

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL – STATEMENT OF INTENT FOR THE PERIOD PRODUCTS (FREE PROVISION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2021

Accessing Free Period Products in the community and schools within Perth and Kinross  
July 2022

## Introduction

The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 requires local authorities to make period products freely available to anyone who menstruates. A reasonable range of products must be easily accessible and comfortable for individuals to access, without embarrassment, and in a way that respects a person's dignity.

Perth and Kinross Council currently supply around 90 premises with free period products, including leisure and culture facilities, public toilets, GP surgeries, and numerous independent community and voluntary group facilities. Information on where period products can be accessed is currently available on the Council [website](#) as well as on the PickUpMyPeriod app and [website](#). At present, providing these free period products is voluntary.

Under the new Act, each local authority across Scotland is required to undertake specific duties, which legally must be met by 15 August 2022. One of these duties (Section 6) is to produce a Statement of Intent, outlining how the Council has met or plans to meet these legal obligations.

This document is the Perth and Kinross Council statement for community, education and Council premises provision.

The following sections outline each of the duties and how Perth and Kinross Council has met or seeks to meet them.

## Consultation

### Responsibility

Under Section 7 of the Act, each local authority is required to undertake a public consultation to determine:

- which premises individuals would like to see free period products stocked
- where within these premises they would like to have access to these products
- how they would like to access these products
- the types of products they would like to have access to

## Method

Perth and Kinross Council, with support from Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services (PKAVS), launched a public consultation on 3 February 2022 for a period of seven weeks. The consultation was conducted online, due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and was promoted through the Perth and Kinross Council Consultation Hub and social media.

The questions covered the required information in the above responsibility section. Annex 1 provides a summary of the consultation feedback, for which we received **335 responses**.

## Review current provision to reflect consultation feedback

### Responsibility

The consultation feedback provides useful insight into what people want from this initiative. The existing provision and arrangements in Perth and Kinross meet the expectations highlighted in the feedback relatively well, suggesting that there is a firm foundation for which to develop and expand the provision of free period products in the area. The following headings in this section explain how Perth and Kinross Council will do this in different contexts.

### Community settings (Section 1 of the Act)

The following six actions have been identified to address provision of free period products in community settings as a result of the consultation:

1. Identify gaps in provision geographically and by type of premises.
2. Increase the number of premises supplying free period products in Perth and Kinross, targeting popular venue types highlighted through the survey.
3. Cooperate with current and future premises to identify appropriate spaces in their venue where period products can be easily accessed whilst protecting an individual's dignity.
4. Expand provision of products (both quantity and range) in premises, with a focus on ensuring all bathrooms have some provision available.
5. Encourage existing suppliers to supply reusable products as part of their provision.
6. Provide all venues with coloured canvas bags to offer users a solution for taking products home discreetly.
7. Provide all venues with appropriate publicity material so that customers are aware of the availability of the products.
8. Make additional arrangements for those who experience barriers to accessing free period products:
  - Work with PKAVS and Council Inequalities Team to support organisations that work with groups experiencing barriers.

## School settings (Section 2 of the Act)

The following four actions have been identified to address provision of free period products in school settings as a result of the consultation:

1. Expand provision of products (both quantity and range) in schools, with a focus on ensuring all bathrooms have both single use and reusable provision available.
2. Cooperate with schools to identify appropriate spaces where period products can be easily accessed without embarrassment.
3. Provide all schools with coloured canvas bags to offer pupils a solution for taking products home discreetly.
4. Provide all schools with appropriate publicity material so that pupils are aware of the availability of the products.

## Council premises (Section 3 of the Act)

The following five actions have been identified to address provision of free period products in Council premises as a result of the consultation:

1. Identify gaps in provision and contact each premises to organise supply.
2. Expand provision of products (both quantity and range) in premises, with a focus on ensuring all bathrooms have both single use and reusable provision available.
3. Cooperate with premises to identify appropriate spaces where period products can be easily accessed without embarrassment.
4. Provide premises with coloured canvas bags to offer Council staff and visitors a solution for taking products home discreetly.
5. Provide all premises with appropriate publicity material so that Council staff and visitors are aware of the availability of the products.

