

# Period Products

Commented [WL1]: @WILSON, Jo Comments have been addressed below 😊

## Core Briefing Pack

October\_ 2022

This briefing pack is designed for both central drafters and policy teams **using the contents page/navigation bar to find the information you need.** Drafting notes are included throughout to support individuals with the various questions we answer. Feedback is always welcome and should you find any errors / omissions please contact Kay Nicholls, Jo Wilson or Lauren Walker.

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## GENERAL OVERVIEW

### TOP LINES:

The period product scheme is available to all state-maintained schools and 16 to 19 education organisations in England. It provides free period products to girls and women who need them in their place of study. The scheme is available for organisations to order until July 2024.

To make sure organisations have access to a wide range of period products in the most cost-effective and efficient way, we have a contract with Personnel Hygiene Services Limited (phs). This allows organisations to order period products and have them delivered when they need them.

No-one should be held back from accessing education due to their period, which is why we launched the Period Products Scheme to provide learners with period products when they need them. Since its launch in January 2020, [94% of secondary schools and 90% post-16 organisations in England now provide free period products to pupils](#). There has been a surge in environmentally friendly products being ordered, with figures up from under a third of schools and colleges in 2020 to almost half in 2021. We're also encouraging more primary schools to order products – 61% have ordered so far.

### DATA / FIGURES

#### **Period products scheme: management information**

We have published an [ad-hoc notice](#) which provides information on the Department for Education's scheme to provide free period products to schools and colleges in England. It presents data from January 2022 to July 2022 but also includes some statistics covering the whole scheme since its introduction on 20 January 2020. Here is a summary of the latest data that we hold:

#### **Overview of period products take-up, 2020-2022**

15,060 organisations had made at least one order since the scheme began in January 2020. This represents 74% of the organisations that were eligible in 2022. 97% of secondary schools and 92% of post 16 organisations had ordered since the scheme began. The equivalent figure for primary schools was lower (68%), probably because they have few girls who are menstruating.

#### **Take-up of the scheme, 2022**

7,473 organisations made an order between January 2022 and July 2022 (when the first contract ended). This represents 37% of all eligible organisations. 15,534 orders were placed during 2022. The total value of orders placed between January and July 2022 was £2,862,000 which was 87% of the available budget for those organisations that ordered and 72% of the total budget for all organisations in the scheme.

### **Variation by characteristics of organisation, 2022**

In 2022, post 16 organisations and secondary schools were most likely to have ordered (78% and 80% respectively). Primary schools were least likely to have ordered (26%). Larger organisations and those with higher levels of disadvantage were more likely to have ordered. These patterns are similar to those seen in previous years.

### **Percentage of spend cap spent, 2022**

Organisations who ordered in 2022 spent an average of 87% of their spend cap. The majority (82%) of organisations who ordered in 2022 had spent over 90% of their spend cap. There was little difference in the proportion of the spend cap spent by organisation type, spend cap or levels of disadvantage.

### **Types of products ordered, 2022**

Between January and July 2022, almost all organisations who had ordered bought pads and almost half bought tampons. Pads accounted for 63% of all packets ordered and tampons accounted for 23%. Period underwear was introduced in May 2022 and accounted for 13% of all packets ordered in 2022. 44% of organisations ordered environmentally friendly or reusable products and 94% also bought standard products. Just under half (49%) of all packets ordered in 2022 were environmentally friendly or reusable products.

## **Q&A**

### **General Q&A**

#### **What is the scheme?**

The government is continuing to fully fund access to free period products in schools and colleges across England, for learners that need them. This scheme enables all learners to participate fully in education by making period products available as and when they are needed. Organisations can order period products online from the supplier, phs.

#### **Why has this scheme been introduced?**

Evidence in 2018 suggested that 14% of female college students and 6% of female school pupils had been unable to access period products in the last 12 months due to affordability. The department launched a scheme in 2020 which provides access to free period products to learners in organisations. This scheme was continued in 2021 and has now been extended until the end of the 23/24 academic year. This ensures that no one has their education disrupted by a lack of access to period products and supports the equality, dignity and rights for all learners that have periods.

#### **What support is available for organisations looking to implement this scheme?**

The Department for Education has [published guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england) for the scheme, which is available on gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england> This provides more information about the scheme and how to place an order for products.

**Why are schools and colleges not instructed to keep toilets open at all times for learners? (who need to go urgently, if they are caught out on their period)**

School leaders have autonomy in how they run and operate schools. We would expect them to have arrangements in place to allow learners to use facilities when they need them, protecting their dignity.

