



Helpu Cymru i leihau
ei Hôl Troed Carbon

Help Wales reduce
its Carbon Footprint



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

**How would a proposed
charge on single use
carrier bags work in Wales?**



reuse
ailddefnyddio

The Welsh Assembly Government is asking for views on our proposals to introduce a charge on single use carrier bags. This new charge will apply to a range of carrier bags which are currently handed out free in many shops. Customers will have to pay the charge at the point of sale at all retail outlets.

This booklet will explain why we are doing this, how we think it should work and how you can tell us what you think.

The consultation document and the questions can be found on our website (Environment and Countryside). To ask for a hard copy please email or call

The Welsh Assembly Government is looking at:

- substantially reducing the amount of single use carrier bags
- encouraging more people to reuse bags.

All these things will help reduce the amount of litter from single use bags. Plastic bags can take hundreds of years to degrade and move around with wind and water. They can often affect wildlife because they can sometimes eat them, or become entangled in them.

By reusing bags instead not only will we be reducing litter, but also helping to tackle climate change.

The Republic of Ireland introduced a charge in 2002 and since then has seen huge reductions in the amount of single use plastic bags.

In Wales it's likely a charge won't be introduced until 2010 or 2011.

When the charge would apply:

There are two situations where the charge would apply

1. Where something is sold and needs to be taken away.

2. When the goods need to be delivered, for example buying food from the internet.

This would include food retailers such as supermarkets and grocers, as well as non-food retailers, including clothing stores, music and entertainment stores. It would also cover goods sold from market stalls, catering vans, charity shops and takeaways.

How much would the charge be?

To help us with this we've looked at what kind of prices are being charged at the moment, and what they did in the Republic of Ireland. We are suggesting that between 5-15p would be appropriate for a charge in Wales. Let us know what you think about that.

What type of bags would be included?

We are suggesting all types of single use carrier bags (paper, plastic, part plastic, recycled and degradable plastic) will be subject to a charge. This is because these bags are not designed to be used again and again.

We propose that the charge will not apply to carrier bags designed for re-use (i.e. carrier bags made from cloth, jute, cotton or hessian) including thick plastic "Bags for Life" or equivalents.

Other bags not affected by the charge would be bags:

- Which act as main packaging for unpackaged food for human or animal consumption (e.g. bags for loose fruit and vegetables)

- Used as packaging for any goods and sealed before the goods are offered for retail sale or supply
- Used solely for NHS prescriptions
- Provided or delivered to people for charity shop donations
- Which are sold for use by the consumer away from the premises at which they are sold (for example, a handbag)
- Bags that have already been used.

How will we know if retailers are charging in the right way?

We are proposing that retailers will have to keep records about the charge. They will need to keep records on the following:

- The number of single-use carrier bags sold
- The gross amount received by a seller (i.e. a retailer) from a charge on single use carrier bags
- The net proceeds of the charge (net proceeds means the gross charges reduced by a particular amount)
- Where the net proceeds have gone.

We are also proposing to ask retailers to publish details about where the money has gone by the end of April each year, in the most appropriate way for their company. They may also have to supply (when requested) their records to Welsh Ministers, trading standards and members of the public.

The role of Local Authorities

We are proposing that local authorities' trading standards departments will administer and enforce the charge. The regulations will include provisions about enforcement and civil sanctions. Civil sanctions include fixed financial penalties and/or discretionary requirements (such as a monetary penalty or specify steps to be take to ensure that non-compliance does not continue or recur). A civil sanctions regime will help make sure that anyone who doesn't comply with the regulations can be penalised.

Where should the proceeds of the charges go?

The Environment, Sustainability and Housing Minister, Jane Davidson AM supports the National Assembly for Wales Sustainability Committee's recommendation that the money should go to fund environmental projects within Wales.

Neither the National Assembly for Wales nor Welsh Ministers have the power to say where any money raised from a charge should go, although this is likely to change soon.

Until then, we could produce a voluntary code of practice to encourage retailers to give the proceeds from the carrier bag charge to environmental projects within Wales.

What is in the consultation document?

The main areas we're asking for views on are:

- What type of bags should it include
- Which sellers should charge for bags
- How much should that charge be
- How should records be kept of these charges and how should they be published
- How would the scheme be administered and enforced.

How to respond

Please send your consultation responses by 21 September 2009. There is a consultation response form to send your response. This can be found at www.wales.gov.uk/consultations (Environment and countryside)

Other ways you can get involved in the consultation

There will be two consultation events open to all, on a first come first served basis in September 2009. Please check the Welsh Assembly Government website for more information on these events, and how to register at www.wales.gov.uk/environmentandcountryside (click on 'environment - protection and quality', then 'waste and recycling', then 'single use carrier bags')

If you have any questions about this consultation please contact the local environment quality team at the Welsh Assembly Government by emailing carrierbagconsultation@wales.gsi.gov.uk or call 02920 826230 or please write to the address below:

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Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing,
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