

# HOW TO DISTRIBUTE PERIOD PRODUCTS

IN YOUR SCHOOL, COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

THE HEY GIRLS  
BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

SUMMER 2019 EDITION

Hey girls®

# HELLO FROM HEY GIRLS

This guide has been written for anyone responsible for distributing period products. We hope it is helpful for decision-makers in schools, colleges, universities and Local Authorities across the UK.

It is designed to share best practice in product distribution that is emerging in Scotland, and give you ideas for how providing free products could work in your setting. We want to support you to support your students.

We're always here to help on [education@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk) if you need anything.

Team Hey Girls X







# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Since March 2018, Hey Girls has been working closely with partner schools, colleges and universities to help distribute period products. Over the last year, we have seen some amazing examples of best practice. As free period products become more and more available, we thought it would be helpful to bring together recommendations into an easy Step-By-Step guide.

Below we outline five key steps to distributing products, illustrated by case studies of good practice:

## STEP 1

Consult with your Students

## STEP 2

Sort the Practicalities

## STEP 3

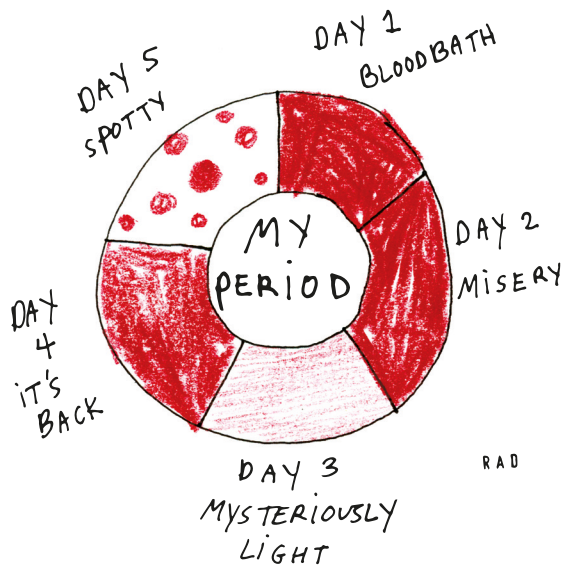
Raise Awareness

## STEP 4

Education

## STEP 5

Evaluate, Refine and Repeat



This guide is a work in progress – if you have anything you would like to add or suggest get in touch [education@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk)



# WHY THIS MATTERS

## THE PROBLEM OF PERIOD POVERTY

In 2019, there are around 14 million people in Britain living in poverty. Here at Hey Girls we know that poverty affects people in many different ways – if you're someone who has periods every month, chances are you may experience period poverty.



Period products are a necessity, but they are expensive.

Tight budgets can leave people forced to prioritise other purchases, leaving them without the right period products, without enough period products, or without any period products at all. We've heard stories of women forced to use socks, newspaper, toilet roll, or even bread to absorb their period. Many will miss out on school or work, or struggle to concentrate fully.

The fact that period poverty affects women in the UK shocks many people. The problem is more hidden than in other countries, but that doesn't make it less real. In 2018, Plan International UK research found that period poverty affects 1 in 10 schoolgirls across the UK. In Scotland, the number is thought to be closer to 1 in 4. More research is needed to understand exactly what is happening, but period poverty is definitely a real problem for many people.

As a society, we treat periods as very shameful – something that must be kept secret. Bleeding through your clothes is embarrassing. Buying tampons is embarrassing. Asking for tampons can be embarrassing. This can make the experience of period poverty more difficult and more isolating than other forms of poverty.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

Since 2015, campaigns to address period poverty have gained momentum, and UK governments are now stepping in to solve the problem. Since August 2018, all schools, colleges, and universities in Scotland have had funding to provide free products for all students. The Scottish Government is also supporting communities by funding free products for charities (distributed through FareShare) and providing funding for free products in all public buildings (libraries, community centres etc.). In 2019, the Welsh Government and the Department for Education in England plan to follow suit, providing products in schools. Many colleges and universities across the UK are funding free products through student union or equalities budgets.

## WHY PROVIDING FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS IS IMPORTANT

Increasing access to period products is really important. Free products can keep young people in school, improve concentration, encourage participation in sport, and support good health. They prevent people having to make dehumanising choices – to wear the wrong product, or a worse quality product, or to wear a product for longer than is hygienic or safe. At Hey Girls we believe that access to period products is a right, not a privilege. No one should have to choose between bleeding on their trousers and eating lunch.

Free products not only help end period poverty, they promote equality. It is overwhelmingly women and girls who have to bear the cost for a biological process that they cannot control.

