

# Report

Report to:	<b>Education Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>18 September 2018</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Period Poverty - Access to Sanitary Products in Schools</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide information on the Scottish Government's commitment to providing free access to sanitary products in schools

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the commitment to the rollout of the Scotland wide initiative to provide free sanitary products in schools for all be noted;
- (2) to note that sanitary products have been sourced for an interim period until the national framework of suppliers comes into effect on 1 October 2018; and that learning over the course of the first year of delivery will be gathered and shared with COSLA and the Scottish Government to aid full rollout from April 2019.

## 3. Background

3.1. The Scottish Government gave a commitment in their Programme for Government that pupils and student in schools, colleges and universities should have access to free sanitary products.

3.2. The purpose of this commitment is to support equality, dignity and rights for young people and to ensure that they have access to products to enable them to fully participate in education, at all levels.

3.3. On 30 May 2018, the Scottish Government:

- ◆ announced funding to all local authorities to provide access to sanitary products to support equality and allow for full participation in education across schools
- ◆ issued a set of guiding principles, and
- ◆ published a report on pilot study undertaken in Aberdeen City Council

3.4. The guiding principles in the delivery of the commitment are:-

- i. protecting students' dignity, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma
- ii. making a range of products and different qualities available, giving students choice about the products they want to use
- iii. a response that is reflective of students' views and experiences
- iv. an efficient and dignified approach which demonstrates value for money

- v. an offer for all eligible students throughout the year regardless of whether it is term time or holidays
- vi. ensuring sanitary products are easily accessible to meet individual needs
- vii. individuals being able to get sufficient products to meet their needs
- viii. gender equality, ensuring anyone who menstruates can access products, including transgender men/non-binary individuals, and that language is gender neutral. The roll out of gender neutral toilets should also be taken account of
- ix. awareness raising and education to both promote the 'offer' and change cultural norms

3.5. South Lanarkshire Council supports this commitment across Scotland from August 2018. The next section of the report provides information on the plans in place in the rollout of the initiative across our schools.

#### **4. Current Position**

4.1. In addition to the national guiding principles, a South Lanarkshire Council good practice document has been drawn up and issued to schools to verify their thinking. This document will be refined as we move through the initial learning period of this initiative. (Appendix 1).

##### **Product Sourcing**

4.2. Councils were advised that the national framework of suppliers, who would be able to offer schools a selection of products, would not be in place until 1 October 2018.

4.3. As a result, and following the appropriate procurement process, the Council has used 'Hey Girls', a social enterprise business to secure an initial supply of products (sanitary towels, tampons and a small order of reusable products for piloting), with most deliveries made over the summer break.

##### **Delivery Models - Secondary Schools**

4.4. Previously, schools made sanitary products available in a number of ways, often by contacting a member of staff e.g. pupil support teacher, guidance teacher or via the school office. Products were sourced by a variety of means e.g. 'Always' schools project, NHS Scotland, school funds or staff donations.

4.5. Schools have reflected on the guiding principles and good practice document issued. In addition, the pilot study has shown that contacting a member of staff can create a barrier for young people. A survey undertaken within the pilot study in Aberdeen showed the most preferred delivery model was in having no contact and accessing products within toilets. (Cards to access products in a shop or on line was another preferred option however this is an area being considered nationally for the future).

4.6. Schools have been canvassing pupil views through e.g. Pupil Councils, girl focus groups, google surveys, Personal and Social Education (PSE) discussions and other groups already in existence within schools. In some schools, girl groups are actively taking the lead role in co-ordinating access to products across the school, communicating with pupils and generating plans to help de-stigmatise this issue.

4.7. Secondary schools are providing access to products via a range of methods, including access via appropriate toilets. Monitoring will take place to gauge effectiveness and appropriateness of places of access over time.

##### **Delivery Models - Primary Schools**

4.8. In the main, it is during Primary 6/7 that the PSE programme is where pupils learn about body changes, the use of sanitary products and how they can access them

within school. Previously, a trusted member of staff helps when required e.g. the class teacher or office staff to access any products if needed.

