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Period Dignity Grant Evaluation

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This project has been delivered to ISO 9001:2015, 20252:2019 and 27001:2013 standards.

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
End users	Older people, those not in an education and learners that have been provided, accessed and / or used free period products and / or offered education / information about menstruation and eco-friendly products.
Under-served communities	Including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, Asylum seekers and refugees, disabled people and LGBTQ+ communities.
FEIs	Further Educational Institutions
Community settings	Community settings e.g., voluntary groups, libraries, leisure centres etc.
Key driver analysis (KDA)	Key driver analysis (KDA) is a statistical test which examines the correlation between each aspect asked (independent variables), creating the best combination to predict the overall agreement (dependent variable). KDA provides an adjusted R-squared value which indicates how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable. This then gives a performance value which is compared against the agreement value. If the performance value of a variable is close to 1, then it is a strong driver of overall experience. If the value is close to 0, then it is a weak driver of overall experience.
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual).
Period poverty	The lack of access to sanitary products due to financial challenges.

1. Introduction

1.1 The wider context

Research delivered by Plan International shows that period poverty and period dignity are complex issues, as social stigma and misunderstanding around periods still exists – both nationally and internationally - along feelings of embarrassment and shame about menstruation and the affordability for many girls and women. There are also different religious and cultural attitudes and behaviours towards girls and women who are menstruating, such as being unclean, impure or dirty, and restrictions placed upon them as a result of having periods, such as being unable to pray, wash or fast. An international survey carried out with over 4,000 makes aged between 16 and 25 found that more than 1 in 3 felt that period should be kept a secret.¹

Research by Plan International UK² looked at girls' experiences of menstruation in the UK. They found that affordability of disposable menstrual products is prohibitive for many individuals and families, who are already struggling to afford to eat and pay bills. Many schoolgirls rely on friends for sanitary products, use improvised materials or simply do not go to school during their periods. Homeless women, asylum seekers and refugees were identified as being particularly vulnerable. The impact on wellbeing, mental wellbeing and self-esteem can be hugely detrimental.

The report identified that distributing sanitary products in schools, including reusable products, would play a role in ensuring that no girl struggles to afford sanitary wear. However, there was also an emphasis that this needs to go hand in hand with training and education, both for staff and pupils, around menstrual hygiene management and broader awareness raising.

1.2 Background to the work in Wales

Since 2018, the Welsh Government has been delivering the Period Dignity Grant³. The aim of this grant has been to positively change how women, girls and people who menstruate experience periods in Wales.



What is Period Dignity? Period Dignity is about **removing the stigma and shame** around periods, **educating people** to help them understand that periods are normal and healthy and making sure that **everyone has what they need** to manage their periods⁴.

¹ [New survey shows 'deep-rooted' taboos around periods](#)

² [Break the barriers: Girls' experiences of menstruation in the UK](#)

³ Previously named the Feminine Hygiene Grant and Period Poverty Grant

⁴ [Period Proud Wales Action Plan](#)

The Welsh Government has been prioritising tackling period poverty for some time, and since 2018 it has invested over £16 million to ensure children and young people, and those on low incomes have access to free period products.

In 2018, the Welsh Government provided £920,000 to address period poverty. In 2019, it broadened its focus on period dignity, by:

- Investing £2.5 million to help local authorities and Further Education Institutions (FEIs) to distribute period products, in order to improve awareness and offer a more dignified experience for people.
- Providing over £2 million in 2020 to ensure that period products could be accessed free of charge by learners in schools, FEIs, to those in need in communities and to hospital inpatients through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A condition of this funding was to ensure 50% of period products were plastic free or reusable.

2. About the Period Dignity Grant

The purpose of the Period Dignity Grant programme is to ensure everyone who menstruates (with a focus on learners, and those on low incomes):

- Have **easier access** to free period products.
- Experience **less disruption** to school, work, or social activities because of easier access to free period products.
- Have **knowledge** and **experience** of reusable/plastic free period products and the **confidence** to use these.
- Have **increased economic** resources.

2.1.1 How the grant is delivered

Free period products are made available and / or offered to all learners who experience menstruation in educational settings, and to those from low-income households via local community settings such as libraries etc. The funding can be used to purchase the following types of products:

- Disposable period pads and tampons
- Eco-friendly period products such as reusable menstrual cups, period pants and pads and plastic-free disposable pads and tampons (during 2022/23, the Welsh Government required 65% of the total spend of the grant to be used to purchase eco-friendly period products. During the most recent grant period (2023/24), the total spend has increased to 70%.)
- Sanitary disposal bags
- Storage purses / wet bags for use with reusable products
- Clothing to be provided where learners, and people experiencing homelessness, do not have a change of clean clothing available and menstrual bleeding has stained or soiled their clothing – limited to underwear, trousers, skirts, tights in school settings

- Period product dispensers.

The funding can also be used towards the distribution and postage of free period products to end users i.e., their home address. The funding also allows up to 20% to be used for the purpose of training or education within schools and communities, for professionals, learners, and community members. Any training or education must provide information and the opportunity to take home and try reusable period products and should be aligned to existing training packages already on offer in the area. Organisations are asked to complete a grant monitoring form twice each financial year. The monitoring form outlines how the funding has been spent.

Picture 1: Products provided at a community centre in South Wales



2.1.2 Key changes to the allocation of the grant:

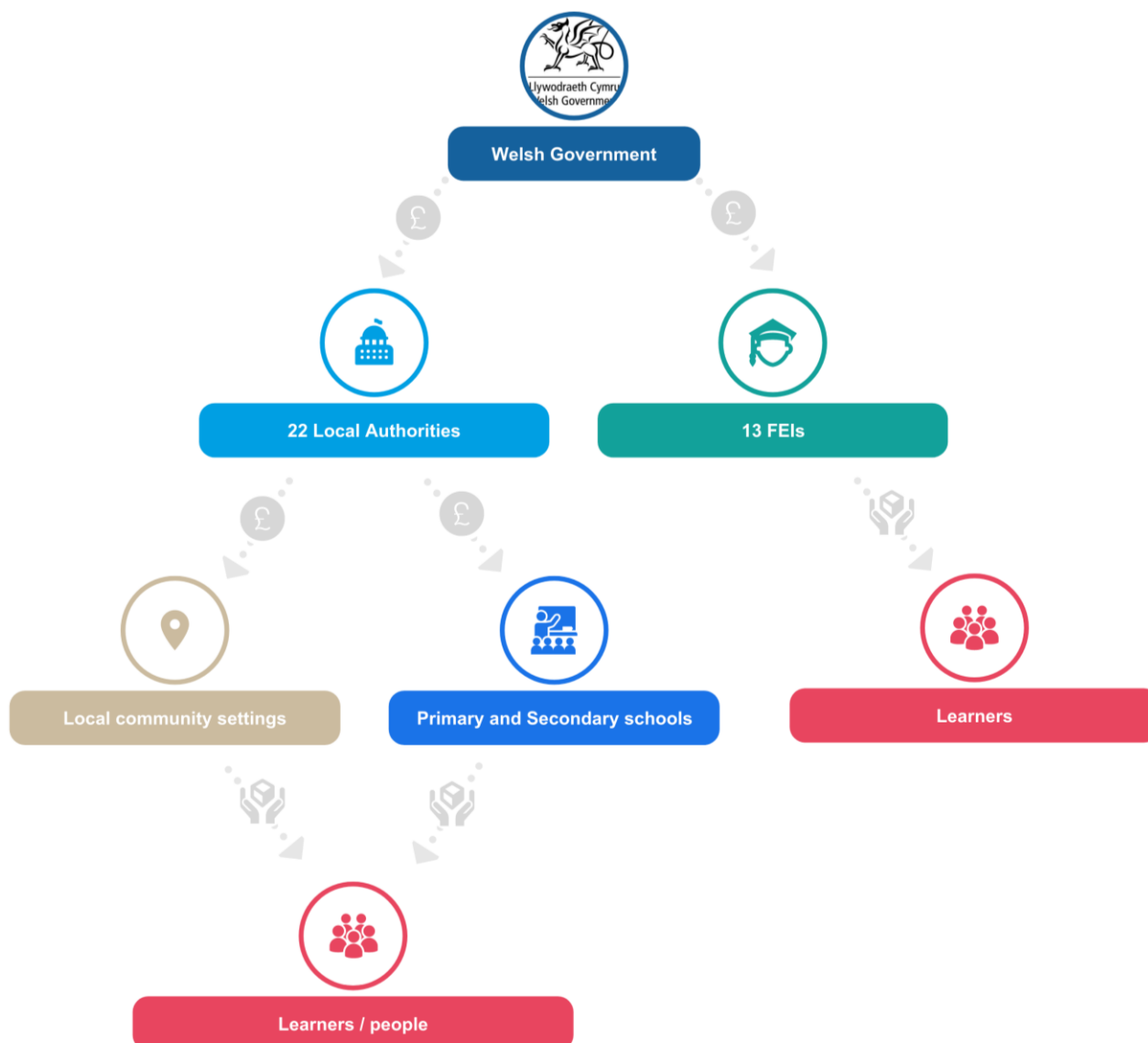
During 2018 and 2021, the grant was provided through three separate allocations:

1. All 22 local authorities⁵ in Wales: used in primary and secondary schools
2. All 22 local authorities² In Wales: used in community hubs (such as foodbanks, libraries, leisure centres, community groups)
3. All 13 FEIs in Wales: direct to FEIs from 2019.

⁵ from 2021/22 onwards, point 1 and 2 above were combined.

Chart 1 presents an overview of how the current grant is administered and distributed across Wales:

Chart 1: Overview of how the current grant is administered and distributed across Wales



3. Evaluation approach

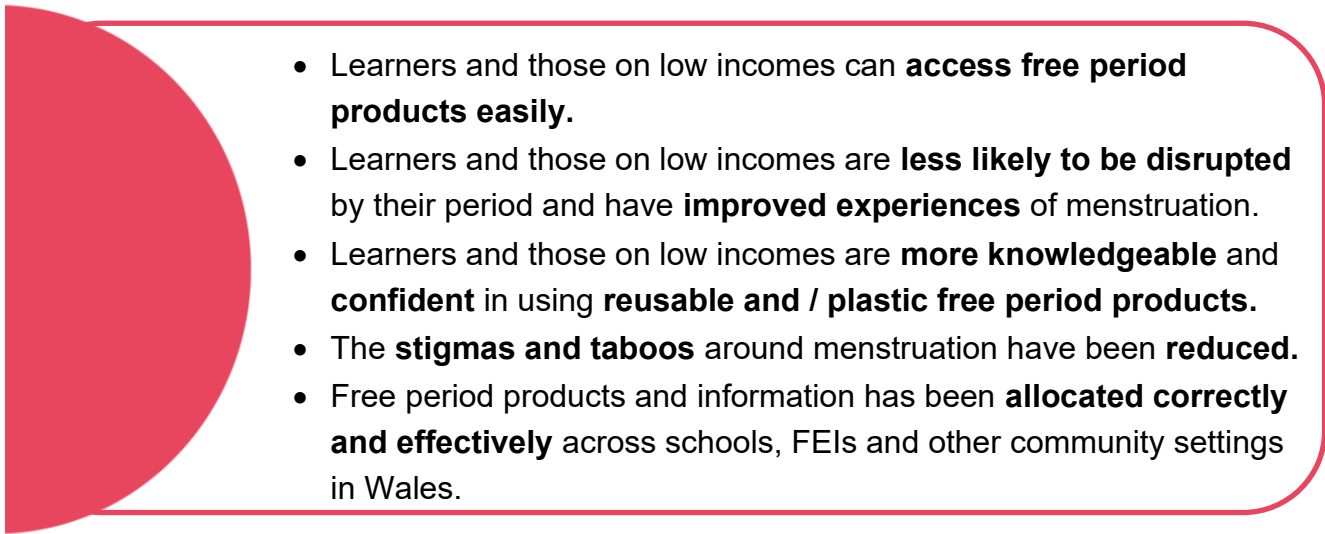
3.1 Evaluation purpose and objectives

To support the Welsh Government in assessing the implementation and impact of the Period Dignity Grant, M·E·L Research was commissioned to carry out an independent evaluation. The evaluation looked to explore the following:

- Assess the efficacy of the current funding and free period product dissemination process (process evaluation).

