



British Glass

THINK TWICE

Why glass should remain your packaging of choice.

With final first-year packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) fees announced in July 2025, glass appears to face a disadvantage compared to other, less recyclable materials. The base fee for glass is lower per tonne than that of plastic packaging – however, one unit of plastic packaging can be up to 10 times lighter than the equivalent unit of glass meaning the fee on one glass bottle verses one plastic bottle is greater.

While some brands and retailers may be tempted to switch out of glass to lower their pEPR obligations, **British Glass is urging producers to *think twice* before switching, as several upcoming policy changes will rebalance the costs away from glass:**

- **UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) impact:** From 2028, plastic packaging will incur higher costs due to incineration emissions, while glass will not. **This could be around £185 per tonne.**
- **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) costs:** Plastic and metal packaging face significant DRS setup and producer fees, which glass beverage containers avoid in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. **These are on top of the additional lay out costs for consumers.**
- **Future pEPR fee modulation:** Glass packaging will benefit from reduced fees in 2026 and beyond due to its recyclability, while fees for less recyclable materials will increase. **This could see a 10% reduction for glass packaging and at least a doubling (from y4) for other materials.**
- **Environmental and health concerns:** Rising awareness of microplastics and chemical pollution is shifting consumer and regulatory focus towards safer, more sustainable, packaging like glass.
- **Reuse potential:** Glass is uniquely suited to reusable packaging systems, supporting government goals for sustainability and circular economy solutions.
- **Long-term sustainability:** Glass is a proven, inert, infinitely recyclable material that aligns with future environmental and health priorities, making it the smart choice for brands.

To brands and retailers thinking of switching from glass, our advice is clear: **THINK TWICE.**



UK Emissions Trading Scheme – January 2028

The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a mechanism for managing the financial cost of reducing carbon emissions between different sectors of the economy. From January 2028, the ETS will be extended to include emissions from the incineration of waste, an activity widely practiced by local authorities to deal with general waste.

Glass packaging does not combust and therefore does not contribute to emissions during incineration; it is separated from the ash and recycled into building products.

Local authorities will face significant additional costs arising from the extension of ETS. The Local Government Association (LGA) estimates this could be as high as **£747million¹**. As this will increase local authorities waste disposal costs this will pass through to plastic and other combustible packaging pEPR fees.

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero estimates that up to 30% of plastic going to incineration is pEPR material². Based on current placed-on-the-market figures, this would add £185 per tonne³ to plastic pEPR fees, with glass facing no increased costs under ETS.

Additional predicted costs on plastic packaging due to ETS costs being included in EPR from 2028:



		ETS	ETS
		£/tonne	p/unit
Plastic food jar	35g	£185	0.65p
Plastic bottle	20g	£185	0.37p

These ETS costs could increase cost per unit by at least 30%.

Deposit Return Scheme

Aside from some complexity in Wales, glass beverage containers remain outside the scope of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, meaning **there will be no DRS set up costs or ongoing producer fees for glass in those areas**. DRS was due to come into effect at the same time as pEPR but was delayed to October 2027, resulting in a two-and-a-half-year window where plastic and metal (including aluminium) beverage containers are exempt from pEPR fees, due to being in a DRS. However, the **DRS costs are uncertain and will be significant. If there are any further delays to DRS, plastic and metal beverage containers will be incorporated into pEPR by January 2028.**

There are 3 components to the DRS funding:

- Unredeemed deposits
- Material revenue
- Producer fee (covering any shortfall in DRS costs)

It is not possible to calculate the producer costs of DRS, however, data from similar schemes in Europe show a wide range and significant DRS cost, which are summarised in the table below:

	*Estimated DRS Fee £/unit (producer)	Typical DRS deposit £/unit (consumer)	Estimated Deposit per 12 pack (consumer)
Aluminium can (330ml)	0.009 to 0.005	£0.20	£2.40
Plastic bottle (330ml)	0.030 to 0.019	£0.20	£2.40
Glass bottle** (330ml)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

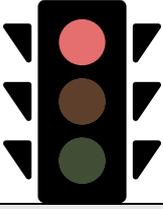
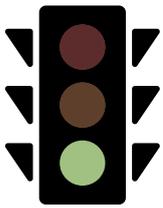
*Producer fee per a unit range is taken from Lithuania 2020⁴ and Finland 2020⁵ and inflated to current cost⁶ and August Euro exchange rate⁷.

