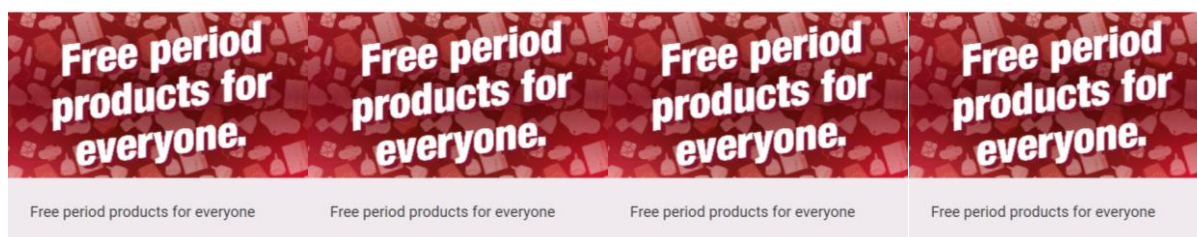


Statement on Exercise of Functions for the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021



Context

The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 came into force on 15 August 2022. Local Authorities have a legal duty to make period products freely available for anyone who needs them. The provisions in the Act supersede the Period Products in Schools Regulations 2020.

The Act is set out in two sections and Councils are required to communicate how they will fulfil the duties placed on them:

- Section 1 of the Act: places a duty on Local Authorities to make period products obtainable free of charge for anyone who needs to use them. (Community provision).
- Section 2 of the Act: places a duty on education providers to make period products obtainable free of charge on their premises for pupils and students during term time. (Education provision).

Local Authorities are required to produce and communicate a Statement on Exercise of Functions to summarise the arrangements in place to meet the legal duties. This includes carrying out one or more public consultation(s).

This statement sets out City of Edinburgh Council's commitment to providing freely accessible, and where possible, environmentally sustainable period products for those who need it without having to ask for them or justify why they need them. It outlines current and future provision in schools and in the wider community.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 24th November 2020. It gained royal assent on 12th January 2021 and is the world's first legislation to support the provision of free period products for anyone who menstruates.
- 1.2 The Act requires Local Authorities to provide period products free of charge to anyone who needs them. There should be a reasonable choice of products which are easily obtained in a way that respects a person's dignity. Period products should be provided in all Local Authority education establishments and a wide range of community venues.
- 1.3 Local Authorities are required to produce and communicate a Statement on Exercise of Functions. This summarises the arrangements in place put in place by the Local Authority to meet its legal duties.
- 1.4 This statement sets out the City of Edinburgh Council's commitment to providing freely accessible period products to those who need them. It outlines current and future provision in schools, education establishments and in the wider community. It also sets out the approach to training, working to create, discussion and promote awareness.

2. Our Commitment

- 2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council is committed to the provision of freely accessible period products for those who need to access them. Provision is to be made available for Edinburgh citizens and visitors to the city for work or leisure. Scottish Government funding has been made available to facilitate this provision. Period products have been freely available in schools since 2018 and in the wider community such as community centres and libraries since 2020. We will continue to widen access to products.
- 2.2 Due consideration is given to those who may face additional barriers, working with pantries, homelessness charities and health projects across the city. Providing a central ordering system.
- 2.3 For people living alone with a disability, who are unable to access venues to collect products, the City of Edinburgh Libraries provides the opportunity to arrange home delivery of products via the mobile library service.
- 2.4 Third Sector organisations and youth groups can collect products from their closest library or Community Centre for their users. Central ordering provision reflects this volume and is varied to accommodate the needs of smaller local organisations.
- 2.5 The City of Edinburgh Council is committed to becoming net zero and the provision of free products reflects this. Where possible products and providers are sustainable and re-usable, with consideration given to the carbon footprint of both manufacture and distribution.

3. Consultation and Engagement

The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 requires local authorities to engage with and consult children, young people and the wider public. This feedback informed the Statement on the Exercise of Functions and also the arrangements to provide freely accessible products that meet people's needs. City of Edinburgh Council consulted with people who:

- need to use products currently,
- need to use products in future,
- need to collect products for someone else who needs them, and
- anyone interested in giving feedback on the provision of period products.

A survey on Microsoft Forms was carried out in January and February 2022, asking:

- have you taken free period products for yourself or others?
- what period products you prefer?
- what you think would encourage more people to take products for their own use or to give to other people?

<https://newsbeat-edinburgh.tfemagazine.co.uk/winter-202122/latest-news/what-do-you-think-about-free-period-products>

There were also a series of engagements with schools and pupils, led by youth work staff. In addition, the parents and carers attending Discover during the school holidays participated in workshops to both inform and consult.

The consultation was widely promoted with 5,383 responses received. The key themes which inform our approach to meeting our duties are:

- Type of Product and Branding
- Promotion and Marketing
- Where to get products/accessibility
- Training and Education
- Other (for comments that didn't form a single theme)

4. Community Access

A range of products is freely available in:

- Community centres
- Libraries
- Museums and Galleries
- Edinburgh leisure venues
- Community pantries

Third sector organisations, youth groups and small community groups are able to collect a supply of products from their local community centre or library for distribution. Ordering for the key venues is responsive to the need of smaller local organisations.

For people living alone with a disability, who are unable to access venues to collect products, the City of Edinburgh Libraries provides the opportunity to arrange home delivery of products via the mobile library service.

In line with procurement requirements, we provide products from a range of suppliers. City of Edinburgh Council's procurement team supports the roll out and work is ongoing to use the most environmentally friendly products with the lowest carbon footprint possible.

The City of Edinburgh Council's period products website page <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/periodproducts> and PickUpMyPeriod App is promoted to ensure those who require products can access information as to their nearest pick up point.

5. Access to Products in Schools

All Edinburgh schools can order products via the central system and are required to make them freely available without pupils having to ask. They are mostly in toilets and some schools have identified other ways to ensure the products are easily accessible.

A programme of training and awareness raising events and workshops is being developed for schools, using a train the trainer approach to ensure widest possible reach and impact.

Where possible, schools are encouraged to order and promote re-usable products with senior pupils within high schools developing their own sanitary product program.

6. Communication and Raising Awareness

The City of Edinburgh Council undertook an extensive and creative publicity campaign to promote access to and awareness of freely available period products.

A launch of the roll out took place at Wester Hailes Library in March 2023, hosted by the Convener of Education, Children and Families.

The publicity campaign used a range of approaches including lamp post wraps in areas of highest deprivation, on social media, banners, radio adverts and bus stop publicity. Posters are also provided in all venues where products are available.

7. Next Steps

We will:

- continue to monitor uptake and need in schools and the wider community
- supply products via the library service to people who are housebound
- continue to support training and awareness raising by school nurses, youth workers, third sector partners and school staff
- be proactive in publicising where period products can be found
- continue to promote environmentally sustainable products with a low carbon footprint
- ensure that products are available in a dignified way, and challenge and support where we hear there are issues
- continue to ensure periods are normalised in society and that barriers are removed for all groups

In addition we will:

- maintain the current provision across schools and community venues
- engage with partners, schools and venues to raise awareness of the act
- update the council website and PickUpMyPeriod App.
- continue to target products as part of our work to reduce poverty and inequality

For more information, please visit the City of Edinburgh Council webpage:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/periodproducts>

Or email:

CEC-PeriodPoverty@ea.edin.sch.uk