- Identify the impact the grant is having on recipients of free period products (impact evaluation). These include school children, learners in FEI settings and anybody using period products in community settings, specifically under-served communities⁶.
- To provide insight and recommendations for:
 - The future grant delivery process for local authorities, schools, FEIs and community hubs.
 - Improvements to the programme which can offer positive impacts to children and young people, those on low incomes and under-served communities.

The programme was measured against the following set of outcomes:

- 
- Learners and those on low incomes can **access free period products easily**.
 - Learners and those on low incomes are **less likely to be disrupted** by their period and have **improved experiences** of menstruation.
 - Learners and those on low incomes are **more knowledgeable** and **confident** in using **reusable and / plastic free period products**.
 - The **stigmas and taboos** around menstruation have been **reduced**.
 - Free period products and information has been **allocated correctly and effectively** across schools, FEIs and other community settings in Wales.

To address the outcomes, a set of research questions were developed for the evaluation. A programme theory of change was developed to understand how the programme intended to work and the desired outcomes and longer term impacts. Both are listed below.

Key research questions set for the evaluation:

1. How are learners and those on low incomes easily accessing free period products?
2. How has the grant led to learners and those on a low income being more knowledgeable and confident in using reusable and / or plastic free period products?
3. What impact has the free period products and information had on attendance levels
4. How has the grant led to a reduction in stigmas and taboos associated with menstruation?
5. How has funding, information and free period products been allocated and distributed to those that most need it across Wales?
6. What are the positive or negative unintended outcomes of the grant?

⁶ Including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, Asylum seekers and refugees, disabled people and LGBTQ+ communities

Theory of Change:

Rationale: The lack of free period products, alongside the taboos and lack of education surrounding menstruation have had a number of tangible, negative impacts for people who experience them in their day-to-day lives.

Objectives: To end any sense of stigma and shame associated with periods; normalising people's experience whilst also acknowledging the distress and pain suffered by those whose periods are not "normal" by providing free period products.

Inputs:

- Welsh Government staff / grant team
- £ funding
- 22 Local Authorities, 13 FEIs / colleges, Community hubs Primary and secondary schools
- Teachers / other educational staff
- Students, young people & people on low incomes
- Period products and distribution partners
- Educational resources on eco-friendly products
- Evaluator

Activities:

- Grants applications and award
- Promotion of free period products
- Educational workshops/resources delivered
- Dissemination of free period products
- Collaborative working via Roundtable sessions and meetings with local authorities and other stakeholders
- Quarterly monitoring forms

Outputs:

- Number and type of learners and those on low incomes:
 - Using free period products and eco-friendly products
 - Facing less barriers to accessing free period products
 - Having improved finances through not having to spend money on period products
 - Less likely to miss school, work or social activities due to their period
 - Having improved experiences when menstruating
 - Being more knowledgeable and confident in using eco-friendly products
 - More able to talk openly, improved confidence and experiencing less shame about their periods
- Number of people facing poverty and those from under-served communities receiving support
- Amount of funding, products and information distributed
- Organisations more informed about their grant and their role in addressing Period Dignity

Outcomes:

- O1: Learners and those on low incomes can access free period products easily
- O2: Learners and those on low incomes are less likely to be disrupted by their period and have improved experiences of menstruation
- O3: Learners and those on low incomes are more knowledgeable and confident in using reusable and / plastic free period products
- O4: The stigmas and taboos around menstruation have been reduced
- O5: Free period products and information has been allocated correctly and effectively across schools, FEIs and other community settings in Wales

Longer term impact:

- Menstruation has been normalised, improving the outlook for young people and those on low incomes
- Free period products including reusable and / or plastic free period products are easily accessed by those who need them across Wales

3.2 Evaluation activities

3.2.1 Data collection approach

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, collecting primary qualitative and quantitative data, alongside the analysis of secondary monitoring data provided by the Welsh Government. All data collection tools used for the research were designed by the evaluator working with Welsh Government and were aligned to the key research questions set for the evaluation. The evaluation also delivered a rapid literature review to support the evaluation framework development and insights from the findings.

The approach to the activities was as follows:

Rapid literature review:

A rapid literature review was carried out prior to the evaluation data collection process to understand the wider context relating to period poverty and period dignity. A total of 32 literature sources were reviewed from 2017 onwards. Findings from the review have been incorporated into this report. A snowballing search methodology using the references in reviewed literature was used as part of the search strategy. Below summarises the topic, target groups, search terms and management for the review:

Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Period poverty and dignity
Any specific target groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary, secondary and FEI students• Under-served communities (people on low incomes, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, Disabled people, LGBTQI+ communities and Asylum Seekers and Refugees)• Local authorities, community hubs and staff at educational establishments
Search terms:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Period dignity• Period poverty• Grants• Marginalised communities OR under served• Ethnic minority groups• Low level of income OR deprivation• Rural• Economic impact
Search management:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence provided by Welsh Government• Google• Web blogs• SAGE journals

In depth interviews and group discussions:

One to one depth interviews and group discussions were carried out with organisations over the phone or online via Microsoft Teams/Zoom. The discussion guides used can be viewed in Annex A. Below presents the recruitment and sampling approach used, alongside the challenges experienced:

Stakeholder	Recruitment approach	Sampling approach	Challenges
Pre-scoping interview with local authorities and FEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members on the Period Dignity Steering group who consented to provide feedback. 	Purposive sampling with priority for selection being based on getting feedback from organisations based in rural and urban areas and spread across Wales.	NA
Local authority, FEIs, schools and community settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations were recruited to take part in the depth interview and / group discussion via the online survey. Welsh Government reached out to schools (once strike action taken by teaching staff in March 2023 had been delivered) to ask if they'd be willing to feedback. 	Purposive sampling with priority for selection being based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Total funding claimed (Local Authority)</u>: Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea <u>Higher levels of deprivation</u> based on school's postcode data: as above plus, Neath Port Talbot, Caerphilly <u>Rurality</u>: Gwynedd, Powys, Isle of Anglesey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of the evaluation, schools were under pressure e.g. teacher strikes. Therefore, the evaluation struggled to get representatives to take part. Therefore, convenience sampling⁷ was used based on

Online community discussion board – end users were recruited to take part in an online community discussion board. FEIs, schools and community settings that had already taken part in the evaluation were asked if they be willing to circulate the online community research opportunity to their learners / people they support. Paper and online consent forms were sent out to all the above organisations that consented. Once the closing date for signing up to the online community research passed, participants were randomly selected and informed that they had been selected to take part.

Participants were asked to complete 7 tasks which took approximately 40 minutes to complete in total. (Visual examples of the board can be viewed in Annex B). Two moderators from MEL Research were available during office hours to engage with

⁷ A non-probability sampling technique, participants are selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate rather than their suitability i.e. characteristics

participants and ask questions. The community board was open for a period of 3 days, enabling respondents to complete the activities in their own time. Twenty three end users who provided feedback were within the 16-30 age range, with a handful (n=3) being under 16 years old. Most were in education, with some of the older participants in work.

Quantitative survey: The evaluation also used a short survey for end users to complete. Participants could complete the survey online or on paper. A more in-depth online survey was circulated with organisations who had been part of the grant / received free period products (the surveys can be viewed in Annex C). The recruitment approach differed dependent on the stakeholder type. Below summarises the recruitment, approach for each stakeholder type:

Stakeholder	Recruitment approach	Sampling approach
Local authority and FEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Government sent a initial email to introduce the evaluators and research. Welsh Government will provide contact lists (organisation, name and email address) via Objective Connect to MEL Research for all Period Dignity Leads relating to the Period Dignity Grant. Evaluators sent all contacts a email with a link to the online survey and information on how take part. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple random sampling (probability sampling)
Schools and community settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent was gained from organisations who have taken part in the online survey (above) to promote the survey link to their schools and community setting they had provided the grant too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combination of simple random sampling (probability sampling) and snowball sampling (non-probability sampling)
End users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent was gained from organisations who have taken part in the online survey (above) to promote the survey link to their learners and those who accessed their services on our behalf. The evaluators then circulated the links to the representative who have consented to circulate the link, provide QR code and sent any requests for paper surveys directly to organisations. <p>To further improve response rates we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Government reached out to their Schools Research Teams and the Period Dignity Leads at each local authority to get them to promote the survey. Local authorities promoted the survey on social media, workplaces and notices board 	

Secondary data: The Welsh Government provided monitoring forms from organisations from the 2017/18 to the 2021/22 grant funding periods. The data from all monitoring forms were entered into one spreadsheet. It should be noted that there were limitations to compiling this information as there were inconsistencies in the data provide across the local authority areas. This is further highlighted in the main body of the report. (An example of the monitoring from can be viewed in Annex D).

Table 1: Summary of the evaluation activities and number of participants involved.

Data collection approach	Stakeholder type	Total population who consented	Number of participants
Pre-scoping depth interviews 1:1 ⁸	Overall	14	8
	Local authorities	7	5
	FEIs	7	3
Depth interviews 1:1 or group	Overall	53	34
	Local authorities	19	15
	Schools (primary / secondary)	20	11
	Community settings	14	8
Online community discussion board	End users of period products	90	26
Online / paper survey with end users	End users of period products	Not known	207
Online survey with organisations	Overall		129
	Local authorities	22	24 ⁹
	FEIs	13	12 ¹⁰
	Schools (primary / secondary)	1,382	51 ¹¹
	<i>Primary school</i>	<i>1,177</i>	<i>30</i>
	<i>Secondary school</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>22¹²</i>
	Community settings	2,857	42 ¹³

3.3 Analysis and reporting

3.3.1 Statistical reliability of quantitative research

The survey findings are based on results from a small sample of organisations and end users, offering a snapshot of views. Where analysis by different subgroups has been discussed in this report, the findings will be indicative only as this was not a representative sample of the target population. Caution must therefore be exercised when interpreting the findings.

Key driver analysis (KDA) was carried out to highlight which aspects, e.g., easier access to free period products, money saved, etc, had the greatest impact on end users who were experiencing better periods as a result of the free period products / information provided. The statistical test examines the correlation between each aspect asked (independent variables), creating the best combination to predict the overall agreement (dependent variable). KDA provides an adjusted R-squared value which indicates how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable. This then gives a performance value

⁸ Pre -scoping depth interview were carried out at the start of the evaluation to feed into the development of the next round of grant provisions.

⁹ Across 17 of the 22 local authorities in Wales

¹⁰ Across 10 of the 13 FEIs in Wales

¹¹ Across all 1,382 maintained primary and secondary schools in Wales.

¹² One organisation classified as both a primary and secondary school

¹³ Based on an estimated 2,857 community settings that received funding between 2018-2023

which is compared against the agreement value. If the performance value of a variable is close to 1, then it is a strong driver of overall experience. If the value is close to 0, then it is a weak driver of overall experience.

Owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed visually on charts within this report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared with the text. The figures provided in the text should always be used. Where figures do not appear in a chart, these are 3% or less. The 'base' or 'n=' figure referred to in each chart and table indicates the total number of participants responding to the question with a valid response.

3.3.2 Qualitative research findings

All qualitative interviews and group discussions took place with consenting participants and were recorded digitally, then entered into a thematic analysis grid for further exploration. Once analysed they were deleted. Key themes and findings were then identified for each of the key research questions, drawing together the quantitative and qualitative data against each evaluation aim and research question.

Throughout the report, mini case studies have been used to show individual impacts of the free period products and information provided through the grant. The names listed are fictitious.

3.3.3 Other considerations

While we have undertaken research activities, the impact of the grant was measured only through self-reported behaviours. There were no independent validating observations, so the evidence is intrinsically limited.

The programme did not include a control group (gathering data from people that did not engage with the grant programme) in order to provide counterfactual evidence with which to assess outcomes.

