



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref TO/AD-/01127/14

Jane Bickerstaffe
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Dear Ms Bickerstaffe

Thank you for your e-mail of 27 June to John Griffiths Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport about the success of the carrier bags charge in Wales and the reduced incidence of littered bags. I have been asked to reply.

I can confirm that although we expect that single use carrier bag (SUCB) litter has reduced as a result of the charge, at present we have very limited quantitative evidence that this is the case.

The research that has been carried out on behalf of the Welsh Government has mainly focussed on consumer perceptions of the charge and, as such, has only touched on whether consumers believe that single use carrier bag litter has reduced as a result.

The Consumer Behavioural Study on the Use and Re-use of Carrier Bags undertaken by Exodus Research in 2012 found that 32% of Welsh households were most likely to strongly agree that the charge has resulted in a reduction in littering.

Please see the following link to this study for your information:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/130903behaviour-study-on-carrier-bags-report-en.pdf>

A more recent 2014 Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) survey on attitudes, awareness and behaviour found that 46% of those interviewed in Wales believed there was less litter because of the 5p charge. This survey is due to be formally published later this year and we would be happy to provide you with a copy of it following its publication.

In addition to the findings in these studies we have also received anecdotal evidence from a number of Keep Wales Tidy officers working in local communities. We have been informed by these officers that since the 5p charge on single use carrier bags was introduced in Wales, they have noticed a significant reduction in carrier bags litter whilst doing clean-ups.

In terms of specifically measuring whether litter has reduced as a result of the charge, I am pleased to confirm that the Welsh Government has commissioned an external review of the SUCB charge policy in Wales. One of the objectives of this review will be to identify, where possible, and to evaluate the extent to which the SUCB charge has reduced littering of SUCBs since its implementation. For your information the review is due to commence at the end of this month and we would be more than happy to share the findings on litter from the review with you as soon as they are available.

Yours sincerely

Ceris Price
Local Environment Quality Branch