

Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

18th March 2026

Dear Convener,

I am writing to highlight the publication of Consumer Scotland's new report on the [circular economy in Scotland](#). Consumers are at the heart of the circular economy challenge. While recycling is now well established for many materials, this alone is insufficient to meet Scotland's ambitions.

To inform Scotland's progress to a circular economy, Consumer Scotland has conducted research to understand the attitudes and behaviours of consumers in Scotland. This research highlights the key factors that promote or reduce consumer engagement with circular economy measures, and sets out the priorities for action to increase consumer participation in Scotland's circular economy.

The key findings in our report are:

- Recycling is currently the dominant consumer behaviour in Scotland for all material types
- Recycling is particularly common for items that consumers can recycle easily at home. For most items, the most common barriers to people recycling are the lack of a suitable local service or facility and uncertainty about where or how to recycle
- Repair levels are comparatively lower amongst consumers. The most common barrier that consumers face to repairing items is cost. Many consumers say that repairing costs them more than buying new. Not knowing how or where to get items repaired or inconvenience are also common barriers
- When asked about how they would engage with a deposit return scheme, two thirds of respondents said that they would frequently return their container, including just over a third saying they always would
- When asked how their behaviour might change if a 25p charge were introduced on single-use takeaway cups, just under half of those consumers who currently purchase takeaway drinks anticipate maintaining or increasing their purchasing frequency

The key recommendations in our report are:

- Policymakers should utilise Consumer Scotland's [4Cs climate change policymakers toolkit](#) to assess the impact of circular economy policies on consumers
- The Scottish Government should deliver a targeted consumer behaviour change campaign focussing on materials which are currently more likely to be incorrectly disposed of via landfill.
- The Scottish Government should put in place measures to encourage repair businesses to provide consumers with a warranty on repaired items
- The Scottish Government should act to ensure that repair, reuse and recycling facilities are accessible and available for consumers across Scotland
- The Scottish Government should work with stakeholders to provide targeted small business development support to repair businesses
- The design of the deposit return scheme should maintain a clear focus on making access as convenient as possible and ensuring that consumer information is clear
- If the Scottish Government proceeds with implementing a charge on single-use cups, the impact on consumers in vulnerable circumstances should be fully assessed to ensure that those who are least able to pay are not disproportionately impacted
- The Scottish Government should work with partners to provide clear and consistent messaging about the appropriate disposal of single-use cups
- Other action on single-use cup should include work to drive improvements in materials, facilitating greater consumer awareness about the impact of cups and supporting further development and trials of cup hire and take back schemes

This evidence-based assessment of consumer experiences and constraints can help provide a clear foundation to support the further development of circular economy policies that are accessible, equitable and effective for consumers in Scotland. We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information about this report and our recommendations if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Sam Ghibaldan