4. Evaluation findings

4.1 The efficacy of the funding and dissemination process

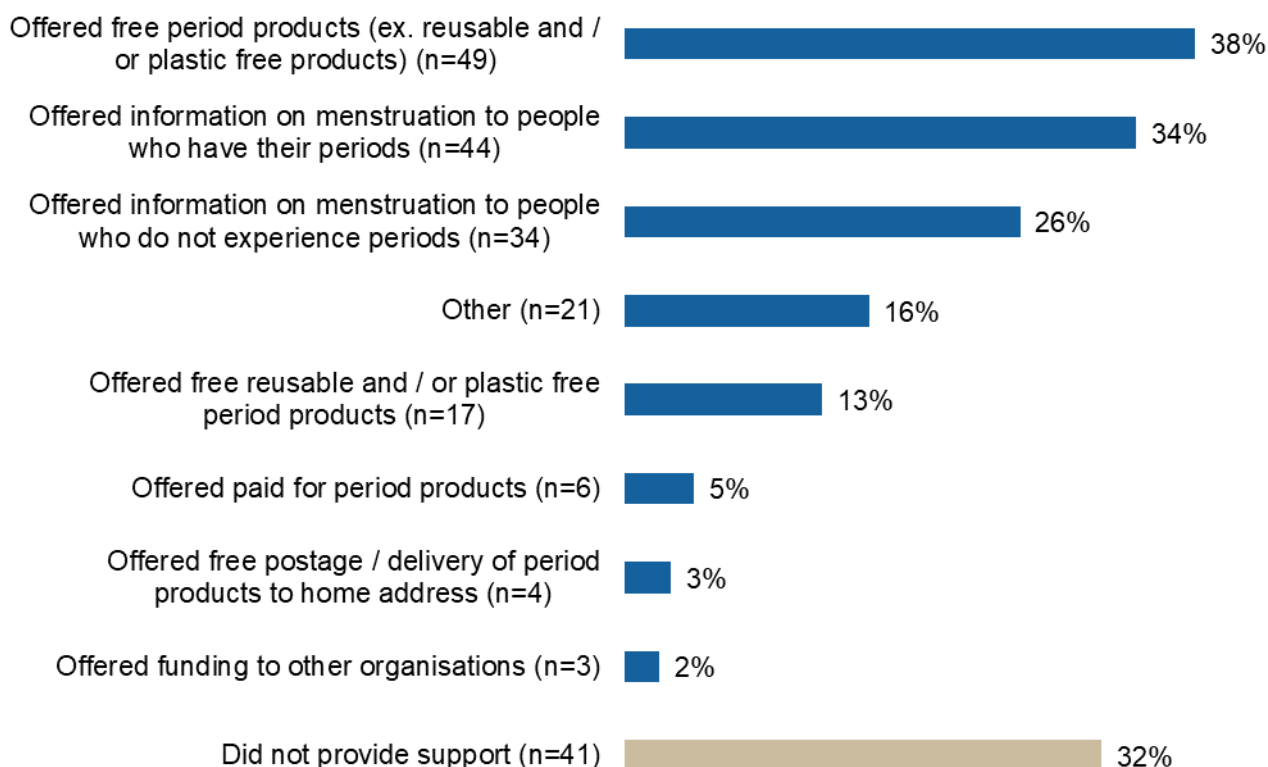
4.1.1 Key research question 1: How are learners and those on low incomes easily accessing free period products?

4.1.1.1 What support was provided by organisations prior to the grant?

To better understand the impact of the grant, we asked organisations what support they gave women, girls and people who menstruate prior to the grant. A third (32%, n=41) said they didn't offer any support, whilst 38% (n=49) said they offered free period products, although these did not include eco-friendly options. Organisations were also offering information to those who do and do not menstruate prior to the grant. Local authorities and community settings were less likely to have offered any support to people prior to the grant.

Chart 2: Prior to the Period Dignity Grant, how did your organisation support people who menstruate?

(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

4.1.2 Types of organisations / people accessing and being supported through the grant

The table below shows the number of organisations that local authorities have supported through the grant¹⁴. Monitoring data was not available and so the **survey responses** from 16 local authorities were used to provide these figures. A mean has been provided to give a snapshot of the primary, secondary and community settings supported across the 16 local authority areas who responded to the survey. On average the proportion of primary and secondary schools and most notably community settings that local authorities have supported, have increased substantially since the funding started in 2017/18. Although more work is needed to reach more community settings in Wales, in 2020 it was reported that there were 8,100 registered charities and 32,000 third sector organisations operating in Wales¹⁵. In addition, to the below all 13 FEIs across Wales received grant funding since 2019.

Table 2: Average number of primary, secondary and / or community establishments local authorities have supported through the Period Dignity Grant by funding period

(figures based on 16 local authorities that provided feedback to this question)

Funding period	Primary schools*	Secondary schools*	Community settings
2017/18	249	52	6
2018/19	180	48	24
2019/20	433	82	105
2020/21	479	98	123
2021/22	472	98	280
2022/23	581	111	412

*There are currently 1,382 maintained combined (n=27), primary (n=1,177) and secondary (n=178) schools in Wales

(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

When looking at the groups of people that were being supported through the grant, most of the organisations (excluding local authorities) said that they supported people that were less likely to have regular access to period products, such as those facing poverty or disabled people. Disabled women, girls and people who menstruate face even greater challenges in managing their menstruation hygienically and with dignity than those who are not disabled. There are often a lack of facilities within toilets and bathrooms for them to deal with periods with dignity¹⁶. Six in ten (59%, n=62) organisations said that they serviced / supported

¹⁴ Based on 16 local authorities that provided feedback to this question

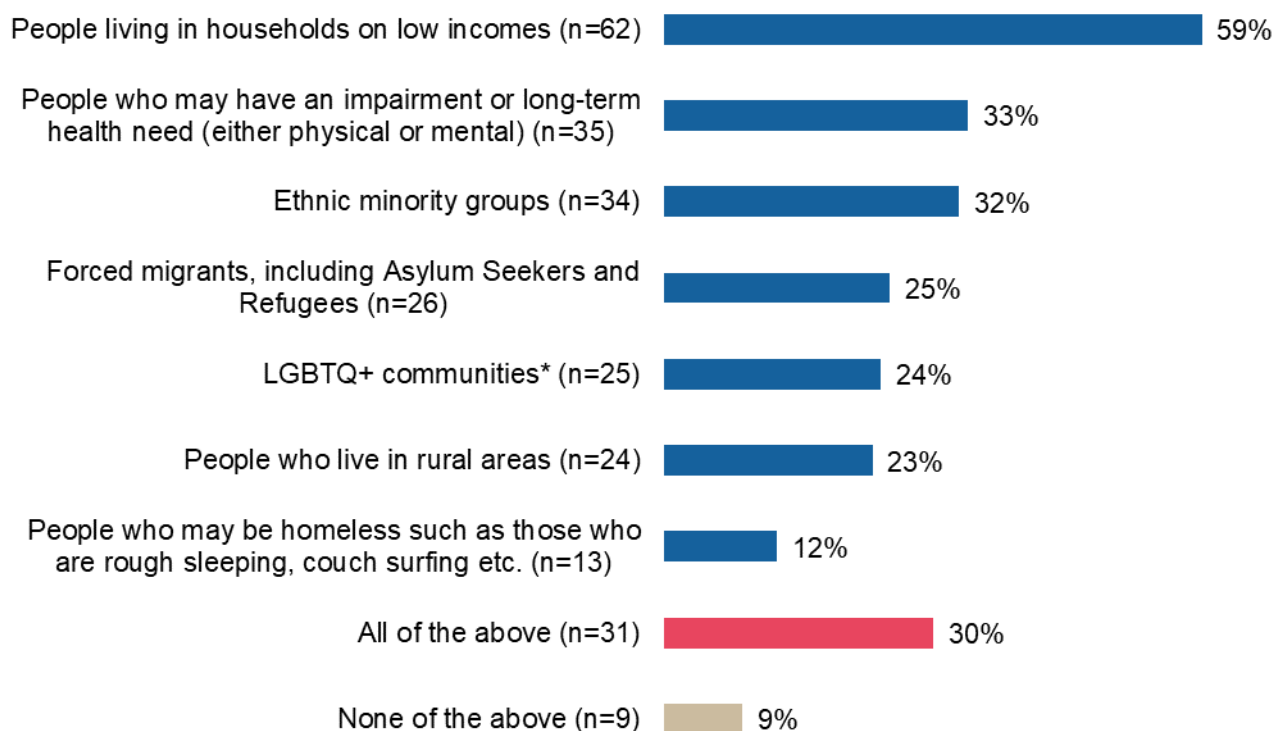
¹⁵ [Key data for the voluntary sector in Wales 2020](#)

¹⁶ [Menstrual Health & Hygiene for Girls and Women with Disabilities](#)

people living in households with low incomes, followed by a third (33%, n=35) who have an impairment or long-term health need. Around a third (30%, n=31) of organisations said they supported or served all of the groups listed (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Do you support any of the below groups of people?

(n=105)



*LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual).

(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

Thirty-four respondents(32%) also said they support ethnic minority groups, who were more likely to be from a mixed or multiple ethnic group (n=27), as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Which ethnic minority groups do you support?

(n=34)

	Count	%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	27	79%
Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African	13	38%
Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British	12	35%
Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma	3	9%
Other ethnic minority group	2	6%
Total	34	100%

(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

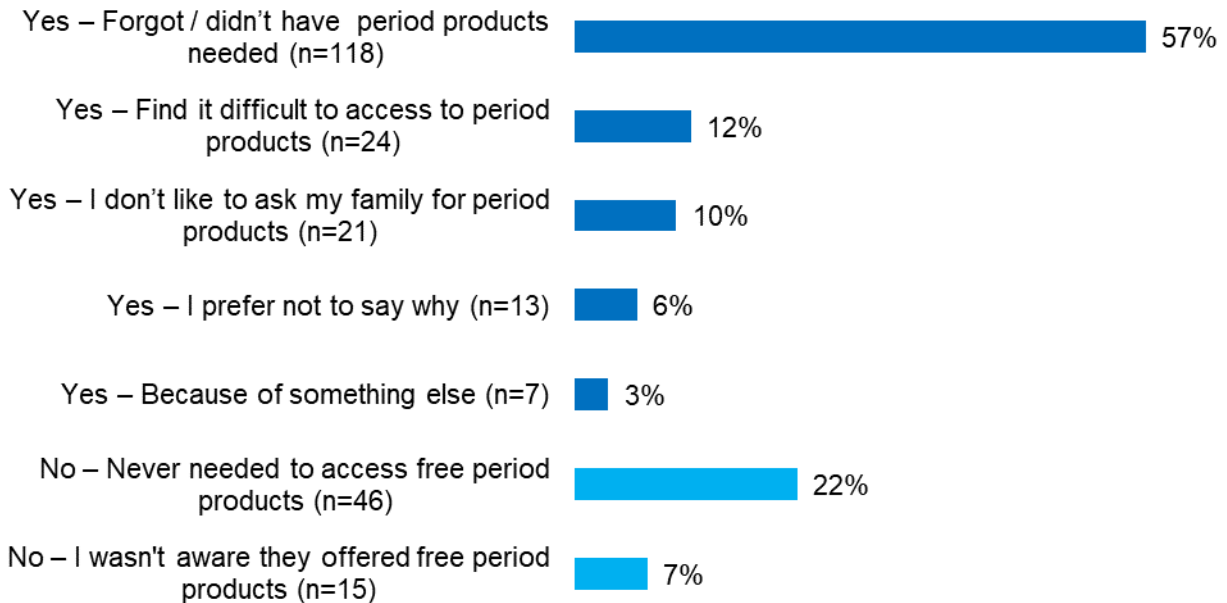
4.1.3 Awareness of and motivations to use free period products

Most end users that provided feedback through the survey (Chart 4) said that they were aware of the free period products on offer, while just 7% (n=15) weren't aware. Most end users that fed back through the in-depth work found out about the free period products through a number of channels, such as the products being easily accessible and visible - *"they are in every bathroom at college for anyone to use"*; via printed materials - *"there are signs and posters saying they are free all round college"*; and via direct messaging from staff members - *"My college sent out emails at the start of the academic year letting students know that there are free period products available in the bathrooms."* [End user]

Why people were accessing the free period products was explored. Six in ten (57%, n=118) said they used the free period products as they didn't have the products they needed with them on the day. A further fifth (22%, n=45) said they either find it difficult to get products or don't like to ask their family for products (Chart 4). The in-depth work showed that end users were likely to use the free period products every time they had a period, or they used the free period products sometimes i.e., every couple of months or so when needed.

