

**JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting	Thursday 27 th June 2024
Report Subject	Period Dignity Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language & Culture
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been developed to provide Members with an overview of the current national position regarding period dignity and how grant funding has been of benefit to Flintshire schools and communities in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members receive the report on period dignity and be assured that the grant funding has been appropriately spent and has helped to meet the needs of those targeted by this Welsh Government initiative.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING PERIOD DIGNITY AND PERIOD PROUD
1.01	<p>Period dignity is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect - removing any stigma and shame around periods. • Education - helping people understand that periods are normal and healthy. • Equality - making sure everyone has what they need to manage their periods, and no-one faces period poverty.

	<p>No-one should be disadvantaged because they have periods. Everyone should have access to period products, as and when they need them - although unfortunately this is not always the case.</p> <p>Period Proud is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone in Wales being treated equally and with respect. No-one should be held back or stopped from reaching their goals because they have a period.
1.02	<p>A Period Proud Wales</p> <p>In February 2023 the Welsh Government outlined its approach to ensuring period dignity in Wales by publishing the Period Proud Wales Action Plan. The plan sets out our ambitions to eradicate period poverty and ensure period dignity for women, girls and people who have periods, by 2027.</p> <p>Welsh Government want to end the stigma and shame associated with periods. The action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets out a vision for period dignity and the eradication of period poverty. • considers what period dignity means across a person’s lifetime. • looks at periods and health, the environment, the workplace and sport and culture.
1.03	<p>Welsh Government Period Dignity Grant Funding</p> <p>The criteria for the 2022-23 and 2023-2024 funding was for period products to be made available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all learners in all schools, free of charge and accessible in the most practical and dignified way possible • those who menstruate, from low-income households, free of charge and accessible in the most practical and dignified way possible. <p>In 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, Flintshire committed to providing a minimum of 70% of the total amount spent on period products to be used to purchase eco-friendly period products (i.e. re-usable products and/or plastic free).</p> <p><i>Note - Welsh Government intend to increase this to 90%-100% of all products bought under the period dignity grant to be plastic-free, made with reduced plastic or reusable by 2026.</i></p>
1.04	<p>Period Proud Flintshire Steering Group</p> <p>A Period Proud Flintshire Steering Group has been established this year with representatives from the authority and community. Members of the steering group have reflected on the funding offer, explored further opportunities to raise awareness among communities and are developing a Flintshire Period Proud Action Plan which is in its initial stages.</p>

1.05	<p>Schools</p> <p>In Flintshire for 2022-23 and 2023-2024 all primary and secondary schools were provided with a proportion of grant funding to purchase period products to ensure they had a consistent supply available which was accessible by any learner who needs them. Funding was allocated in autumn term 2022 and autumn term 2023 to 66 primary schools, 13 secondary schools – including special schools and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).</p> <p>Funding was calculated based on the number of females in each school. The total grant percentage was weighted 70% to secondary schools and 30% primary schools using Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data for Sept 2022 and PLASC 2023 data accordingly. Guidelines for purchasing products were shared with schools maintaining records of all orders made.</p>
1.06	<p>Community</p> <p>During 2022-2023 ongoing partnership working with community outlets enabled a proportion of the funding to be allocated to ensure 9 Foodbanks, 15 Adult Community Learning Centres, 10 Youth Clubs and 2 drop-in session locations for refugees, were fully stocked with free period products to assist those most in need.</p> <p>During 2023-2024 this expanded further to ensure 9 Foodbanks, 15 Adult Community Learning Centres, 16 Community Hubs, 7 Libraries and 4 Leisure centres were able to offer free period products. All outlets have also been promoting reusable period products.</p>
1.07	<p>Online Ordering 2022-2023</p> <p>Alongside the above offer to schools and communities, we have commissioned different suppliers to deliver period products direct to homes of girls and young women aged 8-18 years, providing they attended a school in Flintshire (including those who are electively home educated).</p> <p>In 2022-2023 Hey Girls (a Scottish community interest company) were commissioned to deliver period products direct to homes of girls and young women aged 8-18 years in Flintshire following a pilot the previous year. These included reusable and disposable products.</p>
1.08	<p>Reusable period products are washable products such as period pants, cloth pads and menstrual silicone cups which can be reused. These are the eco-friendly choice which do not contain plastic.</p> <p>Disposable period products are single use products such as tampons, panty liners and sanitary towels. A pack of sanitary towels can contain up to 5 plastic bags. Increasing the uptake of reusable period products can help reduce waste and lessen landfill.</p>
1.09	<p>Either the young people themselves, or the parents on their behalf, could choose the products for delivery from environmentally friendly options on a dedicated Hey Girls web page. All learners were checked centrally in Education & Youth to confirm they were on roll in a Flintshire school before</p>