The government guidance for the period product scheme in schools and colleges actively encourages school leaders to engage with their learners in how best to operate the scheme, allowing easy access to free period products for those that need them.

**What information/reporting do organisations need to provide to DfE?**

Organisations are not expected to report to the Department regarding any part of the scheme. Organisations may wish to monitor take-up for their own records and may find this particularly helpful during the initial bedding in of the scheme.

The take-up of the scheme will be monitored by phs, and the information will be made available to the department on a regular basis. phs will also use this information to identify organisations that have not accessed the scheme and may contact them proactively.

Management information about the scheme will be published periodically. The last publication can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-scheme-management-information> [ADD LINK](#)

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**What happens when the contract ends?**

The current contract is due to end in July 2024. The Department will make further announcements on the scheme in due course.

**Why does the scheme refer to ‘period products’ and not ‘sanitary products’?**

Our research has shown that some words associated with periods may discourage learners from using the products and cause embarrassment.

When talking about periods or promoting the scheme, we avoid using words most negatively associated with periods like:

sanitary (such as sanitary product) - learners may associate this word with uncleanliness

hygiene - this could imply that periods are in some way unclean

poverty - using language associated with poverty may discourage learners from using these products

affordability - using this word or 'struggling' may imply that the products are only available for learners who cannot purchase the products themselves

shame - this may discourage openness and reinforce the idea of stigma and embarrassment

#### [Access to School Toilets \(School Building Specification only - Ian Naylor/Duncan Craig\)](#)

The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 (SPR) and [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014 \(ISS\)](#) state that schools must provide toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils. However, neither the SPR or ISS set out how schools should provide access to these facilities or dictate the number of toilets a school must maintain.

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Schools are autonomous institutions, run by a governing body, with day-to-day operational decisions like this managed by the headteacher. So long as a school provides pupils with toilet facilities and reasonable access to these, the department has no grounds to intervene.

If you think your child's school is not providing reasonable access to the toilet facilities, the department may be able to intervene. However, before we can take any action, we must allow schools the opportunity to resolve complaints locally. It is unclear from the information provided whether you have raised your concerns regarding access to toilet facilities as a complaint with the school, and if you have, whether you have completed the school's complaints procedure.

#### [Managing school complaints \(Pam Kearns\)](#)

Any concerns about a school's procedures should be raised directly with the school in question in the first instance, as they will be best placed to offer

[information and advice regarding their decisions.](#)

[Where individuals are not satisfied with the outcome of informal discussions, they may wish to make a formal complaint via the school's complaints procedure. All schools must have a complaint procedure and provide it upon request. It should explain how you can progress the complaint if you remain dissatisfied with the school's response. More information about school complaints can be found at:](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

#### **Toilet access for pupils on their period.**

[We would expect schools to have arrangements in place to protect the dignity of pupils on their period and allow them to use facilities when they need them, especially if a pupil needs to use facilities urgently.](#)

## **ORGANISATIONS/LEARNERS IN SCOPE**

### **Which organisations are in scope for the scheme?**

Access to free period products will be available for all state-maintained schools and 16-19 education organisations in England. This includes all state-maintained primary and secondary schools, including academies and free schools, all state-maintained middle/all through schools, all general hospital schools, special schools, academies and free schools, all alternative provision organisations, including pupil referral units and all university technical colleges and studio schools.

The term '16-19 organisations' in this instance includes schools, academies, further education (FE) colleges, sixth-form colleges, training providers, specialist independent providers and local authorities.

### **Which learners are in scope for the scheme?**

This scheme is in place to ensure that no learner misses out on education due to their period. Organisations should have products available, should learners need them. Some examples of 'need' include cases where girls or women have forgotten their products, cannot afford products or have come on their period unexpectedly.

Learners under 19 in the current academic year may receive support from the scheme. Those aged 19 or over are only eligible for support if they are continuing on a study programme, they began their study programme aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Women aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications

are not eligible for support. Apprentices are not eligible for support from the scheme.

### **Why are you making period products available to primary schools? How is that good value for money?**

It is estimated that 9.5% of 11-year-old girls in the UK have started their periods, according to the Millennium Cohort Study data. Therefore, it is extremely important that all learners, particularly younger learners, feel well supported by schools to manage their periods in a straightforward and non-stigmatising way. For these reasons, the department extended the scope of the scheme to cover all state-funded primary schools.

