



Minutes: 29th Meeting of the Retail Forum

7 December 2022, 10.30am-12.00pm

*(via video / tele conference and Room 110, Kildare St)
Meeting held under Chatham House Rules*

Chair: Damien English TD, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail.
Attendance and apologies at Appendix 1.

Item 1: Welcome and Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed Retail Forum members and new representatives from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, and the Department of Rural and Community Development to the Retail Forum. The Chair stressed the importance of the Retail Forum to ensure that the retail stakeholder views are heard in the development and implementation of new legislation.

The Chair advised members that the Minutes of the meeting will be circulated to members and agreed under the silence procedure. The Minutes will be placed on the Department's website and gov.ie. The minutes from the last Forum meeting have now been published on the Department's website and on gov.ie

The Chair outlined that the Temporary Business Energy Supports Scheme (TBESS) is now open and encouraged all eligible companies to submit claims.

Item 2: Government Initiatives

Consumer Rights Act 2022

The Chair invited:

- Mr Barry McGreal, Competition and Consumer Policy Unit to give an overview of the Consumer Rights Act 2022. [Copy of the presentation can be found here](#)
- Ms Grainne Griffin, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission to provide an update on the enforcement of the regulations.

Comments Arising:

- *Retailers expressed their disappointment with the lack of notice to the sector regarding the introduction of The European Union (Requirements to indicate Product Prices) Regulations 2022*
- *The timing of the introduction of the Regulations are also problematic for retailers as it was at the busiest trading time of the year (Black Friday/Christmas)*
- *Preparation for the regulation was estimated at 4 - 5 months for retailers due to product lead in times, supply chain operations and shop floor operations*
- *Retailers struggling to make necessary changes and queried if a 'grace period' was possible.*

- *CCPC advised that legislation is now in place and they would continue to educate retailers to ensure compliance*
- *Important that smaller businesses are specifically targeted in communications campaigns to ensure more awareness*

Action:

Copy of Presentation to be forwarded to Retail Forum Members [presentation forwarded to Retail Forum members on 9 December 2022]

Item 3: Future of Retail – Diversity in Retail

The Chair invited Ms Julie Sinnamon, co-chair Balance for Better Business Review Group to give an overview of the Balance for Better Business initiative.

Ms Sinnamon advised members that they are seeking relevant case studies for Balance for Better Business and if they would like to forward them to the Retail Forum secretariat.

[Copy of the presentation can be found here](#)

Comments Arising:

- *Are statistics available per sector? (Ms Sinnamon advised that currently there are no sector specific statistics available and added that they were working to provide sectoral statistics in the future)*

Action:

Copy of presentation to be forwarded to Retail Forum Members [presentation forwarded to Retail Forum members on 9 December 2022]

Item 4: Retail Forum Work Programme

(a) The Chair invited Ms Bernie Kiely, Department of Environment, Climate and Communication to give an overview of

- The outcome of the Consultation on draft regulations to introduce an environmental levy on single-use disposable cups
- Deposit Return Scheme

[Copy of the presentation can be found here](#)

Comments Arising:

Levy on Single-use disposal cups:

- *Timeline (DECC advised that it is due to be in place by Easter 2023)*
- *Will the levy price be changed frequently without consultation (DECC advised that consultation is best practice but not legally required. The Circular Economy Act sets down circumstances in which levy may be changed)*
- *Understand that the de minimus threshold is now 1 tonne, has it changed for Retailers under the Single Use Plastic directive (DECC advised that nothing has changed as a result of recent changes to self-compliance under the Packaging regulations)*

- *Compostable Exemptions (DECC confirmed there was no proposal to exempt compostable cups).*

Deposit Refund Scheme:

- *It is a good concept but the operation of the scheme needs to be further considered*
- *Retail Forum members will engage in bilateral discussions with DRSI regarding operation of the Scheme*
- *Health and Safety implications and considerations for retail employees if issues arise with the Scheme machines e.g., bottles/cans left beside the machine if unaccepted*
- *Who has responsibility for the communication of the scheme? (DECC advised that Re-Turn has lead responsibility for operational communications. DECC Comms Resources are supporting the scheme rollout).*

Action:

DECC will be invited to attend the next Retail Forum meeting regarding levy before Easter 2023 deadline

Members who were due to meet with DRSI will be invited to give feedback at the next Retail Forum meeting

Copy of presentation to be forwarded to Retail Forum Members [presentation forwarded to Retail Forum members on 9 December 2022]

(b) Ms Maedhbh Cronin, (deputising for the Chair who was called away on Dáil business), invited Ms Maeve Brett, Department of Justice and Mr Cormac O'Donnchú, Chair, Dublin North Inner City Local Community Safety Partnerships to update on the Policing, Security, and Community Safety Bill 2022.

