

SCOTLAND'S CARRIER BAG COMMITMENT

A Guide for signatories to the Commitment

May 2014

Scottish Government and retailer representatives are eager to see the net proceeds of the charge for single use carrier bags, introduced through the Single Use Carrier Bag Charge (Scotland) Regulations 2014, donated to good causes.

To facilitate this ambition Zero Waste Scotland is establishing the Carrier Bag Commitment to accompany the Regulations. Signatories to this commitment are agreeing to:

1. Donate the net proceeds from the charge to good causes, that may include environmental causes.

- Donations would provide additionality above and beyond existing arrangements.
- Any good cause would benefit activities in Scotland.
- Good causes do not include organisations or activities that are party political or those that facilitate or promote ideologies inconsistent with human rights principles.

2. Report on an annual basis, through a central reporting portal hosted by Zero Waste Scotland, information on the number of carrier bags distributed and the purpose to which proceeds of the charge have been applied.

- The reporting portal will help businesses fulfil the record keeping requirement under the Regulations and promote transparency by publishing information on how the net proceeds of the charge have been used.
- Zero Waste Scotland will only use this data to produce aggregated figures of signatory information and will never use data from the reporting portal to publically compare signatories.



Success of the Carrier Bag Commitment will be measured by the number of businesses signing up and taking these two actions.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO SIGNATORIES?

- Signatories will receive external and independent commendation of their donations of the net proceeds of the charge to the good causes of their choice.
- The reporting portal will be set up to allow companies to record all information required under the Regulations. This system will backup and store signatories data for a 3 year period, helping fulfil the record keeping requirement under the Regulations.
- Keeping it simple, the information required, above and beyond the Regulations, will be the purpose for which the net proceeds have been used.
- The reporting portal will be searchable by the public, so anyone can search for the most complete year's information submitted by individual signatories. This will ensure transparency and help signatories promote the good causes that they are contributing to while having their donations recognised.

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Carrier Bag
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- A range of communications collateral will be developed for signatories to use, promoting membership of the Carrier Bag Commitment and how the proceeds of the charge are used. These materials will be automatically populated and personalised from information submitted.
- Zero Waste Scotland will undertake PR activity around the Carrier Bag Commitment at least once per year. This will offer the opportunity for signatories to benefit, directly and indirectly, from this coverage.
- Local Authorities, as the enforcement authority, will be encouraged to check the reporting portal following any intelligence around potential breaches. With no requirement to publish information in the Regulations, it provides a straightforward means for queries to be answered without having to contact the business.
- Reporting requirements will be flexible, in order that small businesses and sector associations can sign up to the Carrier Bag Commitment. A business or groups of businesses which are small enough to be exempt from the requirement to keep records can simply report through their sector association the total amount donated to good causes, the name(s) of the good cause(s) and the number of bags that this applies to.
- The reporting portal will offer the option to record additional related data including types and numbers of bags not subject to charge through the Regulations. Providing this data will not be a requirement for signatories but would help "future proof" the system against future questions regarding the extent of substitution.
- The entry of data can be done to a frequency that most suits the individual business e.g. daily, weekly, monthly or annually. Once a preference is set then the reporting portal will email automatic reminders e.g. annual will ensure a business doesn't miss the reporting year.
- A Project Manager will be available to answer any queries, assist signatories with establishing internal recording systems and overcome any problems in submitting information or using the reporting portal.
- The collation of information from a significant proportion of retailers through the reporting portal would provide a clear demonstration of donations and bag use, Scotland-wide, rather than an extrapolation from a limited sample size.
- It is free of charge! There will be no charge for a business to access these benefits.