### **Why aren't you funding products in HE institutions?**

[Higher Education institutions are not eligible for the period products scheme unless they are offering FE courses to girls aged 16 to 19 funded by the Department for Education \(DfE\). This does not appear to be the case for your organisation and so you will not be eligible for the scheme. Please contact us again with more information if you believe that you do meet the above criteria and we can look into this further.](#)

[Higher Education providers are autonomous bodies and it is up to them how they meet their students' needs. This can include providing discretionary financial support where required.](#)

### **Why aren't you funding apprentices?**

Apprentices are not in scope for the scheme on the basis that they are employed. This is in line with the other financial support available for this age group of students, for example, the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

### **Why aren't you funding independent schools?**

Independent schools, as businesses and/or charities, are self-financing. We would expect them to make their own arrangements to ensure that pupils have access to products that they need.

[Do you provide funding to MOD schools overseas?](#)

### **Are Home Educated learners eligible for this scheme?**

Access to the free period products will be available for state-funded schools and 16-19 education organisations in England. This includes state-funded primary and secondary schools, including academies and free schools,



state-funded middle/through schools, general hospital schools, special schools, academies and free schools, alternative provision organisations, including pupil referral units and university technical colleges and studio schools.

The government's policy is that parents who take on the task of educating their child at home also take on financial responsibility for the cost of doing so.

## FUNDING

### How much money do organisations have to spend on this scheme?

Every organisation will be set an individual spend cap for the academic year September 2022- July 2023. The spend cap is based on an assumption that 35% of learners in the organisation, who are likely to have started their periods will exclusively use funded products on the days they attend school or college. This assumption is based on a similar scheme in Scotland.

~~Our spend caps are based on pupil numbers reported in the Spring 2022 School Census for organisations that complete it and 2021-22 pupil numbers from the ILR for those that don't. Our spend caps are based on pupil numbers reported in the Spring 2022 School Census for organisations that complete it and DfE forecasts of 2020-21 pupil numbers, multiplied by the % female from 2019-20 for those that don't.~~

We have set the minimum spend cap at £20 to ensure that even organisations with very small numbers of learners who are likely to have started their periods (e.g. small primary schools) can order and provide a range of products.

Spend caps vary significantly between organisations based on pupil numbers, ranging from £20 for a very small school to £2000 for a ~~very~~ large college.

We recognise that demand might vary across organisations for different reasons, which is why we introduced a demand led scheme based on pupil numbers. It would be wrong for us to choose and deliver products on behalf of schools and colleges – and could lead to waste.

Further information on this is provided in the [scheme's guidance](#).

### Will unspent funds from Jan- Jun 2022 roll-over into September 2022?

Every organisation will be set a new, individual spend cap on 8 September 2022. to cover the academic year. The spend cap is based on an assumption that 35% of learners in the organisation, who are likely to have started their periods will exclusively use funded products on the days they attend school or college. In reality we know take up will vary. This mirrors our approach in 2020,2021 and early in 2022.

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The Department for Education will continue to keep the scheme under close review to monitor use and up-take and user satisfaction.

[if pushed] 2020 spend caps were based on maximum estimated take-up across the year, and organisations were instructed to use this budget between January and December 2020. The same principle was applied in 2021. Organisations will receive a new spend cap in September 2022 to cover the new academic year to July 2023. .

#### **Will organisations receive less funding because of poor take-up in 2021/2022?**

No. Every organisation will be set a new, individual spend cap for 2022. The spend cap is based on an assumption that 35% of learners in the organisation, who are likely to have started their periods will exclusively use funded products on the days they attend school or college. This mirrors our approach in 2020 and 2021.

#### **What about VAT on period products?**

The ~~Government has~~Government has made clear that a zero rate of VAT has applied on period products (pads, towels, liners and tampons) since 1 January 2021, the end of the Implementation Period following the UK's exit from the EU. Period Pants do however attract VAT.

#### **How have you determined the number of estimated menstruating learners in a primary school?**

We have based estimates of need in individual learning organisations on the likelihood of learners having started their periods. Research suggests that a very small minority of children aged 9 or under will have started their periods, therefore we are limiting access to the scheme to organisations that have learners in year 5 or above enrolled [if needed: to ensure the scheme delivers value for money].

#### **Can organisations top up their funds on the system?**

No, organisations will not be able to top up their funds on the phs system. For any specific questions on spend caps, please refer to Department for Education via the contact DfE page at [www.gov.uk/contact-dfe](https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe).

