



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

## Plastic Straws, cotton buds and stirrers regulations

### FAQ for businesses

#### **Q. What is included in the ban?**

A. Single-use plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers are being banned in England from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. You won't be able to buy any of these products in shops other than pharmacies, though catering establishments will still be allowed to supply plastic straws to people that request one. All businesses that supply these products to customers are included in this ban, including retailers and restaurants. Business to business sales are not included in this ban.

#### **Q. What is exempt from the ban?**

A. Single-use plastic straws are essential for people with disabilities or accessibility needs, and single-use plastic cotton buds are essential for medical, scientific and forensic reasons. Therefore the ban includes some exemptions. There are no exemptions for plastic drinks stirrers.

#### **Q. How long can I continue to use/sell my current stock of these items for?**

A. Businesses can continue to supply stock acquired before the 1<sup>st</sup> October for 6 months after the ban enters into force.

#### **Q. What does it mean to supply someone with one of these items?**

A. This means to provide a plastic straw, stirrer, or cotton bud to someone, regardless of whether it was for sale or given away for free. A person will be offering to supply an item if, for example, they: display the item for sale in a shop or market stall; advertise the item for sale in writing; or offer to supply the item to another person verbally.

#### **Q. Who is an end user?**

A. An end user is any person to whom the product is supplied with the intention to use the product for its intended purpose. For instance, a customer in a shop who has bought a pack of straws for use at home.

**Q. What should I do if a customer asks for a straw?**

A. There is no requirement for customers to prove that they require a straw due to medical restrictions. If a customer requests a straw then businesses can provide one. However, plastic straws must not be kept in a place where they are visible to customers, or where customers can access them and are not allowed to be offered to customers whether verbally or in print.

**Q. Do I have to keep straws behind the counters for disabled users?**

A. No, whether to do so is a decision for individual businesses.

**Q. Can I continue to provide/sell drinks with drinking straws attached (e.g. capri sun pouches)?**

A. To allow industry time to innovate, the supply of single-use plastic straws attached to their packaging will still be allowed to be provided until 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2021.

**Q. Can I appeal or object to any enforcement action taken against me?**

A. You can object within 28 days of you receiving a fine, the fine or letter will tell you how to do so.

You can appeal a penalty if you feel your fine was wrong, unreasonable or based on an error. You can also appeal if you feel that your non-monetary requirement is unreasonable, or if the variable amount penalty is too high.