## Educational / Awareness Raising Campaign

### Responsibility

Each local authority must provide information on how and where free period products can be accessed in their area by launching an educational and awareness raising campaign.

### Campaign Priorities

Survey participants were very clear that education and awareness raising was very important in taking the free period products initiative forward. Given that the education/awareness raising related survey feedback included requests for more than just highlighting how and where free period products can be accessed, Perth and Kinross Council will launch an educational and awareness raising campaign that includes the following priorities for all community, education and Council premises. We will:

- Promote how and where free period products can be accessed in Perth and Kinross.
- Work to change attitudes towards periods so that they become easier to talk about and less of a taboo.
- Raise awareness that the scheme is for everyone, not just for those in poverty.
- Educate people on reusable products with the aim to expand the use of reusable products.
- Expand the quality and quantity of information on periods and make this information accessible to everyone, including men – what to expect, how to prepare, how you can support those around you who menstruate, hygiene and health information.
- Raise awareness on the need for transgender men and non-binary people to have access to products.
- Review provision and arrangements annually to ensure we are meeting the needs and requirements that were voiced by participants in the consultation.

## Period Products Free Provision

### 2022 Survey Responses

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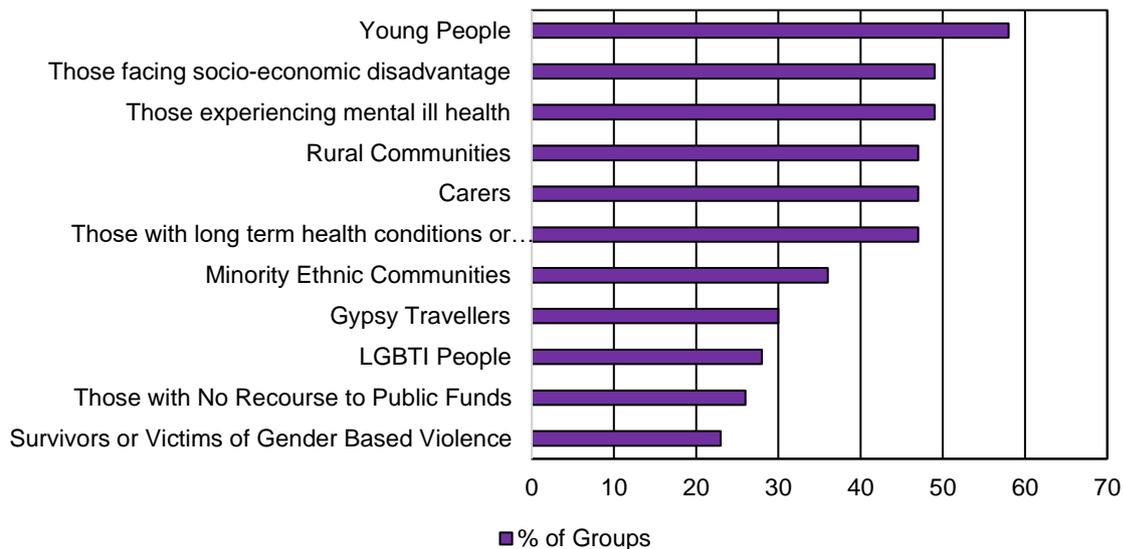
#### Responses – Demographics

The survey received 335 responses. The majority of those who responded to the survey were adult individuals (70%). 20% of respondents were school pupils, whilst 10% answered on behalf of a community group or organisation.

#### Groups and Organisations

Responses were received from organisations operating in all five locality areas. When asked which vulnerable or underserved groups they supported, and could answer on behalf of, the groups covered a wide range of characteristics.