Chart 4: In the last year, have you accessed, and if so, why have you needed to access free period products from your school/FEI or community setting?

(n=207)



(Period Dignity evaluation end user survey 2023)

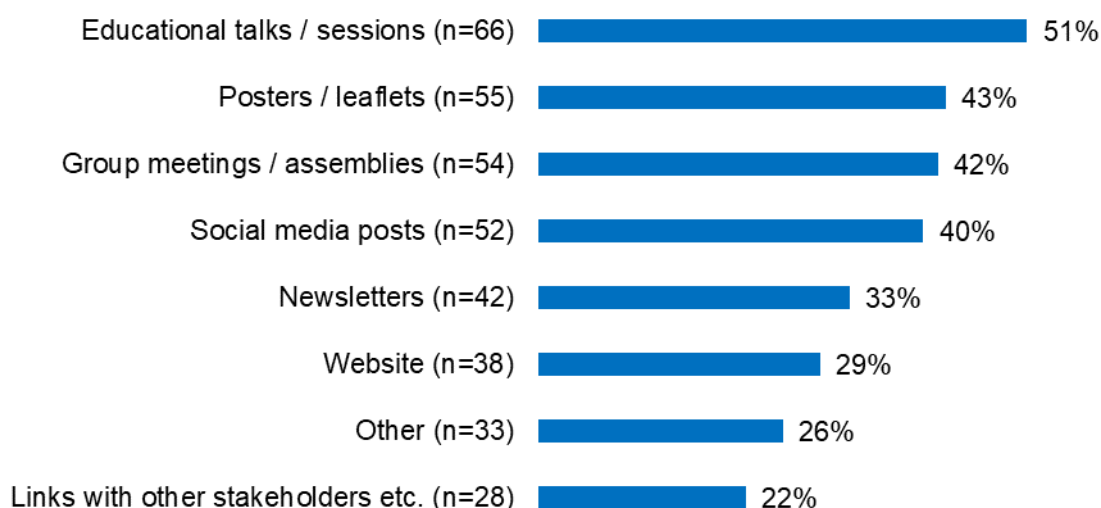
4.1.4 How organisations made people aware and distributed free period products

Organisations that fed back via the survey most commonly promoted free period products through educational talks (51%, n=66), posters (43%, n=55), group meetings (42%, n=54) or via social media (40%, n=52) (Chart 5). There were variations by organisational type – FEIs were more likely to promote free period products via posters and leaflets – *“We have posters in the toilet about free period products, also we had a period dignity week”* [End user]. Primary and secondary schools mainly used educational sessions (75%, n=39). Community settings and local authorities used a mix of promotional methods. The in-depth research highlighted how the grant had allowed for direct engagement with learners and parents and the importance of having staff within organisations that can promote the concept of period dignity and free products available – *“we’re able to promote period dignity with school children and also with parents who are predominantly low-income families. This has worked exceptionally well.”* [Local authority]

Training and education worked well for some organisations, for example, schools were stretched for resource in this department, but some felt this was of more value as they had sufficient stock of period products – *“they [the schools] appreciate not having to hold as much stock on site and the variety of services that are available for young people, and they also value the training and additional kits that go in to the support we can offer.”* [Local authority].

Chart 5: Promoting / raising awareness of the free period products available

(n=129)

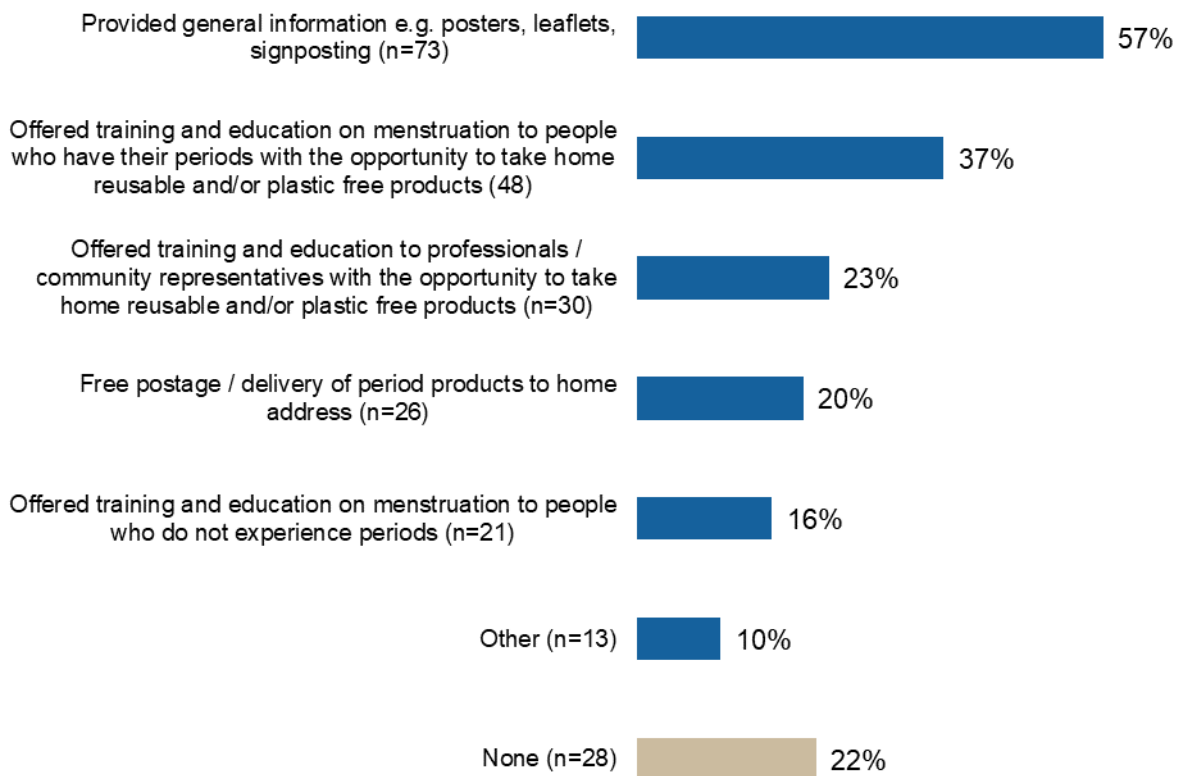


(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

Organisations were asked how else they have supported people with the funding they received, other than providing free period products. Almost six in ten (57%, n=73) said they had provided general information such as posters – *“There are posters on the doors”* [Secondary school]. Almost two fifths (37%, n=48) had offered training and education to people who have their periods and 23% (n=30) had provided training to professionals and community representatives. Around a fifth (22%, n=28) said they hadn’t provided any other type of support – these were more likely to be community settings rather than schools, FEIs or local authorities. More widely, more coordinated outreach work is needed to engage community settings, as there generally seemed to be less awareness although the interest in the programme was great – *“I hadn’t really heard about the Period Dignity Grant before this”* [Community organisation]. One community organisation felt that local authorities need to look at what networks and grassroots activities are happening and how they can link in with these – *“So it’s like assessing what assets you’ve got within your local area”* [Community organisation].

Chart 6: With the exception of offering free period products, how else have you supported people through the funding you received?

(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

4.1.5 A review of models used by organisations

Free period products provided across the different settings enables people to gain access to products when they need them. Access to period products is perceived to reduce embarrassment, stigma, stress, worry and health risks, allowing students to remain in education and engage in learning¹⁷.

The evaluation found that there was not a consistent model of approach to how organisations were required to provide free period products to the people they support. However, there were similarities and approaches that organisations felt worked well (Table 4).

Having **free period products easily accessible in toilets** was found to be by far the most common way to provide items across organisations – *“Distribution of products works well when schools put products in individual toilet cubicles, but the process of distribution varies across schools.”* [Local authority]. This was more so for disposable products like tampons and pads – *“The dispenser is a key thing for success. The dispenser is in an accessible toilet; anyone can access the toilet.”* [Community Setting].

Reusable items were often handed out to people directly, because these are more expensive than disposable products, therefore there was a need to control distribution. This could potentially have an impact on how aware individuals are of reusable products and if they actually ask about them – due to being embarrassed.

¹⁷ Katherine Swainston, Claire O'Malley, Vik Brown, (March 2020) [The implementation and evaluation of a university-based scheme to reduce period poverty](#), (blog)

Table 4: Overview of common models to distribute free period products and proportions stating this approach works particularly well
(n=121)

Mode of distribution	% stating this approach has worked particularly well	
Promoting / providing free products at events	25%	<i>“Promotion of free sustainable products, and education on reusable products at Health and Wellbeing events.”</i> [FEIs]
Offering products in toilets, washrooms	22%	<i>“Packs are placed in all toilets with one box open and spare boxes placed in a pile.”</i> [FEIs] <i>“This makes it easier to feel comfortable when on your period as you know that there are things that you need available to you”</i> [End user]
Products freely available at communal points e.g., reception areas, hallways	14%	<i>“Products available to all from reception, bathrooms, classrooms and via our school uniform bank.”</i> [school] <i>“It is good that local community hubs have them in their toilets too. Some even have red boxes where you can pick some up.”</i> [End user]
Posting free products / subscription service	8%	<i>“We have seen huge success with a growing period product subscription service. This is a particularly effective way to distribute products in an area such as ours, impacted immensely by rurality and with minimal urbanised areas of condensed population”</i> [Local authority] <i>“My period products are posted monthly to the house; this has been a god send”</i> [End user]
Distributing free products in other packs e.g., food bank packs	7%	<i>“The school distributes period products to pupils and we offer these products at our food bank which is used by our local community.”</i> [school]

4.1.6 Other aspects to the models used that worked well

- Having dedicated individuals in educational settings who learners can approach when needed, has been highly valued by both staff and end users – *“They know which staff members to go up to, their names are on the poster as well. They also get the information when they have their lessons at the start of the year. And they get a*

reminder every now and again about who to go to if they want to pick stuff up”

[Secondary school].

- Through staff training and general awareness raising, organisations were actively looking to change their culture and how they have viewed and dealt with menstruation – *“We have made a real effort to change our culture and views on periods – making it more of an open conversation where children can speak to staff/each other openly about it and removing the taboo surrounding it”* [Secondary school]
- Having regular reminders throughout the year for end users, to reiterate the support and products available – *“They also get the information when they have their lessons at the start of the year. And they get a reminder every now and again about who to go to if they want to pick stuff up.”* [FEI]
- Co-design and delivery of offering free period products works well e.g., via a student led team – *“Pupil voice has been hugely important. It has led to discreet stickers on toilet cubicles indicating where products are kept which allows dignity for learners. It has also provided insight into areas for development, which products young people wish to see and the importance of dignity in maintaining products in areas where learners do not need to request from staff.”* [Local authority]. Student-led teams managing products, avoids the need for students to approach teachers, which has been positive for students, meaning those most in need (e.g., those from low income backgrounds) can get them without attention being drawn to them – *“I created a project for year 12 as part of their Welsh [text removed] to see if they could have more control of the spending of the grant. At that point xxx local authority were giving us the amount that we were allocated per child, and the students were allocated a challenge to come up with a way of making sure that people were accessing the products they were aware of.”* [Secondary school]. One participant mentioned how they’d been working with a group of trans students developing liners that fitted better than standard liners for example – *“It has been something that’s been really useful in terms of feedback from students and making sure we’re inclusive.”* [Secondary school]. Being able to vary the models of delivery across sites has also helped manage student needs, from offering support in more open settings to one-to-one confidential conversations – *“It’s a mindset change ... that we need to work on. You know, we have mixed groups. You know you’ve got to do it in the right place.”* [Secondary school].

- Participants felt the grant generally works well for students, although one FEI organisation felt it was more funding than they were able to manage – *“Because it’s so much money and I don’t think it is best value if I’m totally honest because I just don’t think it’s being used effectively”* [FEI], but this could be down to the delivery models used.
- The grant has been a means to getting people talking and asking questions about menstruation, *for example, the products offered, events held at FEIs etc, has helped people to start talking more openly about periods. Organisations have seen the benefit of this and were therefore encouraged to do more to support people via the grant– “As periods and the products become less stigmatised, more normalised, this is why we are so keen.”* [FEI]

4.1.7 Challenges

A handful of secondary schools mentioned that they had to monitor and educate students due to the misuse of products – *“They had issues with some students messing with the tampons for example, seeing how much water they can collect.”* [Secondary school].

