

## Craft, care and circularity: Rethinking a just transition for hairdressing

### What's to comb:

- Research context
- Chemicals use and disposal
- Key actions for a just transition



### **Personal context**





# Studies where CE intersects with labour practices

Industry report on hairdressing chemicals

(Rigg & Hodgson, 2023)

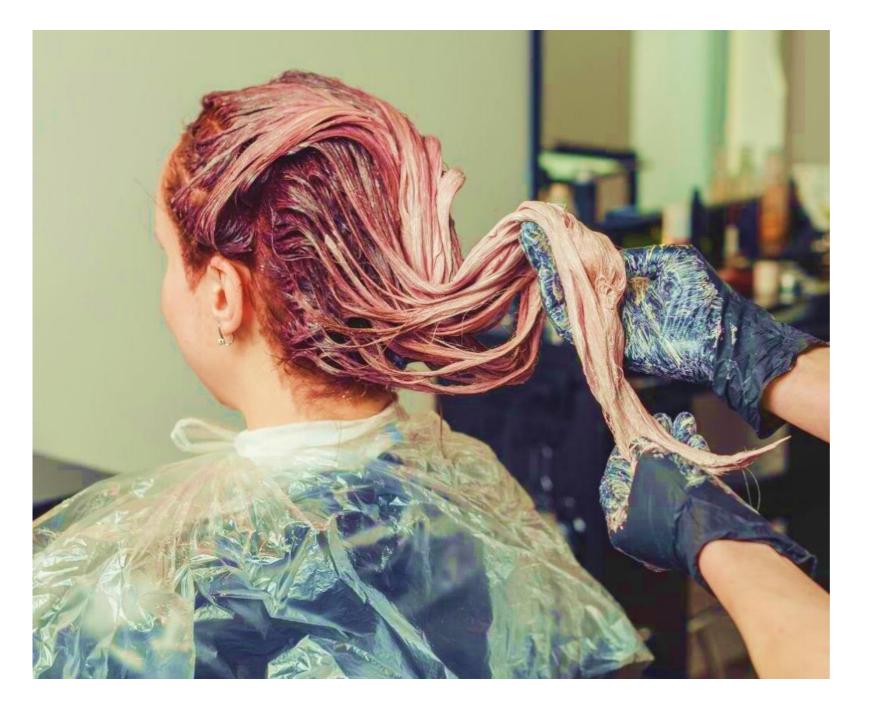
Literature review on CE in hairdressing

(Hodgson et al., 2024)

Case study on CE challenges in hairdressing

(Hodgson et al., 2025)\*

\*publication pending



## **Chemicals in hairdressing**

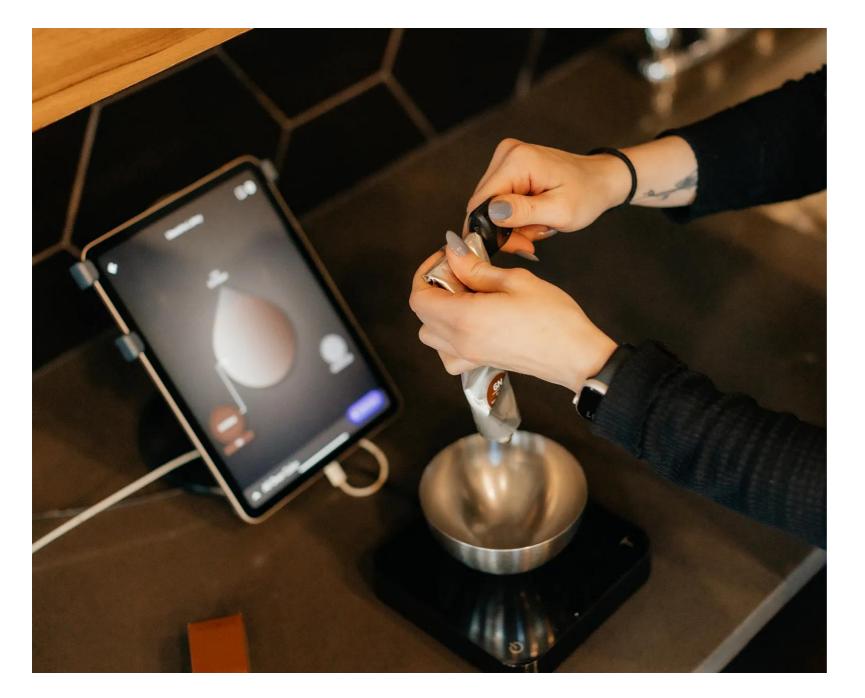
Hairdressing professionals regularly handle and dispose of toxic substances.