#### **We have run out of money. How do we get more?**

The spend cap is based on an assumption that 35% of learners in the organisation, who are likely to have started their periods will exclusively use funded products on the days they attend school or college. To ensure consistency and equity, individual top-ups will not be available. For organisations who are finding their spend caps not sufficient, we would welcome a discussion with DfE as to how you are using your allocated funds.

### **Why has our spend cap changed?**

We regularly review the spend caps that we provide to organisations and the budgets that are available.

We have raised the minimum spend cap to £20 to ensure that even organisations with very small numbers of learners who are likely to have started their periods can order and provide a range of products

Spend caps range from £20 for the smallest schools right up to ~~£XXXX~~ £8000 for the largest college.

### **Why are products more expensive now? Why can we buy less with our budget?**

A new contract was awarded to PHS in July 2022 following a competitive procurement.

Due to inflationary pressures, some product prices have risen. Where possible we have increased the spend cap to organisations to ensure they can still buy the same products.

Some products have also changed package sizing. Our most popular product now comes in a larger package meaning that the price per package has increased, but now organisations will be able to receive a similar amount of products. ~~more individual products within the package for the same money.~~

### **We would prefer to spend our funding on X (not period products). Can I arrange that?**

The department has procured a national contract with phs in order to supply period products to organisations. This funding is therefore only available for

the procurement of period products.

**We would prefer to spend our funding on X (other period product supplier/products). Can I arrange that?**

To ensure that all education organisations have access to a wide range of period products in the most cost-effective and efficient way, the department ran an open procurement for a national contract, which would allow organisations to order period products as required and have them delivered to their organisation. In July 2022, the department awarded the contract to Personnel Hygiene Services Ltd (phs). Period products through this government scheme are only available from phs.

**Why are you spending money on free period products, when schools don't have enough money overall?**

We are determined to create an education system that offers opportunity to everyone, no matter what their circumstances or where they live. That is why we have delivered on our promise to reform the unfair, opaque and outdated schools and high needs funding systems by introducing the national funding formula.

We are investing a further £4.7bn by 2024-25 for the core schools budget in England, over and above the Spending Review 2019 settlement for schools in 2022-23 – building on the largest cash boost for schools in a decade provided at the spending review in 2019.

The £4.7bn investment includes a further £1.6bn in 2022-23, on top of the year on year increase already announced as part of the 2019 spending round. This additional funding will help the school sector respond to the pressures we know they are facing.

The national funding formula (NFF) continues to distribute this fairly, based on the needs of schools and their pupil cohorts. We will make announcements on the breakdown of the 2023-24 and 2024-25 core school budget in due course, as well as the distribution of the additional £1.6bn of funding confirmed for 2022-23.

The additional £1.6bn of funding confirmed for 2022-23 will build on previously announced funding for schools through the National Funding Formula, in which school funding will increase by an average **2.8% per pupil**: every primary school will receive at least £4,265 per pupil, and every secondary

school at least £5,525 per pupil, delivering on the government's pledge to level up the lowest funded schools.

### **How can organisations check how much money they will have for the next year?**

The spend cap given to organisations on the 8 September will cover the rest of the academic year until July 2023. New spend caps will then be given in September 2023.

Information regarding any future funding will be provided by DfE as and when available.

## **PRODUCTS**

### **What products are available to order through the scheme?**

There is a choice of products available, including a range of pads and tampons. Organisations can also choose to order environmentally-friendly towels, reusable pads, menstrual cups, period ~~pants, and~~ pants, and non-applicator tampons. This year we have also included tights as a supplementary item based on feedback from users – this is to support learners who come onto their period unexpectedly and may need to change their underwear.

### **How do organisations decide which products to provide their learners?**

Organisations have autonomy in determining which products to provide to their learners and should refer to the DfE guidance when making these decisions. When making decisions about the most suitable products to order, staff should consider the specific needs, characteristics and preferences of all learners and engage learners in these decisions, where appropriate.

It is vital that all individual products are provided with the relevant health and safety information and that learners are made aware of the risks of improper use.

### **Why aren't all of the products environmentally friendly?**

The scheme provides a wide range of products for organisations to choose from. These include environmentally friendly tampons and pads, alongside reusable products such as menstrual cups and reusable pads and pants

Schools and colleges know their learners best and will, therefore, have the freedom to select the most suitable products for their learners, considering cost and type of product. This approach ensures that the scheme remains cost-effective and sustainable, bearing in mind the current size of the sustainable period products market. The department will be monitoring product choice closely and will continue to seek opportunities to encourage the use of sustainable products as the scheme develops.

