

# Press release: Views sought on reward and return schemes for drinks containers

The government today [invited views](#) on how reward and return schemes for drinks containers could work in England by issuing a call for evidence.

More than eight million tonnes of plastic are discarded into the world's oceans each year, putting marine wildlife under serious threat.

Up to 80% of this is estimated to have been originally lost or discarded on land before washing out to sea, and plastic bottles are a particular concern – with figures showing just 57% of those sold in the UK in 2016 collected for recycling.

This compares to a record 90% of deposit-marked cans and bottles that were returned to dedicated recycling facilities in Denmark, and a return rate of almost 80% of beverage containers in South Australia, both of which have a form of deposit return scheme.

To improve these numbers and increase recycling, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has asked organisations and individuals to share their views with the government on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of reward and return schemes for plastic, metal and glass drinks containers that could help reduce the number of bottles entering our waterways.

The call for evidence opens today for four weeks and ministers have asked the Voluntary and Economic Incentives Working Group, set up as part of the [Litter Strategy](#), to accelerate its work and report back early in the New Year.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We must protect our oceans and marine life from plastic waste if we are to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

That means tackling the rise in plastic bottles entering our waters by making it simpler and easier to recycle and dispose of them appropriately.

Today we are launching a call for evidence to help us understand how reward and return schemes for plastic bottles and other drinks containers could work in England.

This approach has already seen great success in other countries such as Denmark in curbing plastic pollution and we want to hear people's ideas on how we could make it work in England.

This adds to the progress we have already made in cleaning up our oceans by significantly reducing plastic bag use and drawing up one of the world's toughest bans on plastic microbeads.

The evidence submitted will be examined by the government's working group which includes brand and retail giants such as Coca Cola and Tesco.

This builds on successful waste initiatives already launched by the government, including the [5p plastic bag charge](#) which has seen enormous success in changing consumer behaviour by reducing use by 83 per cent.

Some nine billion fewer carrier bags have been distributed since the charge was introduced, with more than £95million raised donated to environmental, educational and other good causes.

In addition, legislation for the government's [ban on microbeads](#) – welcomed by campaigners as one of the toughest in the world – will be introduced later this year and we are now assessing how best to tackle other sources of microplastics from polluting the seas.

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## [Consultation outcome: Drinks containers – reducing litter and increasing recycling: call for evidence](#)

*Updated:* Voluntary & Economics Incentives Working Group Report, which summarises the responses to this call for evidence and the working group's recommendations, added.

We are seeking views and evidence on ways to reduce littering and improve recycling and reuse of drinks containers. In particular, we want to know what evidence there is on the benefits and disadvantages of different types of deposit and reward and return schemes (DRS).

Your responses will be used by the independent Voluntary and Economic Incentives Working Group to give advice to government. This forms part of government's commitment to its [Litter Strategy for England](#).

If any commercially sensitive information is submitted to us in response to the call for evidence, we will remove details which could identify those who wrote it, before we share it with the Working Group.

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## **Notice: DA8 2AD, European Metal Recycling Limited: environmental permit issued**

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: European Metal Recycling Limited
- Installation name: European Metal Recycling
- Permit number: EPR/FB3509MJ/V002

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## **Press release: Next phase in rollout of Universal Credit confirmed**

The next stage of the rollout of Universal Credit to all claimants starts on Wednesday 4 October 2017.

Universal Credit is available in all jobcentres across the country to new single jobseekers and the government has been rolling out the [Universal Credit full service](#) to all new claimants, including families and people who cannot work.

In July, Universal Credit full service was successfully introduced to 29 jobcentres across the country, making a total of 101 jobcentres with Universal Credit full service. In October we will introduce it to a further 45 jobcentres across the country.

The [commencement order confirming those plans](#) was published today (2 October 2017).

Universal Credit replaces the complex old system of 6 main out-of-work benefits with one simple monthly payment and is paid the same way many working people are.

The expansion is in line with the planned, gradual, safe rollout of Universal Credit.

As a percentage of the total expected caseload on Universal Credit, the number of households claiming Universal Credit is expected to increase from 8% in September to 13% in March 2018.

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## [Press release: Minister Field reaffirms UK commitment to Afghanistan during visit to Kabul.](#)

Minister Field expressed the UK's continued support for the Afghan government, highlighting the excellent progress made on reforming the security sector, addressing anti-corruption and making progress on elections. The Minister stressed the need to focus on political solutions as the key to bringing a more peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

He also met with Attorney General Farid Hamidi to discuss the progress made by the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre (ACJC). The ACJC was set up in 2016 with UK funding and technical support, and since its formation, has successfully prosecuted a number of senior Afghan officials, highlighting the move towards ending impunity for corruption in Afghanistan.

The Minister also met with Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai to discuss regional affairs and prospects for peace.

Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

The UK is committed to continuing its support for Afghanistan, and we continue to work closely with the Afghan Government as it seeks to overcome the legacy of over 40 years of conflict.

We work in close partnership with the government, and will continue to provide military, political and developmental assistance as this amazing country moves ever closer to becoming a more prosperous and stable state that provides real opportunities for the Afghan people.

The UK's combat mission to Afghanistan ended in 2014 but we continue to work closely with NATO on Afghanistan in a number of areas. As the framework nation for the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA), the UK has helped to train over 2,500 cadets, intended to be the next generation of military leaders.

By working closely together on corruption, a policy priority shared by both

the UK and Afghanistan, our technical assistance is helping to increase accountability and support the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre (ACJC). The first trial took place at the ACJC in November.

All the latest news is available on the Foreign Office page of the gov.uk website at: [www.gov.uk/fco](http://www.gov.uk/fco)

Follow Minister Mark Field on Twitter @MarkFieldUK