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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>23 January 2018</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/04/18/WB</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Putting an end to Period Poverty in Inverclyde</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about the national period poverty initiative and outline proposals to end period poverty for girls and young women in Inverclyde.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Menstruation, or periods, is a natural bodily function of women and young girls. There are a number of women and girls in Scotland who are unable to afford essential sanitary products during menstruation due to poverty.
- 2.2 Currently there is no mechanism or statutory position which ensures the provision of sanitary products to anyone who needs them.
- 2.3 A Labour MSP has launched a consultation on a Members' Bill at the Scottish Parliament that would create a universal right to free sanitary products in Scotland regardless of women's income.
- 2.4 The proposals include placing a duty on schools, colleges and universities to provide free sanitary products to their students via establishment toilets.
- 2.5 Schools hold supplies of sanitary products for pupils who ask for them. This is the case in Inverclyde primary and secondary schools and no charge is made for the products which tend to be asked for in emergency situations.
- 2.6 However, there is stigma attached to menstruation and some pupils may not feel comfortable about asking school staff for sanitary products.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that members of the Education and Communities Committee tackle period poverty by:
- (a) agreeing to the installation of free sanitary product dispensing machines in all Inverclyde secondary schools.
  - (b) agreeing that the cost of installing and stocking the machines be remitted to the 2018/20 Budget Process.

**Wilma Bain**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Menstruation, or periods, is a natural bodily function of women and young girls. There are a number of women and girls in Scotland who are unable to afford essential sanitary products during menstruation due to poverty. Some women and girls in Scotland are using newspaper or toilet paper instead of sanitary towels or tampons because they cannot afford to buy them.
- 4.2 Currently there is no mechanism or statutory position which ensures the provision of sanitary products to anyone who needs them.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government is currently piloting the distribution of free sanitary products to low income families in Aberdeen to tackle period poverty through food bank distribution.
- 4.4 A Labour MSP has launched a consultation on a Members' Bill at the Scottish Parliament that would create a universal right to free sanitary products in Scotland regardless of women's income. The proposed Bill aims to help women and girls who cannot currently access or afford sanitary products. The proposals include placing a duty on schools, colleges and universities to provide free sanitary products to their students via establishment toilets.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Bill could potentially improve attendance at school, improve attainment and overall have a positive impact on individuals' lives, thus putting an end to period poverty in local communities.
- 4.6 Head Teachers, members of SOA6 Children and Young Person Health and Wellbeing Sub Group, and colleagues from Sandyford Clinic were invited to respond to the consultation questionnaire (Appendix 1).

## **5.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 Schools hold supplies of sanitary products for pupils who ask for them. This is the case in Inverclyde primary and secondary schools and no charge is made for the products which tend to be asked for in emergency situations. Sanitary products are not just requested by female pupils in secondary schools as some girls in the upper stages of primary school start menstruating, albeit small numbers. Young girls usually start menstruating, or start their periods, around the age of 13 years. However, there is stigma attached to menstruation and some pupils may not feel comfortable about asking school staff for sanitary products.
- 5.2 Our 2 secondary FES secondary schools – Clydeview Academy and Notre Dame High School – have sanitary product vending machines in the girls' toilets (Clydeview has 5 machines and Notre Dame has 2 machines) at a cost of £1 per item, be it towel or tampon. However, both these schools still provide free products via the school office.

## **6.0 PROPOSAL**

- 6.1 To install free sanitary product dispensing machines in all secondary schools which have a dual option offering sanitary towels and tampons.
- 6.2 The option will be free vend only, so it will be important that the pupils are educated on the benefits to the pupils who really need this most and that waste cannot be tolerated. Discussions will take place with FES regarding replacing their current dispensing machines with ones which will dispense sanitary products free of charge.
- 6.3 The proposal is to install 3 vending units in each of the 6 secondary schools with one vending unit going into Lomond View Academy and Craigmarnoch School.

#### 6.4 Costs are as follows:

School	Number m/cs in girls toilets	Basic cost per unit		Annual Cost for products**	Total Cost Year 1
Clydeview Acad*	3	£250	£750	£3,429	£4,179
Notre Dame HS*	3	£250	£750	£3,429	£4,179
Inverclyde Acad	3	£250	£750	£3,429	£4,179
St Stephen's HS	3	£250	£750	£3,429	£4,179
St Columba's HS	3	£250	£750	£3,429	£4,179
Port Glasgow HS	3	£250	£750	£3,429	£4,179
Lomond View Acad	1	£250	£250	£693	£943
Craigmarnock School	1	£250	£250	£693	£943
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>£5,000</b>	<b>£21,959</b>	<b>£26,959</b>

\* FES Schools

\*\* These figures are based on maximum estimated usage but we won't know exact costs until machines are installed and utilised.

Funding for the above equipment and supplies would need to be considered as part of the 2018/20 Budget Process.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

### Finance

#### 7.1 Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Anti-Poverty Fund		2018/19	5		To be considered as part of the 2018/20 Budget

##### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Anti-Poverty Fund		2018/19	22		To be considered as part of the 2018/20 Budget

### Legal

7.2 If the proposed Members' Bill is passed there will a duty on all schools to provide free sanitary products in school toilets.

## Human Resources

7.3 N/A.

## Equalities

7.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix

No

This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

## Repopulation

7.5 N/A.

## 8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 A national consultation exercise on ending period poverty ran from October to 4 December 2017. The 12 consultation questions are shown in Appendix 1.

## 9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Consultation document – [www.periodpoverty.scot](http://www.periodpoverty.scot)