When choosing products, girls and women will inevitably have a range of priorities including whether the product is familiar, comfortable and whether it is environmentally friendly. We are therefore offering a range of products to allow organisations and learners a choice.

In [research commissioned by the Department](#), young people felt that this scheme should prioritise the comfort of learners. We are therefore supplying a range of products so that both learner needs are met and environmentally friendly options are on offer.

**ONLY IF PUSHED:** Whilst the environment is an extremely important topic for many young people, feedback from young people suggested that in this case, they would prioritise comfort over being environmentally friendly. **[NOTE: this was taken from qualitative learner research conducted with a small sample of 62 learners].**

### **I don't want my child to have access to X product. How can I stop the organisation from providing this?**

If you have concerns about your child accessing a specific product from the range supplied, this is an issue that we encourage you to raise with your child's school or college, as each organisation will have tailored its arrangements differently.

The new Health Education curriculum for schools covers teaching about a range of menstrual products, in addition to other key facts about the menstrual cycle.

### **I want my organisation to provide X product. How do I make that happen?**

There is a choice of products available to organisations, including a range of pads and tampons, as well as environmentally-friendly towels, reusable pads, menstrual cups, period pants and non-applicator tampons. Schools and colleges are free to choose products from the range available and we encourage them to consult with pupils, parents and carers in deciding which

products to make available.

### **I'm a supplier/manufacturer, how can I make my products available through this scheme?**

To ensure that all education organisations have access to a wide range of period products in the most cost-effective and efficient way, the department ran an open procurement for a national contract, which would allow organisations to order period products as required and have them delivered to their organisation. In October 2019, the Department awarded the contract to Personnel Hygiene Services Ltd (phs). Period products through this government scheme are only available from phs.

The contract is for a range of products agreed between phs and DfE. You can find details of the products and list of suppliers on Contracts Finder, please see link here: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/8e908dee-2558-4f57-bc12-20ac78c777b2?p=1>. If you want your products and/or services to be considered for this scheme, please contact phs on 01827 255500.

### **Are these products safe?**

Each of the period products available through the scheme complies with the relevant industry standards and regulations, which can be found on the phs ordering website or by calling phs customer services on 01827 255500. Each item delivered to organisations will be provided alongside safety guidance specific to that product, and organisations must make learners aware of the risks of improper use.

## **ORDERING**

### **How can organisations order?**

A simple and easy-to-use website has been set up and contains information about the products available to order. Should organisations require alternative methods for ordering, they can consider ordering via email or telephone. Further information is provided in the [scheme's guidance](#), available on gov.uk.

### **How often/when can organisations order?**

In 2022, organisations will be able to order products from the 8 September until July 2023. Staff should consider the environment when deciding how frequently to receive deliveries, and guidance, available on gov.uk suggests delivery frequencies to support with these decisions. To keep our carbon

footprint as low as possible, organisations will have a £5 minimum spend on each order placed.

Organisations should ensure that they will be open to receive deliveries within 5 working days of ordering, and plan accordingly in regards to holiday periods if the setting will be closed during this time.

### **How much can I order?**

All organisations have a spend cap based on an assumption that 35% of learners in the organisation, who are likely to have started their periods will exclusively use funded products on the days they attend school or college. Organisations are not able to exceed that cap. Larger organisations can only order 25% of their annual spend cap at any one time. You can order any combination of products within the available budget which suits your organisation.

### **When will I get my activation email and what do I do if I haven't received it?**

You received an activation email from phs when the scheme first launched in January 2020. If your organisations did not order products through the scheme in 2020, 2021 or in 2022, you ~~should have will~~ received a new activation email by 16 September 2022. If you have not received it, please check your quarantine or "spam" emails. If you still don't have it, please call phs customer services on 01827 255500.

We have taken the majority of establishment contact information from the Get Information About Schools (GIAS) system so would encourage all schools and colleges to ensure their contact details are up to date on the system. You can do this by signing into your GIAS account at: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

### **How do new organisations register for access?**

New organisations should contact the Department for Education in the first instance.

### **Can I split my spend cap across various sites?**

Yes. A senior individual (likely to be the Head Teacher or Finance Director) may contact phs and ask for the spend cap to be divided across their sites. They will need to provide names, email addresses and full postal addresses for each site.



