

Period Dignity

Strategic Action Plan



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government





Views on the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan

The Period Dignity Action Plan is the Government's plan for improving periods for people in Wales. Period Dignity means things like:

- People should be able to get the period products they need
- People should not feel shame about having their period
- For all people to be treated equally and fairly.

The plan sets out how the Welsh Government will work with local authorities, health boards, social services, businesses, organisations and others to create Period Dignity over the next five years. This will involve removing any sense of stigma and shame around periods. It will also involve helping people understand that periods are normal and healthy, and making sure everyone has what they need to manage their periods and no one faces period poverty.

The Welsh Government asked people to tell them what they thought about the plan. This report summarises what people said.

The consultation was launched on 20 October 2021 and closed on 12 January 2022.

The full text of the consultation is available at:

[Consultation on the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan \[HTML\]](#)
[| GOV.WALES](#)

The Welsh Government received a total of **250 responses to this consultation**, from individuals and from organisations.

Support for the Plan



Most respondents agreed with the ideas in the plan. They were in support of more efforts to make sure we have period dignity in Wales.

Most respondents to the consultation agreed with the vision for period dignity and they supported more efforts to ensure period dignity in Wales. More than two-thirds of the people who responded to the consultation clearly agreed with the vision set out in the plan.

Respondents said that the plan must use clear language and should be shared widely. They made suggestions on how the plan could be linked to what is taught in schools. Many respondents wanted the Welsh Government and others to make sure that everybody has access to the period products they need, especially those who struggle to afford period products. Many people commented that there should be a focus on providing eco-friendly products. Another theme in the responses was the issue of tackling embarrassment and stigma around periods.

Finally, some respondents wanted more detail about what happens next including more on the proposed next steps and how it would all be funded.

'At this current time, the plan is very generic. More work needs to be done to put these suggestions into actual practice. What funding will be put in place to help schools and businesses actually put these actions in place? What training will be provided to assist in implementing these promises?'

Use of language



Respondents asked that the Welsh Government use the words 'women' and 'girls' in the plan, instead of 'person who menstruates'.

Many respondents had strong views on the **use of language in the plan**. The action plan uses the terms 'woman' and 'girl' but also states that 'in order to be inclusive, the term "person who menstruates" will be used most frequently to encompass all affected by this plan'.

Across all the responses to the questions, a third of respondents raised concerns about the use of language and the absence of references to women and girls. Many respondents asked the Welsh Government to specifically refer to women and girls in the plan. The respondents said that they were concerned that not naming women and girls was inaccurate, 'dehumanising' and risked creating 'a new euphemism around menstruation'. They raised concerns that the language used is vague which is confusing and difficult to understand, especially in the easy-to-read version of the plan.

'Please stop erasing women from our own health matters. It is not inclusive language if we are being pushed aside. Inclusive language would be "female" or "women, transmen and non-binary". Women's health is specific to women - not people. Not referring to us as women will lead to the message not getting out to women.'

Raising Awareness



Respondents said that it's important to make more people aware of period dignity.

Raising awareness in schools: A major theme across the answers to the consultation was the need to raise awareness and include period dignity as part of education. It should be taught in schools to everybody.

Raising awareness with the general public, and reducing stigma: Respondents identified a need for actions to reduce the embarrassment and stigma sometimes associated with periods among the general population. They said there should be more actions around changing workplace policy around periods.

Raising awareness among health professionals: A small number of respondents said that there should be a focus on the training and professional development of health practitioners. Some respondents shared their experiences of dealing with health professionals, and of instances where they did not receive the advice or treatment they needed. Respondents recommended making it easier to access experts, more research into menstrual health and ensuring GPs are up to date in their understanding of women's health issues including periods.

'There needs to be more done about workplaces putting in policies about menstruating. Some managers are understanding, others are not. There should be policies in place for flexibility during menstruation. Employers (in most cases) will not do this unless it is mandated by the government.'

'More education is needed around what healthy periods look like and when to see a doctor. And more education for doctors on healthy periods.'

Access to products



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Respondents agreed with the plan that children, young people and adults be able to access free period products in spaces they are most likely to frequent. Respondents thought that free access for all could take away the stigma and embarrassment of needing to ask for them. They went on to ask that any free products take into account cultural differences, individuals' product preferences and the needs of disabled people.

Respondents also wanted to **make sure that the plan takes account of everybody's needs and reaches everybody**, including ethnic minority communities, disabled people, those with autism and people from different religions. Homeless people, and those that suffer from domestic abuse were other groups who may need to be better included in the plan.

'...Internet-first approaches to period poverty interventions, period health information and guidance is likely to exclude some people who could benefit from free access to period products and need to access period and menstrual health information. Offline information sources must be made available and be well-promoted.'

'Period poverty is a serious issue I have seen this with friends when I was in school, it's incredibly embarrassing for people who cannot simply afford sanitary products..... There has to be a simple way of accessing sanitary products by not feeling ashamed.'