



## Written evidence from Reloop – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024

1. Thank you to the Committee for inviting Reloop to give oral evidence on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our insights and experience.

### **Impact of delays to the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility Reforms**

2. The Welsh deposit return scheme was initially set to start in October 2025. In line with scheme's across the UK, it has now been delayed until October 2027. Reloop's [What We Waste report and dashboard](#) draws on data from 93 countries, over a 20-year period, to examine trends in sales, collection and wastage of drinks containers. Our analysis shows that, on average, the countries with the least wastage per person collect their beverage containers via a deposit return system.
3. Reloop understand that Wales' current recycling rates stand at 59% for PET bottles, 82% for cans, and 87% for glass bottles. An effective deposit return scheme is likely to bring rates up as follows:

PET plastic: 85% oct 2025 to sept 2026, then 90% oct 2026 to sept 2027.

Aluminium: 90% Oct 2025 to Sept 2027

Glass: 90% oct 2025 to Sept 2027

Based on these estimates, a two-year delay from October 2025 to October 2027 would result in 647 million PET bottles being landfilled, littered or incinerated in Wales. This would also be the fate of 332 million cans and 61 million glass bottles.

4. Delays to the implementation of deposit return are harming the transition to reuse, indeed as Huw Irranca-Davies noted in his Statement on DRS on April 24<sup>th</sup>, "it is striking that the best examples not only include glass but are already supporting the reuse of glass".
5. At a per unit (can or bottle) level, greenhouse gas emissions associated with glass are three to four times higher than for aluminium and PET. Recycling glass saves just 25% of the energy costs, whereas recycling aluminium saves 90%. This means that reuse and refill of glass, as well as a switch away from it where possible, will be key. Including glass bottles



in a deposit return scheme from the start will keep costs down and establish the infrastructure required to move towards refillable glass in the future. Excluding glass from a deposit system risks producers switching to the most carbon- intensive material.

6. The table below shows the implementation timeline and material scope of recently started international systems.

#### Recently implemented European schemes

Country	Legislation Enacted	System Operator appointment	System start date	Scope
Slovakia	September 2019	February 2021	January 2022	plastic, metal
Latvia	August 2020	January 2021	February 2022	plastic, metal, glass
Malta	July 2020	September 2020	November 2022	plastic, metal, glass
Romania	October 2021	May 2022	November 2023	plastic, metal, glass
Hungary	February 2021	February 2022	January 2024	plastic, metal, glass

7. Several other countries are preparing to roll out their deposit schemes soon, including Austria, Greece, Portugal and Poland.

#### Delays to EPR for packaging

8. The Government's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) reforms offer a meaningful chance to tackle the root causes of our environmental problems, fully adopting the "polluter pays" principle and shifting the costs of pollution onto those who profit from placing large amounts of packaging on the market. Delays to EPR mean that the financial benefits to Local Authorities are taking longer to materialise as well as the projected environmental benefits from better designed packaging and greater collection rates. Further, packaging EPR was supposed to be the first of many EPR schemes, including for textiles, and delays have halted progress across the board.



### **Impact of the UK Internal Market Act**

9. This post-Brexit legislation has already had serious negative consequences for the progression of environmental policy in the UK's devolved nations. Scotland's deposit return system was due to start in August 2023 and agreement had been reached with the UK Government in terms of the inclusion of glass in the UK's deposit-return schemes. Scotland was very advanced in the implementation of its deposit return scheme, but the UK Government diverged from what had been a collectively agreed position that had been consulted upon. This has resulted in the Scottish system being delayed for a fourth time, until October 2027. It is now set to start almost 20 years since the primary legislation was first approved at Holyrood.