

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

Date of Meeting	Thursday 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Period Dignity Update
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
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 benefitted Flintshire schools and communities in 2021-22.

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	PERIOD DIGNITY UPDATE
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>

1.02	<p>Context</p> <p>In 2018, research by Plan International brought to light the impact of period poverty on girls in the UK. In December 2021 the Bevan Foundation revealed that more than a third (39%) of Welsh households do not have enough money to buy anything beyond everyday essentials. By 2022 people in Wales are now facing a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by soaring energy bills and other inflationary pressures. Period products are often the first item to be left off the list when choosing between paying for food, rent, bills or period products.</p>
1.03	<p>Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan</p> <p>Welsh Government has outlined its approach to ensuring period dignity in Wales in the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan, which was open for consultation October 2021 - January 2022.</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 life time • looks at periods and health, the environment, the workplace and sport and culture. <p>The timeframe for the Plan will apply over the next 5 years and it is expected to be published in full this year.</p>
1.04	<p>Period Dignity Grant</p> <p>Welsh Government have been committed to addressing period poverty for a number of years, and since 2018, have allocated over £9 million to ensure there are products available in every school and college in Wales and across communities for those on low incomes.</p> <p>The criteria for the 2021-22 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>A minimum of 50% of the total amount spent on period products must be used to purchase eco-friendly period products (i.e. re-usable products and/or plastic free) to allow maximum choice for users. 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.</p>

1.05	<p>Flintshire Period Dignity Grant 2021-22</p> <p>In Flintshire for 2021-22 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 the Autumn term 2021 to 66 primary schools 13 secondary schools – including special schools and 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 PLASC Sept 21 data. Guidelines for purchasing products and companies shared and schools maintain records of all orders made.</p> <p>Ongoing partnership working with Flintshire Foodbanks enabled a proportion of the funding to be allocated to ensure the 9 Foodbanks were fully stocked with free period products to assist those most in need.</p> <p>Further funding was also allocated to the Integrated Youth Service in order to supply youth clubs which were reopening after the COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed.</p>
1.06	<p>Flintshire Hey Girls</p> <p>Alongside the above offer to schools and communities in Flintshire, Hey Girls were commissioned 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>This approach was piloted January – March 2022 in order to establish if there was an appetite among young people to access products in this way. Either the young people themselves, or the parents on their behalf, would choose the products for delivery from environmentally friendly options on a dedicated Hey Girls web page. These included reusable and disposable products. All learners were checked centrally in Education to confirm they were on roll before their orders were processed and a 3 month supply was delivered with discrete packaging.</p> <p>The Hey Girls 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 this campaign, which in turn would reach those in underserved communities.</p> <p>2057 orders were received within the 3 month period with the most orders from learners in Years 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. 2057 orders equated to the following products delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6159 daytime pads ● 3705 overnight pads ● 1289 panty liners ● 2400 regular applicator tampons ● 411 Pack of 5 x reusable pads ● 118 small menstrual cup and cleaning pot

- 23 large menstrual cup and cleaning pot
- 3596 period pants

The benefit of this approach meant young people could select products of their choice and receive these discreetly. There was no large stocks of products occupying storage spaces in schools not being utilised. The closure of schools and community settings during the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges in ensuring period products reached those in need which is why this creative approach was supported by Flintshire secondary head teachers.

Period pants in particular have been very popular - this is a product that all schools would not have routinely stocked from their own funding allocation. Largely positive evaluation findings from the online survey responses have been received.

1.07

Education

The 2021-22 period dignity grant funding was the first from Welsh Government that allowed flexibility to fund training for schools alongside the purchasing of period products.

Education is crucial in achieving the government's aim for period dignity. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code and statutory guidance includes the teaching of menstrual well-being at developmentally appropriate phases. It will provide learners with the knowledge and confidence to seek support and to deal with the physical and emotional changes that occur throughout their lives.

The RSE Code will apply from September 2022 for schools delivering Curriculum for Wales. All secondary schools in Flintshire will introduce the new curriculum from September 2023. In preparing schools to meet the requirements of the RSE code 14 training workshops were coordinated with a subject specialist for primary and secondary RSE Leads:

9 x primary workshops and 5 x secondary workshops held during January to March 2021 with 171 attendances across the 14 workshops. It was recommended that the same staff member would attend 3 workshop dates for primary schools and from the secondary schools, the same member of staff would attend all 5. Based on the representation from schools approx. 2/3 primary schools attended and 3/4 secondary schools.

Verbal feedback and group discussions have established there is a need for more resources and information about reusable products and as such, we have purchased with other funding available to the portfolio, the Hey Girls Teacher Training Bumper Kit which includes samples of all the different products (which were available for online ordering) including a menstrual cup, reusable day pad, reusable panty lines, and period pants in addition to a pack of period education cards for every school to support delivery going forward and promote the conversation about reusable products.

	There is a clear need for further training in order to build on the initial workshops delivered to reach more staff and to build confidence in this area.
1.08	2022-23 Period Dignity Grant The Welsh Government have confirmed Flintshire's grant allocation in writing on 15 th June 2022 and planning is now underway.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None identified.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The grant funding must be claimed in full by 30 April 2023 otherwise any unclaimed part of the Funding will cease to be available to the authority.
4.02	Funding must meet the criteria and reporting requirements as stipulated by Welsh Government.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no appendices to this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Welsh Government Period Dignity strategic Action Plan (closed consultation) https://gov.wales/period-dignity-strategic-action-plan
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

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding Telephone: 01352 704054 E-mail: Claire.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	RSE – Relationships and Sexuality Education.