



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. In 2020, glass achieved an impressive recycling rate of 76%, but the glass industry wants to go further with a target to achieve a collection rate of 90% by 2030. We believe that including glass in a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will be detrimental to glass recycling and have many unintended consequences which will stand against the concept of a truly circular economy.

Where are we now?

Environment Bill: We remain concerned that the Bill – despite being the Primary Legislation that enables the introduction of a DRS – has received very little time for debate on the floor of the House. The Bill is currently making its way through the parliamentary process.

DEFRA's regulatory consultation: We were disappointed to see that glass was included within the scope of a DRS in DEFRA's regulatory consultation. We believe including glass in scope would be to the detriment of the government's environmental commitments.

Environmental Audit Committee: During their inquiry 'Next steps for Deposit Return Schemes', the EAC said that the issues surrounding the inclusion of glass in a DRS should be "seriously considered".

The problems with a Deposit Return Scheme

It encourages a switch to plastic packaging

International evidence from countries such as Croatia, Germany and Finland shows that including glass in a DRS causes a reduction in sales of glass bottles alongside a surge in single use PET containers. In Finland when PET was introduced into the DRS in 2008, **the quantity of PET increased** from around 50 million units in 2007 to 375 million units in 2017.



It risks increasing carbon emissions

Making new glass from recycled glass reduces CO₂ emissions and energy use, **saving 580kg of carbon dioxide emissions** with every tonne of glass re-melted. If DRS machines crush glass to a point where it cannot be colour sorted, it can no longer be remade into everyday glass containers, increasing the need for raw primary materials and creating more emissions.



No remelt target means more glass could be 'recycled' as aggregate

DEFRA's consultation on the design of a DRS does not contain a remelt target for glass, this will mean that more glass could be **'recycled' as aggregate**, meaning glass recycle permanently exits circulation and can no longer be recycled to create more glass containers.



Local authority collections will be threatened

Including glass in a DRS will **divert 70% of all glass packaging away from kerbside**, which puts at risk the viability of continued local authority kerbside and bottle bank collections of glass. This in turn will have a detrimental impact on the **30% of glass packaging not in scope** of the DRS - such as oil bottles and jam jars - with this material potentially ending up in landfill.



It will negatively impact retailers

A recent Oakdene Hollins report found that a DRS including glass will also lead to significant additional costs for retailers - **£252 million**, as opposed to **£203 million** should the scheme exclude glass.²



¹Voluntary & Economics Incentives Working Group report, Feb 2018

²Oakdene Hollins - Report on the appraisal of the cost and benefits of three policy options for increasing the recycling rate for container glass in England

What do consumers want?

73%

of consumers agree or strongly agree that they would be **more likely to recycle glass** packaging if household collections were more frequent.³

56%

of those surveyed either agree or strongly agree that **more information** about what happens to glass once recycled would make them more likely to recycle.³

78%

of respondents said they **'often or always' use household collections** to recycle their glass packaging.³

The majority of consumers agree that the best way to increase glass recycling is through improved kerbside recycling and more bottle banks, which both ranked ahead of a DRS³.



More household
collections
73%



More bottle
banks
69%

What do we want from Extended Producer Responsibility?

- 1. Remelt targets:** A DRS will not be regulated to ensure that the current remelt target is maintained and exceeded in future years – however, a remelt target is necessary to protect closed loop recycling. **EPR MUST legislate for a remelt target** to drive glass recycling and associated carbon savings.
- 2. Household glass to be collected through EPR:** Consistent household collections working with EPR is ideal for collecting glass that will be recycled back into new packaging. Collecting Glass via reverse vending machines (used in a DRS) will result in glass being broken at the collection point and possibly unfit for remelt – to maximise remelt **it is essential that all glass from households is collected kerbside**.
- 3. Significant infrastructure investment:** EPR will need to be **capable of collecting and recycling all the glass placed on the market** (2,574,000 tonnes) for at least the first 18 months of its implementation. This is because a DRS will be established later than EPR.

Glass recycling done right : A Welsh case study

- Wales has been consistently ahead of the rest of the UK when it comes to recycling rates, with the **third highest household recycling rate in the world**.
- The current capture rate of glass in household collections is **87.3% in Wales**, the highest of any widely recyclable material.
- Wales proves that increased investment through a scheme such as EPR, alongside consistent collections and communications campaigns, can create a **national culture of recycling** that could lead to a significant rise in recycling at the kerbside.

What we want for glass...

- ✓ **Consistent** household collections
- ✓ **Better education and communication** about what to recycle and where; both at home and on-the-go
- ✓ A system of EPR designed to bring **extra investment** in recycling infrastructure

“A DRS which excludes glass not only reduces the risk that the policy would lead to more, not less, plastic being placed on the market, but it is also the most cost-effective of all the DRS options, resulting in an annual operational benefit of £140m a year, compared to an annual loss of £903m per year should glass be included.”

- **Oakdene Hollins, circular economy consultancy**