[Copy of the presentation can be found here](#)

Comments Arising:

- *Community Safety Partnership is a good model*
- *Need to ensure a co-ordinated approach between the Night-Time Economy, Town Centre First and the Local Community Safety Partnerships*

Action:

Copy of presentation to be forwarded to Retail Forum Members [presentation forwarded to Retail Forum members on 9 December 2022]

Item 5: AOB

Free Book Scheme

Member asked if there was an update on the query, they raised regarding the free book scheme. (DETE advised that the query had been referred by Minister English to Minister Foley, D/Education, and that a reply will issue shortly from Minister English)

Solar Panels

Member cited delays in signing off on the installation of solar panels

Energy Suppliers

Members advised that an energy supplier is due to raise their unit pricing by 50% from 1 January 2023 when the wholesale rate is going down. The reduction in wholesale prices is not being passed on to customers. Energy suppliers should be using profits to bring down prices.

TBESS	Member said that to register for TBESS you need two MPRN numbers. They used the same one and it worked. Member advised that it was difficult navigating ROS and thought it would be easier if information regarding TBESS was on the home page of Revenue website.
SME Test	Members queried the application of the SME test to legislation with one member citing particular reference to the Finance Bill.
Better Regulation Unit	Member commented that a Better Regulation Unit existed previously and had done some good work and could it be possibly resurrected by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
Shop Licence	Could retailers have a 'shop licence' to cover all the regulations that they need to adhere to, to operate as a retailer.
Legislation	Member said that the cumulative costs to retailers of adhering to all legislation is not being considered and called for an audit.

Action:

Retail Forum Secretariat to contact Revenue Commissioners about the ROS website and information on TBESS

Appendix 1 – Attendees and Apologies List

Company	Name	Title
RGDATA	Tara Buckley	Director General
CSNA	Vincent Jennings	CEO
Retail Excellence	Duncan Graham	Managing Director
Retail Ireland	Arnold Dillon	Director
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)	Gerry Light	General Secretary (MANDATE)
Musgrave Group	Edel Clancy	Director of Communications & Corporate Affairs
Primark	Emma Ormond	Head of Government Affairs
Small Firms Association	Elizabeth Bowen	Acting Director
ISME	Neil McDonnell	Chief Executive
ISME / Sligo BID	Finbarr Filan	
Technological University Dublin	Damian O'Reilly	Senior Lecturer - Retail Management
Department of Social Protection	Eimear Hayes	Assistant Principal, Employer Relations
Hardware Association Ireland	Martin Markey	Hardware Association Ireland
Waterford City and Co. Council (Local Government Management Agency Rep)	Michael Quinn	Director of Service
Dublin Town (BID)	Richard Guiney	CEO
Chambers Ireland	James Kiernan	Director of Relationship Management
D/Taoiseach	Fiona Curran	Economic Policy
D/Taoiseach	Jerome Wholihane	Economic Policy
Department of Rural and Community Development	Deirdre Maloney	Principal Officer
Department of Rural and Community Development	Tara Taheny	AP, Town and Village Renewal and TCF, Rural Programmes and Policies unit
D/Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Aine Friel	
D/of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science	Mary McGarry	Principal Officer, Further Education and Training
Enterprise Ireland	Teri Smith	Manager Retail Consumer & Online
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Pauline Mulligan	Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Enterprise Division
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Maedhbh Cronin	Principal Officer, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit
D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Deborah Dignam	AP, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit
Additional: D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Oliver Tushingam	Enterprise Strategy Unit

Presenters

Company	Name	Title
Balance for Better Business	Julie Sinnamon	Co-Chair
D/ Enterprise, Trade and Employment,	Barry McGreal	Principal Officer, Competition and Consumer Policy Unit
Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	Grainne Griffin	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
D/Environment, Climate and Communications	Bernie Kiely	Principal Officer
Department of Justice	Maeve Brett	Principal Officer, Criminal Justice Policy
Department of Justice	Niamh Callan	Assistant Principal, Policing Legislative Framework Unit within the Criminal Justice Governance Function,
Dublin North Inner City LCSP	Cormac O'Donnchú	Chair

Apologies

Company	Name	Title
Irish Pharmacy Union	Jim Curran	Director of Communications
LEO Enterprise Network	Marcella Rudden	Head of Enterprise Cavan