. FN! operates trains volunteers in NVQ and volunteering qualifications both during these activities and while working for other charities or voluntary organisations.

The Furniture Service stock also forms the 'raw material' for FN!'s Training Centre. Our trainees select some of the more worn and dilapidated items for refurbishment. Trainees produce quality-enhanced pieces of furniture.



Client Growth in Recent Years



Typical Spread of Income Stream

Last year we served 8,413 households and community groups up from 6,825 in 2008 which represented over 20,000 actual beneficiaries. Needless to say, there were many more clients and potential furniture donors whom we were unable to help even after the 19,700 odd hours of work donated by volunteers. We have received funding to expand this service and ensure access to new communities of need, have opened on Saturdays at both premises and have also started training courses to NVQ Level 1 rising to level 2, in *customer services, business administration, retail and warehousing*, helping some trainees towards their first ever formal qualification and hence a future in the world of work. We are also now operative the *Volunteer Passport* scheme, accredited vocational training for volunteers.

### **Other FN! Activities - Social Exclusion and Recycling**

#### **The Training Centre - Lewes**



Opened in January 2001, our Training Centre was the result of over 3 years research and development. It focuses on two issues: how to improve the health and employability of one of our society's most socially excluded groups – those with enduring mental health needs – and how to re-use and recycle dilapidated furniture as unique painted items.

After extensive research and collaboration with MIND, East Sussex Social Services, Open College Network (OCN) and South Downs College (SDC), we have created tailored Training Programmes in Creative Crafts and Decorative Paint Techniques. We have recently extended the program to other groups of people who are socially excluded.

#### **Community Kerbside Recycling - Lewes**

In April 2002, in partnership with Lewes District Council, FN! began operating a kerbside scheme in Lewes Town, utilising new, custom-designed electric vehicles. This has met with great community support, boasts higher than national average participation rates and is proving to be another valuable skill-development and training opportunity for young unemployed New Deal placements and others. We now offer this service in the neighbouring village of Ringmer & Kingston, currently offering the service to over 9,000 households. We will continue to expand, particularly in rural areas.



#### **The Compost Project**

FN! is working with East Sussex County Council to develop a food waste composting project. We have bought and installed a "Rocket" which is a sealed vessel composting unit into which will go food waste. Once the Rocket is working correctly and we have passed through the necessary licensing regime, we will be looking to fill the rest of the space up with food waste we collect on a commercial basis. The final product will be used internally in the first instance.

**More information is available at:**

[http://www.furniturenow.org.uk/composting\\_pilotphase.html](http://www.furniturenow.org.uk/composting_pilotphase.html)

#### **Deputy Director (Operations)**

Furniture Now! was founded in 1994 and has been growing ever since. Under the current Director and departmental managers, the charity has been growing at about 20% each year. Recently, there has been substantial change at board level with a new Chair of Trustees being appointed for the first time in ten years. The new Chair is joined by a Vice Chair of trustees, a new post. The board of trustees wish to see the charity becoming much more professional and positioning itself well to take advantage of the opportunities that are emerging around waste, recycling, composting and re-use with a lean towards collaborative working with other social enterprises, ensuring our mission is clear and the most vulnerable in society are having their needs met.

To this end, a Deputy Director is sought. The contract will be for one year initially, with the possibility of renewal or extension if the charity is successful in raising the necessary funds to expand its work. The post will be a key transitional role for the charity and will concentrate on bringing a full and proper management system into the organisation and managing the departmental managers. The role will involve some monitoring of activities and a lot of key developmental work around policy and procedure and health and safety. Additionally, once trained, the Deputy will be the most senior operational member of staff on site as the Director will be off premises researching and writing a strategic plan for three months. After this time, a new structure will be proposed to the board where the Director and Deputy will provide the two senior management roles at the charity.

[www.furniturenow.org.uk](http://www.furniturenow.org.uk)