- 4.9. Although the number of pupils will be much lower within primary schools, each school still needs to consider the guiding principles and good practice document including the potential use of toilets. This may not be appropriate where toilets are accessed by a mix of age groups, however, consideration should be given to accessing an alternative toilet.

#### **Communication**

- 4.10. Effective methods of communication on this initiative for schools will include assemblies, during PSE classes, school website or school newsletter. Posters on this national initiative were produced for secondary schools. Parents have been notified by the usual communication routes. In primary schools, parents may prefer to access products direct on behalf of their child.
- 4.11. Appropriate colleagues in the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service have been made aware that sanitary products can be accessed within schools.

#### **5. Employee Implications**

- 5.1. Relevant staff within Education Resources and the corporate procurement section will be involved in ensuring processes are in place to allow purchasing of products to continue following the introduction of the national framework of suppliers. Schools will also be required to gather information on the initiative between August 2018 and March 2019, and to share this information with COSLA and the Scottish Government.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. Nationally £1.850m has been set aside to cover the period August 2018 to March 2019, with the Council receiving £124,534.
- 6.2. The assumptions on funding include free access for all (also including during school holidays), and uptake rates of 35%. Within the primary school sector, NHS information has been used to assume eligible pupils rates at 10% of 11 year olds and 30% of 12 year olds, again at an assumed uptake level of 35%.
- 6.3. Due to this being a new national policy, information will be gathered and used to monitor and review the cost of delivery, uptake levels, and therefore inform the future funding levels of the Scottish Government from April 2019 onwards.

#### **7. Other Implications**

- 7.1. There are no significant risk implications in terms of the information contained within this report.
- 7.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 8.1. As this initiative introduces a new function an equality impact assessment has been undertaken.
- 8.2. Dialogue on the roll-out has taken place with schools and services.

**Tony McDaid**  
**Executive Director (Education Resources)**

28 August 2018

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Tackling disadvantage and deprivation, and supporting aspiration
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning

### **Previous References**

None

### **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ Scottish Government guiding principles

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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## Education Resources

### Accessing Sanitary Products in Schools

**Guiding Principles produced by Scottish Government (Scotland wide rollout Aug 2018 to Mar 2019)**

The delivery model should be based on:-

- ◆ **Protecting students' dignity**, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma
- ◆ Making a range of products and different qualities available (including reusable), 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** (including consideration to home schooled children)
- ◆ 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. The roll out of gender neutral toilets should also be taken account of.
- ◆ **Awareness raising and education** to both promote the 'offer' and change cultural norms

Link to Scottish Government published document 30 May 2018 on the pilot in Aberdeen:

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/access-sanitary-products-aberdeen-pilot-evaluation-report/>

### **SLC Good practice advice for the provision of sanitary products in schools**

- ◆ A range of products should be made freely available for all who need it regardless of the need being ad hoc, regular/monthly or in advance of school holidays.
- ◆ Using pupil involvement explore various methods of making products more widely available across school, (including where there may be split campus), to reduce barriers such as embarrassment, improve ease and anonymity of access.
- ◆ Sanitary products should be placed in appropriate toilets so they can be obtained unobtrusively without pupils having to ask an adult. Schools may have to work through issues connected with misuse or behaviour.
- ◆ Pupils should be regularly informed (e.g. at the beginning of each school term) that sanitary products are available. This could be during PSE, via the school website, assemblies or school newsletter. Posters on the initiative will also be available (secondary schools).
- ◆ Parents can also be informed of this initiative using the usual communication channels.
- ◆ Primary schools may wish to notify parents via letter, (draft letter provided), to include how arrangements can be made for parents to directly access products for their child.
- ◆ Consider methods appropriate to your school to help normalise the subject and reduce stigma.
- ◆ Remember to make provision for pupils on residential and day trips. Those who are home schooled will be made aware of the initiative by Education HQ.
- ◆ Feedback should be sought to evaluate how the provision of sanitary products is being facilitated within your school. (particularly during this Scotland wide rollout period August 18 to March 19 – information from the Scottish Government on this is to follow)
- ◆ Other colleagues such as those in the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service will be advised that this initiative will now be in wider operation within schools.