As well as supporting young people on low-incomes, free period products give peace of mind to everyone who has periods. The knowledge that products are there in case you forget them, or start unexpectedly, can be very reassuring. Providing free products ensures all people can menstruate with dignity.












At Hey Girls we  
believe that  
access to  
period products  
is a right, not a  
privilege.










# EXISTING GUIDELINES

In December 2017, the Coalition of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) pulled together the guiding principles for the delivery of free product provision in Scotland.

They are a helpful starting point for thinking about distribution:

-  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 regardless of whether it is term time or 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/non-binary individuals, and that language is gender neutral. The roll out of gender-neutral toilets should also be taken account of.
-  Awareness raising and education to both promote the 'offer' and change cultural norms.

Hey Girls supports these guiding principles, and in consultation with schools has some further practical suggestions for best practice:

-  Engage with students early – either through an existing student body, or by forming a new steering group. Ideally allow students to lead the roll out of provision.
-  Inform all students about the project (not just girls).
-  Inform parents and all staff of the project.
-  Ensure barrier free provision – i.e. allow students to help themselves freely to the products they need in the quantities they need them. **Do not** require students to ask staff for products.
-  Ensure access can be discreet – ideally avoid vending machines, and other mechanisms that require students to access products in the public area of toilets. Or, work to destigmatise public access (see Stirling High School example below).
-  Ensure access across your site so students don't have to walk too far to collect products.
-  Complement free product provision with education about menstruation – plan to provide at least one session per year (and ideally two) to all students. Consider opportunities for peer-led learning.

# STEP 1: CONSULT WITH YOUR STUDENTS

We know that periods can be difficult to talk about. For a long time, periods have been considered shameful and best kept secret. While the main aim of providing free period products is addressing period poverty, it is also an amazing opportunity to unpick some of the ancient myths and taboos surrounding menstruation.

Consult with your student body early on, and ideally form a steering group to lead the project moving forwards.

Even if you are already providing products, it is worth bringing together students to consider how to improve provision.

## WHY YOU SHOULD TALK TO YOUR STUDENTS:

- 1)** This provision is for them. They are best placed to say which products they would like to see, how they would like them distributed, and where they should access them.
- 2)** Student toilets are political spaces, each with unique social dynamics. Factors like location and layout can make students feel more or less comfortable in certain toilets. Young people are best placed to understand these dynamics. Listening to them can reveal hidden barriers to access.
- 3)** This project creates great leadership opportunities for young people. Creating a student steering group empowers young people, and ensures student buy-in.
- 4)** If students are invested in the project then they are more likely to support it. Engaged groups of young people monitor each other, and prevent abuse and vandalism.





ROSSHALL  
ACADEMY

## WHAT YOU HEAR WHEN YOU LISTEN:

Young people in schools do not want to ask staff for products – in the classroom, in the school office, in pastoral care. It is embarrassing.

Young people can find using the toilet at school embarrassing – many will avoid going to the toilet altogether. Changing a pad can be noisy, and girls in neighbouring stalls might hear the rustling, and know you're on.

Locking toilet doors during lesson times prevents girls from changing their period products in privacy.

Young people often feel unable to collect products from communal sinks and public areas for fear someone sees them take one.

Sometimes products are stocked in some toilets but not others, creating a long walk to fetch products from the opposite side of the school site.

# STEP 1 IN ACTION

## STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL

Location: Stirling

Number of Students: 945

Lead Teacher: Vicki Wilson

Contact: 01786 472451

Stirling High School was nominated as the pilot school for Stirling Council to test the roll out of free provision. In May and June 2018, the school engaged with students to determine the best method to distribute period products. Two student voice groups were formed – one for lower and one for upper school girls. Students decided how to implement the roll out of free products. The group was initially dubbed the 'Period Posse' but later adopted 'Pedro the Panda' as their mascot and became the 'Panda Posse'. Pedro is gender neutral to raise awareness of the fact that not everyone who has a period identifies as female.

The steering group has grown to include new members – including many male students.



Product provision was launched in assemblies, and accompanied by a high-profile poster campaign using the panda logo. A whole school approach was taken, with a focus on destigmatising periods and making access fun. Surveys distributed before and after the pilot found that 84% of students felt more comfortable talking about periods after the pilot. The project created strong leadership opportunities for pupils, who have grown in confidence – both discussing periods and in general.