**Can I cancel my order?**

If an organisation wishes to cancel an order, then they should do so as soon as possible by calling phs customer services on 01827 255500. Cancellations will be accepted up to 3pm on the day before delivery.

**Will there be guidance on how to use the portal?**

Yes. A detailed user guide for the website is available in the email you will receive from phs and on the phs portal. If you are having trouble accessing the portal, please contact phs customer services on 01827 255500.

**DELIVERY****How quickly will products be delivered?**

Delivery to organisations is expected to be 5 working days (with the first day being the day after ordering). If you place your order after 6pm then it will arrive 6 working days later.

**Who needs to receive the package on-site?**

Packages must be signed for by any member of staff. The carrier will not be able to leave products at the organisation without a signature.

**We missed our delivery. How can we rearrange it?**

Please call phs direct on 01827 255500.

**Can I get the products delivered to a site that isn't the organisation's address?**

Organisations can only have products delivered to the address listed on phs' systems. If this address is incorrect or if you are a multi-site organisation, requiring deliveries to more than one site, please contact phs customer services on 01827 255500 to make the necessary changes or arrangements.

**Some of our learners study at distance. How will you get the products to them?**

This scheme is only for organisations and so it is the responsibility of the organisation to distribute products to all learners who need them. Phs can, however, make arrangements for organisations with more than one site, and these organisations should contact phs customer services on 01827 255500 to discuss this.

## **RETURNS AND COMPLAINTS**

**What do I do if the products arrive damaged?**

If all or part of the delivery is damaged on arrival, please refuse delivery of the damaged items and sign for the undamaged items (you will be signing for a "partial delivery"). You can then either complete the online customer service query form available on the order portal or contact phs customer service on 01827 255500 who will assist you in arranging a replacement.

**What should I do if I receive the wrong products?**

If organisations believe all or part of the delivery is incorrect, they should check the Order Confirmation Form. If the delivery matches the order confirmation form then you will need to accept the order, then call phs on 01827 255500 to discuss next steps. If the delivery does not match the order form then you should refuse delivery of the incorrect items (you can accept the correct items and sign for a "partial delivery" then contact phs customer services on 01827 255500.

**I am unhappy with the service from phs. How do I complain about this?**

If an organisation wishes to make a complaint regarding a product, ordering, delivery or service provided by phs then they should call phs customer services team on 01827 255500 or email [periodproducts@phs.co.uk](mailto:periodproducts@phs.co.uk). phs will respond to questions regarding orders within 24 hours, and to other queries or complaints by the end of the following business day.

If the complaint relates to Period Product Provision policy, or the spend cap for your organisation, please contact the Department for Education via the contact DfE page at [www.gov.uk/contact-dfe](https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe).

## **EDUCATION AND ACCESS**

The new Health Education curriculum, which became compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools in England from September 2020 sets out in the statutory guidance that both boys and girls should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health.

Beyond the Health Education curriculum content, our statutory guidance directs schools to make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage periods, including with requests for period products. Even small changes, such as using the term “period products” rather than “sanitary products” help shift the conversation from the suggestion that menstruation is unhygienic.

To support schools further, the department has also issued non-statutory implementation guidance titled '[Plan your Relationships, Sex and Health Curriculum](#)', alongside teacher training materials and case studies from lead teaching schools.

### **What should we be teaching learners about menstruation?**

[Schools only] Educating all learners about periods is crucial to tackling the stigma that surrounds it. The statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance sets out that pupils should be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. In addition to curriculum content, schools should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products.

The ‘changing adolescent body’ RSHE teacher training module, which covers menstrual wellbeing, can be downloaded here: [Teaching about relationships, sex and health - GOV.UK](#)

### **Where can we access lessons plans etc. regarding menstruation?**

There are a range of excellent resources available online, free-of-charge, which organisations can draw on when discussing periods with their learners. Organisations should assess each resource that they propose to use to ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of learners, and sensitive to their needs.

### **How should organisations communicate about the scheme?**

Advice on communicating about the scheme can be found in the [Department's guidance](#) available on gov.uk.

### **How should organisations make products available to learners?**

The scheme's guidance contains a number of examples, case studies and insights from learners, stakeholders and teachers. Organisations should refer to the guidance when considering how the scheme and products should be distributed on-site. In particular, organisations should consider the potential impact that any perceived stigma around periods could have on uptake.