

Dumfries and Galloway Council Statement on Exercise of Functions for the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021

Background

The [Period Products \(Free Provision\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#) will come fully into force on 15 August 2022. From this date local authorities will have a legal duty to make period products available for free for anyone who needs them, and in their role as education authorities, make period products available for free in schools. The Period Products in Schools Regulations 2020 will be repealed on this date as the provisions in the Act supersede these regulations.

There are two sections to the Act and our Council is required to set out prior to its implementation how our Council shall fulfil the duties placed on them:

- Section 1 of the Act places a duty on Local Authorities to make period products obtainable free of charge for anyone who needs to use them. (Community Provision).
- Section 2 of the Act places a duty on Education Providers to make period products obtainable free of charge on their premises for pupils and students during term time. (Education Provision).

Local Authorities are required to produce and communicate a Statement on Exercise of Functions to summarise the arrangements in place to meet the legal duties, which includes carrying out one or more public consultation(s).

During the development of our original Period Poverty Project in Schools in 2018, extensive consultation was completed by the Poverty Team and the Youth Work Services Team to develop our first model of delivery. This resulted in our provision being made available in all toilet cubicles and toilet facilities within all Primary and Secondary Schools for all pupils who needed these products without the requirement to request these from any member of staff or office base within the Education establishment. This eliminated all stigma in accessing these products, additional supplies were available depending on the individuals need and additional supplies could also be accessed for those in need at home.

Feedback from the participants of the Consultation included the request that this system would be completed on a trust basis with all pupils and it has proven to be successful since it's implementation in 2018.

This statement sets out Dumfries and Galloway Council's commitment to free product provision and details current and future provision in education facilities and the wider community.

Our Commitment

Access to free sanitary products has been in place in both Primary and Secondary Schools within our Region since 2018 as part of the delivery of projects from our first Anti-Poverty Strategy 2015-2020, with expansion the following year into Youth Work Services Centres, Education Facilities and Leisure and Sports Centres.

In addition to the above, our Council also developed during the Covid 19 Pandemic a free Online Period Dignity Poverty Project which offers any resident within our Region who is in need with the option to order a range of products which will be delivered to their home address on a monthly basis. This is completed via a totally confidential process with the products being delivered discretely in plain boxes or bags.

This direct provision offers free period dignity poverty products with no stigma attached and removes the need for anyone to request products from any office, community or other location which could cause embarrassment to those who are in need at this very challenging time.

We further developed this Project from May 2022 onwards to include 10 community organisations who now complete the delivery of all orders within their local community. This Co-Production Model increases the opportunities for the community groups to interact with our most vulnerable families & individuals and to offer additional support including free food provision, welfare and benefits support and also referrals onto other support agencies who can mitigate the effects of poverty and inequalities in all of their forms.

A dedicated page on our [Access to Free Period Products - Dumfries and Galloway Council \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/access-to-free-period-products) outlines the full provision available including a link to the online ordering form for home delivery and a dedicated email address for any queries around access to products.

We will do this by ensuring that;

- Products are free of charge and easy to obtain in all Primary and Secondary Schools and Dumfries and Galloway Council Education facilities.
- Consideration is given to respect and dignity in our approach.
- Consideration is given to those who may face additional barriers in accessing products.
- Public consultation(s) and community engagement is carried out to inform our future provision.
- We communicate effectively what products are available and where and how these can be accessed.
- We regularly monitor and review the levels of demand and supply to maximise the impact of funding and support provided.

Consultations

The Act requires each local authority to undertake consultations with children and young people and the wider public and use this feedback to inform our future provision of Period Poverty Products. To ensure that the arrangements we put in place meet people's needs we are required to consult with individuals who may:

- (a) need to use free products currently
- (b) need to use products in the future, or
- (c) need to collect products on behalf of someone who needs to access any products

As well as the original Consultation which we completed at the beginning of our Project, we will also be completing a further Consultation in November / early December 2022 on our current provision.

This will include Consultation with all Primary and Secondary School Pupils, all residents who are already accessing our Online Period Dignity Partnership Project, all community partners and third sector organisations and will also be open to all residents within our Region.

The Consultation Report will be published on our Access to Free Period Poverty Webpage.

The results of this Consultation Exercise will be used to inform the future provision of our free products from the 1st of April 2023.

For further information on how to access our Dumfries and Galloway Period Poverty Partnership Project, please click on the link below:

[Access to Free Period Products - Dumfries and Galloway Council \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/access-to-free-period-products)