Exposure often leads to contact dermatitis and hand eczema.

(Seité et al., 2023; Quaade et al., 2021).

Alternatives exist but these are seen as less effective.

(Rigg & Hodgson, 2023)



## Colour management systems

Salons reportedly waste 25% - 40% of hair color. *(Morris, 2022)* 

Colour management systems can reduce inventory purchases by up to 40%.

(SmartMix, 2025)



### **Supplier misalignment**

Suppliers often require minimum order volumes and pressure salons to increase purchase orders.

"These big brands have got such a chokehold on us." (Hodgson et al., 2025)

### **Limited regulation** around safe practices

Ongoing training on safe handling and disposal isn't required and many don't receive it.

64.4% of salons lack a COSHH register even though it is a legal requirement.

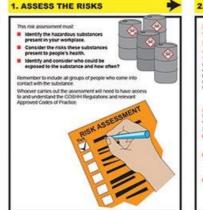
(Rigg & Hodgson, 2023)

#### IS IT COSHH OR NOT? WHAT IS A SUBSTANCE HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH UNDER COSHH? Under COSFRI there are a range of substances regarded as hazardous to health including: Substances or mixtures of substances classified as dangerou to health under the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP) Regulation. Their warning label LOOK FOR THESE SYMBOLS: directly connected with work, such as farming, sewage treatment or healthcare, or if the exposure is incidental to the work (e.g. exposure to bacteria from an air conditioning system that Any kind of dust if it's average concentration in the air exceeds Any other substances which creates a risk to health, but which for technical reasons may not be specifically covered by CLP including: pesticides, medicines, cosmetics or substances WHAT IS NOT A SUBSTANCE HAZARDOUS TO **HEALTH UNDER COSHH?** For the vast majority of commercial chemicals, the presence or not of a warming label will indicate whether COSHIH is relevant. For example, there is no CLEANER warning label on ordinary household washing-up liquid, so if its used at work you do not have to worry about COSHH but there is a warring Tabel on bleach. 돌 and so COSHIFI does apply to its use in the

A. D. SARRY FIRST AID GROUP LTD 2014

### COSHI











#### COSHH REQUIRES HEALTH SURVEILLANCE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

Where an employee is exposed to one of the substances listed in Schedule 6 to COSHH and is working in one of the related proces e.g. In the manufacture of certain compounds where there is manorable from that exposure.

Where employees are exposed to a substance triked to a particular disease or adverse health effect and there is a reasonable likelihood under the conditions of the work, of that disease or effect occurring and it is possible to detect the disease or health effect.



#### 6. INFORM, INSTRUCT & TRAIN

#### ENSURE EMPLOYEES ARE PROPERLY SUPERVISED INFORMED AND TRAINED

COSHIH requires the provision of suitable and sufficient information

- The main findings of any risk assessment The names of the substances they work with or could be exposed
- to and the risks created by exposure Access to any data sheets that apply to those substance



- How to use personal protective equipment and clothing provided The results of any exposure monitoring and health surveillance
- The emergency procedures that need to be followed.

### 7. PREPARE PLANS & PROCEDURES

#### PREPARE PLANS AND PROCEDURES TO DEAL

WITH ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES. COSHIH requires a plan outlining the response required before

#### The plan must include

- Preparing procedures and setting up warning and communication systems to enable an appropriate response immediately any
- Ensuring that the information on the emergency arrangements is available to those who need to see it including the emergency
- If any accident or emergency occurs all steps required must be taken to minimise the harmful effects and restore the situation
- Employees who may be effected must also be informed
- Only those staff necessary to deal with the incident may remain in the area and they must be provided with appropriate safety



A704 (REV-06/14)

## Glove use to mitigate exposure to chemicals

Gloves protect against contact dermatitis <u>BUT</u> they are often disposable and non-recyclable.

