

# 10p plastic bag charge introduced in England

The single-use carrier bag charge has today (21 May) increased from 5p to 10p and been extended to all businesses in England. The charge has seen a 95% cut in plastic bag sales in major supermarkets since 2015 and the move will help drive down sales further.

Before the 5p bag charge was introduced, the average household used around 140 single-use plastic carrier bags a year, and this has now been reduced to four.

By extending the charge to all retailers, it is anticipated that the use of single-use carrier bags will decrease by 70-80% in small and medium-sized businesses. The move is also expected to benefit the UK economy by over £297 million over the next 10 years.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Everyone wants to play their part in reducing the scourge of plastic waste that blights our environment and oceans. The 5p bag charge has been hugely successful, but we can go further.

From today we will increase the charge to 10p and extend it to all businesses. This will support the ambitious action we have already taken in our fight against plastic as we build back greener.

We have banned the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds, banned microbeads in personal care products, and we are consulting on a new deposit return scheme for drinks containers.

Since the introduction of the charge, almost £180 million has been raised by retailers for good causes from the revenue collected. Last year, from the £9.2 million that was reported, around 30% went to charity, volunteering, environment and health sectors, 49% went to causes chosen by customers or staff and 21% went to a combination of good causes.

A recent [report](#) published from charity WRAP revealed that 95% of people in England recognised the wide-ranging benefits to the environment so far. The survey of over 2,000 adults in England found that close to seven in ten (69%) were either 'strongly' or 'slightly' in favour of the charge when it was first introduced, and that has increased now to 73%.

Helen Bird, Strategic Engagement Manager, WRAP said:

The introduction of a charge has had a significant influence in reducing the number of bags purchased at stores. I'm confident that

the increase to 10p and the extension across all shops will continue this decline.

However, there are reports of increased purchasing of so-called 'bags for life', likely being used just once. To truly benefit the planet, bags, regardless of what they are made from, need to be reused many times over. Once they are worn out they can be recycled, or in the case of 'bags for life', replaced for free by supermarkets.

Most supermarkets are members of The UK Plastics Pact, committing to all plastic packaging to be recyclable by 2025. And ahead of plastic bags and wrapping being collected directly from peoples' homes, many are working towards accepting all of these soft plastics at their stores including bread bags, frozen food bags and crisp packets which are sorted for onward recycling.

The move will help the UK build back better and greener from the pandemic, and boost our global leadership in tackling climate change and plastic pollution. As hosts of COP26 this year, President of the G7 and a key player in the CBD COP15, we are leading the international climate change agenda.

In its war against plastic pollution, the Government has already [banned microbeads in rinse-off personal care products](#) and [prohibited the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds in England](#). A [world-leading plastic packaging tax](#) will be introduced from April 2022 for products which do not have at least 30% recycled content, while [the Government is currently consulting on landmark reforms](#) which will introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and [consistent recycling collections for homes and businesses](#).

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## [Secretary of State to appoint advisory committee for the establishment of the Castlereagh Foundation](#)

Press release

The UK Government has today announced the intention to appoint an Advisory Committee for the establishment of the Castlereagh Foundation.



The New Decade, New Approach agreement included a commitment to provide funding to establish the Castlereagh Foundation to support academic research through universities and other partners to explore identity and the shifting patterns of social identity in Northern Ireland.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, confirmed the panel will support the UK Government aims to identify appropriate delivery partners to establish the Castlereagh Foundation and take the work forward at the earliest opportunity.

Brandon Lewis, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said:

“This is an important milestone that marks a key commitment under the terms of the New Decade New Approach agreement.

“In this Centenary year, we have an important opportunity to reflect on Northern Ireland’s history and explore the diverse perspectives and identities that make Northern Ireland a fantastic place to live, work and do business. The appointment of this advisory committee and the establishment of the Castlereagh Foundation will be a significant step in progressing such vital work.”

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## [Two men fined for poaching in Northumberland](#)

David Moore, 30, of Staffen Court, Amble, and Adam Nyberg, 39, of Leslie Drive, Amble, were both charged with illegally fishing for salmon and sea trout with a gill net in the river Coquet near Amble.

They pleaded guilty when they appeared at Newcastle Magistrates’ Court on Thursday, 20 May. They were both fined £500, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £50, and the forfeiture and destruction of the net was ordered.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 29 July 2019 the Environment Agency received a report that two men had set a gill net across the River Coquet near Amble.

Gill nets are designed to catch fish by their gills and are rarely licensed in rivers due to their indiscriminate nature and the fact the fish caught in the nets will usually suffocate and die.