However, organisations that reported this, said it was easily dealt with through education.

A couple of organisations fed back that they felt that the funding was being provided later each year, which impacted their delivery time – *“Challenges we have is the allocation of the grant. The timing seems to come out later each year or later in the year, which reduces the actual spend time and we still need to do the spend by March.”* [School]. The timing of the grant had negative impacts for some organisations too, which led to stockpiling, with some recommending that a longer funding period should be considered *“The timing of the grant is also crucial but we often find ourselves stockpiling products at the end of the financial year and then waiting a number of months before being able to purchase again as we await the new grant to be formalised. A 3-year funding rather than year-by-year would be far more beneficial and easier for the local authorities to plan appropriately.”* [Local authority]

4.1.8 The gaps in support and / or take up of free period products that exist for under-served communities

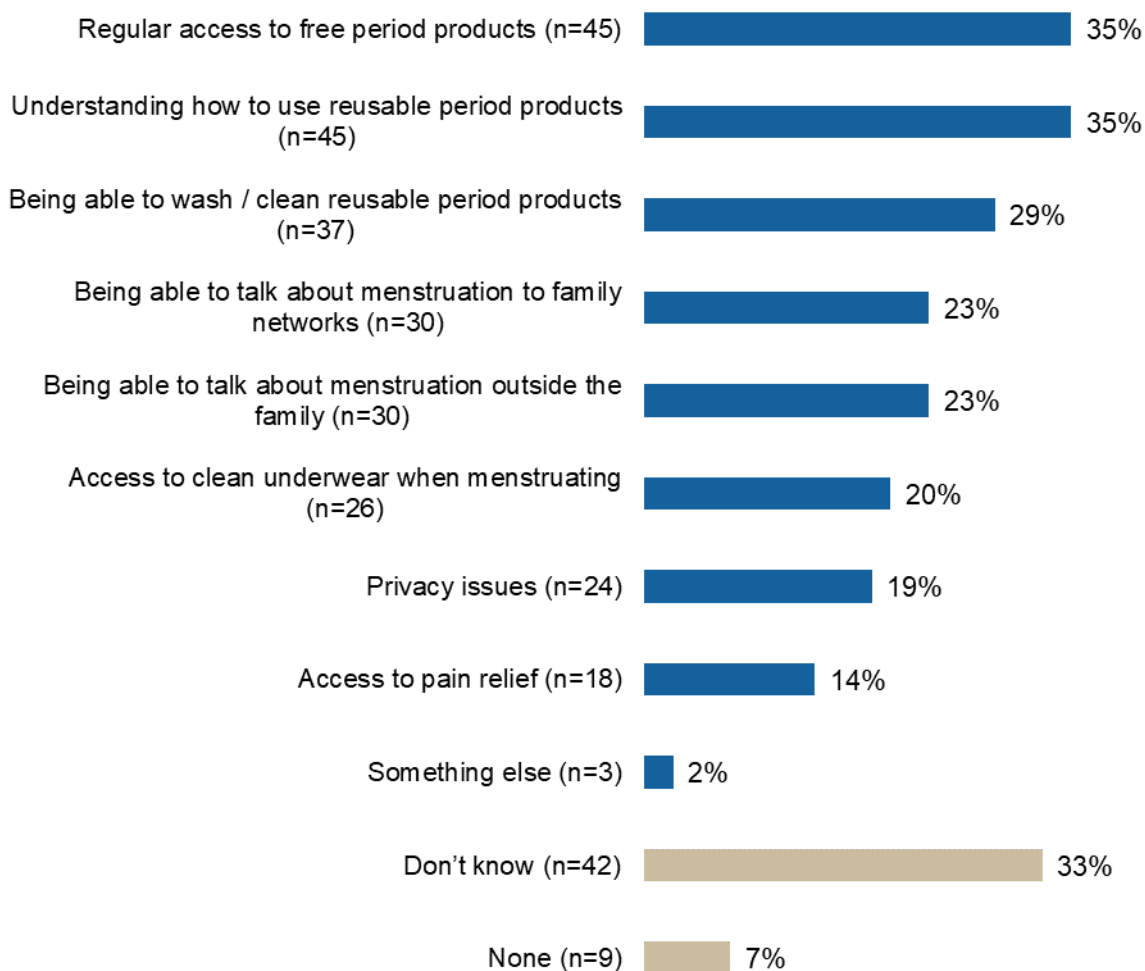
Access to period products in general is a challenge for disadvantaged, vulnerable and low-income households¹⁸. Organisations fed back that having regular access to free period products (35%, n=45), understanding how to use reusable products (35%, n=45) and being able to wash and clean reusable products (29%, n=37) were the top barriers for under-served communities, especially for those facing poverty – *“Can’t offer reusable products as most of the people we service are homeless or in temporary accommodation, so all products need to be easily dealt with or disposable”* [Community setting] (Chart 7). There

¹⁸ [Access to sanitary products Aberdeen pilot: evaluation report](#)

are still significant cultural stigmas for some communities that exist, such as being segregated at home whilst menstruating due to assumptions that periods are impure, that menstruation is linked to bad spirits or that menstruating is dirty¹⁹. There was an acknowledgement that overcoming deeply entrenched stigmas need wider support in the community to break down the myths associated with periods and that this process will take time – *“it’ll take a while to break the stigma with some of these communities because it is such a taboo subject”* [Community setting]. Through the qualitative work with organisations, it was found that different community languages need to be catered for to try and overcome these barriers and access to support – *“We don’t expect things in every language, but just very basic, easily understandable literature that is translated.”* [Community setting].

Chart 7: Gaps in support and / or take up of free period products

(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

¹⁹ [Shatakshi Jaiswal, Menstruation stigma and the importance of cultural representation, Breakthrough \(Blog\)](#)

4.1.9 The range of free period products offered

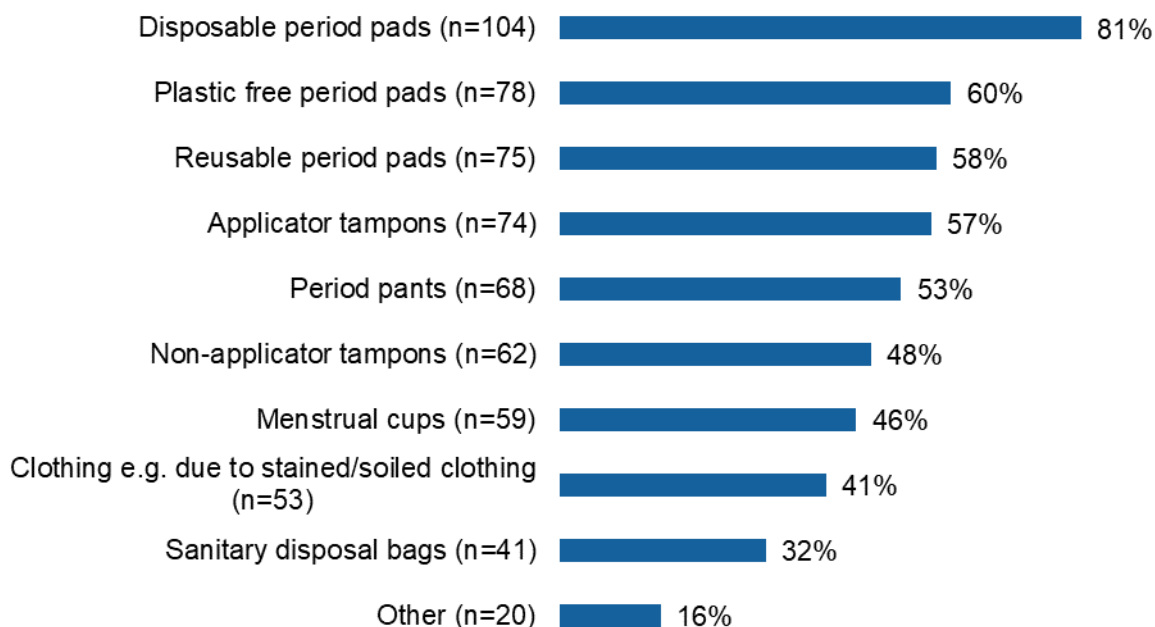
A combination of secondary data and primary quantitative data has been used to assess the range and type of free period products provided as part of the Period Dignity Grant. Due to inconsistencies in the monitoring data we have relied mainly on the primary data collected through the evaluation.

Eight in ten (81%, n=104) organisations were offering disposable period pads – this was most likely to be in primary and secondary schools. Almost two thirds (60%, n=78) were offering plastic free disposable period pads – this was most likely the case for local authorities. Overall, 58% (n=75) were offering reusable period pads with FEIs being more likely to offer reusable products, including period pants. Just under half (46%, n=59) offered menstrual cups i.e., moon cups, with FEIs and local authorities being more inclined to offer this.



Chart 8: The type of free period products offered

(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

Table 5 overleaf shows the range of period products purchased and offered under the schools and community grant, stratified by local authority (excluding FEI) (taken from the

monitoring data collected by the Welsh Government). It has not been possible to report on the numbers of products purchased, due to the lack of data available, however this provides a good overview of the types of products being provided through the grant. Unsurprisingly, all local authorities purchased sanitary products and / or period pack bundles for end users. Eight out of the 22 local authorities offered spare clothing, 4 offered wash kits / wipes and 2 had upgraded their wash / toilet facilities.

Table 5: Range of period products purchased during the schools and community funding period

	Summary of dissemination process during the 2023 period based on interviews and survey responses			Range of products provided / purchased during the schools and community funding period from <u>2017/18 to 2022*</u>					
	Direct provision of products	Direct funding provided	Subscription service	Sanitary products****	Spare Underwear/ clothing	Period Packs/bundles	Period product dispensers	Disposal bags	Wash kits/ wipes
Isle of Anglesey	Y			Y		Y	Y		
Gwynedd	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y
Conwy	Y*			Y	Y	Y			Y
Denbighshire	Y		Y	Y		Y			
Flintshire		Y		Y					
Wrexham	Y			Y			Y		
Powys	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y			
Ceredigion	Y			Y	Y				Y
Pembrokeshire		Y***	Y	Y	Y			Y	
Carmarthenshire	Y *			Y		Y			Y
Swansea	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Neath Port Talbot	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Bridgend	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Vale of Glamorgan	Y			Y		Y			
Cardiff	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y		
Merthyr Tydfil	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y		
Caerphilly	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Blaenau Gwent	Y			Y		Y	Y	Y	
Torfaen	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Monmouthshire	Y**			Y					
Newport	Y			Y	Y	Y			

