



The Welsh Deposit Return Scheme: why glass must be removed

Glass is one of the most sustainable materials on earth - it is 100% recyclable and can be re-melted endlessly without ever reducing its quality.

However, the Welsh Government's plan to include glass in its future Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) puts Wales' impressive recycling record in jeopardy, ultimately making it harder to recycle.

Including glass in a DRS also poses significant risk to businesses – threatening growth, and potentially leading to certain beverage products no longer being sold across all UK nations.

87.3%



Glass is already achieving an 87.3% glass collection rate in Wales.

State of play across the UK's single market



Excluding glass from a Welsh DRS is better for business

Different materials being included in the Welsh DRS to the scheme in England and Northern Ireland will mean many businesses won't be able to trade across the UK



Glass bottles included in a DRS would likely be required to carry a specific label and/or demarcation, which would require a separate Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) for bottles being sold in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to those in Wales. This would increase production complexity and cost, and could lead to producers withdrawing products from uneconomic markets – or switching to plastic packaging – hitting hard both businesses and consumers alike with higher costs and less choice.

It will increase the risk of fraud



Having multiple schemes with different materials in scope increases the risk of fraud, as has been witnessed in other schemes around the world.

The public don't want it

Glass in Wales' DRS will lead to greater confusion over what can be recycled properly, and where



For residents in close proximity to either border, and indeed those travelling between countries, divergence risks creating more, not less, confusion about how to recycle properly, to the detriment of both kerbside collections and a DRS.

The current glass collection system is working



YouGov polling highlights that over 70% of people are satisfied with the current collection system for glass packaging and would prefer to recycle their glass through kerbside recycling.

The evidence shows that glass must be removed from the Welsh DRS.



Excluding glass is better for the environment

Keeping glass packaging at our doorsteps is better for our environment



Research by Reconomy Group company, Valpak has shown including glass will produce millions of tonnes more carbon and collect less glass than an improved kerbside scheme.

It will perversely increase plastic consumption, rather than reduce it



In countries like Germany and Croatia there has been a significant uptake in larger, plastic containers due to the smaller upfront cost of the deposit where glass is included in the DRS.

It splits glass packaging recycling into two waste streams to the detriment of both



Glass jars, condiment bottles and other glass packaging would still remain part of future household collections, representing circa 30% of all glass packaging. When a DRS was announced in Scotland which initially included glass, Dumfries and Galloway Council immediately set out its intention to stop collecting all glass from the kerbside.

But there is a better alternative.....

Keeping glass bottles out of all schemes in the UK, and instead collecting and recycling all glass packaging through improved, consistent collections within a world-leading system of EPR would remove major interoperability issues, including:

1



Alleviating issues caused by divergence, creating a level- playing field for producers of all sizes to sell on all markets without additional cost or complexity.

2

Expediting the implementation and effectiveness of deposit return schemes across the UK.



3

Making it as easy and understandable as possible to recycle your glass packaging, wherever you are in the UK.

