

October marks one year to go for UK's drinks deposit scheme

The [Marine Conservation Society](#) is highlighting the scale of drinks-related litter being cleaned up by volunteers ahead of the introduction of Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) in October 2027.

Last year, volunteers from the Marine Conservation Society recorded nearly 50,000 drinks-related litter items like plastic bottles and aluminium cans across UK and Channel Islands beaches. Drinks-related litter was found on 95% of beach cleans.

Catherine Gemmell, Policy Manager at the Marine Conservation Society, said, "The introduction of DRS is an opportunity to reduce the amount of drinks packaging becoming litter, and cut costs for councils. We know these policies work – ten years following the introduction of the carrier bag charges, we saw an 80% reduction in bags on beaches – we have the same hope for plastic bottles and drinks cans."

Under the 'Exchange for Change' schemes, consumers will pay a refundable deposit when they buy eligible single-use drinks containers and receive the deposit back when they return the empty container. The UK Government says the scheme is designed to reduce litter and increase recycling, with [a target of more than 90%](#) collection of in-scope containers by the third year of operation.

DRS are already operating internationally, with schemes in more than 50 countries. The UK Government has said they can significantly reduce drinks container litter, while its impact assessment estimates that the scheme could save local authorities around £30 million a year in street cleaning costs.

Marine Conservation Society volunteers carry out beach cleans and litter surveys throughout the year. Their data provides an important picture of the litter reaching UK beaches and has helped to inform policies like the carrier bag charges and DRS, designed to prevent litter from entering the marine environment.

The charity is calling for the UK's Deposit Return Schemes to be implemented effectively and for governments to continue supporting measures that reduce reliance on single-use packaging, including reuse and refill systems.

ENDS

Images

Please find a selection of [high-res images here](#).

Press Contacts

Evie Martin, Media Relations Manager (evie.martin@mcsuk.org / 07891057102)

Notes to editors

The [Marine Conservation Society](#) is a leading UK environmental charity dedicated to protecting our ocean – defending crucial habitats, regenerating vital ecosystems and inspiring volunteers. The organisation unites communities, governments, and industry to champion science-based solutions for cleaner, healthier seas to tackle the climate and nature emergency.