



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Easy Read

Single-use plastic products

The law is changing about some plastic products in Wales - Guidance



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of 'The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastics Products) (Wales) Act 2023. Statutory Guidance'.

September 2023

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 22**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **the Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

E-mail: SingleUsePlastic@gov.wales

Address: Local Environment Quality
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ



Easy Read Wales made this document into Easy Read using **Photosymbols**. To tell us what you think about this easy read version, [click here](#).

Photosymbols Licence number 403527247

Contents

Introduction.....	4
The law.....	6
What is being banned and when?	7
Will other products that are usually only used once be banned?...	10
More about the law	11
What should businesses do next?	13
When the law will not apply	15
More about what can be used instead of single-use plastic products	18
Support for businesses	20
Hard words	22



Introduction

This is a guide to a new law in Wales banning some types of single use plastic products.



There is a lot of rubbish found on beaches in Wales that is made of plastic products.



These products are for things that people use to eat when they are out and about. For example, a plastic fork to eat with food bought from a takeaway.



They are called single use plastic products as people usually use them once then throw them away.



They are often thrown away without thought. For example, on a beach. Some products are thrown down the toilet.



These products cause a lot of harm to the environment and wildlife.



To help protect the environment, lots of businesses in Wales have already stopped using single use plastics products.



We want to make sure **all** businesses and organisations now do this in Wales.



This will help stop these plastic products damaging our environment and wildlife.



Organisations includes charities and voluntary organisations.



We want to make Wales more **sustainable**.

Sustainable means doing things in ways that cause little or no damage to the environment.

The law



To make sure we stop using single use plastic products we have made a new law.



It is called the **Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023**.



We will be banning certain plastic products from October 2023.



This means businesses and organisations will no longer be able to give away or sell these products.

What is being banned and when?



There are 10 products being banned.



There may be more in the future, but we will ask people what they think first.



We want to make sure people have time to prepare. So we are introducing the bans in **stages**.

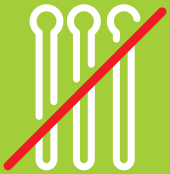
Stage 1 bans – These will be banned from **October 2023**:



- Single-use plastic plates



- Single-use plastic cutlery – like knives, forks and spoons



- Single-use plastic drinks stirrers



- Cups made of some types of polystyrene



- Takeaway food containers made of some types of polystyrene



- Plastic sticks for balloons



- Single-use plastic-stemmed cotton buds



- Single-use plastic drinking straws – apart from people who need them to eat and drink safely and independently.

April

2026

Stage 2 bans – will come into force by **April 2026**.

- Single use plastic carrier bags.
- Polystyrene lids for drinks and food containers.
- Products made from a type of plastic called **oxo-degradable** plastic.



Will other products that are usually only used once be banned?



No. There are some products that are used only once that we are not banning.



This is because they are less harmful to the environment.



For example, wooden cutlery or cotton buds with cardboard stems.



The ban will apply though if these products are coated with plastic. For example, a paper plate is not banned. But if it is coated with plastic then it will be banned.

More about the law



Businesses and organisations will not be allowed to **supply** these banned products. They can still own them.



If a family member gives one of the banned products to another person, they will not be breaking the law.



This is because the law applies to businesses and organisations only. This is to help stop them being everywhere.



Businesses outside of Wales will not be allowed to deliver banned products to Wales.



Local authorities (councils) will be allowed to check if businesses and organisations are following the law.



Businesses who break the law may have to go to court. They could be fined.

What should businesses do next?



Businesses need to start planning for the changes in the law.



They could use up the stock they have.



They need to think about what other products to use instead.



It is better to use products that can be used again. But otherwise, to use products that are better for the environment. For example, wooden cutlery.

October

2023

From October 2023 businesses and organisations must:



- Stop providing customers with banned products.



- Make sure staff know the law.



- Tell customers about the changes.

- Avoid having leftover stock. But if you do, contact your suppliers or council about recycling it.



- For example, some polystyrene can be recycled.



- Businesses will be responsible for getting rid of any leftover stock and deal with any costs.

When the law will not apply



There are some situations where the law will not apply.



Businesses will still be allowed to sell the banned products listed on page 8 to other businesses.



People who need to use single use drinking straws due to a health issue or disability will still be allowed to use them.



Because of this some businesses or organisations will be allowed to sell or supply some products.



The details of these are below:

Straws:



People will **not** need to provide proof of a health issue or disability.

Chemists (also known as pharmacies)



They will still be able to sell plastic straws to people who say they need them for health or disability reasons.

Businesses



They will be allowed to provide or sell people straws if they believe they are needed for health or disability reasons.



Cups

Cups made of expanded polystyrene are banned. Other single use cups are not.



Takeaway food containers

Containers made of expanded polystyrene are banned.



Spoons that come with medicines are **not** banned.

More about what can be used instead of single-use plastic products



We have listed the products that are being banned on page 8.



It is always better to use products that can be re-used. Some examples of them are listed below:

- Ceramics – for example a china plate.
- Metal – for example cutlery.



Sometimes it is not possible to re-use something. For example, if you buy food from a food stall or takeaway.



But there are products that are much better for the environment, even if they are only used once. They are:



- Paper and card – for example, for plates, straws, cups, or cotton-bud stems.



- **Bagasse** – for example for food containers and lids. **Bagasse** is a dry material made from sugarcane.



Support for businesses



Welsh Government runs Business Wales, which is a support service for businesses.



Their website is: businesswales.gov.wales



There is a lot of information and advice on this website. Including how businesses can save money.



Business Wales uses the term **resource efficiency**. This means how to save money and be more **sustainable**.

Business Wales employ people called **Resource Efficiency Advisers**. They can support and advise businesses on issues like:



- Lowering costs and making more money.



- Following laws. For example, about health and safety or the environment.



- Improving the workplace and local environment.

Their contact details are:



Phone: 03000 603 000

Email: BusinessSupport@gov.wales



They are usually open on Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 4pm.

Hard words

Sustainable

Sustainable means doing things in ways that cause little or no damage to the environment.