

**Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill:**
**Response from The Young Women's Movement**

5 November 2019

**The Bill has been brought forward partly in response to concerns about "period poverty" – difficulty in being able to afford period products.**

The Young Women's Movement run a leadership programme called Young Women Lead which is for 14-30 year old women in Scotland. The programme is run in partnership with the Scottish Parliament and has ran for 2 years. Our most recent report produced by Young Women Lead in June 2019 was on the participation of young women and girls in sport. This report looked at a variety of different barriers to participation, including puberty.

The report found that puberty has three main factors that impact on young women's participation, including that:

*A lack of knowledge and support about how to deal with physical activity, health issues that impact women, and the changes of puberty. For example, period products, supportive clothing, pre-menstrual tension symptoms means young women feel unsupported.*

The committee conclusion has the following recommendation

*We recognise that period poverty can act as a barrier to participation in sport. We support plans for free period products to be made available in schools and elsewhere to combat period poverty. We would encourage policy makers to make provision for free products in gyms and sports clubs, as well as schools and educational establishments, to allow participation of young women.*

Period poverty is a serious issue in Scotland, and the impact it can have on sport is just one small element of the issue. We know from reports from Girlguiding UK that period poverty has severe implications on both education and health. Our Glasgow centre provides free sanitary products to all service users through Hey Girls.

**Do you support the overall aim of the Bill - that no one in Scotland should have to pay for period products and that this should be set out in law?**

We fully support this Bill.

**The Scottish Government already has a scheme for free period products across schools, colleges and universities. Some public bodies also provide free products voluntarily. Do you have any experience of such schemes? If so, do they seem to you to be effective?**

N/A

**The Bill would allow the Scottish Government to require organisations other than schools and colleges to provide free period products. Do you support this? If so, what other organisations should be legally made to provide free products?**

We absolutely support this. We believe that gyms and sports club should also provide free period products, and they should be available in community centres, and other local authority buildings.

**The Bill requires the setting up of a scheme for making free period products available. Do you have any views on what elements a scheme should include? In answering this question, you might want to take account of factors such as the importance of privacy, accessibility, value for money and the environment.**

It is important that period products should be available in all bathrooms, male, female, disabled and gender neutral. People who have periods use all of these facilities, so we must ensure it is inclusive for all. It would also be good to have an option for more environmentally friendly period products, such as menstrual cups, available. Perhaps as part of a subscription scheme, such as free condoms using the C-Card, as this will have higher costs than tampons and sanitary pads.

**Do you have any other comments you wish to make about the Bill?**

N/A