Reusable gloves last for months <u>BUT</u> affect grip and technique.

Bio-based gloves can be composted <u>BUT</u> are flimsy and incompatible for colour work.

(Hodgson et al., 2025)



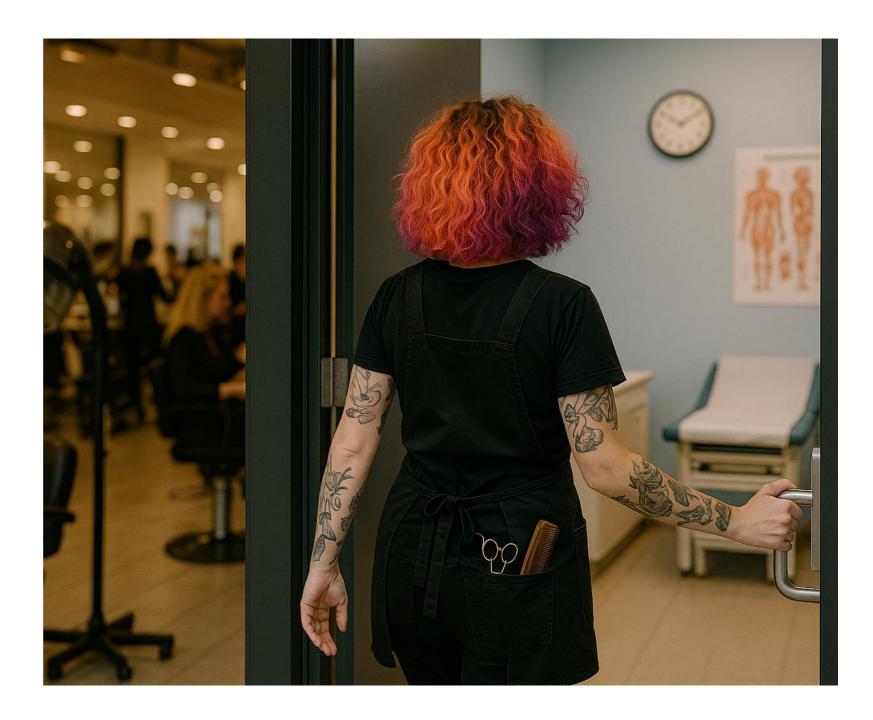
## Salons within a larger social ecosystem

An unsafe working environment can burden the healthcare system.

(Driscoll et al., 2025)

Preventative measures in salons can prevent downstream waste and resource strain.

(Hodgson et al., 2024)



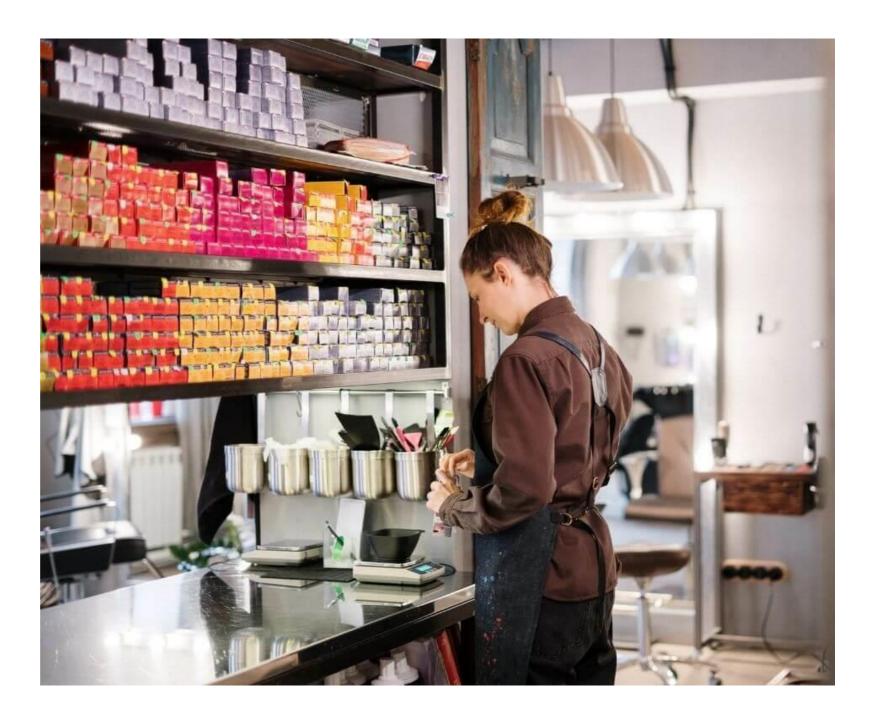
## Salons within a larger economic ecosystem

