

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 28 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT ON: PROVISION OF FREE SANITARY PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 361-2019

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Scottish Government has committed to providing access to free period products to pupils in schools to support equality, dignity and rights for those who menstruate. This report now outlines the progress made on the delivery of provision of free sanitary products in schools and seeks approval to roll out the new collaborative pan-Tayside service delivery model with Tayside Contracts, building on the commitment made by Scottish Government to increase the number and range of places where free sanitary products are available for those who need them, eg in Community Facilities, such as sport centres, libraries, community centres, museums. This provides an update from the previous report in May 2018 (Report No: 154-2018).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Services Committee:

- i note the contents of the report
- ii seek approval to roll out to all schools and instruct the Executive Director to continue to monitor the implementation of the proposals; and
- iii instruct that the Executive Director be remitted to submit a further report on progress in 12 months' time

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The financial implications of £53,000 for the delivery model are fully funded by the Scottish Government for 2019/2020. It is anticipated that this will be committed funding for the term of Parliament.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Since June 2017, "Ending Period Poverty" has been high on Scotland's public policy agenda. Easy access to period products is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of those who menstruate. With one in four children in Scotland living in poverty, the cost of essential sanitary products is yet another expense that low income families struggle to meet.

The Scottish Government has therefore committed funding to all Local Authorities to ensure that lack of access to products does not impact on an individual's ability to participate fully in learning in education at all levels. National Guiding Principles have been developed which include:

- **Protecting students' dignity**, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma;
- Making a range of products with different qualities available, 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**
 - 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.
 - **Awareness raising and education** to both promote the 'offer' and change cultural norms
- 4.2 Scottish Government expected all Local Authorities to have an interim Local delivery model in place ready for implementation in schools by August 2018 which has been completed.

5.0 PROGRESS

- 5.1 Dundee Officers, Education Officer and Senior Health and Wellbeing Officer, have engaged with key stakeholders to create a delivery plan, model and Policy Guidelines for all Dundee Schools. The policy guidelines focused on 6 key areas:
- Developing the Culture in schools – reducing stigma
 - Developing the Curriculum
 - Involving children, young people, staff and parents
 - Provision out with school
 - Procurement of products and services
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- 5.2 A “Period Poverty Working Group” was established with representatives from a number of secondary schools, with primary schools contributing, through tests of change. Through this group, our young people were involved in shaping and designing the Dundee Policy Guidelines and delivery model on access to free period products. This involvement ranged from creating the promotional material, choosing the products to identifying where the products should be located in the schools as well as leading assemblies.
- 5.3 All schools received Dundee’s Policy Guidelines in October 2018. All Secondary schools, Offsite and Special schools are at full implementation phase. Primary schools are at different stages of implementation, from full roll out to engaging with children and young people on the best model for their school, however free access to sanitary products is on offer at all Dundee schools. The culture change in schools has been overwhelmingly positive. Children and young people were motivated leaders in the implementation of the programme, for example through school assemblies or discussions in Personal and Social Education. The Corner were also included in the delivery model as a place where young people could access products after school hours.
- 5.4 School teachers and leadership teams were offered training on 3 September 2019, by Hey Girls, (a social enterprise company which seeks to enrich the lives of girls and young women by exercising social and ethical responsibility in every aspect of their work), on the diverse range of products available including environmentally friendly and reusable products. This training included curriculum development and case studies on how the programme is being rolled out in other local authorities in Scotland.
- 5.5 Dundee City Council’s Procurement team developed the initial model of delivery and contract with suppliers. Quality Improvement methodology was used to test implementation processes, reviewed, improved, then scaled up across the schools.
- 5.6 Following a recent review of service delivery by a working group consisting of 4 Secondary School Senior Leaders, Support Staff, Young People, Education Officer and Senior Health and Wellbeing Officer, the Group has worked in partnership with Tayside Procurement Consortium to develop an improved, collaborative pan-Tayside, service delivery model, which will ensure coverage within schools and community destinations throughout the calendar year (allowing for out of school coverage), with Tayside Contracts providing the fully ‘managed

service'. The partnership with Tayside Contracts will provide better value for money, increased product range and improved, more efficient delivery model(s) to maximise coverage and uptake.

- 5.7 Tayside Contracts will **provide** all period products in schools. Over the next year, the model will be developed and products will be provided in identified toilet areas in all schools, with Tayside Contracts cleaning staff undertaking the **replenishment** of the products on a regular basis.
- 5.8 The Children and Families Service gained recognition of their efforts to create a bespoke, culture changing approach to accessing free period products in schools and this was recognised at the Dundee City Council OSCA (Outstanding Service and Commitment Award) Awards in June 2019. COSLA have shown an interest in the Dundee Model and visited schools (Braeview Academy, Harris Academy and St Paul's Academy) in May 2019 to speak to the young people on the impact.
- 5.9 The Scottish Government have recently extended access to free sanitary products in schools to include the wider community and publicly operated facilities. The Officers in Children and Families Service are working closely with the Chief Executive's Service to align delivery models in schools with the Community roll out into community facilities, such as sport centres, libraries, community centres, museums. The first phase of the community facilities provision began at the end of September 2019 and will be monitored to align with school provision over the next year. This extension of the initiative means the service can signpost children and young people to community facilities which will cover out of hours and school holiday provision.

6.0 PROPOSALS

- 6.1 It is proposed the new delivery model with Tayside Contracts is fully implemented across all schools over the next year.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness and poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Council Management Team, Tayside Contracts, Angus Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Tayside Procurement Consortium have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

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October 2019

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