

North Ayrshire Council's Statement on
Exercise of Functions for the Period Products
(Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021
August 2022

Background

In 2021 the new Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 gained royal assent. The Act sets out the right to free period products for those who menstruate and places a duty on local authorities to provide these products within school and community settings.

North Ayrshire Council's Statement on Exercise of Functions for the provision of free period products follows the principles set out in the Guidance for Responsible Bodies under the Act.

Overarching duties of the Act are:

- to make period products obtainable free of charge for anyone who needs them
- to make products available free of charge in educational establishments during term time

Current model in North Ayrshire Council

North Ayrshire Council has been committed to combatting period poverty since the inception of our sector leading policy to introduce free period products in schools in 2017.

Continuous improvement has been made to develop the initial model by extending and promoting the access points and by raising the awareness of the issue by engaging with a range of internal and external services and community partners.

Additional focussed resources have been allocated to drive forward an ambitious promotions and communications strategy to ensure North Ayrshire's Period Dignity strategy develops at pace and scale to give as many citizens in North Ayrshire as possible the rights to have a period with comfort and dignity.

The Period Dignity strategy in North Ayrshire is based on user led experiences and focusses on the views from the recent consultation and engagement exercise with pupils and members of the public.

Statement from North Ayrshire Council Leader – Marie Burns.

“North Ayrshire is a great place to live and work but unfortunately our Authority faces a number of challenges, including high levels of unemployment and rising child and household poverty. Tackling poverty is a top priority for the new administration and our focus will be on reducing the devastating impact poverty has on our families and communities. We are working on long term solutions to tackle the root causes of

poverty but it's important that we also act now to mitigate the immediate impact with some direct targeted interventions where and when they are most effective.

Period poverty is an example of where the Council has been able to offer support with dignity to those who need to access products. We know that the pandemic exacerbated period poverty due to the lack of access to a range buildings and supplies. Lessons have been learned from Covid and work is well underway as part of our recovery plan to improve the pathways to period products by extending and promoting the network of community partners and access points.

North Ayrshire Council recognises that living in poverty is not a choice, and all of our citizens deserve the right to free and suitable products. We are committed to raising the awareness of our provision to allow everyone the right to manage periods safely, confidently, and most importantly with dignity”.

Education facilities provision

North Ayrshire Council is proud to be the first local authority in the UK to launch the free provision of period products in schools. We will continue to develop and improve this model based on feedback from both our initial and future consultations with school pupils and education leads.

Products will continue to be available in both primary and secondary school settings in a convenient, dignified and discreet way. Ongoing support will be made available to all children and young people to ensure they have the knowledge and confidence of their entitlement to access a range of products whenever they need them.

Community based provision

Period products are available free of charge from all Fairer Food Community Larders in North Ayrshire and can be picked up by existing or new members as part of weekly shopping experiences. Our larder sites are strategically placed across our authority and offer dignified access to a range of products.

Citizens can also access a range of products from a range of council buildings including libraries, halls and centres. Additional targeted approaches are also in place providing key staff such as Community Link Workers with period product stocks which can be provided to clients as a quick and direct intervention to prevent period poverty.

The Statement from North Ayrshire Council

This statement summarises the arrangements that will be put in place and sustained to meet the duties of the Act.

We are focused on and committed to improving and extending access to free period products in a dignified way for people living in or visiting our area.

We will do this by:

- ensuring we have a range of stock available at all schools which is accessible and free of charge
- ensuring we have a range of stock available at council buildings and via other community partners which is accessible and free of charge
- extending the products readily available in male and accessible toilets to ensure the service is inclusive for all gender identities
- piloting the introduction of tote bags in cubicles providing products in a more discrete and dignified manner for pupils in school and youth establishments
- optimising the opportunity to introduce re-useable products by piloting environmentally friendly samples in a range of our access points
- identifying and addressing any geographical gaps in the operating model to ensure that citizens have convenient and local access to the service
- reviewing the data from the Period Dignity consultation to further improve North Ayrshire's operating model with user led views and experiences being at the heart of any changes
- continuing to proactively engage with internal and external stakeholders specifically targeting those who work with marginalised communities to ensure the operating model is inclusive and represents those particularly at risk of period poverty
- increasing the awareness of the provision and sharing information on the service provision by developing an ambitious and comprehensive communications plan
- integrating the Period Dignity work with the Council's Challenge Poverty agenda
- implementing an improved electronic ordering system for requesting top up period products which will also improve stock and financial control measures
- assigning 'Period Dignity Champions' within the authority to undertake research, case studies, reviews and to promote and present the Council's vision for addressing Period Poverty and reaching a place of Period Dignity for all

Further information

North Ayrshire access points and access to our products are further promoted on the PickUpMyPeriod app detailing locations and details for access.

Follow our Period Dignity journey on social media:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [You Tube](#)

Email: periodnignity@north-ayrshire.gov.uk