

Plastic carrier bag sales slashed by more than 95% since 5p charge introduced

Plastic carrier bag sales [have dropped by more than 95% in England's main supermarkets](#) since the 5p charge was introduced in 2015, new government data reveals.

In the last year alone, Asda, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, The Co-operative Group, Tesco and Waitrose sold 226 million bags – 322 million fewer than in 2018/19 (59%).

The average person in England now buys just four bags a year from the main supermarket retailers, compared with 10 last year and 140 in 2014.

As a result of the charge, £178 million has been donated to charitable causes, with £9.2 million donated in the last year alone.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

It is so encouraging to see in such a short space of time the huge difference our plastic carrier bag charge has had in reducing the amount of plastic we use in our everyday lives.

We have all seen first hand the devastating impact that plastic bags have on the environment, littering our beautiful countryside and threatening the world's marine life. I am committed to driving this progress further and I hope this continues to inspire similar action across the globe.

The 5p charge currently applies to all retailers employing over 250 people, and government has [consulted on extending this to all businesses as well as increasing the minimum charge to 10p](#). The formal response to this consultation will be published in due course.

The UK continues to be a global leader in tackling plastic waste to protect oceans and marine life, and our [landmark Resources and Waste Strategy](#) sets out a range of measures to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste.

Key government actions include a [world-leading ban on microbeads](#), consulting on introducing a [deposit return scheme to drive up the recycling of single-use drinks containers](#), and a [ban on the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds](#) which will come into force in October.

The government will also introduce a [new world-leading tax on plastic packaging](#) which does not meet a minimum threshold of at least 30% recycled content from April 2022, subject to consultation, to encourage greater use of

recycled plastic to tackle the problem of plastic waste and protect the environment.