
Report To:	Education and Communities Committee	Date:	4 September 2018
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/72/18/RB
Contact Officer:	Louise McVey	Contact No:	01475 712979
Subject:	Access to Free Sanitary Products in Schools		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update and inform the Committee on the implementation of the Scottish Government commitment to provide free access to sanitary products in schools and community facilities.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 30 May 2018, the Scottish Government committed funding to provide access to free sanitary products to students in schools, colleges and universities. The purpose of this funding is to support equality, dignity and rights for those who menstruate and to ensure that lack of access to products does not impact on an individual's ability to fully participate in education at all levels.
- 2.2 This commitment will roll out a Scotland wide initiative and is based on the main findings of the pilot study from Aberdeen in 2018. A set of Guiding Principles has been developed to help shape local delivery models.
- 2.3 The sanitary products will be sourced for an interim period given that the national framework of supplies will not be in place until October 2018. There will be an initial stock purchased for the first four months of the project to include the Christmas break.
- 2.4 Inverclyde Council has received a total of £28,075 to cover the period August 2018 – March 2019 and the Scottish Government will be issuing a monitoring framework to monitor uptake and spend to inform any future funding. Learning in the first year will be shared with the Scottish Government in line with the terms of funding to aid future rollout and policy.
- 2.5 Learning gathered between August 2018 and March 2019 will be shared with the Scottish Government to aid further development of this service across Scotland.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Inverclyde Council supports this commitment to roll out access to free sanitary products across schools and colleges. This includes access to sanitary products during term time, at weekends and during the holiday periods.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 30 May 2018 the Scottish Government announced funding to local authorities to provide free sanitary products in schools, colleges and universities and to provide access to the products during holidays and weekends.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government also issued a set of guiding principles on which the local delivery model should be based. These include:
- Protecting students' dignity, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma.
 - Making a range of products and 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. The rollout of gender neutral toilets should also be taken account of.
 - Awareness raising and education to both promote the offer and change cultural norms.
- 4.3 The findings of the Aberdeen pilot project in 2018 confirmed access to sanitary products as an issue for some people and that different groups are affected in different ways. The key learning point from the pilot was that in educational institutions there was embarrassment about periods generally and having to ask a staff member for products was considered to be a particular issue for young pupils. School staff noted a need for education around menstruation and sanitary products to reduce stigma and normalise discussion of menstruation. Provision during the holiday and weekend periods should also be easily accessed (without having to ask a member of staff) and discreet for people on low income.
- 4.4 Schools in Inverclyde currently hold supplies of sanitary products for pupils who ask for them; this is the case in both primary and secondary schools and no charge is made for the products which tend to be asked for in emergency situations. However, there is a stigma attached to menstruation and some pupils may not feel comfortable about asking school staff for sanitary products.
- 4.5 In January 2018, members of the Education and Communities Committee supported a recommendation to tackle period poverty by agreeing to the installation of free sanitary product dispensing machines in Inverclyde Secondary Schools. However, the cost associated with installing the free sanitary product dispensing machines and the restrictive nature of the machines both in variety of products and location mean that this is no longer the preferred option. It is proposed to purchase storage/dispensing trolleys instead. This will also allow pupils the freedom and flexibility to access a variety of products for the menstruation period.

5.0 CURRENT PROPOSAL

5.1 Product Sourcing within Inverclyde

There will be a national framework of suppliers who should be able to offer schools a selection of products, however this framework will not be in place until October 2018. In the interim the Council's procurement team is sourcing suppliers that will provide enough products for the first 4 months of the project and to cover the Christmas Holiday period.

5.2 Proposed Delivery Model within Inverclyde

All Head Teachers have received the Scottish Government Guiding Principles and Good Practice information for the provision of sanitary products in schools, to be shared amongst staff.

Inverclyde will provide free sanitary products in sites around both primary and secondary schools and this will be monitored to find out where pupils are more likely to go for the products and which products they are more likely to choose. The proposed sites include areas within the medical rooms, staff rooms, reception areas, pupil support areas and various toilet areas where the sanitary products can be stored but will be discrete and easily accessible to pupils, without having to ask a member of staff.

Inverclyde will establish a short life working group to support the development, delivery and impact of accessing free sanitary products as part of the tackling poverty and gender inequality agenda. The short life working group will have relevant representatives from procurement, children and young people's rights, school nursing, teachers and young people from across the Primary and Secondary school sector, youth workers, and facilities services.

5.3 Delivery Model - Secondary Schools

The sites within the secondary schools will be identified through engagement and consultation with Pupil Voice representatives coming together to the Inverclyde Pupil Network, to share what is good in their school and how other pupil voice representatives can adapt this practice. Pupils from the Network will be asked to collate pupil views on accessing the free sanitary products in line with the national framework to Scottish Government.

Secondary schools will be given a range of products to choose from placed in a variety of discrete locations including appropriate gender neutral toilets. There are some concerns nationally that the use of the products will be abused and some local authorities have reported a spike in use when the project was initially introduced but this slowed down when people were given education and information on the purpose of the project.

The representatives at the Pupil Network and the short life working group will receive a training workshop opportunity to raise awareness and knowledge of how challenging it may be to participate in education without access to sanitary products, and will promote the offer of free products and how to access them in school and in the community. Assemblies will be delivered by relevant pupils and supported by the short life working group to raise awareness and promote the offer in Secondary Schools.

The proposal is to provide discrete stickers designed by the Inverclyde Pupil Network, to advise people of the various areas around the school where they can access the free sanitary products. This will ensure that the products can be accessed when required and a supply can be taken without embarrassment or anxiety. It is anticipated that there may be an increase in the number of sanitary bin uplifts and possible increase in the number of sanitary bins around school toilets and this will be monitored over the first four months (September-December 2018). Posters, information leaflets, school newsletters and electronic media will also be used to communicate this national initiative.

Delivery Model – Primary Schools

Primary schools are more likely to know which pupils may require the products, because the numbers are likely to be low and therefore will be given a smaller range of sanitary products to be made freely available for pupils to access when they need them. Pupils in Primary 6 and 7 will learn about the changes in their body as part of the Curriculum of Excellence and the offer of free sanitary products and how to access them will be raised at this time. Parents will receive letters and receive notification from schools as to how they can access the free sanitary products on behalf of their child. The short life working group will have responsibility to gather information from all the primary schools to share with the Scottish Government as part of the national framework agreement.

5.3 Delivery Model in the Community for evenings, weekends and holiday periods

In addition to school sites, it is proposed to ensure the sanitary products are available in Libraries, Youth Zones and Community Centers throughout Inverclyde to cover weekends and holiday periods. It is proposed to use the discrete stickers, posters and electronic media as a way of informing people of the locations that the products can be accessed.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 The Council will receive £28,075 to cover the period August 2018 – March 2019. The funding includes access for primary and secondary use and for the products to be available during the holiday and weekend in the community establishments. The funding also includes all set up costs and the cost to provide workshops and learning opportunities.

Information gathered and reported will be used to monitor and inform future years funding from April 2019 onwards.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A			£28,075		

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Legal

- 6.2 None

Human Resources

- 6.3 None

Equalities

- 6.4 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

- 6.5 N/A

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 Ongoing evaluation and consultation will take place with young people and updates will be provided.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This initiative to tackle period poverty is welcomed and Inverclyde Council will share any learning nationally to ensure that the project has maximum impact.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Access to Sanitary Products Aberdeen Pilot: Evaluation Report.