#### Percentage of groups representing different vulnerable or underserved groups



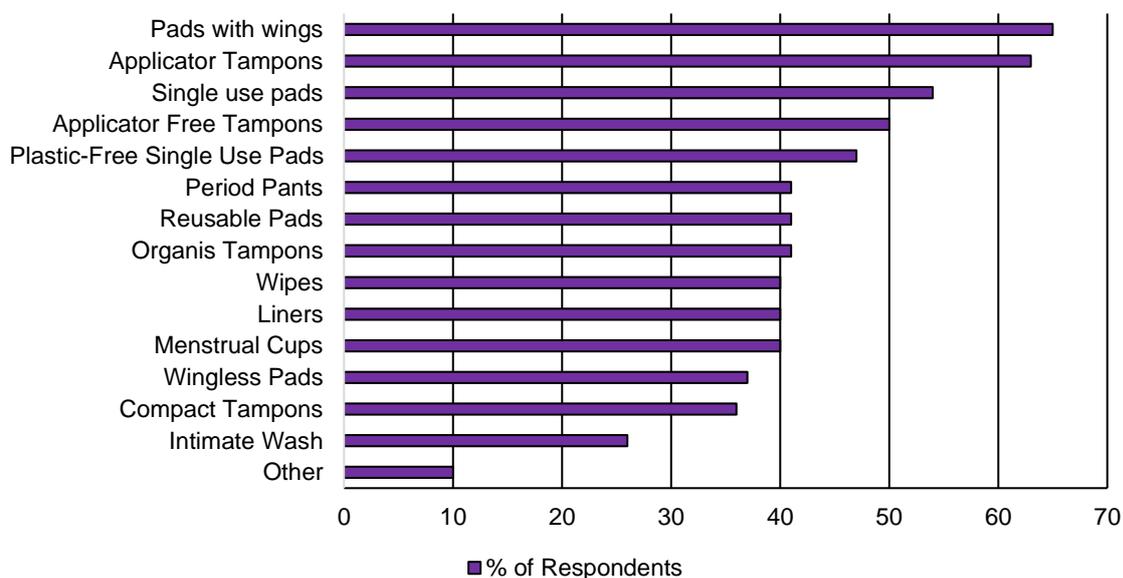
#### Findings: Community respondents

40% of those who responded to the survey had used the scheme before. 55% had not, and the remainder were unsure.

## Products and Brands

There was a broad spread of preferences in terms of the products people were keen to see made available. Single use pads, with and without wings, and tampons with and without an applicator were the most popular selections. However, there was also a clear appetite for reusable products, such as period pants, menstrual cups and reusable pads; as well as evidence that people would like to be able to access environmentally friendly disposables such as plastic free and organic options.

### Type of products that community respondents would like to be able to access through the initiative



Products which were suggested under 'other' included:

- Clean replacement underwear in the event of a leak.
- Menstrual Cup Sterilisers
- Products designed for a particularly heavy flow, such as night time pads.

Respondents were also asked to rate period product brands in order of their preference. Well-known brands, such as Always, Tampax, Bodyform and Lil-lets were the highest rated across responses, and the most commonly selected as a top choice. Around 50% of respondents also selected reusable brands in their top 6 choices of the 12 available.

Environmentally friendly brand Hey Girls was among the top 6 brands for 63% of respondents. Hey Girls offer both reusable products and environmentally-friendly single use options, such as organic tampons and plastic free pads.

## Places and Methods of Distribution

Respondents were asked which places they felt period products should be available, and the ways they would like to access them.

There was an even spread across a range of locations, most of which are represented in the existing scheme;

- Public services' locations such as the Job Centre, Libraries, Pullar House, Welfare Rights, schools & community campuses, and Housing Offices.
- Third Sector Premises and community centres.
- NHS venues such as GP practices, pharmacies, and dentists.
- Public Toilets
- Gyms and Leisure Centres

Some suggestions for locations which are not covered, or less commonly covered, at present, included:

- Workplaces (this was particularly popular, with 70% of respondents indicating this as a preference)
- Foodbanks and Community Larders
- 'Period Packs' of reusables given out as standard in schools.

The clear first choice (93%) for how to access products was from a bathroom. Respondents indicated that this should not be confined to the female bathroom, to allow those with caring responsibilities and of other genders to access products if needed. A small number of people also indicated a preference for collecting items from a designated member of staff or volunteer. Suggestions for other places products could be made available included:

- Anywhere that it would not be necessary to ask – somewhere with clear signage and discreet collection options.
- A communal staff room in a workplace
- Vending machines

When asked about home delivery, 61% of respondents indicated that this would be their preferred method of receiving products if it were available.

