Minister Bruton Announces Government will Lead the Way in Reducing Single Use Plastics

From the date of the announcement on 4th January 2019, no government department or agency will buy single-use plastic cups, cutlery or straws for use within their offices.

- Green procurement advanced
- All government departments and agencies to develop resource efficiency plans

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Focus on Single Use Plastics

The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment, Minister Richard Bruton T.D. announced on 4th January 2019 that government departments, public bodies, and schools will lead the way in the response to cutting down on single use plastics, with a number of measures, including no longer purchasing single-use plastic cups, cutlery and straws for use within their offices.

From the date of the announcement on 4th January:

• No government department will purchase single-use plastic cups, cutlery and straws for use within their offices.

• All government departments will develop resource efficiency action plans by the end of June this year. These plans will help staff make savings in energy and water use as well as preventing food waste and maximising recycling.

• The Department will work with the Office of Government Procurement to bring forward proposals on how national public procurement policy can take account more fully of environmental matters. This will ensure state contracts include the full life cycle cost of our purchases. These proposals are to be finalised by the end of March 2019.

In addition, all public bodies including state agencies and schools will not purchase single-use plastic beverage cups, cutlery and drinking straws after 31st March 2019, except where specific public health/hygiene or safety issues arise.

Every public body is required to report to its respective Minister by end-November 2019 on the measures it is taking to minimise waste generation and maximise recycling.

Minister Bruton said, “Ireland is way off course in our response to climate disruption. It is practical steps like these that put us on a sustainable path which is essential if we are to achieve our ambition to become a leader. I am committed to putting us on the right trajectory to meet our obligations.”

The Government is implementing these measures ahead of broader proposals relating to single-use plastic items being negotiated at EU level. Draft EU legislation proposes new rules targeting the 10 most prevalent single-use plastic products found on Europe’s beaches and seas, as well as lost and abandoned fishing gear, which together account for 70% of all marine litter. The proposal includes a ban on certain single use plastic products such as plastic straws, cutlery, cotton buds and balloon sticks.

Source: www.dccae.ie

European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy

In January of 2018, the European Commission adopted the first-ever Europe-wide strategy on plastics. The European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy envisages that all plastic packaging on the EU market will be recyclable by 2030, the consumption of single-use plastics will be reduced and the intentional use of micro plastics will be restricted. This strategy will transform the way products are designed, produced, used, and recycled in the EU. One of the first key legislative proposals to emerge on foot of the EU Plastics Strategy is the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, which was published on 28th May 2018. This draft legislation proposes new EU-wide rules to target the 10 most prevalent single-use plastic (SUP) products found on Europe’s beaches and seas. Ireland has supported the ambition of this proposal throughout all the negotiations.

More information on the European Strategy can be found at


Source: www.dccae.ie
General Waste

Approx. 70% of material in the black bin could be diverted to recycling or composting.

Organic waste is one third of all waste in the black bin. Businesses must divert this to the brown bin.

The share of plastic waste in the black bin has almost doubled over the last ten years. Approximately 4% of commercial black bin waste is made up of coffee cups.

Recyclable Waste

Packaging material in the green bin is less clean now than it was ten years ago.

The share of cardboard in commercial bins has declined substantially in the past ten years.

Organic Waste

Over 95% of the commercial brown bin waste is biodegradable; but 25% of this organic waste is unused packaged food, that could be managed differently.

Total Kerbside Waste

Organic waste remains the largest component of commercial waste.

Tissue paper accounted for 10% of commercial waste.

Key Messages

The successful separate collection of cardboard is a model that could be applied to other waste streams. This will increase recycling rates.

Use your bins correctly

Businesses must improve segregation: 70% of the material currently in the black could be recycled or composted.

Present your recyclables clean, dry, loose.

Say NO to the throwaway culture

Avoid single use products.

Stop food waste

Improved management of stock can prevent avoidable food waste.
Renew is a Social Enterprise originally operated by Treo Port Lairge CLG, with whom it shares a premises in Lacken Road Business Park, Kilbarry, Waterford. Renew expanded on skills and programmes developed by Treo and began trading under the name “Renew Enterprises” in March of 2018.

The social enterprise was set up to create full-time employment for people that have been most distant from the labour market, so that they can learn, train and practice new skills while working in an operating business. A social enterprise is a business that has a social mission. Social, environmental and economic issues are fundamental and drive the business’ core philosophy.

At Renew, they undertake to provide saleable products, with the purpose of benefiting the local community at large, and creating employment. They believe people have the right to participate fully in life from an economic, social and cultural perspective. They also support creating a sustainable future for every member of society and for societies as a whole. They are committed to social inclusion and social justice.

What they do:
- Lawnmower and small engine repair and servicing
- Bicycle repair and servicing
- Wheelchair repair and servicing
- Bicycle sales (at community prices)
- Kindling Production
- Pallet furniture (indoor and outdoor)
- Custom made furniture and woodcraft items
- Delivering QQI and City & Guilds accredited bicycle mechanics programmes.
- Delivering QQI Level 3 four stroke engine repair programmes.

The Renew Enterprises team were delighted to be short listed as a finalist in the Waterford Chamber of Commerce Business Awards in the Community and Social Enterprise category for 2018/2019.

Renew’s Social Enterprise manager is Nicola Tull, contact her on manager@renewenterprises.ie or 089-2436006.