

In this week's Ours to Protect, show producer Ethna Quirke chatted with Colin O'Byrne, of Voice Ireland who is Lead on the Return for Change campaign, ahead of the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme, in February.

Why and what? In an effort to reduce pollution, a deposit will now have to be paid on any plastic bottle or can containing a Re-turn logo. Dairy products (Milk, yogurt etc.) will not be included in the scheme but should still be recycled.

The drinks included in the Scheme are PET plastic bottles as well as aluminium and steel cans from 150ml to 3L.

Deposit and how to get it back. A 15c deposit will be required on containers from 150ml-500ml and a deposit of 25c for containers 500ml-3L.

In order to get your deposit back, there are 2 options:

Bring the empty, undamaged container to any shop that sells Re-Turn products. You will be able to give them back over the counter and you will be issued a refund.

Alternatively, you will be able to make use of a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM), which will allow you to insert the drinks inside and you will be issued a voucher which can be used to get a refund at the till. You will have a choice to receive your refund against a new purchase or in cash.

Benefits of the scheme A new convenient way to recycle: Any shops that sells re-turn products will also accept returns. This means that you will never have to worry about finding a return spot, simply just return to the shop that you purchased the product from and get your deposit back!

Bringing the community together: Recycling plays a big part in combatting climate change and it needs to be done by as many people as possible. Creating a nationwide recycling scheme will promote communities to come together and have a positive impact on future generations.

A step to protect the environment: In other countries, Deposit Return Schemes have been very successful in minimising litter waste. Adding a deposit to containers gives consumers more incentive to return them rather than discarding them recklessly.

How is the scheme funded? The management and operation will be funded by producer fees for each product, it will not cost the public or government any money.

Why not just put them in the recycling bin? Currently, only about 60% of plastic bottles and cans are being recycled through collection bins. This scheme aims to move that closer to 100% and to create a closed looped recycling system that guarantees all recyclable materials are recycled and turned into new containers.

Resources:

www.re-turn.ie

www.voiceireland.org

www.ourstoprotect.ie