Fisheries officers attended and saw men matching their descriptions in the area. They kept watch of the river where the gill net had been set and using a thermal imager and night vision they saw the defendants by the side of the river, with one wading out towards where officers had been told the net was set.

They were both arrested and the net was later recovered after it had come loose from the river bank. It had caught 14 fish – 12 sea trout and 2 salmon – 10 of which were dead.

### **Gill nets 'extremely damaging to fish stocks'**

Both defendants said they had been fishing to feed themselves and their families and had not given a great deal of thought about the consequences of their actions, although they admitted they had offended deliberately.

Following the case, David Shears, Senior Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

Gill nets such as the one used in this case are designed to catch fish by their gills and can be extremely damaging to fish stocks. Illegal fishing can have a devastating impact, particularly on migratory fish, while other wildlife can also get caught up in the nets.

We'll continue to act on information received and work closely with our partners and angling clubs, supported by the Angling Trust, to take action against those flouting the law. This case demonstrates that we do act on the information that is passed to us.

To report illegal fishing call the 24-hour Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.

Anyone interested in fishing can [buy a fishing licence online](#)

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## **[Fleet Solid Support ships competition](#)**

# Launched

These crucial Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels will provide munitions, food, stores and provisions to support carrier and amphibious based Task Groups at sea.

Building on the commitment made in the recent Defence Command Paper to create a shipbuilding renaissance, the competition will help revitalise British shipbuilding by requiring a significant proportion of the build and assembly work to be carried out in the UK.

With a £24 billion multi-year settlement to modernise our Armed Forces, the competition is an exciting moment for UK industry to design and deliver a world-leading capability, securing highly-skilled jobs and boosting homegrown skills.

## **Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

As Shipbuilding Tsar, I am delighted to launch the competition for these crucial Fleet Solid Support ships.

These vessels embody our commitment to a truly global presence by supporting the Royal Navy's operations around the world.

The competition reaffirms our dedication to invest in shipbuilding and support jobs across the UK maritime industry.

Designed to challenge the shipbuilding industry, Defence Equipment and Support have issued the contract notice inviting companies to register an interest in participating in the tender for the design and build of the ships, which will incorporate next-generation technology.

The successful bidder can work in partnership with international companies but would be required to integrate the ships in a UK shipyard. The Government has already pledged to double the investment over the life of this Parliament to more than £1.7 billion a year, providing a pipeline of work to sustain jobs and skills around the UK.

This will be further supported by a refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy, to be published this summer setting out the Government's commitment to the UK shipbuilding enterprise and its supply chain.

## **DE&S' Director General Ships, Vice Admiral Chris Gardner, said:**

The launch of the Fleet Solid Support competition presents a really

exciting opportunity for the shipbuilding industry to support the design and build of a new class of ship that will primarily resupply our Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

It is also another step in implementing the National Shipbuilding Strategy and increasing our domestic maritime construction capacity and capability alongside the Type 26 and Type 31 programmes already underway.

The FSS ships will join the QEC Task Group, carrying out replenishment at sea to supply stores and ammunition to sustain operations, which is essential to meeting the UK's defence commitments. To do this the ships will be able to transfer loads of more than two tonnes at a time while at high speed.

Interested companies are now invited to register their interest to receive a pre-qualification questionnaire. Successful respondents will be invited to tender for Competitive Procurement Contracts.

These contracts will allow potential suppliers to develop designs and delivery plans, with a particular focus on providing UK social value through, for example, supply chain development, the creation of new jobs and skills, and contributions to carbon emission reduction targets, as outlined in the new Defence and Security Industrial Strategy.

The manufacture contract award is expected to be made within two years, following approvals.

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## **Evaluating the education inspection framework: for schools and further education and skills providers**

In September 2019, we introduced the education inspection framework (EIF) for our inspections of schools, further education (FE) and skills providers and early years settings. When designing the framework, we drew on a significant amount of research into what really makes a difference for children and young people. We consulted with stakeholders and ran many events to explain our thinking about the changes.

It seems like a short time between the introduction of the EIF and the start of the first national lockdown in March 2020, but in that time we carried

out:

- over 7,300 'full' early years register inspections
- 3,250 school inspections, including 2,900 full inspections and section 8 visits (previously known as 'short inspections') to good and non-exempt outstanding schools
- over 200 FE and skills inspections

From the outset, we were committed to evaluating the impact of the EIF to find out what was going well and what might need to improve.

