

# Orkney Islands Council



**ORKNEY**  
ISLANDS COUNCIL

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

October 2022

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 24th November 2020 and gained royal assent on 12th January 2021. It is the world's first legislation to support the provision of free products for those who menstruate.

**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. Products should be provided in all Local Authority run education establishments, community venues and in publicly accessible workspaces.

**1.3** 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, which includes carrying out 1 or more public consultation(s).

**1.4** This statement sets out Orkney Island Council's commitment to free product provision and details current and future provision in education facilities and the wider community.

## **2. Our Commitment**

**2.1** Orkney Islands Council is committed to the provision of free products for those who may need to access them. Provision is to be made available for all residents and visitors to the County for work or leisure. Scottish Government funding has been made available to facilitate this provision.

**2.2** We will ensure that:

- All products are free of charge and easy to obtain;
- A reasonable choice of both single use and reusable products are offered in most public settings, and specifically targeted within Education facilities;
- Provision will be available in the community, as well as in Education facilities;
- Provision will be available on Ferries;
- Provision will be available via Orkney Food Bank
- Due consideration is given to respect and dignity in our approach;
- Due consideration is given to those who may face additional barriers, including those who are BME, LGBTQ, disabled, homeless, victims of domestic abuse etc;
- Public consultation(s) and community engagement is carried out to inform our provision;
- What products are available and where these can be accessed is communicated efficiently to our residents and visitors; and
- Provision will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

### **3. Consultation**

**3.1** Orkney Community Planning Partnership consulted with our schools and school pupils in August 2019. Also included was our Youth Café and their LGBTQ group. The consultation was open to all regardless of gender, age or menstruating status.

**3.2** Further consultation is being considered and is being planned for completion in 2023/24.

### **4. Community-based Provision**

**4.1** Orkney Islands Council worked together with community planning partners via The Orkney Partnership to implement this scheme. We received particular support from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector via Voluntary Action Orkney which was of great value and much appreciated.

**4.2** Free access to period products has been set up in over 60 locations across the County. and include libraries, museums, sports centres and community hubs, as well as some local police stations and Health and Social Care buildings. These sites are mainly kept stocked by OIC staff, Partner staff or local volunteers.

**4.3.** In February 2020 provision was expanded to include Ferry vessels, which carry over 300,000 passengers a year.

**4.4** Products are now supplied by the social enterprise Hey Girls. The range of products available include single use pads and tampons in various sizes and absorbencies to accommodate differing needs and preferences. In some venues, reusable items such as period pants, period cups and reusable pads are available. The type of products available is regularly reviewed to meet the needs and wants of the community, and taking account of any feedback. Feedback is very infrequent.

**4.5** Products are available for collection by anyone who needs them, or by anyone collecting on behalf of another person. Products are normally available within all toilet facilities of a building, meaning that anyone who wishes to access products can do so without having to ask a member of staff and in a way that respects their dignity. A person may take as many products as required.

**4.6** Information on stocked venues can be accessed on the Orkney Islands Council website. This includes a map of all locations where free period products can be accessed, and also how anyone can order a supply of free period products online. This is especially useful for anyone who lives away from the Orkney Mainland or linked Isles and so may not be able to access as many sites on a regular basis. This is the link on our website: [Free Period Products \(orkney.gov.uk\)](https://www.orkney.gov.uk/free-period-products)

## **5. Education Facilities Provision**

**5.1** Orkney Islands Council provides free products in all primary and secondary school establishments.

**5.2** Products are available in a way which respects the dignity of the pupil and can be accessed without having to ask a teacher.

**5.3** Products are available during term time in at least one building of the school which is normally used by pupils. For most schools, products will be located within the toilet facilities. Other schools may have products available in multiple locations.

**5.4** Pupils have been consulted with to ensure the products available are appropriate to their needs and wants. A reasonable choice will be available to pupils to ensure their needs can be adequately met whilst attending school. This will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

**5.5** Orkney Islands Council provides ongoing support to its education establishments to ensure every pupil in Orkney who requires products is able to easily obtain them.

## **6. Communication**

**6.1** Orkney Islands Council endeavours to communicate with its pupils and the wider community as to the provision of free products on an ongoing basis.

**6.2** We make use of various communication channels including, but not limited to, social media, website, The Orcadian and BBC Radio Orkney to inform its residents and visitors what products are available and where they are located. There has been very good and supportive coverage throughout the life of this scheme.

**6.3** Orkney Islands Council shares any further engagement via above mentioned communication channels.

## **7. Additional / Future Provision**

**7.1** Orkney Islands Council recognises the importance of Period Dignity for all. We are not only committed to meeting all statutory obligations, but also to exploring additional provision.

**7.2** We will continue to supply local third sector organisations, through Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) with products to support them in addressing access barriers for the most vulnerable in our community.

**7.3** Orkney Islands Council will continue to work closely with our Community Planning Partners and others to expand product provision as opportunities arise.

**7.4** We will continue to monitor, evaluate and build on service provision to ensure Orkney remains a Period Friendly County where everyone has easy access to products appropriate to their needs.