	<p>their orders were processed and a 3-month supply was delivered with discrete packaging.</p> <p>Online ordering was promoted via the Council's website and through social media. All schools were given appropriate information to share with their learners and families about the campaign, which in turn would reach those in underserved communities.</p>
1.10	<p>A total of 1890 orders were received within the 3-month period. Period pants were the most popular reusable product and daytime pads were the most popular disposable product.</p> <p>The benefit of this approach enabled young people to select products of their choice and receive them discreetly. There were no large stocks of products occupying storage spaces in schools not being utilised.</p>
1.11	<p>Online Ordering 2023-2024</p> <p>In response to the increased number of reusable products ordered by young people with Hey Girls and feedback from young people that some schools did not routinely stock reusable products, we explored a different approach. Grace and Green (a certified B Corporation company) were commissioned to deliver reusable only period products via online ordering, direct to homes of girls and young women aged 8-18 years (we did not offer single use disposable products). This pilot ran throughout March 2024 following a very similar process as delivered in previous years.</p> <p>A total of 1814 orders were received in March 2024. This equated to the following products delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3009 reusable period pants • 2960 reusable period pads • 219 menstrual cups and pods <p>Again, period pants were the most popular product. There has also been a large increase in the number of menstrual cups ordered compared to the previous year.</p>
1.12	<p>Education</p> <p>During 2022-2023 the first dedicated period products training was offered to Flintshire schools, focusing on both reusable and disposable products. Four workshops were delivered attended by 17 school staff and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Feedback from the steering group highlighted the need to equip community staff with the knowledge and skills needed to have supportive period product conversations.</p> <p>Building on this in 2023-2024, a broader offer of training and education was co-ordinated with 10 parents and carers trained, 104 learners, 19 school staff and 16 community staff.</p>

1.13	<p>Menstrual Health Education</p> <p>A small group of parent/carers also attended a menstrual health education training session focusing on understanding symptoms of periods, supporting a young person with periods, and an overview of products available. The session has highlighted that understanding the day-to-day impact of periods and their symptoms is important to support the individual as well as raising awareness on Period Dignity across other provisions.</p>
1.14	<p>2024-25 Period Dignity Grant</p> <p>The Welsh Government have confirmed Flintshire's grant allocation on 28th March 2024 (£132,821) and planning is well underway to build on the education offer to parents and community and aim to achieve the target of 100% plastic-free, made with reduced plastic or reusable products purchased with the funding.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Should the grant funding reduce or cease this would not only have an impact on the local authority's ability to offer a provision of free products to schools and communities, but it would also impact on staffing.

3.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The grant funding must be claimed in full by 30 April 2025. Any unclaimed part of the funding will cease to be available to the authority.
3.02	Funding must meet the criteria and reporting requirements as stipulated by Welsh Government.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no appendices to this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Welsh Government Period Proud Wales Action Plan https://www.gov.wales/period-proud-wales-action-plan-html#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20Period,%2Dranging%2C%20holistically%20intersecting%20actions.</p>

6.02	The Curriculum for Wales – Relationships and Sexuality Education Code https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Emma McIntyre, Healthy Schools and Preschools Officer Telephone: 01352 704057 E-mail: Emma.McIntyre@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding Telephone: 01352 704054 E-mail: Claire.h.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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	<p>Period Dignity Period dignity is about respect, education, and equality. Removing any stigma and shame around periods, helping people understand that periods are normal and healthy and making sure everyone has what they need to manage their periods and no-one faces period poverty.</p> <p>Certified B Corporations, or B Corps Certified B Corporations, or B Corps, are companies verified by B Lab to meet high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.</p> <p>RSE Relationships and Sexuality Education</p> <p>PLASC Pupil Level Annual School Census</p>
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