Products were placed in drawered storage units in all female toilets, as well as PE changing rooms, in pupil support offices, and in a named classroom on each corridor. Although the drawered units are in the public part of the bathroom, strong work has been done to destigmatise access in this area. As the drawers are also stocked with wipes, cotton pads, cotton buds, bobbles, deodorant, body spray, nail files, and tissues, they are easier for young people to access.

The Panda Posse also ran stalls during lunchbreaks in the run up to the summer break reminding students to collect supplies for the 'holiday period'.



## STEP 2: SORT THE PRACTICALITIES

### HOW TO BUY PRODUCTS

Different public bodies have different procurement frameworks and choose to buy period products using different models. Some procure centrally for all schools in the Local Authority. Others devolve procurement to each school. It's worth bearing in mind that there is a high mark-up + VAT on period products sold in stores. So, if you devolve purchase to individual schools, make sure they're not paying retail price in their local supermarket! There are significant cost benefits when you purchase via a manufacturer or distributor.

Many public bodies are concerned about single use plastics and have made sustainability commitments. It is encouraging, therefore, that many are choosing to buy plastic-free ethically sourced period products. Reusable products (menstrual cups and reusable cloth pads) are more expensive per unit, but more cost effective in the long term. They are an increasingly popular part of the free product provision in Scotland.

### WHAT PRODUCTS TO BUY

Young people are most likely to start by using disposable sanitary pads, but by Secondary School, students will use a mix of products, including tampons and reusable options. At College and University level, many young people are interested in trying menstrual cups and cloth pads. In Scotland, the Scottish Government and COSLA have produced guidelines on uptake and can provide advice about quantities needed.



## WHERE TO PUT PRODUCTS

The most obvious place to put products is the female toilets. Don't forget gender-neutral toilets, disabled toilets, and PE changing rooms. Many also make products available in a Pupil Support / Pastoral Care location.

## HOW TO DISPENSE PRODUCTS

Schools, Colleges and Universities have used a variety of different methods to dispense products - from tote bags hung on the back of the cubicle door, to Tupperware boxes on the toilet basin; from wicker baskets, to custom made wall dispensers. What suits best will depend on the physical space in your toilets.



DRAWER



BAG



BASKET

Options that allow students to access products freely and without shame are preferable. Many toilets have existing vending machines - these are fine to use, but can be noisy (and therefore indiscreet).

TIP: If you're dispensing loose tampons, remember that they have a 'Best Before' date, so track stock and make sure all stock is in date. Please also ensure that information about absorbency and Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) is clearly visible at point of collection. The Scottish Government have issued guidance text for this purpose.

## HOW TO RESTOCK

This will depend on your existing facilities management. It is most likely that restocking products will fall to the janitorial team, so consult with them early to ensure buy in. Many schools have involved student leaders in checking on stock, and even assisting to restock. There are different methods for young people to inform staff if stock is running low – often this is speaking to a nominated teacher.

## COMMON FEARS

Schools and colleges tell us that they are worried that young people will misuse products – throwing wet tampons on the ceiling, blocking the toilets, and sticking pads to the mirrors.

We can't lie. This has happened. But it has mostly been minor, one-off occurrences.

All reports of misuse have happened in schools where students haven't been told about what is going on, and pads just magically appeared in the toilets one day. This is easily solved by...

EDUCATION!



## STEP 2 IN ACTION

### CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Location: Glasgow

Number of Eligible Students: 11,000

Staff Lead: Deborah Fagan

Contact: 0141 375 5176

To distribute products, the City of Glasgow College procured specially designed stainless-steel wall dispensers. Dispensers are branded with information about the free product provision, with tear-away Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) information leaflets. Loose pads and tampons are available in over 70 toilets (female, gender neutral and disabled) across the two campuses. Toilets containing products are labelled with a discreet pink blood droplet sticker – on the outer door, and on the cubicle door.



The programme launch was accompanied by an awareness raising campaign – including use of large screens around campus, information on the college website, and cards given out at induction telling students where to find products. Next year there will be a stall at Welcome Week distributing products and information for new students.

Initially the college provided pads and applicator tampons. Feedback from students was to make reusable products available, so in May 2019 the college began stocking menstrual cups and cloth pads. To launch the reusable products, the City of Glasgow College partnered with Hey Girls for the #GiveACupAGo campaign in honour of global Menstrual Hygiene Day. The team from Hey Girls held a stall in the main foyer distributing menstrual cups and providing education on how to use them. Further education is planned for the next academic year.

## STEP 3: RAISE AWARENESS

It's really important to tell young people that you're now providing free period products. This sounds obvious, but an amazing number of schools, colleges and universities skip this step – perhaps because they are too embarrassed to discuss periods, or lack the time to raise awareness.

