

Regulation (EU) 2026/405 on detergents and surfactants, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 648/2004

1. Can you provide updated information on how many businesses produce detergents and surfactants in Northern Ireland, and would therefore be affected by the Regulation?

The UK Government continues to engage with affected businesses, including further meetings this week with the UK cleaning products sector. Following the hearing last week, DAERA and Defra officials have identified a number of NI-based companies who may be producing detergents and surfactants. These were contacted by email on 16 March to make them aware of the DSC's call for evidence. Defra will follow up separately to contact these businesses directly so they can be involved in future engagement with us on this issue and make their views known as we take this work forward.

In addition, available trade statistics for detergents and surfactants indicate that NI's recorded international trade flows are very small relative to those of GB. For the period 2022–2025, NI accounted for less than 1% of UK detergent trade with both EU and non EU markets. This reflects only international trade recorded at ports and airports and does not capture NI's significant land border movements with Ireland, as HMRC provides only port level data for trade and does not break down goods that move directly across the border to ROI. This therefore does not indicate the overall size of the NI detergents and surfactants sector but remains consistent with our understanding that only a limited number of NI based producers trade these goods.

2. What is the scale of trade from GB to NI in this sector?

The scale of trade from GB to NI for detergents and surfactants is not possible to obtain using HMRC's trade statistics, because internal market flows across the UK including GB–NI trade movements are not recorded. Further investigation using alternative sources such as industry led information, supply chain evidence, or business surveys would be required to establish an estimate.

The UK market is dominated by large companies with international footprints that already place goods on the EU market.

3. Do any companies in Northern Ireland make microbial cleaners? What is the scale of trade from GB to NI in this sector?

As stated above, HMRC's trade statistics does not record GB–NI trade movements. Furthermore, microbial cleaners cannot be identified separately in trade statistics because they have no distinct customs classification and are recorded under broader headings for detergents and surfactants. More targeted engagement with the relevant industry stakeholders would be needed to gather an estimate of this.

4. If the UK Government does not align with the EU Regulation, or aligns after the transition period, what are the potential impacts for Northern Ireland?

As the UK Government's Explanatory Memorandum notes, the Government's default intention is to align GB chemical regulatory decisions with the EU unless there are compelling reasons to diverge. It is the Government's aim to ensure a consistent UK market for detergents and surfactants. As the majority of traders operate across the EU Single Market we do not anticipate any negative impacts for Northern Ireland. The regulation includes a 42-month transition period, meaning it will not come into force until 2029, giving businesses significant time to adapt.

5. Can you outline the enforcement responsibilities and potential costs for DAERA under this Regulation?

Enforcement provisions are not included in the 2004 Detergents Regulation and The New Detergents Regulation as this is a matter for the national authorities to determine their own approach. For the UK this is via the Detergents Regulations 2010 (as amended) (SI 2010/740). The main objectives of the regulations are to:

- Enforce the Detergents Regulation (EC 648/2004) (as amended); and
- Enable the government to recover costs associated with the testing for derogation work

DAERA holds no enforcement responsibilities in relation to Detergents regulation and will therefore incur no associated costs. Enforcement responsibility lies with local councils. Action is taken on a reactive basis and based on the fact there has been no enforcement action taken to date; it is expected to be low going forward.

By way of further information Defra carried out a Post Implementation Review (PIR) of the 2010 Enforcement Regulations in 2023 ([ukia_20230183_en.pdf](#)). One of the main conclusions from this review was that trading standards officers, the enforcers of the regulations, have little familiarity with the regulations and do limited work in this area. They take a risk-based approach and the vast majority have not identified any risks. Those that have identified risks were able to act on these. The limited data available on compliance with the regulations suggests a high degree of compliance.

The findings of this review will be drawn upon when considering any amendments that may be needed to the current Enforcement Regulations.

- 6. In May 2025, DAERA [informed](#) the Committee that “DAERA and DfE officials are currently scoping a NI Chemical Stakeholder Forum” and [officials stated](#) that “evidence gathering and stakeholder engagement will continue as the regulation is finalised”. Can you provide an update on this forum and the stakeholder engagement DAERA has carried out on this EU act?**

As stated in May 2025, DAERA and the DfE were scoping the establishment of a new NI Chemicals Stakeholder Forum. This work remains at the proposal stage.

It is worth noting that DfE published a notification on the NI Business Info website inviting relevant stakeholders to express their interest in joining the NI Chemicals Stakeholder Forum. To date, no expressions of interest have been received.

As a reserved matter, Defra have undertaken stakeholder engagement on this EU Act in a number of ways.

- At its monthly UK Chemical and Policy Communication Forum (CPCF) meetings with key UK Chemical Trade Associations and its monthly NGO Forum. Some of those trade associations will include members located in Northern Ireland;
- Through direct meetings with those trade associations who had flagged their interest in this Act when it was covered in the CPCF – the UKCPI; British Chemicals Association; and the British Retail Consortium.

As noted in the response to Q.1, DAERA have provided additional local company details to Defra to assist with their future programme of stakeholder engagement at a local level.

7. Is DAERA involved with the UK Government's stakeholder consultation on this EU act? If so, what views have been expressed?

DAERA officials have discussed with Defra the importance of considering potential impacts on NI, such as product choice. DAERA have highlighted the need for special consideration to be given to local stakeholder engagement within NI, including the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA). The council led representative body for local authorities in NI.

Defra will be engaging directly with NI stakeholders and sees this as a key part of its ongoing engagement with interested parties across the whole of the UK.

8. How would the non-application of this EU act affect relevant businesses in Northern Ireland? For example, could this restrict their exports to the EU or put these businesses at a competitive disadvantage?

NI companies are required to adhere to this new Regulation to supply products to the EU market.

Non application of the EU Regulation in NI could potentially risk:

- loss of direct EU market access for NI manufactured detergents;
- the need for dual product lines (GB vs EU compliant), increasing costs for NI producers;
- potential withdrawal of certain SKUs from the NI market if suppliers consolidate product portfolios;
- reputational and commercial impacts for NI manufacturers exporting into Ireland and the EU.

These risks may be heightened for firms already embedded in EU facing supply chains.