* Based on review of claims forms

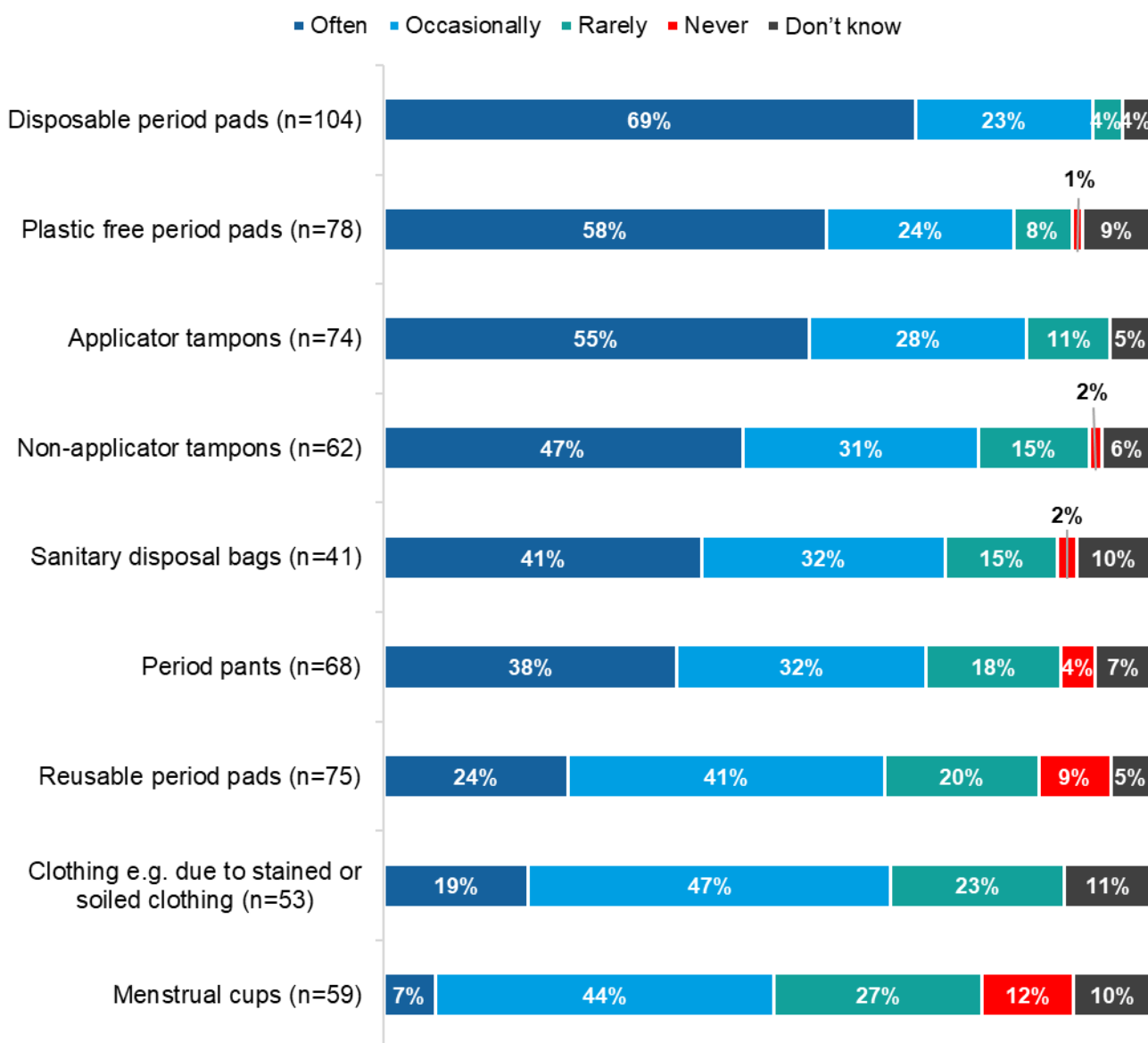
** Authority is looking to work with satellite groups who will be ordering / distributing products on their behalf

*** Due to change

**** e.g. disposable and reusable products: pads, tampons, period pants etc

Organisations were asked how frequently the free period products were taken up by the people they support. Chart 9 shows that disposable period pads were most frequently taken, with seven in ten (69%) stating 'often'. This was followed by eco-friendly plastic free pads, with 58% stating 'often'. Of all the reusable products, period pants were most often taken up (38%), compared to just 7% taking up menstrual cups / menstrual cups - *"We'll have tampons and pads available, maybe an idea to provide every period age child a pair of period knickers that they can order themselves in the right size and then it would maybe encourage use of them."* [End user]

Chart 9: How frequently are the free period products taken up by the people you support?



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

4.2 Key research question 2: How has the grant led to learners and those on a low income being more knowledgeable and confident in using reusable and / or plastic free period products?

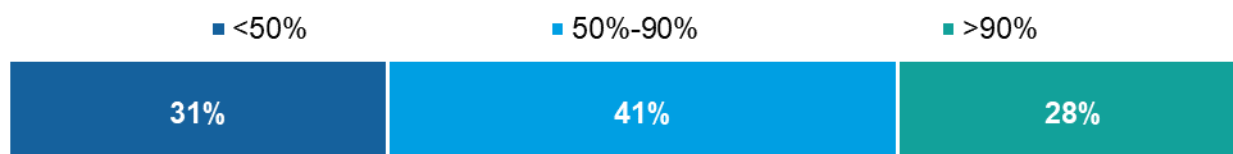
4.2.1 Awareness of and uptake of reusable and / or plastic free period products

By 2027, the Welsh Government aims to have 90-100% of the period products funded by the Period Dignity Grant to be products with reduced plastic content, reduced plastic packaging or reusable products²⁰. To understand the extent to which organisations were currently meeting this target, they were asked during the last funding period (2022/23) what proportion of the funding or products were spent on reusable and / or plastic free products. The findings suggest good progress is being made, with around a third (31%, n=26) stating less than 50% has been spent on reusable and/or plastic free products, two fifths (41%, n=35) stating at least 50% but less than 90%, and just over a quarter (28%, n=24) stating more than 90% (Chart 10) - *“We are now able to offer the pupils the chance to use reusable period products which they may not be able to afford themselves.” [School].*

As not all local authorities completed the survey, secondary monitoring data for the 2022/23 period was also assessed. Looking at the percentage of the grant spent on eco-friendly products for local authorities 10 of the 22 local authorities used >90% of the grant on eco-friendly products, while the remaining 12 had used between 65% to 90% of the grant on eco-friendly products.

Chart 10: During the 2022/23 funding period, what proportion of the funding / products you purchased was spent on reusable and / or plastic free products?

(n=85)



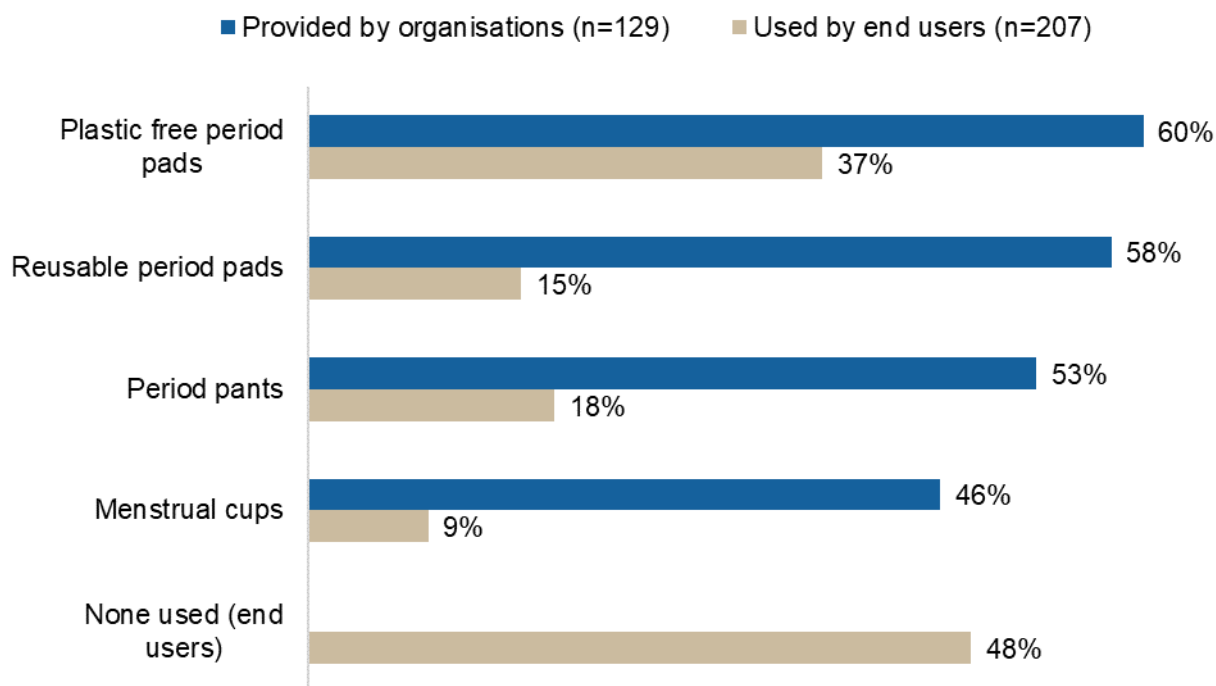
(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

A wide range of eco-friendly products were provided by organisations, with the most cited being plastic free pads (60%, n=78), reusable pads (58%, n=75) and period pants (53%, n=68). However, there were differences between the products provided by organisations and usage in these products by end users, with 48% (n=99) of end users stating that they

²⁰ [Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan Young Peoples version](#)

have not used any eco-friendly products (Chart 11). Looking at the eco-friendly products used, end users preferred to use plastic free period pads out of all the eco-friendly products available. This is explored in more detail in section 3.2.2 which looks at end user experiences of using eco-friendly products.

Chart 11: What reusable and / or plastic free products did you provide / compared to products used by end users



(Period Dignity evaluation end user survey 2023) and (Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

4.2.2 The experiences of people using reusable and / or plastic free period products

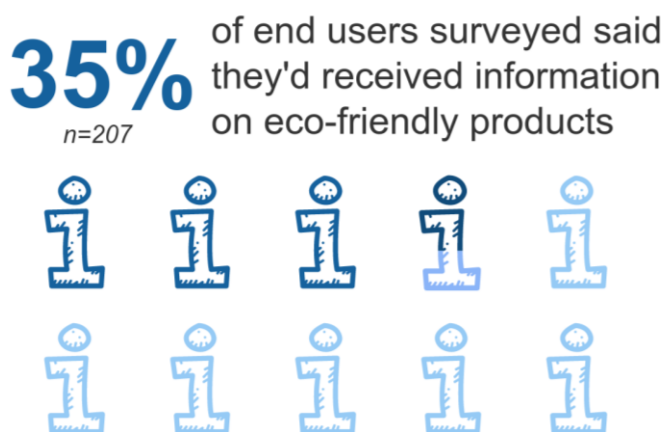
Across the organisations we spoke to, most felt that the reusable and / or plastic free products weren't of the same quality standard - *"They didn't find them as good and they are double the expense for not as good a product"* [Community setting]. Similarly, younger learners did not seem as open to using them - *"They are not so keen on the plastic free, the eco-friendly, or the washable products - they're not really interested in those at all."* [School]

We spoke to 26 end users in-depth around their experiences of using reusable and / or plastic free period products and 44% (n=11) said they were 'not very' or 'not at all confident' in using these products, while the rest said they were 'fairly confident' – none were 'very confident'. When we explored why this was, results showed there they were two key concerns with using reusable products (such as reusable pads, menstrual cups):

- Hygiene-related barriers, such as how to clean them, the time needed to clean them and having to carry bulky, dirty products around with them: *“I haven’t used the reusable pad either because I am not entirely sure how to clean it properly for it to be safe and disinfected enough to be reused”* [End user]. Another comment included; *“I have used them [reusable pads] in the past, but I find them time consuming to clean”* [End user]
- There were also concerns around products leaking: *“I don’t have as much confidence in how much they can hold and if they leak.”* [End user]; and: *“Speaking from a girl with a heavy flow I am still a bit worried about how much a product can hold without leaking and not holding the blood without spreading around.”* [End user]

4.2.3 What information did people receive about reusable and / or plastic free period products

We asked organisations how they have approached educating people on reusable and / or plastic free period products (Table 6). Just under half (46%) said they have held educational sessions or talks with learners - *“We spoke to the girls receiving the products how the organic/plastic free ones were better for the environment and how going forward, they might try and change to using these.”*



Around a quarter (23%) said that they have promoted eco-friendly products via social media or their website - *“Our social media coverage and face to face inquiry support provided the platform to initially spread the word about the provision available at our centre.”* A further 20% said they have offered eco-friendly products to try out - *“By providing the products with conversation around their use.”* When we asked end users themselves, 35% said they had received information about reusable and / or plastic free period products.

Table 6: How organisations have approached educating people on reusable and / or plastic free period products

	Count	%
Educational sessions / talks with learners	56	46%
Promoted eco-friendly products on social media, website etc.	28	23%
Offering eco-friendly products to try	24	20%
Produced in house guidance, information	18	15%
Upskilling staff to support learners	9	7%
Student ambassadors have been talking to other learners	3	2%
Other	5	4%
Haven't done anything	11	9%
Respondents	121	

(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

4.2.4 Improving the eco-friendly product user experience

Exploring how the experiences of using eco-friendly products could be improved, end users felt that improving the availability of items, including the range of absorbency levels should be considered. However, this needs to be supported with more information and education about reusable products in particular, such as how to wash them, what to expect etc -

“Information such as how to properly clean reusable products and how to ensure they are properly clean. Where to store them when you aren't on your period to ensure that they don't get damaged or dirty and having the information in simple form such as leaflets or talks so that everyone can understand it, would be helpful to people especially if they had never used reusable period products before.” [End user].

