

A young woman with long blonde hair tied back, wearing a striped t-shirt, is holding a clear glass bottle. In the background, a young boy in a blue t-shirt is also holding a clear glass bottle. They appear to be outdoors, possibly on a balcony or patio, with a railing and buildings in the distance. The image has a soft, teal-colored overlay.

# CLOSE THE GLASS LOOP

THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE UK

June  
2020

# UK Glass Recycling: Facts & Figures

- Collection for recycling rate: **No official statistic – estimated to be around 75%**
- Recycling rate: **69%**
- Remelt rate: **67% of what's recycled**
- Amount of glass recycled per inhabitant: **21.6kg**
- Local Authorities: **408**
- Population: **67 million**
- Carbon saving (using recycled glass for remelt compared to raw material): **593,978 tonnes of Co2 per year**



# Platform Lead: British Glass

- **British Glass** – the trade association for the UK glass industry, representing packaging manufacturers and the entire glass supply chain
- A monitoring committee set up by British Glass will be responsible for annual monitoring the implementation of the road map
- British Glass will bring together the critical stakeholders from across the glass supply chain



# Objectives

A **monitoring committee** will coordinate and implement the plan, produce and monitor the progress of the collection rate for glass recycling in the UK, work with and drive new supporters and signatories across the UK and European glass supply chain to the UK Roadmap, and focus on the following objectives:

- Build on the sustainability of glass
- Achieve 90% collected for recycling rate by 2030
- Maximise the quantity of glass collected for recycling going for remelt into new bottles & jars
- Increase the recycled content of glass packaging
- Quantify the environmental benefit and contribution of high collection rates on the Government's ambition to achieve Net Zero by 2050.



# Challenges

- **Inconsistency of recycling across UK** – With over 400 local authorities collecting different sets of materials through different methods, this inconsistency causes confusion with no possibility of universal labelling and communications campaigns. This is also problematic for recyclers and reprocessors, creating inefficiency and driving up costs
- **Lack of funding for household recycling** – Local authority recycling budgets have fallen (over £60m between 2013 and 2017). The UK's current producer responsibility scheme contributes around 10 to 20% of the collection costs to local authorities, therefore budgets are stretched.
- **Unambitious bottle to bottle recycling targets** – The obligated recycling target is met every year, but this is not ambitious enough. The new Scottish DRS targets 90% collection but focus must be on a remelt target to guarantee circularity and carbon savings.
- **No legal obligation for commercial recycling** – There is no UK wide legal obligation for businesses to separate their waste for recycling which means recycling rates by business vary from 80% to 0%.
- **Improve consumer awareness of what and how to recycle** – 78% of UK households 'often or always' use kerbside collections to recycle their glass. This is good but we want to increase this further and reduce confusion such as whether it is possible to recycle bottles with lids on or glass jars contaminated with food.
- **Cullet colour imbalance** – Whilst there is a good supply of green cullet in the UK, the UK has a higher demand than supply for flint glass. This means some green cullet is exported whilst the under supply of clear cullet means it is imported or manufacturers must use higher % of raw materials, in all cases emitting CO<sub>2</sub>.
- **Glass losses through recycling process** – Whilst important to increase glass collected for recycling rates, we need to continue to improve efficiency of recycling and reprocessing to reduce losses to the system through fines and poor-quality cullet going to construction/aggregate.

# Solutions

- **Improving consistency of recycling collections** – The best way to increase glass recycling is through consistency. We will work with the UK Government on upcoming legislation on consistency
- **Increasing funding for recycling** – Collaboration with Government and compliance schemes on the upcoming extended producer responsibility legislation that increases capital and resource budgets to invest in better consistent recycling including kerbside as well as communication campaigns
- **Increase national glass recycling targets** – We will lobby for the new EPR scheme to obligate a 90% + recycling rate for glass by 2030 with 80% of recycled glass for remelt.
- **Obligate businesses to recycle glass** – We will push for all UK businesses to be obligated to recycle and work with local government and recyclers to maximise glass recycling
- **Increase consumer awareness of glass recycling** – Our survey showed that 48% of the public would recycle more glass if it was simpler to understand 'what goes where'. We will facilitate communications and behavioural change campaigns with organisations such as Wrap to increase consumer awareness
- **Reduce colour imbalance** – We will work on communications to increase clear glass food packaging and with the glass supply chain to increase the quantity of green cullet used in bottles and jars
- **Cut losses throughout recycling process** – Promote research and innovation to maximise glass for remelt in collaboration with glass reprocessors