### ASSEMBLIES

Most schools inform young people through assemblies (often female-only). This is fine, but 10 minutes is rarely enough to communicate the message properly. If you do assemblies, make sure you support this with conversations during form time as well as in curriculum time. Include all students so that male students can support their female friends and peers, rather than prevent access through teasing, or because they don't know what is going on.

### POSTERS

A great way of raising awareness of the project – sample posters are available from COSLA, or you can design your own.

### EVENTS

Many colleges and universities are using Welcome Week to inform incoming students.

### EMAILS

Make sure you tell all teaching and support staff about this project, including where products are available and how they can support young people to access them. At school level, inform parents. At college and university level, use student union emails to inform students.

### WHO TO TELL



ALL Students

ALL Teaching and Support Staff

Parents, Visitors, and the wider education community

### NOTE:

If you have bought  
high quality,  
sustainable products  
for your pupils – tell  
them!



## LANGUAGE MATTERS

### PERIOD EQUALITY, NOT PERIOD POVERTY

No one wants to be classified as poor. No one wants to be 'outed' as living in poverty or on benefits. And no one wants to be 'outed' as being on their period.

There is stigma attached to taking products and services targeted at "poor people", so if you frame this project exclusively in terms of period poverty young people may think the provision is not for them.

We know that the uptake of Free School Meals is low because young people don't want other students to know they qualify for a means-tested benefit. Young people have told us that same dynamics exist around free period products. If your school says that free period products are for poor people, then young people may be reluctant to take them, even if they need them.

## STEP 3 IN ACTION

### ST PAUL'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

Location: Glasgow

Number of Students: 880

Lead Teacher: Patricia McGregor

Contact: 0141 582 0040



St Paul's High School was nominated as one of four schools to take part in the Glasgow pilot of free period product provision from May 2018. The school first engaged with students to determine the best method to distribute period products, forming a steering group of 52 girls who decided how and where to place the products.

The provision was announced in an all-female assembly delivered by the student steering group.

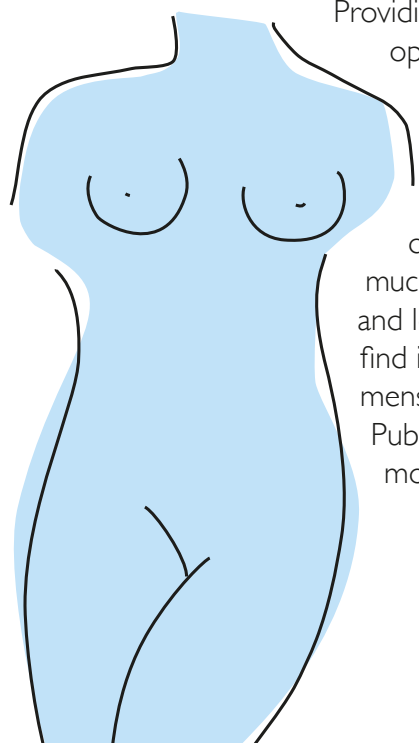
The group was heavily involved in raising awareness of the project, and even established a rota to monitor stock levels. Products are available in baskets of loose pads in each cubicle (students didn't want to access the product in the public area of the bathrooms), as well as in PE changing rooms and at Pupil Support. The project is framed in terms of period equality and dignity – not in terms of period poverty. Privacy of access, combined with young people feeling the products are for them, have meant a successful uptake. Student buy-in has also reduced vandalism – with only one instance of pads down the toilet.

In May 2019, the steering group received training to deliver period education, and have since been leading sessions with S1 students. In June, St Paul's students hosted the first Glasgow Schools conference about period poverty (see below). New students have been recruited to take over the leadership roles next academic year. The school is planning to involve male students more formally from next school year.

## STEP 4: EDUCATION

Period poverty is a problem of financial resources. But it can also be a problem of knowledge. Traditionally, young people receive one lesson about periods at the end of Primary School – often tacked onto a 'Girl Puberty' session. They may later cover menstruation in biology, but it is rarely talked about in detail at school. This means that most people know about menstruation through a mix of personal experience and rumour.

Our consultation – with young people as well as adults – reveals that this is not enough to help people feel confident about periods. Everyone needs proper, empowering, education about the female body (not just girls). In particular we need to teach about the practicalities of menstruation. We need to teach about related medical conditions (it still takes an average of 7 years to get diagnosed with endometriosis – often because the patient was never told that chronic pelvic pain was abnormal). And we need to teach that periods are natural, not dirty and not shameful.