There were concerns about having to carry around dirty products particularly around the smell, bulkiness and hygiene. Some end users said that this was a significant barrier, but said that providing wash bags or offering areas to store soiled items may help - *“Maybe a room or a storage area, this would not be feasible but making it a normal thing would help. Maybe if they had a cloakroom girls could have a separate bag. But I know not everyone*

would take them home. I think reusable knickers are great but if you have to take the knickers off to get changed." [End user]. Again, this needs to be supported with information, as a lot of reusable period products are far more absorbent / can hold more period waste than standard disposable products. Resulting in people not needing to get changed as often or until they get home for example.

4.2.5 What were main barriers faced by people who menstruate

End users experienced more barriers accessing free reusable period products compared to free disposable products (Chart 12). For example, 56% of end users said that they haven't experienced any barriers accessing disposable products, compared to 33% stating this for reusable products.

When exploring why this was the case, many mentioned that reusable products weren't always available (27%), or were not easy to access (18%) - *"I know some schools have them in reception. This stops some young people asking, as it can be embarrassing"* [End user]. Some were not aware the products were available (16%). However, when we explored this with end users of free period products, their main concerns around using reusable period products were typically around hygiene - *"Not being able to dispose of them straight after their use, carrying them around until I can clean them"* [End user]. Others felt that they were inconvenient or required too much effort to use - *"They are not as convenient as disposable products"* [End user].

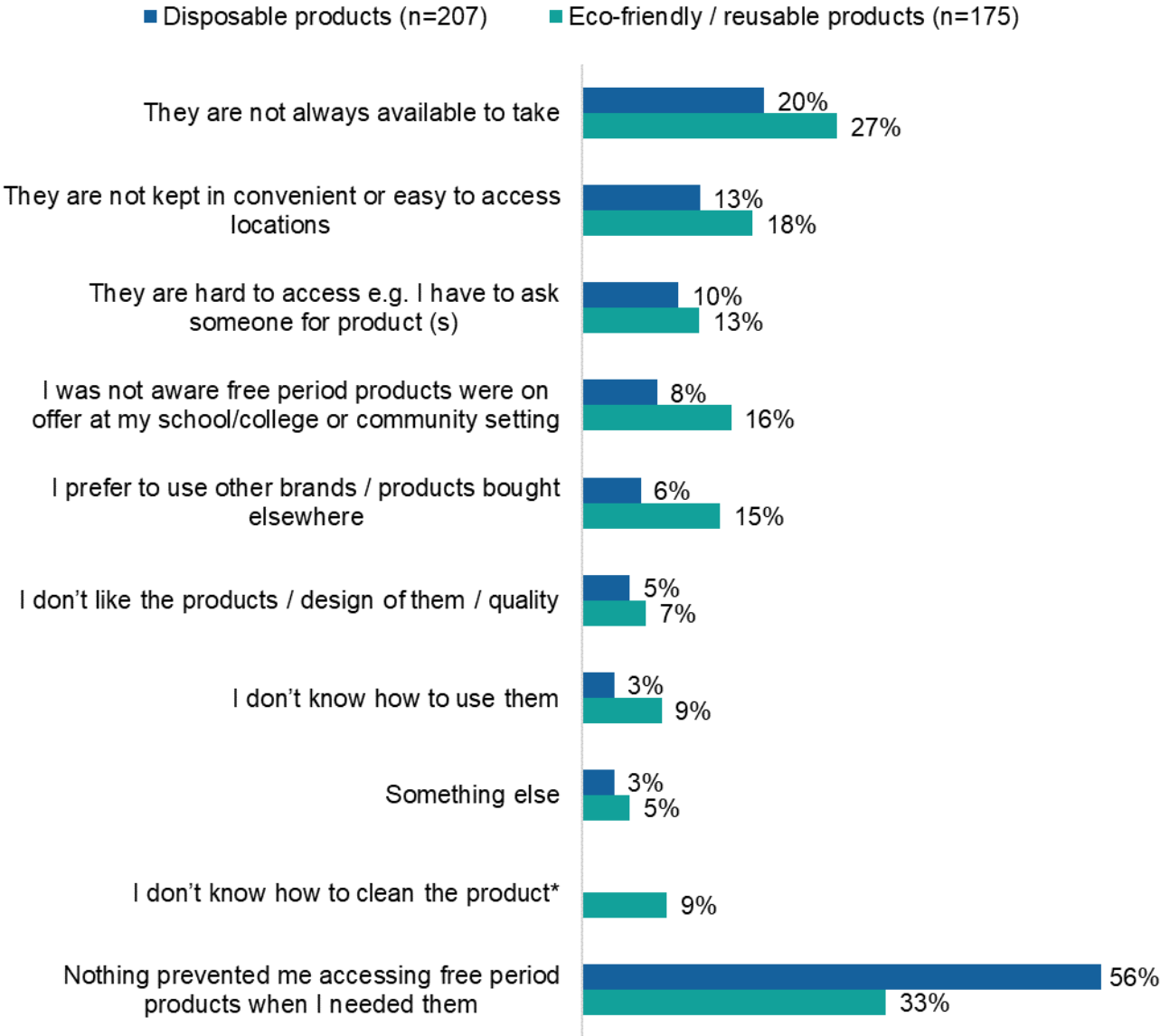
"They are quite bulky, and people opt for a disposable pad as they are more convenient, and you don't have to carry them around once you're done with them." [End user].

"I suppose it's to do with washing and cleaning the items, I'm often away from home and it's difficult in public toilets to wash anything if required and I worry it won't be as clean and so may smell." [End user].

The qualitative work also highlighted barriers to using reusable period products as a result of stigmas around periods, particularly at home. For example, people in the family home may become aware that someone is on their period due to reusable products being washed and dried, in contrast to disposable products which can be easily thrown away - *"I just wouldn't really like to use reusable ones because then I'd have to go home and wash them which I don't feel like I can do freely as periods are not spoken about publicly in my household"* [End user].

Religious and cultural community initiatives around period dignity should take into account the taboos that surround periods, and reproductive health²¹. A number of end users also highlighted the need for a wider range of absorbency options, with a focus on offering more products for a heavy menstrual flow - *“The flow range is often from light to medium and sometimes heavy but never extremely heavy or there isn’t an abundance of heavy flow, making it less accessible for people with heavy flows”* [End user].

Chart 12: Barriers to accessing free period products



(Period Dignity evaluation end user survey 2023)

*reusable products only

²¹ [Let's talk. Period: Inclusivity and diversity](#)

4.3 The impact the grant is having on recipients of period products

4.3.1 What impact have the free period products had on people's finances

We know that people facing poverty will often forgo buying period products, with eco-friendly period products being perceived as less affordable²². It is therefore important to understand to what extent the grant has impacted on people's finances. There are differences in the impact free period products has had on end users. Just over half (55%, n=92) of end users stated they 'agree' that they now have more money to spend on other things as a result of being able to access free period products. A fifth (20%, n=34) said they weren't quite sure and a quarter (25%, n=42) said that this wasn't the case.

Chart 13: The extent to which end users agree free period products and information have...



(Period Dignity evaluation end user survey 2023)

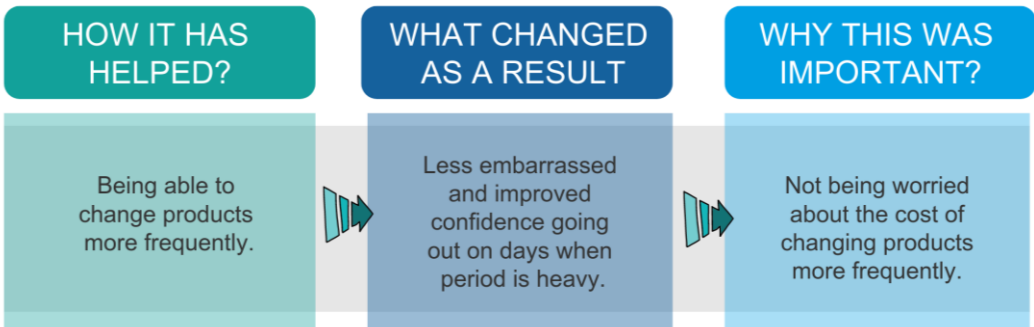
Exploring this further, those who accessed free period products because they generally find it difficult to access products, were slightly more likely to agree (63%, n=26) that they have more money now - *"I have saved a lot of money which has helped me to afford stationery and textbooks when my family was struggling financially during the cost-of-living crisis"* [End user]. This is compared to those who forgot to bring or did not have the period products they needed (58%, n=68) - *"I wouldn't say it helped, just convenient when it happens unexpectedly, my family can afford them so I have only used the free ones in an emergency"* [End user].

The qualitative research highlighted the individual impacts the free period products had on people. For example, Sarah, a FEI learner, told us that having access to free period products at her college has enabled her to change sanitary products more frequently, especially when her period is heavier. This resulted in Sarah feeling cleaner during the day when she is away from home and generally has more confidence going out and about. This

²² [Access to sanitary products Aberdeen pilot: evaluation report](#)

change is important to her as she doesn't have to worry about the cost of changing her period products so frequently now.

Sarah, FEI learner

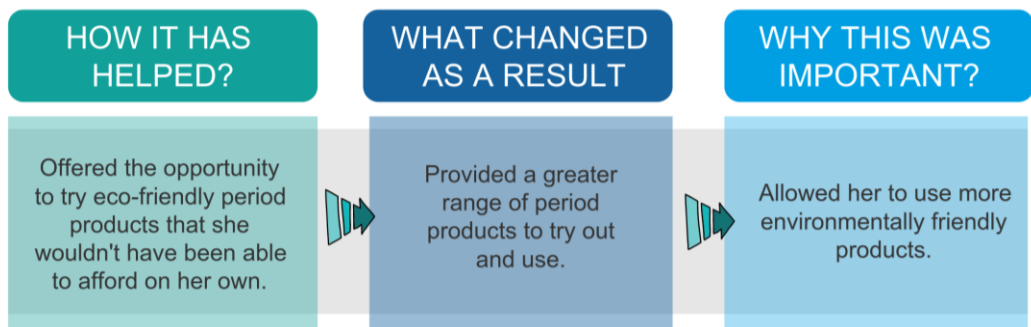


"It means I can go into college even on a heavy day knowing that I have a backup instead of potentially going home because I was scared of leaking through."

4.3.2 What barriers have been overcome and to what extent are people experiencing better periods

The grant has given people access to eco-friendly products, specifically those who would have normally struggled to afford them, more experience of eco-friendly products. - *"It's given me access to try new products and awareness of other options available"* [End user]. For example, Steph told us that being provided with the free eco-friendly products has given her the opportunity to use them, which she wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise. She felt that this gave her more options, which was important to her as she was environmentally conscious.

Steph, older woman



"Being older you do tend to stick with what you know and what has worked. Having access to these more environmentally friendly products are important to me."

4.3.3 What is driving better experiences when menstruating?

Key driver analysis (KDA) was conducted to see what aspects have the strongest influence on the overall experiences of people on their periods. KDA gives us a performance value - if the performance value of a variable is close to 1, then it is a strong driver of overall experience. If the value is close to 0, then it is a weak driver of overall experience (see analysis section for further information on KDA).