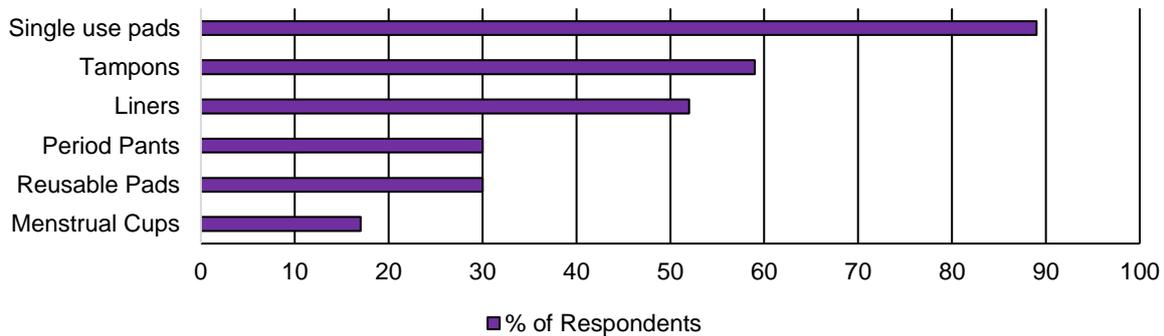
### Findings: School respondents

55% of those who responded to the survey had used the scheme before. 45% had not.

### **Products and Brands**

There was a clear preference amongst school pupils for single use pads – 89% of respondents wanted to see these made available through the scheme. There were no suggestions for other products which were not included in the list below.

## Type of products that school pupil respondents would like to be able to access through the initiative



Brand choices reflected those made by the individuals and groups who responded to the survey; Always, Bodyform, Lil-lets and Tampax all received a similar response rate, with Tampax and Always receiving the highest proportion of first-choice selections.

### Places and Methods of Distribution

Again, the clear first choice (83%) for how to access products was from a bathroom. Respondents again indicated that this should not be confined to the female bathroom. A small number of people also indicated a preference for collecting items from a designated member of staff within the school, from the first aid room, or from changing rooms.

### Stigma and Education/Awareness Raising

Respondents were asked what they thought the scheme could do to help people feel more comfortable talking about periods and asking for help if they need it. Some key themes emerged in the responses;

**The role of schools and educators** – There were a wide range of responses referencing the role of schools in providing comprehensive information about periods to young people; covering periods themselves, the range of products available including reusables; and the variety of experiences people have with their periods. There was a sense that schools could play a role in normalising these conversations, which could address some of the stigma associated with periods and change the perception of the younger generation. Several adult respondents indicated a desire to see better education for young people than they themselves received.

**Visibility and awareness-raising** – The clearest role respondents saw the scheme itself playing was one of increasing visibility. This was the most common theme in the responses. Respondents suggested that a key role for the scheme could be in its marketing and presence, reducing stigma simply by making the scheme itself more visible. This also included the universality of the scheme – tackling stigma around poverty and need, as well as periods themselves.

**Information Resources** – A significant proportion of respondents suggested an information resource, ideally a leaflet, which some suggested could be in various

languages, with details about the scheme. Some suggested that this could also include information on key resources or organisations where more support can be found regarding menstrual health and period products.

## Summary & Conclusions

Overall, the responses to the survey reflect positively on the existing scheme. Some key points and potential opportunities to take away from this exercise would include:

- The brand and product preferences largely reflect those already on offer through our agreement with Tayside Contracts, with the exception of Bodyform; which came out as a very popular brand and is not currently available.
- There is a clear appetite for more information and availability of reusable products, with many respondents highlighting their environmental and financial benefits.
- Awareness and use of the scheme, both in schools and more widely, indicates that there is scope to undertake more awareness raising and marketing, particularly around the availability of products and the universality of the scheme.
- Preferences expressed in relation to collection points and methods of collection align closely with what is already in place.
- The most popular response for where products could be placed was workplaces; indicating that there could be an additional opportunity outside the scope of the public sector scheme to engage with employers around period dignity in the workplace.