

Pupils in England a step closer to free period products

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Government plans to offer free period products in more than 20,000 schools in England have been confirmed ahead of the national roll-out of the scheme.

There is only now a matter of weeks until pupils in England will have free access to period products.

Earlier this year, the Department for Education (DfE) pledged to provide free period products at all schools and colleges in England in a bid to create period equality. After a competitive tender, the contract for the supply of the free products has been awarded with a roll-out date of January. This means that from the new year, every school girl in England will have access to free period products.

The contract has been officially awarded to phs Direct, part of washroom and hygiene provider phs Group. It has also been confirmed that the product offering will include environmentally-friendly pads and reusable products such as reusable pads.

Preparations are now underway for the implementation and, as part of this, the Department for Education will publish guidance later this year to make clear how schools and colleges can get access to the products.

Children and Families Minister Michelle Donelan said: "Every young person should be able to access help when they need it. That's why we are making free period products available in all schools and colleges, so no young person has their education disrupted by a lack of access to period products. We will be publishing guidance later this year to help schools and colleges offer these products free of charge to those who need it, free from the fear of stigma or shame."

David Taylor-Smith, CEO of phs Group, said: "From our independent research, we know young people believe access to period products to be a real issue. We firmly believe period products are a necessity, not a luxury, and this is why access to free products at school and college for all pupils is a significant achievement. This initiative isn't just about what is perceived to be 'poverty'. Offering access to free products to every pupil creates period equality and stops both periods and access issues getting in the way of a young person's education."

The move to supply free period products to schools in England follows similar directives elsewhere in the UK. In April, the Welsh Government announced a £2.3m Period Dignity Grant for Schools to provide free of charge products via local authorities. And last year, the Scottish Government implemented a directive for educational establishments to offer free period products, boosted by an additional £4m of funding to expand the scheme in January.

Bryn Bach Primary School, in Tredgar, already supplies free period products to pupils as part of a period equity scheme introduced by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Head teacher Luisa Munro-Morris said: "The rights of the child underpin our school vision, and consequently we want to ensure all our young people are treated with dignity and respect. The period

equity initiative supports us to achieve this vision, as giving our pupils access to period products enables them to manage menstruation without experiencing any shame or stigma.”

For more information visit <https://www.phs.co.uk>. You can also follow @phsGroup on Twitter and phs Group on LinkedIn

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About us

phs Group is the leading hygiene services provider in the UK, Ireland and Spain.

Our team of over 3,000 expert personnel provides washroom, floorcare, healthcare and a range of specialist services to over 120,000 customers ranging from large single sites, to multi-national restaurant chains, healthcare establishments and small owner occupied shops. Wherever we're needed, we're on your doorstep.

phs provides vital workplace services to organisations which improve the well-being of employees and customer. It makes over 3.6 million visits each year, whether it's disposing of sanitary waste and nappies, installing hand dryers, soap dispensers, consumables and air purifiers or supplying floor mats to prevent slips, trips and falls. You'll also find phs working within the healthcare industry disposing of clinical, pharmaceutical and dental waste. phs services also include the provision of indoor and outdoor plants, electrical and gas compliance testing services, industrial workwear, and waste compactor and crate rental. And phs Direct supplies thousands of customers with a wide range of washroom consumables and products including cleaning materials, paper products, hand dryers, soaps, period products and vending machines which freely dispense products for those wishing to offer free products to washroom users.

What makes phs different? It's commitment to do the right thing. Through its LifeCycle Strategy, phs aim to divert up to 95% of our customers' hygiene waste away from landfill, by using sustainable disposal methods, creating power for the national grid. It's helping clean up the ocean from plastic by using ghost fishing nets to create Econyl floor mats. It has patented products which deliver significant water and cost savings. Its air purifiers help to improve employee wellbeing. And it's been campaigning to create period equality across the UK.

By using phs, organisations can make a difference to the environment and their bottom line as well as telling a good news story. It's all about doing the right thing.

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