Providing free period products is an amazing opportunity to start having conversations with students that you haven't had before. And not just students going through puberty, students of all ages. Universities and Colleges have been revisiting period education and discovering how little students know, and how much they value the opportunity to share stories and learn more about their bodies. Older students find it particularly useful to learn about reusable menstrual products (often ignored during the 'Girl Puberty' talk), and ways of managing their periods more sustainably.



Hey Girls supports the following key messages when having conversations about periods with people of all ages and genders:

- Being positive about menstruation
- Acknowledging a range of experiences
- Encouraging body confidence and body positivity
- Including everyone in the conversation (those who have periods and those who don't)
- Interrogating our attitudes towards periods
- Dismantling stigma and taboo
- Making period education fun!

CHECK OUT THE  
HEY GIRLS MY  
PERIOD EDUCATION  
PACK!



EVERYTHING YOU WANT  
TO KNOW ABOUT PERIODS

## STEP 4 IN ACTION

There are great examples of inclusive, fun, period education happening across Scotland – from school students making art out of pads and tampons, to University students designing dispensers for period products. We encourage you to get creative, and get chatting. If you need a hand, check out the Hey Girls Education programme – My Period – which was developed following close consultation with schools. It comprises a pack of 50 conversation starter cards, as well as free downloadable lesson plans and activity ideas to support learning for people of all ages from aged 8-80.

Hey Girls provides free training to staff and students in how to deliver quality period education sessions.

Get in touch: [\*\*education@heygirls.co.uk\*\*](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk).

### IN PRIMARIES

P6 and P7 girls from schools across northern Edinburgh gathered to learn about periods and period products as part of a football festival...

#### REMEMBER:

It's is never too young to learn about periods! Some students will start as young as 8. It is important that they know about periods in advance.



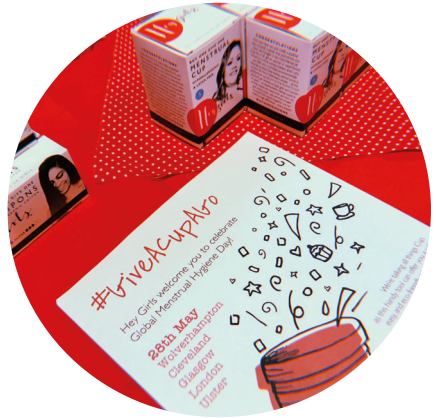
## IN SECONDARIES

A steering group from Notre Dame School in Glasgow, learn about periods using the Hey Girls My Period cards...



## IN COLLEGES

Young people learn about menstrual cups at City of Glasgow College...



## IN UNIVERSITIES

University students from across Edinburgh Napier's three campuses gather to learn about periods and period poverty at the Bloody Big Brunch...

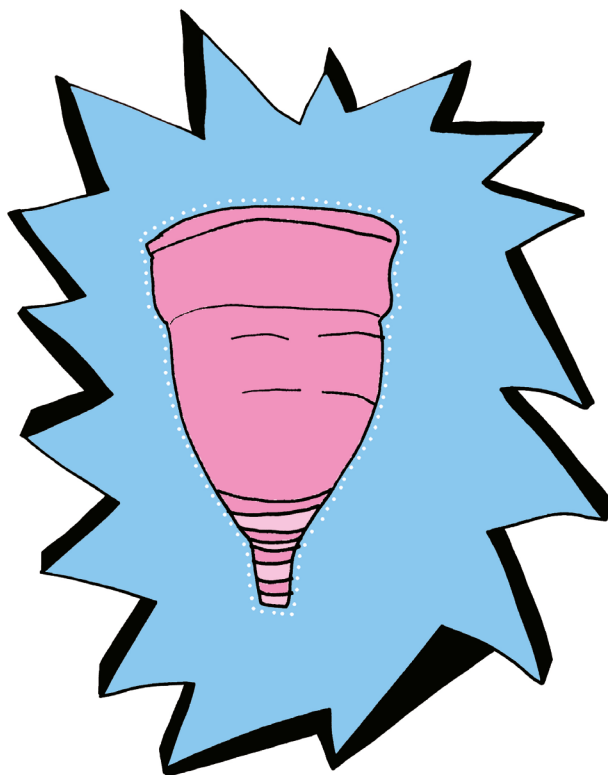


## STEP 5: EVALUATE, REFINE & REPEAT!

It's important to keep talking to your students, staff and wider community, and to build their feedback into provision moving forwards. Is the project to provide free products working? Are there any issues? What can be done to improve things?

Keep evaluating, keep talking, keep learning, and keep improving. And please, if you have any top tips, share them with other people!

