

**POLICY AND RESOURCES**

**21 JUNE 2022**

**FREE PERIOD ANGUS**

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON – CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report presents the Free Period Angus Statement on Exercise of Functions under the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the committee:

- (i) scrutinise and notes the Statement of Community-Based Provision for the 'Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021' attached as Appendix 1 to this report and
- (ii) note the proposed forward plan for delivery across Tayside

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COUNCIL PLAN**

The contents of the Free Period Angus Statement on Exercise of Functions is aligned with the Angus Community Plan 2017 – 2030 and Angus Council Plan 202-2024. This includes Reducing Child Poverty and Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**3.1** The Angus Community Planning Partnership has been delivering on the Scottish government requirement to provide free period products throughout the area since 2018. The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 was given royal assent on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**3.2** The Act states in both Section 1 and Section 2 that sufficient products must be obtainable for free to meet a product user's needs either while in Scotland (Section 1) or during term time (Section 2). In relation to Section 3 sufficient products should be obtainable to meet an individual's needs while they are on the premises.

**3.3** There must be no judgement as to the need, no limit to the number of products an individual can take, nor attempts to 'ration' products. Individuals do not need a reason to access the products, above and beyond the fact that they menstruate, however individual needs in terms of period products could vary considerably due to the reason for the need arising, including but not limited to

- a) a period starting unexpectedly or forgetting to bring a product from home
- b) ongoing need due to low income
- c) ongoing need for another reason
- d) higher than average need due to a medical condition

**3.4** All of the above are valid reasons for needing to access free products and from our consultation, arrangements have been put in place to meet different needs, e.g. single products or bulk supply available in different places. However, in all cases, an individual has access to sufficient products to meet their needs and the principles set out in this Guidance are being met, regardless of how the need arises. Processes have been put in place to ensure that the frequency of restocking products is sufficient to meet demand.

3.5 This report outlines the ongoing and proposed plans for the free provision of products throughout Angus and the regional plan to build a sustainable model for future delivery.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 In Angus the Community Planning Partnership lead on the Period Poverty work under the banner of 'Free Period Angus' which was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2019. This was developed with and for the local community who have continued to participate in how this is delivered through bi-monthly Red Tent Events.

4.2 As part of the Scottish Government guidance a consultation exercise was done from November 2021 – February 2022 building on the 2020 Citizens Survey to ensure that the views of our communities were part of the long-term plan. In total 1,386 responses were received with the consultation highlighting the following:-

- a) The products being distributed in Angus suit the needs of local people and having the products in locations throughout the area alongside the option to have products delivered directly has to date worked effectively to tackle period poverty.
- b) The Survey results showed that over the last 12 months:-
  - 67% of respondents advised that Free Period Angus had raised awareness of where products could be collected or how to order them
  - 63% of respondents advised that Free Period Angus had raised awareness of period poverty in general across the area
  - 38% of respondents advised that Free Period Angus had highlighted the benefits of re-useable products which correlates to the demand in orders for washable pads and menstrual cups
  - 56% of respondents knew where to get products if they needed them
  - 21% of respondents advised an inability to access period products stopped them going to school or work
  - 30% of respondents reported having to choose between buying period products and other items such as food, nappies
  - 20% of respondents reported that covid-19 impacted their ability to afford or access period products
  - 58% of respondents have made a shift to using re-useable products in the past 12 months
  - 68% of respondents have had products sent direct to them through Free Period Angus
  - 92% of respondents advised they now know what is meant by period poverty which was an increase in 40% since the initial survey in 2020
  - 87% of respondents advised Free Period Angus has been an essential service for the people of Angus throughout the pandemic

A number of national strategies and legislation are aligned to the work of the Partnership and help to guide and influence change. These include the Fairer Scotland Duty, Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, Vision for Health Improvement in Scotland and the Local Governance Review.

#### 5. PROPOSALS

5.1 Free Period Angus has and continues to be used throughout Scotland as a model of good practice. Through the survey results and continued engagement work the aim is to build on the work done to date and work towards a sustainable model of product distribution. Proposed project work includes:-

- a) Continued distribution of products through existing locations with a campaign to encourage more business premises to be part of the Period Positive Employer Scheme throughout 2022/23
- b) Encourage the use of re-useable products as part of the drive to care for the environment and reduce poverty. [80% of survey respondents advised they have been thinking about becoming more sustainable and environmentally friendly]

- c) Refresh the Red Tent Events now that pandemic restrictions have eased to include face to face sessions. This includes facilitating the network of groups in place to support with menstrual wellbeing for example menopause cafes, endometriosis support groups
- d) Build on the legacy work done to date in partnership with Dundee & Angus College to provide a long-term educational resource that can be used in Schools, Colleges, Universities and throughout our communities
- e) Work across the region to provide a Tayside wide offer for local people which will provide a consistent approach to period poverty in Dundee, Angus & Perth and Kinross. Initially this will be through a joint funded post for 2 years.

5.2 Over 40% of survey respondents advised that throughout the last 12 months they had been unable to afford period products. In Angus we have a priority to eradicate poverty therefore to ensure no person experiences period poverty again the partnership will drive the proposals forward and report on progress as part of the Community Plan Annual Performance Report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Funding allocated from the Scottish Government covers all costs and funding is in place to continue the provision of products until 2025 at which point through the proposals noted at point 5 there will be a sustainable provision for local people in Angus.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 Throughout April and May the Partnership and local communities were consulted on the report and helped shape the provision through surveys and focus groups.

**NOTE:** The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Audit Commission: Angus Council Best Value audit report (October 2016)

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List of Appendices: Statement of Community-Based Provision for the 'Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021'.