

# **The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021**

**Islands Communities Screening Assessment**

**January 2021**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

## **Islands Communities Screening Assessment**

### **The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021**

#### **Introduction**

1. The importance of island-proofing was recognised in the “Empowering Scotland’s Island Communities prospectus”<sup>1</sup> published in June 2014. The principle of island-proofing is one of building a broad-based islands awareness into the decision making process of all parts of the public sector.
2. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 places a duty on the Scottish Ministers and other relevant authorities, including a number of public authorities, to have regard to island communities in exercising their functions, and for the Scottish Ministers this will also include the development of legislation. This duty is often referred to as ‘island-proofing’.
3. The Scottish Government recognises the importance of island-proofing the secondary legislation required to increase the minimum charge for single use carrier bags.

#### **Background**

4. The current 5 pence minimum charge on carrier bags was introduced in the Single Use Carrier Bag Charge (Scotland) Regulations 2014. The original policy intent was to reduce litter, which was in line with Scotland’s Zero Waste Plan and Safeguarding Scotland’s Resources.
5. Carrier bags also have a disproportionate impact on wildlife, notably in the marine environment, where they can be mistaken for food and cause death after ingestion. As they are light and easily windblown, they can spread widely and be difficult and expensive to remove from the wider environment.
6. The policy intent of the proposed increase is to reinforce the benefits set out above, to reduce further the number of single use carrier bags that are sold in Scotland, and to encourage consumers to use sustainable alternatives to single use carrier bags.
7. The proposed increase would also serve to keep Scotland in line with the rest of the UK. In 2019, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs consulted on increasing the carrier bag charge in England to a minimum of 10 pence a bag. On 31 August 2020, Defra announced a commitment to implement that change from April 2021<sup>1</sup>. Although both Wales and Northern Ireland are considering next steps as regards charging, in neither case will any changes be made as soon as we and Defra propose. The increase would also deliver on a Scottish Government commitment, made to the Scottish Green Party as part of the 2019 budget

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/war-on-plastic-waste-stepped-up-with-extension-of-plastic-bag-charge>

negotiations and included in the 2020/21 Programme for Government, to increase the carrier bag charge to a minimum of 10 pence.

### **Consultation process**

8. A formal six-week consultation 'Developing Scotland's Circular Economy; Proposals for Legislation' was undertaken in November 2019.<sup>2</sup> The consultation paper included two specific questions on the charge for single use carrier bags<sup>3</sup> and one on its potential equalities issues.<sup>4</sup> Independent analysis of the responses by Griesbach & Associates and Jennifer Waterton Consultancy was published. No issues in respect of islands communities were raised by the Islands authorities which responded.

### **Conclusion**

9. Scottish Ministers are aware of the duty to consult island communities before making a material change to any policy, strategy or service which, in the Scottish Ministers' opinion, is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities.

10. In this case, Scottish Ministers have concluded there was not found to be any significantly different effect of the regulations on inhabited island communities compared with non-island communities.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Circular Economy Consultation Analysis](#)

<sup>3</sup> The questions were: (i) Do you agree with the proposal to increase the minimum charge on single-use carrier bags from 5p to 10p? (306 respondents (77 organisations and 229 individuals); and (ii) Do you agree that the initial 5p minimum charge on single-use carrier bags has had a positive impact on the environment? (305 respondents (80 organisations and 225 individuals))

<sup>4</sup> The question was: Taking into account the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), are there any additional likely impacts the proposals contained in this consultation may have on particular groups of people, with reference to the 'protected characteristics' listed above? (230 respondents - 75 organisations and 155 individuals)



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2021

**OGL**

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80004-540-8 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, January 2021

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS809528 (01/21)

W W W . g o v . s c o t