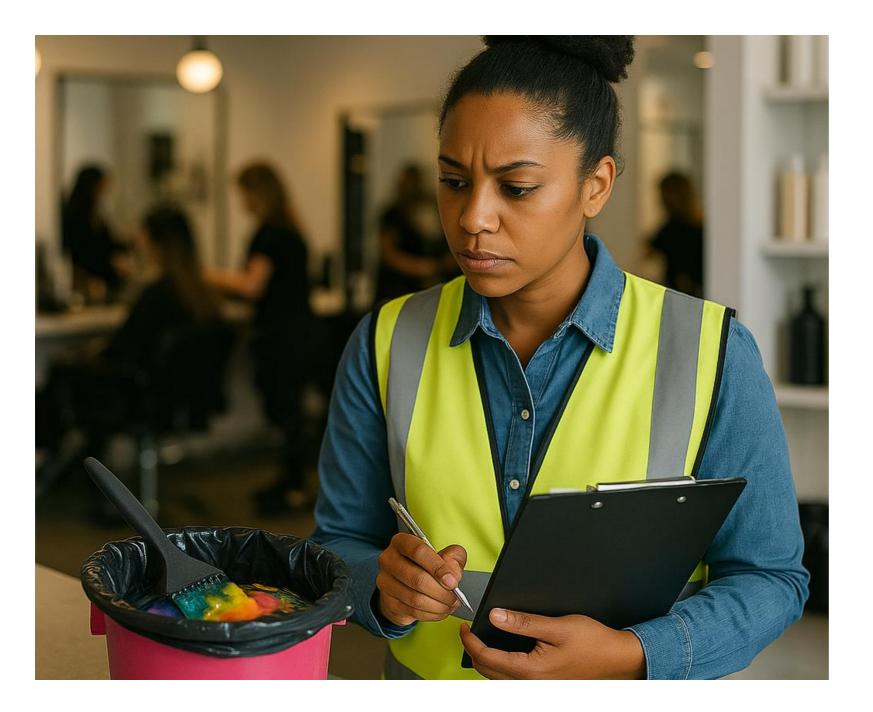
Hairdressing is a 'supplier-dominated service' industry.

(Castellacci, 2018)

Salons are reliant on the market for access to safe, effective and affordable products/tools.

(Hodgson et al., 2025)





### **Regulation on disposal**

Legal requirements exist but awareness is inconsistent and checks are rare.

50% of salons reported pouring excess colour or developer down the sink.

(Rigg & Hodgson, 2023)



### **Chemical recycling**

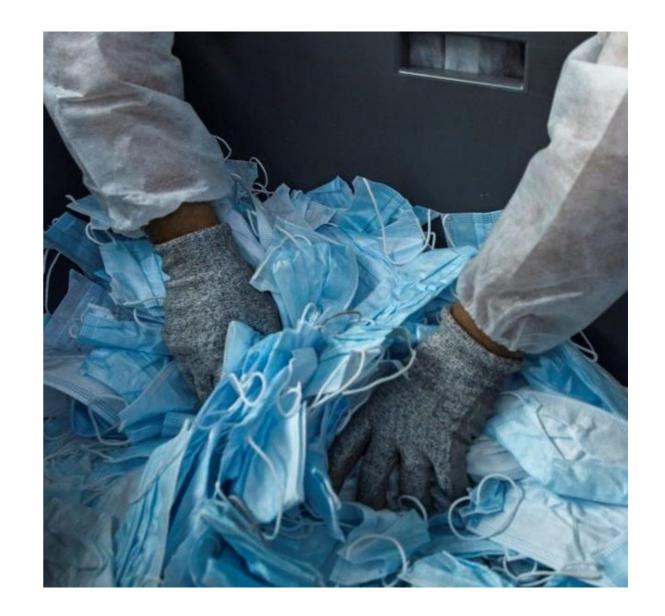
Reliable data on chemical colour waste is scarce.