In this commentary, I want to share some of our findings from the first piece of evaluation we have carried out. This small-scale study looked at what was working, what might have gone better and whether there were any unintended consequences.

To do this, we held focus groups with a range of leaders and staff from primary and secondary schools and FE and skills providers. We considered evidence from inspections and from providers across a range of locations, sizes and levels of deprivation. We talked to inspectors and looked at post-inspection surveys, including the free-text responses. We also carried out a survey of leaders of small schools to find out more about how the EIF inspections were affecting them.

My thanks to Dr Sue Morris-King, Senior HMI and the evaluation team for their work on this project.

## **Judging the quality of education**

### **Deep dives**

Under the EIF, inspectors use a deep-dive methodology to evaluate the quality of education. This involves looking at the quality of the curriculum through a range of evidence, focusing on different subjects in order to draw conclusions about the overall curriculum. Inspectors hold discussions with senior leaders, look at curriculum planning and discuss this with curriculum leaders, and visit lessons and talk to pupils about their work. The [research](#) that we carried out in order to develop the EIF showed that this methodology should allow inspectors to collect valid, reliable evidence on which to base their judgements.

So how has this worked in practice?

Responses from FE and skills providers to the 2019/20 post-inspection surveys indicate that the deep-dive methodology has generally been welcomed by the sector. The vast majority agreed that the deep-dive methodology allowed inspectors to understand the quality of education in their setting, for example:

You very rarely have the opportunity to bring all the teachers and all the work and all the evidence to the same place and sit there

and look at it, and actually it's quite a powerful opportunity to see the difference you are making.

When we talked to curriculum leaders in schools, they had similar views, for example:

There's a lot of value in... thinking about the intent of your curriculum and how it's planned.

I thought the whole experience of the deep dive was oddly pleasurable in the fact that you could talk about your subject and showcase what we were doing.

The 'joined up' nature of the deep dives – an important part of the validity of this methodology – seemed to be something that both leaders and inspectors found valuable. All our inspectors are well versed in the purpose of deep dives. They reported that these had substantially improved inspection methodology from previous frameworks:

I think it's more focused, more interrelated, which I think is the whole point of the deep-dive methodology.

It's the connectedness that gives us the strength to the methodology really.

And as well as improving the connection of evidence across an inspection, inspectors thought it gave them deeper evidence across the whole inspection:

We gather a quantity of information that goes way deeper and beyond what we used to be able to get to.

## **The use of internal data**

Under the EIF, inspectors put more emphasis on the curriculum than they have under past frameworks, and no longer consider providers' non-statutory internal progress and attainment data. During our consultations about the EIF, teachers told us they believed that this would reduce unnecessary workload. When we talked to school staff as part of our evaluation work, it was apparent that they had noticed this shift. For some, the new approach to inspection felt more aligned to what they were trying to achieve, enabling better and broader conversations about the curriculum to take place.

A small number of the leaders and staff that we spoke to in our focus groups,



though, felt that the pendulum had swung too far away from considering attainment. There was a perception among some of these that Ofsted no longer considers pupils' attainment at all. This is not the case: inspectors still use published national performance data as a starting point in inspection, and pupils' performance in national tests and examinations is included in one of the grade descriptors for the quality of education. But national test and examinations are only one indicator of the quality of the curriculum, so we will continue to use published attainment information in a balanced way, alongside all the other valuable information we gather during inspections. Because of the disruption to the 2020 and 2021 exam series, we will have to use published data from 2019 in future inspections, recognising all its limitations.

## **Challenging but fair**

We are always aware of the intense nature of the inspection process, and it is clear that being inspected under the EIF is demanding for leaders. And many middle leaders – particularly those who lead areas of the curriculum – are more involved in an inspection now than they might have been in the past. Our initial evaluation of the EIF explored leaders' perspectives on their involvement. Responses reflected a process that was seen as demanding but fair:

This was the fairest inspection process I have experienced as a headteacher; it was thorough, intense and therefore exhausting but very fair and the inspection team genuinely listened to us.

Some school leaders said that they had experienced a more open approach from inspectors under the EIF, leading to better professional dialogue than they had in the past. One head of department, for example, said:

It was more of a conversation and a dialogue... the inspector who I was with really reassured me. I think for me that actually calmed me down a little bit and I could actually just focus on what we do well within a department and I could really showcase what we did.

A leader of a further education college had similar views:

It felt very supportive, it really did, you know, it very much was a collaboration... That there was significant challenge and that transparency to it... it didn't feel like there's an agenda or that they can sort of have preconceived ideas, it was very much 'let's do it together'.