Hey Girls is building a best practice network, so get in touch if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions: **[education@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk)**



## STEP 5 IN ACTION

### GLASGOW SCHOOLS PERIOD POVERTY CONFERENCE

In June 2019, student representatives from all Secondary Schools in Glasgow gathered at St Paul's High to share learning about the provision of free period products. Glasgow City Council has supported the policy strongly from the beginning and were the first Local Authority to host a conference of this type, sharing learning across the City, and putting students in the driving seat.

The student steering group from St Paul's organised the conference, to share the work they have been doing to distribute products and educate young people about menstruation. Addressing a packed assembly hall, they explained how the project has created leadership opportunities for them. They were proud of what has been achieved in St Paul's, but surprised to find that not all schools in Glasgow had been as proactive.

In January 2019, a city-wide survey by Glasgow City Council revealed that schools were at different stages of distribution. The results were presented and discussed at the conference, with students calling out schools that required young people to ask staff for products. They thought this was a major barrier for young people – as embarrassment would prevent people accessing products.

A key message from the conference was that access to free products wasn't enough. To end period poverty, schools need to work hard to break down the embarrassment that surrounds periods through education. This will make pupils feel more able to collect products from school toilets and other areas, as well as feel more confident in their bodies.



Half of the morning was dedicated to learning activities – with St Paul's students leading education activities from the Hey Girls My Period resource. Sessions included Period Bingo, a True or False activity, and opportunities for young people to explore menstrual cups and cloth pads.

Pupil and staff teams from visiting schools left full of ideas for how they could better integrate learning into the scheme. One assembly for girls, it was decided, wasn't enough. Boys needed to be educated too, and students needed more dedicated curriculum time to explore menstruation, and break down existing taboos.



Image credit:  
Glasgow Evening Times



Communications  
with parents is of  
vital importance  
especially for  
further down the  
school.

# WHAT THIS MEANS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## BANNOCKBURN PRIMARY

Location: Bannockburn  
Staff Lead: Sharon Canny

Number of Students: 600  
Contact: 01786 813274

### WHAT THEY DID:



Conversations with all female pupils P4-P7 to launch the programme.



Complemented with education about menstruation for pupils of all genders in Sexual Health and Relationships Education (SHRE).



Letters sent home to parents to inform them of provision.

### HOW PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:



Loose pads in drawers in P4-7 toilets with extra products at Pupils Support. P4- P7 girls who need products are given boxed products for the holidays.

### WHICH PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:



Loose pads and baby wipes.

### KEY LEARNINGS:



Communications with parents is of vital importance especially for further down the school.



Education with younger students may be necessary (without too many details) if toilets are shared across several years.



Close liaison between the Primary and the Secondary schools allows for a smooth transition from P7 to S1.

# WHAT THIS MEANS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

## INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Location: West Lothian

Number of Students: 1,050

Lead Teacher: Wilma Loughins

Contact: 01506 438093

### WHAT THEY DID:



Provided products in the toilets (March 2018).



Consulted with pupil council ('Learners Voices') about provision, and engagement with older pupils (Summer term 2018).



Assembly for all female pupils to inform them of the scheme and about plans for continued access through the community part of the school for the summer holidays (Summer term 2018).



Planned assemblies with new S1 students, further advertising of the scheme, and learning activities including with male students.

### HOW PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:



Initially loose pads in a bowl in the central sink area of the female toilets. Subsequently in bags hanging on the back of cubicle doors.



Products are also available from the Pupil Support Office, and from the Attendance Hub (identified by pupils as more discreet).



As a Community High School one section of Inveralmond is open to the wider community – products are available in these toilets.



The janitorial team has been responsible for restocking.

## WHICH PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:



Loose pads from March 2018; Tampons, boxed pads, reusable pads and cups introduced in September 2018.



The school also provides spare underwear.

## KEY LEARNINGS:



Important to inform the pupils of the project to ensure buy in. Initially the school rushed to get the products out there as soon as possible without consultation or information. In the early days there were instances of the produce being misused in the toilets (thrown on the floor and stuck to the walls). In response, the school worked with older pupils to design posters, and with the pupil council ('Learners Voices') to consult with pupils about the provision. Since then there has been no misuse of the products.



Engagement with the pupil council has revealed that many students are nervous about leaving lessons to go to the toilet during their period. Pupils suggested devising a scheme where students would be given a small pink card – this could be used to ask for the toilet during lessons, and also to ask for product from staff if for whatever reason stock in a toilet has run low or there is a problem. The school is planning to trial this idea in the autumn.



