

ITEM No ...4.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 26 OCTOBER 2020
REPORT ON: PROVISION OF FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS
REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE
REPORT NO: 274-2020

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 COSLA Leaders agreed to provide access to free period products in schools and public buildings in 2018 and all local authorities do so according to a set of guiding principles. This issue continues to be one of high political interest and Scottish Government have committed to bring forward regulations that will place a duty on Local Authorities to provide period products for those who need them in education settings.
- 1.2 This report outlines the progress made on the delivery of provision of free period products in schools in Dundee and the adjustments made to our delivery model since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic. The report also further outlines the Period Products in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 which come into force on the 19 October 2020, subject to parliamentary process. An update report was provided in 2019 with reference made to Article IV of the Minute of the Meeting of the Children and Families Services Committee of 28 October 2019 (report no. 361-2019 refers).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Services Committee:
- i note the contents of the report
 - ii note the imminent **Period Products in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020** which come into force on the 19 October 2020

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The £53k funding from Scottish Government for this initiative has been rolled up into the settlement figures from 2020-21 and now forms part of the overall Revenue Budget for Children & Families Services.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Since June 2017, “Ending Period Poverty” has been high on Scotland’s public policy agenda. Easy access to period products is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of those who menstruate. With one in four children in Scotland living in poverty, the cost of essential period products is yet another expense that low income families struggle to meet. Being able to access period products when you need them is also regarded as a gender equality issue.

The Scottish Government has therefore committed funding to all Local Authorities to ensure that lack of access to products does not impact on an individual’s ability to participate fully in learning in education at all levels. National Guiding Principles have been developed which include:

- **Protecting students’ dignity**, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma;
- Making a range of products with different qualities available, giving students **choice** about the products they want to use;
- A response that is **reflective of students’ views and experiences**;
- An efficient and dignified approach which demonstrates **value for money**;

- An offer for all eligible students **throughout the year** to include both **term time and holidays**
- Ensuring sanitary products are easily accessible to **meet individual needs**;
- Individuals being able to get sufficient products to **meet their needs**;
- **Gender equality**, ensuring anyone who menstruates can access products, including transgender men and non-binary individuals, and that language is gender neutral.
- **Awareness raising and education** to both promote the 'offer' and change cultural norms

4.2 Dundee schools' central team engaged with schools, children, young people and families, and key partners to create policy guidelines and a delivery model which embrace these National Guiding Principles across all Dundee schools. The policy guidelines focus on 6 key areas:

- Developing the Culture in schools – reducing stigma
- Developing the Curriculum
- Involving children, young people, staff and parents
- Provision out with school
- Procurement of products and services
- Monitoring and evaluation

Phase One of Dundee's delivery model involves schools implementing all six key areas above and liaising with Tayside Contracts to order all period products on behalf of the school. Phase Two of the model involves schools implementing all six areas, with Tayside Contracts ordering and providing period products in identified places in schools including toilets, with Tayside Contracts cleaning staff undertaking the replenishment of the products on a regular basis.

5.0 PROGRESS

5.1 Since the last Committee Report in October 2019, good progress has been made on the implementation of the new delivery model with Tayside Contracts. All Secondary Schools and Specials Schools and Primaries were supported in implementing the first phase of the new delivery model at the point of lock-down in March 2020, with some schools progressing to phase two of the delivery model. Central officers are continuing to work with all schools to ensure the success of the implementation.

5.2 COVID 19 presented challenges for both community and school delivery models of free access to period products due to school and council facility closures. However, by early April 2020, Dundee City Council Officers in both Children and Families Service, Chief Executives Service and Neighbourhood Services in partnership with Dundee Volunteer and Voluntary Action Centre established an online ordering system which provided a home delivery service of period products to all residents across this City. A dedicated email address and phone number were established to enable ordering of products and delivery of period products to residents by volunteers within a week. Since the service has been established, a total of 350 deliveries have been made. These successful partnerships will continue to shape the school and community delivery models of free access to period products as we move into the recovery phase. Ongoing, the nature of access to products will evolve as is necessary with the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions.

5.3 The **Period Products in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020** will be subject to parliamentary process on the 19th October 2020. This legislation is intended to lock in current good practice and will place a requirement on Local Authorities to make period products available to pupils who need them who are:

- in attendance at a public school.
- accommodated in a hostel provided or maintained by them.

5.4 Due to the previously mentioned successful implementation of period products in Dundee Schools, the remaining 30% of Primary Schools will be supported by Dundee Education Central Officers to ensure free access to period products will be in place in all schools to meet the legislation requirements.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness and poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Council Management Team and Tayside Contracts have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

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