

Circularity Scotland announces Biffa as logistics partner for UK's first Deposit Return Scheme in Scotland

3 years ago



Circularity Scotland Ltd, the not-for-profit scheme administrator for the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in Scotland, has signed an agreement with Biffa that will see the leading sustainable waste management company become the scheme's official logistics service provider.

The Deposit Return Scheme is a fundamental part of Scotland's efforts to move to tackle climate change and create a circular economy by reducing waste. DRS aims to ensure that at least 90% of recyclable drinks containers are captured and prevented from becoming waste.

The agreement comes after several months of close collaboration between the organisations as they progress towards DRS going live in August 2023 and is expected to create around 500 jobs in Scotland to support the collection, sorting and counting of products within scope of the scheme.

Circularity Scotland is also working with Biffa to explore the opportunity to build a PET recycling plant in Scotland to support the scheme and deliver further employment opportunities.

It marks the latest milestone in the development of the scheme, following May's announcement that Circularity Scotland had secured £18m investment from the Scottish National Investment Bank and Bank of Scotland to support the initial set-up phase of the scheme.

The new agreement will see Biffa take responsibility for the crucial work of collecting billions of drinks bottles and cans from return points across the length and breadth of Scotland each year, as well as managing the bulking and counting centres that will process material for recycling.

From August 2023 all drinks producers and everyone selling single-use drinks containers is required to take part in the Deposit Return Scheme. A refundable 20p deposit will apply to all single-use PET plastic, aluminium, steel or glass drinks containers ranging in size from 50ml up to three-litre containers.

People will be able to return their bottles and cans to thousands of shops or hospitality venues across Scotland. Some venues will accept items over the counter, while larger stores, shopping centres and transport hubs will operate automatic collection points known as reverse vending machines.

David Harris, CEO of Circularity Scotland, said: “The DRS scheme is a key part of Scotland’s move to a circular economy. It is one of the most significant environmental infrastructure projects ever introduced in the UK and the most comprehensive deposit return scheme anywhere in the world. As scheme administrator, Circularity Scotland is working at pace to ensure that the scheme runs effectively and efficiently, and at as low a cost as possible, from August 2023.

“Bringing on board Biffa as our logistics service provider is another landmark moment in this work and their unparalleled expertise in supporting large scale and complex recycling schemes will help us to achieve the aim of capturing and recycling at least 90% of drinks containers made from PET plastic, aluminium, steel or glass.”

Michael Topham, Biffa Chief Executive Officer, said: “We’re delighted to have been appointed to provide logistics, sorting and counting services for Scotland’s landmark Deposit Return Scheme. This appointment is testament to the strength of Biffa’s reputation as a sustainable waste management provider to complex markets, our extensive capabilities and world leading recycling infrastructure.”