



Writing To Your MLA, Supporting The Message In A Bottle Campaign

There are some basic guidelines we need you to follow to ensure your letter has the greatest chance of influencing your Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).

- Add your address. Your MLA will take your letter more seriously if they know you are a potential voter residing in their constituency.
- Make the message personal to you and relevant to your MLA. You can do this by mentioning how prevalent plastic bottles and cans are across the environments that are important to you. And if you've attended any beach cleans, reference the bottles you found during your event. The Message In A Bottle campaign call for a Deposit Return System to stop bottles and cans from polluting your beaches, seas, rivers and rural spaces.
- Add a few pertinent facts supporting the need for a Deposit Return System in Northern Ireland, for example:
 - 1) Bottles and cans account for 40% of all litter (by volume).
 - 2) A Deposit Return System for the UK is expected to capture between 80-90% of these bottles and cans in the recycling economy and prevent them from polluting the environment.
 - 3) In the past 12 months 50,000 plastic bottles have been removed from tidelines around the UK thanks to SAS beach cleans.
 - 4) 150 million people live with Deposit Return Systems across Europe with many more in America and Australia.
 - 5) A Deposit Return System can save local authorities £159 million per annum.
 - 6) A Deposit Return System would create a net increase of 4,000 jobs across the UK.
- Ask your MLA to write to the Minister for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Michelle McIlveen MLA) calling for a Deposit Return System to be included in the National Litter Strategy.
- Address your MLA as they are listed on the [Gov. site](#). You can find your MLA's address on [this site](#). Send the letter to their constituency office. You could even hand deliver your message face to face at your MLA's constituency

surgery. Details of these surgeries will be available from the constituency office.

- Ask for a reply.
- Add the date to your letter and sign off with “yours sincerely”.
- Keep it to the point, MLAs are busy and a long rambling letter will be ineffective.
- It’s fine to have these letters printed or hand written. But please send them in the post or hand deliver them to your MLA, do not send your message by email.
- During November and December we would like your MLA to receive at least 20 letters supporting the Message In A Bottle campaign, calling for a Deposit Return System. This coordinated approach will help persuade your MLA to take action. Please ask your friends and family to also write to their MLAs.

Writing this letter shouldn’t take more than 5 minutes, but will hopefully be a stepping-stone towards stopping a major source of litter from polluting our environment.

Thanks for your support, Team SAS.