## **Feedback and reports**

Inspectors provide formal feedback to senior leaders and those responsible

for governance at the end of each EIF inspection, and keep in touch with the headteacher or principal as the inspection progresses. But we found that some middle leaders who had been involved in the inspection had expected more feedback than they had received.

In some cases, curriculum leaders said that they had had valuable, in-depth professional dialogue with inspectors, which they had really appreciated. In others, curriculum leaders felt that they were not receiving enough informal feedback throughout the inspection, despite their significant investment of time in the process. Some had received feedback from their headteacher, but not until a while after the inspection. We also heard that some staff who did not receive direct feedback during the inspection were left feeling a bit worried. This was especially true for those who had been involved in a deep dive:

I was expecting an end-of-day conversation... [it] didn't happen. It was quite late in the day but I was expecting to have something. But there was nothing, there was absolutely nothing. No debrief.

We do all of this preparation. You know, teachers work incredibly, incredibly, hard and then to not have any sort of indication...

Some leaders also felt that direct feedback from inspectors to staff could work well, particularly when it was positive:

I then fed back to staff... It would have been lovely for the staff to have had that from the [inspection] team. I was scribbling it down as they were saying it... and there was a lot and it would have been really lovely for the team to share that with the staff.

In general, when teachers, curriculum leaders or headteachers did receive feedback directly, they were extremely positive about the experience – even when they were disappointed by the feedback and final judgement.

There were also mixed views about the new-style inspection reports. Prior to the EIF, our reports were aimed more towards schools. Now, EIF reports are written with parents in mind, so they can get a real flavour of what a school is like for their child. Some senior leaders we spoke to felt that the report was now too short to cover the depth and breadth of the inspection adequately. And we heard from some curriculum leaders that they had been expecting to see more detail about their subject in the final report.

When we carry out a deep dive, we are not inspecting the subject itself. Instead, we are looking to see what is 'systemic' in the curriculum: what are the common reasons why things are as they are, and what needs to happen next? So feeding back or reporting in detail on individual subjects is not something we do. But our findings here about how some providers feel about

the process are important ones, and we will consider how this aspect could be improved further.

## **Small providers**

For the smallest providers of any type, inspections can require a lot of effort to organise and facilitate. Middle and senior leaders often spend much of their time teaching, and usually hold a number of different roles. Under the EIF, the shift away from discussion with headteachers, which made up a large part of inspection under the previous framework, and towards time spent with teachers and curriculum leaders therefore has a particular impact on smaller providers. We heard from leaders in small schools and small FE and skills providers about the logistical demands of releasing staff to spend time with inspectors. A few leaders also told us that they felt that some staff had been somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of time that inspectors had been with them during the inspection.

As well as talking to leaders, we carried out a survey of leaders of small schools that had been inspected under the EIF to find out whether they thought that 2 days on site with one inspector, or one day with 2, would be better. There was no real consensus. Those who preferred the one-day model saw this as reducing the impact on staff and learners by 'getting it over and done with' in a short space of time and therefore not extending the amount of time that the school had to accommodate inspection activities. One respondent suggested that "the stress and workload on a limited number of staff would be much greater over 2 days."

Interestingly, however, the same reason was given by those who preferred the 2-day model. These respondents had all experienced a one-day inspection and thought that having another day would reduce the burden by spreading out the workload:

While I understand the rationale for the one day, 2 inspector model, the pressure put on members of staff in one day was quite immense.

The one-day inspection process with 2 inspectors was completely overloaded.

It was clear when we looked at evidence bases for the inspection of small primary schools that some inspectors had taken the school's size into account really well when planning their inspection activities. Inspectors want to talk to those who are responsible for curriculum intent. In small schools, that is most likely to be the headteacher and deputy headteacher, where there is one.

Inspectors had thought carefully about the most efficient ways to do the deep dives. For example, it was clear that they had listened carefully to the headteacher's views about which staff should be involved and when, to ensure

that the process was manageable. We want to make sure that this happens more consistently as we return to full section 5 inspections.

## **What are we doing next with the EIF?**

In [his recent blog](#), Sean Harford, National Director, Education, explained how inspectors will take schools' COVID-19 context into account during this term's inspections, as well as how we will inspect safely. He talked about how we will consider the impact of COVID-19 on the curriculum and how we might use some remote methods of inspection, such as video calls, to gather some of our evidence when needed. He also said that we want to play our part in helping schools get back on track, through inspection and professional dialogue that helps schools to reflect and develop well. And as we do this, we will continue to reflect on and evaluate how well the EIF is being implemented.