

Submission from the Federation of Small Businesses

Further to written evidence submitted earlier in the year and our recent participation in a roundtable discussion with the Committee, we are pleased to submit additional comments on the regulations:

1. Latest survey evidence of FSB members in Scotland again highlights the crucial role played by local authorities in waste collection and recycling for small businesses – 66% currently rely on their local authority for waste collection, while 20% who use a private waste company. Only 7% (12% for catering) currently recycle food waste¹.
2. Most small businesses want to recycle more but, like households, they need collections to be practical, easy-to-use and affordable.
3. The challenges facing local authorities in relation to household collections may mean their responsibilities to businesses are overlooked. The current variation across councils, both in provision of recycling services and general approach to trade waste, means that the introduction of the regulations could have a greater impact in some areas than others. For example, there is greater potential for negative impact on businesses in areas with limited recycling options for business customers and a general reluctance to introduce services that meet their needs.
4. While advice on waste prevention will be a key element of the Scottish Government's approach to mitigating impact on businesses, the potential of waste reduction savings is likely to be minimal for most small businesses in the short term. Potential longer-term savings will not detract from any immediate additional costs that small businesses may have to bear to comply with the regulations.
5. We recognise the difficulties in assessing costs to businesses and welcome ongoing work by the Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland to improve information currently available. Understanding the impact on small (especially micro) businesses and adapting implementation and support accordingly, is crucial to improving the regulatory environment in Scotland.
6. In particular, small hospitality/catering businesses are likely to be particularly concerned about the impact of the regulations.
7. We hope to take part in discussions about a national approach to enforcement however we are currently unclear about potential sanctions for non-compliance.

¹ FSB monthly membership survey, March 2012