**No DRS in England, Scotland and NI

Refinements to pEPR fees and future modulation

Based on figures released by the Department of the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs; there is significant scope for a reduction in the base pEPR fee for glass at the next iteration in 2026. This will be undertaken by the newly formed industry-led Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO). For example, the value assigned to waste glass price collected by local authorities was taken from waste glass price in 2022 when there was an oversupply of waste glass following the pandemic and waste glass prices were at an all-time low. A figure of minus £10/tonne was used in the pEPR fee calculation, but in reality, it is now over +£20/tonne. **British Glass will work with the PRO, and local authorities for a fairer distribution of costs in the future pEPR base fee calculation.**

From year two (2026) of the scheme, **pEPR base fees will be modulated depending on the recyclability of the product** with each product given a Red, Amber, Green rating. **The new industry body could introduce modulation sooner, at a higher rate, and consider factors such as recyclability within the UK. The limited availability of UK facilities for plastic recycling and aluminium refining could, therefore, lead to higher fees for those materials.**

RAG Rating	Explanation	Unknowns
	<p>Products with a red rating will pay double the base fee by 2028.</p> <p>Year 2 x 1.2 Year 3 x 1.6 Year 4 x 2</p>	Currently the modulation is purely based on recyclability, but this may change
	<p>Products with an amber rating will pay the base fee.</p>	
	<p>Products receiving a green rating, which will be most glass, will see a reduction in their fee.</p> <p>Estimated to be around 5-10% reduction on the pEPR base fee from Yr 2</p>	Defra estimates that the reduction could be around 10%, although the exact amount will depend on the number of products that receive a red rating.

From year two, most glass packaging will receive a 5-10% reduction on the EPR base fees.

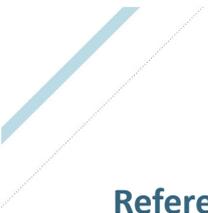
Human health and environmental impact

As the world moves towards electrification with renewable energy and greater use of hydrogen, and as the glass sector moves towards carbon neutrality, **the focus is shifting from the carbon impact of products to their effects on health and the environment.** Recent studies have revealed microplastics in the human body, as well as in rivers, drinking water, and the deepest parts of the ocean. International efforts are being made to combat this through the Global Plastics Treaty, and **it is likely that further steps will be taken to increase the policy costs of plastic usage in the coming years.** Public perception is also turning sharply against plastic and plastic lined packaging. There is currently no price for health and wellbeing, but there will be future costs to pay.

Reuse

The Government has signalled its intention to increase the use of reusable packaging over the next decade. Glass is the perfect product for reusable packaging and glass manufacturers already produce reusable products widely used across Europe and globally. Products currently in single use glass could be easily switched to reusable glass, but the greatest environmental and health benefits would come from replacing single-use plastic and plastic-lined packaging with reusable glass. For this to happen, **the production and availability of glass packaging must be maintained in the coming years to protect both the environment and human health.**

Put simply, glass is the best material for the future Circular Economy, human health and the protection of its contents.



References:

¹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-response-consultation-desnz-uk-emissions-trading-scheme>

² <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/687de90da8ee0c6e06f452d6/uk-ets-energy-from-waste-interim-authority-response.pdf>

³ Calculated based on the LGA upper estimate for EPR pass-through costs of £121 million divided by the tonnage of EPR plastic packaging placed on the market in England in 2024 (National Packaging Waste Data adjusted by population). The LGA figures assumed that 18% of fossil plastic in the residual waste stream is packaging covered by EPR; however, more recent work by DESNZ estimates that this is up to 30%. The £/tonne was therefore adjusted to reflect the DESNZ upper estimate.

⁴ <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-Global-Deposit-Book-WEB-version-1DEC2020.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-Global-Deposit-Book-WEB-version-1DEC2020.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/>

⁷ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/boeapps/database/Rates.asp?Travel=NlxAZx&into=GBP>