Waste to energy outperforms chemical recycling for colour waste.

(Rigg & Hodgson, 2023)



Misalignment: Craft, care, circularity



## Ongoing training to prevent harm

Mandatory, subsidised training on safe procedures is needed...beyond vocational education.



## Mainstreaming of official guidance

Greater visibility of guidelines on chemical safety and integration into everyday practice are needed.



## Clear industry signalling

Collective bargaining is an opportunity to coordinate and shift expectations

upstream.



## Policy to steer supplier reform

Policy must steer suppliers towards safe, circular and affordable options with professional use in mind and away from volumebased models.



### Key actions for a just transition in hairdressing

- Mandatory, subsidised training on safe procedures is needed beyond vocational education.
- Greater visibility of guidelines on chemical safety and integration into everyday practice are needed.
- Collective bargaining is an opportunity to coordinate and shift expectations upstream.
- Policy must steer suppliers towards safe, circular and affordable options and away from volume-based models.



### **References | Primary**

Hodgson, S., Piscicelli, L., Frenken, K., & Williams, I. (2024). Circular economy beyond manufacturing: Exploring the challenges and opportunities for circularity in the hairdressing industry. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 46, 512–521.

Hodgson, S., Piscicelli, L., Frenken, K., & Williams, I. (2025). Navigating circular economy tensions in the service sector: Insights from the hairdressing industry. (*Publication pending*)

Rigg, J., & Hodgson, S. (2023). Industry audit report: Chemicals. *Green Salon Collective*. Available at: https://www.greensaloncollective.com/pages/reports

### **References | Secondary**

Castellacci, F. (2008). Technological paradigms, regimes and trajectories: Manufacturing and service industries in a new taxonomy of sectoral patterns of innovation. *Research Policy*, 37(6–7), 978–994.

Driscoll, T., Turner, M. C., Villeneuve, P. J., Scheepers, P. T. J., Schlünssen, V., Cao, B., Momen, N. C., & Pega, F. (2025). The WHO/ILO Joint Estimates approach to occupational risk factor and burden of disease estimation: Providing actionable evidence with impact across sectors in countries. *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*, 69(3), 337–343.

Kezic, S., Nunez, R., Babic, Z., Hallmann, S., Havmose, M. S., Johansen, J. D., John, S. M., Macan, M., Symanzik, C., Uter, W., Weinert, P., Turk, R., Macan, J., & van der Molen, H. F. (2022). Occupational Exposure of Hairdressers to Airborne Hazardous Chemicals: A Scoping Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(7), 4176.

Morris, M. (2022). Let's Talk Waste. VISH. Available at: https://getvish.com/lets-talk-waste/

NetRegs. (2025). Waste from hair and beauty salons: Environmental guidance for your business in Northern Ireland & Scotland. *NetRegs.* Available at: https://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/waste/managing-waste-materials/waste-from-hair-and-beauty-salons/?utm\_source=chatgpt.com

Quaade, A. S., Simonsen, A. B., Halling, A.-S., Thyssen, J. P., & Johansen, J. D. (2021). Prevalence, incidence, and severity of hand eczema in the general population – A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Contact Dermatitis*, 84(6), 361–374.

Seité, S., Le Dantec, G., Demessant-Flavigny, A., & Kerob, D. (2023). Survey of Hand Issues Encountered by Hairdressers and Hairdresser Related Professionals: From Epidemiological Data to Clinical Observational Survey Results. *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology*, 16, 111–117.

SmartMix. (2025). SmartMix: Put an end to colour waste. *Precision Colour*. Available at: https://precisioncolour.co.uk/about-smartmix/