



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**            **The Deposit Return Scheme for Drinks Containers (Wales) Regulations 2026**

**DATE**            **12 February 2026**

**BY**                **Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs**

Today, the [Deposit Return Scheme \(DRS\) for Drinks Containers \(Wales\) Regulations 2026](#) have been laid. This scheme enables the return of drinks containers for recycling and reuse, and so it will build on our world-class recycling performance, tackle litter in our communities and help us reduce waste even further. This is a major milestone on our journey towards ending throwaway culture and creating a more circular economy and delivers on our commitment in *Beyond Recycling* and *Net Zero Wales*.

We have always been clear that we need to progress a scheme which meets Wales' needs and delivers improvement against our high recycling rates, whilst managing interoperability across the UK. In practice, this means a scheme that includes glass bottles in Wales, even though the previous UK Government chose to diverge from that previously collectively agreed scope. That difference in scope has meant the need for an exclusion from the UK Internal Market Act. Through partnership working with the other Governments in the UK, I am pleased to be able to confirm their agreement to that exclusion being brought forward.

This means that the scheme in Wales will encompass PET plastic bottles, aluminium and steel cans, and glass bottles drinks single use containers from day one. It will also commence a clear pathway towards the roll out of reuse, supported by the pilots which industry are committed to delivering and meaning that Wales' scheme will reflect international best practice and continue to lead the way within the UK.

As previously set out, in order to meet industry's request for the aligned launch of DRS across the UK in October 2027, we have accelerated the development of the regulations which are laid today to establish the scheme. This means that the main content of the recent public consultation, particularly in relation to setting out onward

targets for reuse, will therefore need to be brought forward in subsequent regulations. Discussions on the UKIMA exclusion for these elements have already commenced.

To support the smooth delivery of the schemes across the UK, I have proposed to the UK, Northern Ireland and Scottish Governments the establishment of an implementation taskforce to oversee interoperability, working in partnership with the appointed industry-led Deposit Management Organisations. We will also continue our close partnership working with industry, Local Authorities and wider stakeholders to ensure the scheme will deliver clear benefit to Wales.

The Regulations which will now be considered by the Senedd, set the overall framework for DRS, enable the appointment of a Deposit Management Organisation, and define the scheme's purpose and scope. From 1 October 2027, the scheme will cover PET plastic bottles, aluminium and steel cans, and glass bottles (150 ml to 3 L). Following the earlier engagement with industry, whilst glass drinks containers will be part of the scheme and collected from the outset, there will be a transition period during which glass drinks containers will be exempt from labelling and carry a zero-pence deposit. This will last for four years, providing a substantial period which gives industry time to adapt to the requirements which will then apply to glass drinks containers in parallel with the phasing in of reuse. The scheme will also allow people in Wales to donate their deposit refunds to charity, supporting wider social and community benefits.

Subject to Senedd approval, the regulations will enable a DRS to be brought forward in Wales from 1 October 2027. This represents another milestone in the development of our scheme, which will enable Wales to keep leading the way in the UK and the world in building a circular economy that delivers for our economy, our communities and our environment.