



FULL COUNCIL - INFORMATION REPORT

Date Written	7 th October 2020
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Service Area	Learning
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non-Exempt
Committee Date	4 th November 2020

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Period Dignity

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on how the grant from the Welsh Government for 'Period Dignity' has been used and outlines plans for the future spend of this money.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There has been recognition by Welsh Government that it is unacceptable that some young females cannot afford to buy essential feminine hygiene products when they need them, and as such, Welsh Government allocated funding to address this inequality.
- 2.2 In the financial year 2019/20 Welsh Government allocated a total grant spend of £43,847. However, this was then reduced by approximately 50% due to COVID 19. This meant that there was a capital grant of £21,924 for Merthyr Tydfil for the maintenance and installation of equipment, and for the purchase of sanitary products for female pupils in school. There was also a revenue grant to the value of £4,376 for maintaining sanitary ware stock in schools. This gave us a total grant spend of £26,300.

3.0 EVALUATION OF CURRENT PRACTICE

- 3.1 As a result of using the grant all schools have been provided with vending machines stocked with sanitary products, which are free to female pupils. Through the grant a three-year maintenance contract has been provided and supplies have been re-stocked. This means that pupils can access these products in the privacy of the toilets without having to notify a staff member.

- 3.2 In April this year, Welsh Government announced £2.3 million funding to be allocated to Local Authorities in Wales for the coming year to provide period products in schools. The funding criteria stipulated that 50% of this funding should be used to purchase eco-friendly period products (i.e. reusable products and/or plastic free products) to allow maximum choice for the users.
- 3.3 There are clear benefits to providing an option of reusable period products. Primarily, it provides girls with choice about how to manage their periods. There is also an environmental benefit. Disposable sanitary products can contain up to 90% plastic and can make a notable contribution to our plastic litter problem. Providing the option of using reusable products can help to address the impact that disposable products are having on our environment and support the action we are taking to reduce the volume of single use plastics. Encouraging a move away from disposable options towards reusable and plastic free options is a relatively small measure, but which could have an important environmental impact. Furthermore, the availability of reusable products can have a positive impact on tackling period poverty as their use saves money in the longer term.
- 3.4 To support our young females in their choices we arranged for an Environmentalist Campaigner to visit some of our schools earlier this year to speak with some of our female learners. The groups discussed the benefits of using eco-friendly products, how the products can be used, their maintenance, and what kind of information should be readily available in the toilets. Education in this area is crucial to enable the increased usage of these eco-friendly products.
- 3.5 There is a broad range of information online with regards to the eco-friendly sanitary products that are available and many come with guidance, while some also have support helplines. Welsh Government in conjunction with Eco Schools and Keep Wales Tidy have provided resources for schools which will promote open discussion with young people and aim to help break down the social stigma and taboos around the subject. These resources are available on Hwb, the Digital Learning for Wales website, to which all schools have access. They can be accessed on Hwb <https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/686e315c-2f6c-428e-8425-2740bcf3da74/en>

In addition to this, the supplier of the re-useable products that have been purchased for our schools, has provided all schools with leaflets to share and posters to display.

- 3.6 The Welsh Government is setting up a cross-Government group which will look at how the funding has been allocated and spent and where any improvements need to be made as well as options for sustainable provision of products.
- 3.7 In addition to providing eco-products for schools, these have been provided to 8 Youth Service Community venues and the Youth Forum. Where required during the spring lockdown, they were also delivered to some Children Looked After (CLA), Children With Disabilities (CWD), those eligible for Free School Meals (eFSMs) and to our English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Gypsy Traveller (GT) communities.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is a requirement in the terms and conditions of the funding for 2020/21 that 50% of the grant be spent on re-usable products. To date we have spent 38% on such products. Further expenditure for the cost of sanitary products, including more environmentally friendly products, will be met by the funding allocation from Welsh Government for the financial year 2020/21, ensuring that we reach this target.

5.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	4 of 4	0 of 4	0 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)	9 of 10	0 of 10	1 of 10
4. Biodiversity	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1

Summary:

The main positive impacts against:

- The **Well-being Objectives** are that the proposal would provide young female pupils with free sanitary products. This would allow for improved wellbeing, dignity and outcomes.
- The **Sustainable Development Principles** are that the proposal would safeguard the long-term health and educational needs of young females. The proposal seeks the engagement of young females and outside providers.
- The **Protected Characteristics** and **Welsh language** are that the proposal will provide support for all young females with protected characteristics and will promote the use of the Welsh language where appropriate.
- **Biodiversity** are that the proposal would encourage awareness raising and understanding about becoming ethical and responsible citizens.

There are no negative impacts as a result of this proposal.

SUE WALKER
CHIEF OFFICER (LEARNING)

COUNCILLOR LISA MYTTON
CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Period poverty: capital funding allocation for 2020/21	April 2020	Education and Accountancy
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.