Further education within curriculum time is planned for next year using the My Period resource.



# WHAT THIS MEANS AT COLLEGE

## FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE

Location: Stirling, Falkirk, Alloa  
Staff Lead: Lynne McClelland

Number of Students: 8,300  
Contact: 01324 403 057

### HOW PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:



Basket of loose pads and tampons in toilets (female, gender neutral and disabled) across the three campuses.



Day cleaners hold bulk stock – some instances of students asking them for more or different products when needed.



Bags of products planned for the holiday period.

### WHICH PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:



Loose pads, applicator tampons, menstrual cups and cloth pads.

### KEY LEARNINGS:



Uptake of reusable products was slow to begin with. Planning to gather a group of volunteers to test the products to get feedback and see if wider roll-out can be encouraged.



Investigating providing education to complement free products.



Changing stock to environmentally friendly tampons and pads.



MANY PEOPLE (STAFF & STUDENTS) ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH REUSABLE PERIOD PRODUCTS. WHY NOT ORGANISE A WORKSHOP SO PEOPLE CAN GET TO KNOW THE PRODUCTS AND HOW TO USE THEM BEFORE GIVING THEM A TRY? HEY GIRLS PROVIDES TRAINING TO GET YOU STARTED.

# WHAT THIS MEANS AT UNIVERSITY

## EDINBURGH NAPIER

Location: Edinburgh

Number of Students: 20,000

Lead Staff Member: Lindsay Morgan

Contact: l.morgan@napier.ac.uk

## WHAT THEY DID:



Edinburgh Napier consulted students first, and formed a student collective – The Bloody Big Project. The team have been working hard to break down the stigma around taking period products through placing them in prominent positions, and campaigning for product to be available in all student bathrooms in the university. To further help break the taboo, the team came up with 'Period Blether' a blogging campaign that got both men and women to talk openly about periods.



Not only has Napier provided free period products, they have taken the goal of debunking the period taboo to a whole new level. A cross-departmental group of students developed a project – Bleedin' Saor – to debunk myths around menstruation. Design students partnered with Hey Girls to design dispensing equipment for menstrual products that will be rolled out in sites across the UK. Film and Media students have produced a documentary about the period positivity movement in the UK and Uganda. Events team students led the first University edition of the Bloody Big Brunch – where guests pay for food and drink (Bloody Mary's, menstrual 'cup' cakes etc.) with donations of period products.

## HOW PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:




'Menstruation Stations' have been established in key corridors around the University sites. The 'Stations' contain all kinds of period products – including menstrual cups and reusable pads – and encourage students to help themselves. Products are also available in most bathrooms – with access increasing as the project has developed.


© HEY GIRLS CIC 2019




## WHAT PRODUCTS WERE DISTRIBUTED:

 Pads, tampons, menstrual cups and reusable pads. All plastic free.

## KEY LEARNINGS:

 Student leaders have benefited greatly from leadership opportunities and gained insight into issues around period poverty and period dignity. The wider student body has found it valuable to voice their concerns and contribute towards a campaign on a topic typically considered too taboo to talk about openly.

 Napier is pleased to be able to meet its sustainability commitments while providing all types of product.





## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### BEING TRANS-INCLUSIVE

The best way to be inclusive of gender non-binary students is to ensure that all communications are available to pupils of all genders. Products should be available in all gender-neutral toilets to ensure equality of access. When undertaking education sessions, make sure to point out that not everyone who has a period identifies as female, and that not all women have periods. At the Primary and Secondary School level, staff are likely to be aware of existing sensitivities.



### IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

There are many different ways that people can find periods difficult, either physically or mentally. Having periods is a reality of life for most females of reproductive age so for anyone living with a disability it is a good idea to get support. For some the sensory experience of having a period and using products can be overwhelming, while for others the physical side of changing products could be the area that needs support.

If you are working with people with Anxiety, Autistic Spectrum Disorders or Learning Difficulties, be aware that education about periods may need to be delivered one to one. You will need to be aware of the individual's needs such as word triggers and the impact they can have. If you need any support in this area, please see [www.autismandadhd.org](http://www.autismandadhd.org).






### IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

Schools come in all shapes and sizes and what works in a big city, doesn't work for rural schools. You will know what works best in your context. In very small schools, conversations at Primary level may need to be had one to one or in small groups.

# ABOUT HEY GIRLS

Hey Girls CIC is a social enterprise on a mission to eradicate period poverty in the UK. We launched in January 2018 with a Buy One Give One model. This means that for every box of period products that we sell, we donate a box to someone who needs it via our partners (women's centres, youth groups, food banks etc.). Since we launched, we have donated over 5.2 million products to people who need them.

## OUR PRODUCTS

-  Pads (Bamboo and corn fibre, plastic and bleach free)
-  Tampons (100% organic cotton, plastic and bleach free)
-  Applicator Tampons (100% organic cotton, plastic and bleach free, sugar cane applicator)
-  Menstrual Cups (Medical grade silicone) + Cup Steriliser pots
-  Reusable Cloth Pads (Microfibre bamboo)

When a school or college buys from Hey Girls we match that purchase with a donation, effectively making products half price – this makes schools and colleges our biggest donation partners.

Hey Girls believes that alongside access to products, all young people should have access to high quality education about menstruation. We worked closely with schools and over 150 young people in focus groups to develop resources to help teachers facilitate conversations with students. We also offer free training to schools to deliver high quality education workshops that address the biological process of menstruation, as well as tackling stigma and shame.

## ANY QUESTIONS?

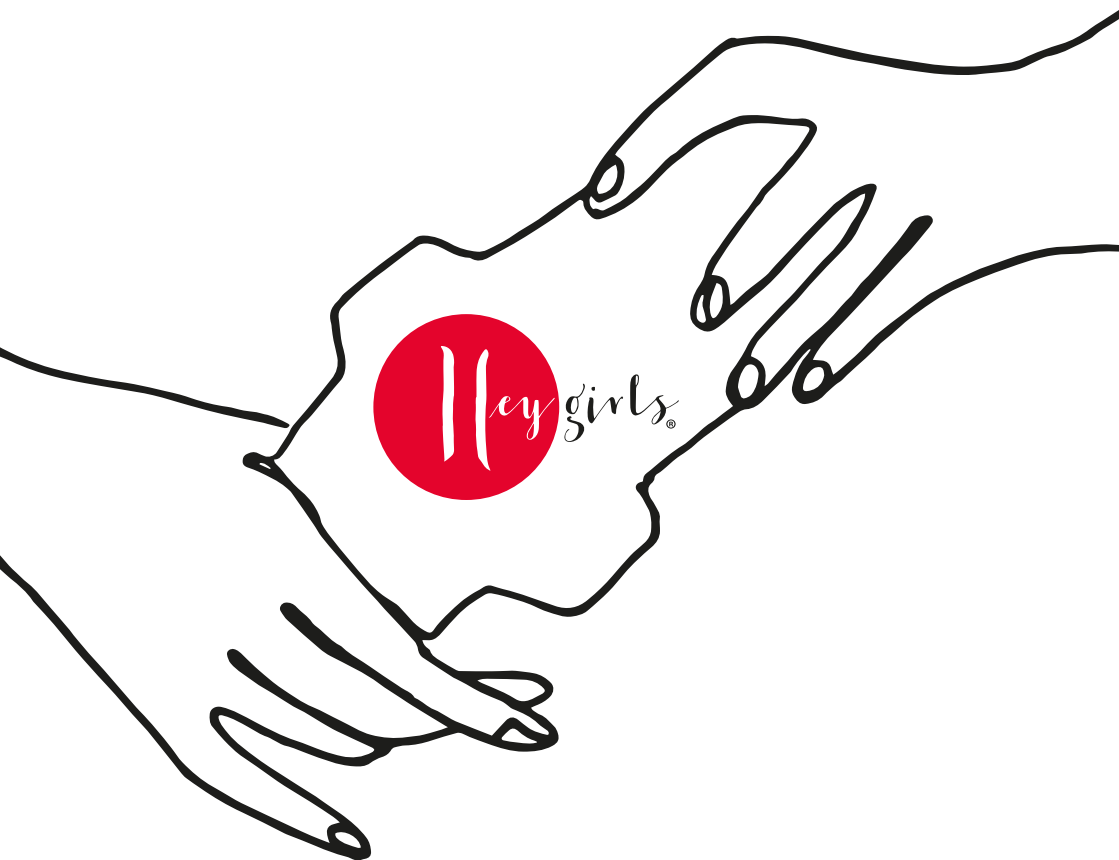
Get in touch [\*\*education@heygirls.co.uk\*\*](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk).











With special thanks to Vicki, Tricia, Sharon, Sam, Lindsay, Deborah, Maureen, Wilma, Pauline, Lynne, Jennifer, Hannah and everyone else who has made this guide possible.

For more information visit [www.heygirls.co.uk](http://www.heygirls.co.uk)  
Or email [education@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk)

@HEYGIRLSUK