Table 7: Key Driver Analysis

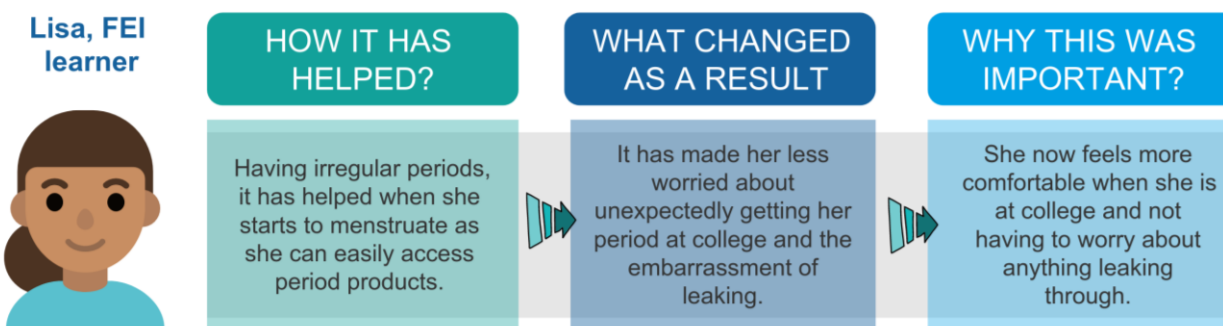
	Correlation	The extent to which end users agree free period products and information has led them to being...
I am less worried about my period now	0.68	60%
I am less embarrassed about my period now	0.55	59%
I know more about eco-friendly/reusable period products than I did before	0.50	55%
I feel more able to speak to people openly about periods than I did before	0.49	53%
I have more money to save/spend on other things now	0.49	55%
I can get free period products easily now	0.46	74%
I can get eco-friendly/reusable period products easily now	0.36	42%
I am less likely to miss school/college, sports or other social activities when I am on my period now	0.30	56%

Table 7 shows that **being less worried about being on their period** was a key driver for better experiences when menstruating. Six in ten (60%) end users agreed that free period products led them to being less worried about their periods. Therefore, being able to access free period products in schools and community settings has helped people feel more confident and consequently less worried about having their period - *“Knowing I can access what I need whilst on my period makes me feel more confident”* [End user]. Angie told us that the free period products have helped to reduce the stress of having to remember to bring enough products with her for the day. She now feels more comfortable at school and feels she is less likely to miss class on days when she has a heavy flow.



"It allows me to attend things such as college when I'm on my period. In the past I have missed school due to not being able to change my pads frequently enough."

Another key driver in people experiencing better periods was **being less embarrassed about their period**. Almost six in ten (59%) end users said that the programme has resulted in them feeling less embarrassed - *"Having them in the bathroom for free has made my life so much easier and also makes it a little less embarrassing."* [End user] Lisa told us how her periods were irregular, and how she had used toilet paper when she started to menstruate unexpectedly. Since she can now access free period products at her FEI, she is less worried about getting her period away from the home and less likely to have a leak. This is important to Lisa as she is now more comfortable when at her FEI.



"When I come on my period while am away from home and didn't bring any pads with me, I would normally use toilet paper until I get home, which would be extremely uncomfortable. It also makes me feel anxious about it leaking through, so having access to free period products helps me a lot"

4.3.4 Key research question 3: What impact has the free period products and information had on attendance levels

Research has shown that people lack confidence when they are on their periods and have to do physical activity. If not addressed, this can have a negative impact on forming lifelong

habits and positive attitudes towards doing physical activity²³. Overall, 56% (n=94) of end users said that the free period products and information, made it less likely for them to miss out on school, sports or other social activities when menstruating (Chart 14).

When exploring the impact of the free period products and information through the qualitative work with end users, we found that there was some indication that people were more likely to take part in activities such as sports, as they knew that they could change if needed, using the free products available - *“I enjoy taking part in many sports especially football and it makes it easier for me knowing that because I have different options, I can still do activities”* [End user].

Others said that they were more likely to attend school or FEI when their period was heavy, as they could change more regularly, not having to worry about the cost or having enough products with them - *“It has made me feel more confident doing the activities that I enjoy doing”* [End user]. This was echoed by organisations reporting that they felt people they had supported were less likely to miss out on activities / school, with 83%²⁴ (n=92) saying they ‘definitely agree’ (25%) or ‘tend to agree’ (58%) with this.

Chart 14: The extent to which End Users agree that due to free period products and information ...

I am less likely to miss school/college, sports or other social activities when I am on my period now (n=167)

■ Agree ■ Not sure ■ Disagree



(Period Dignity evaluation end user survey 2023)

²³ [Puberty & Sport: An Invisible Stage](#)

²⁴ Based on 111 survey responses

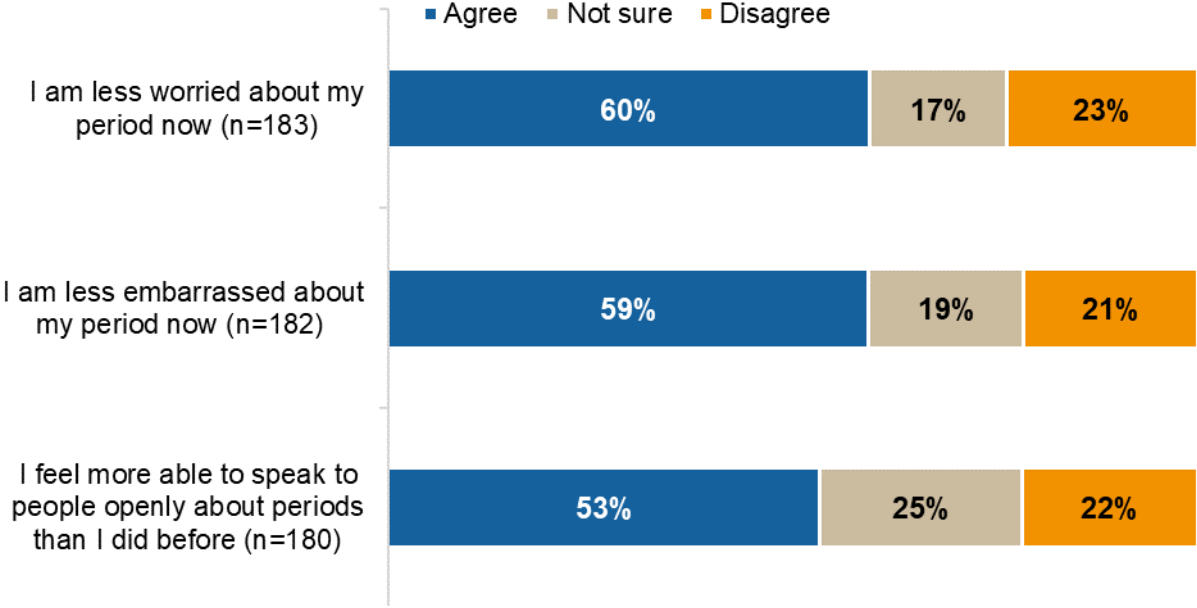
4.3.5 **Key research question 4: How has the grant led to a reduction in stigmas and taboos associated with menstruation?**

End users still felt that there were stigmas and taboos associated with menstruation in society, but felt that gains were being made by more people talking about periods. Common words mentioned by end users included:

Dirty, emotional, irrational, gross, disgusting, impure, sinful, scary, secretive, hush, unclean, embarrassing, a curse.

The free period products offered, and the information provided has helped address these issues - *“just being able to talk about it more and putting more information out there helps reduce the stigma of talking about periods being a taboo subject”* [End user]. Six in ten (60%, n=109) end users said that as a result of this programme, they were less worried about their period now, whilst 59% (n=108) felt less embarrassed about their period, and 53% (n=96) felt able to speak more openly about periods (Chart 15). The qualitative work with end users showed that people would like to see more work being done to address these issues - *“There are often negative comments about periods and menstruating, e.g., if you are a bit irritable the response may be “is your period due?”. There is not enough acknowledgement about how periods affect women and how this can be positive! It should be an empowering conversation rather than one that views periods as a negative”* [End user]. Feedback was also received on the stigmas and taboos in communities, such as Southeast Asian and Roma / Traveller communities and how education on menstruation should start at a younger age – *“Ideally in schools starting from young ages but also in the open public primarily in South-East Asian communities. From experience, the topic is taboo and men are afraid of the topic. Information should be provided more in these communities and environments”* [End user] Another comment was around the Roma Gypsy community – *“I am a Roma Gypsy and women’s health is not something that is spoken about openly and definitely not with men. Need education when you are about 11 years-old, have the talk in schools and the free products available to them”*. [End user]

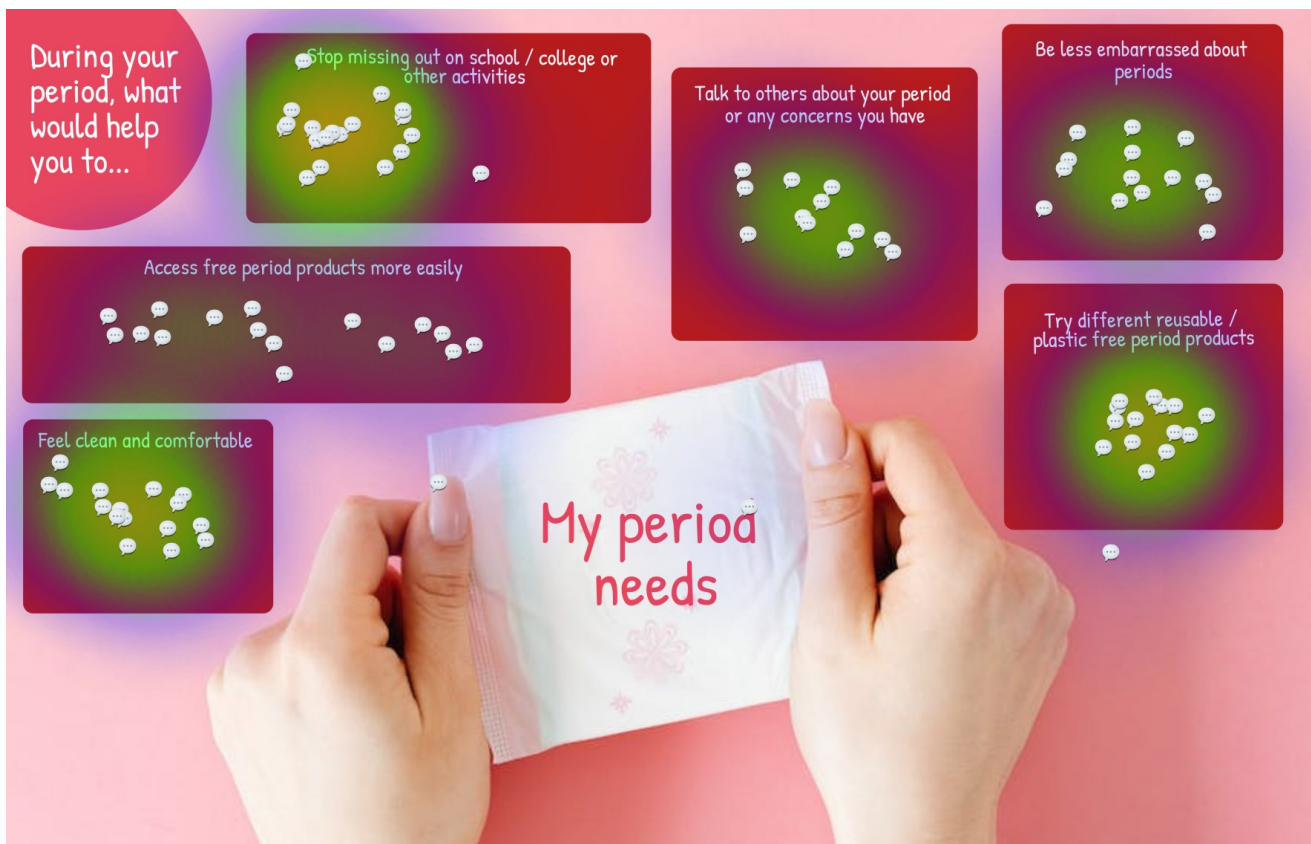
Chart 15: The extent to which ends users agree free period products and information have impacted on them.



(Period Dignity evaluation end user survey 2023)

4.3.6 The end user period needs

We asked end users (n=26) to think about what things would make their lives easier when they were menstruating. Participants were provided with a template to note down their thoughts (as per the image below).



In summary, end users' periods needs were as follows:

Stop missing out on school / college or other

- The provision of products that do not leak
- Knowing who to go to if you have an unexpected accident / 'period friendly' approachable staff
- More detailed information on period symptoms and how to deal with them
- Pain relief, hot water bottles, heated pads
- Being able to change more regularly when at school
- Being able to work / study from home

**Access
free
period
products
more
easily**

- Where you can access products quickly / not having to ask anyone
- Having products inside the toilet stalls rather than outside by the sinks
- Having free products in all public toilets
- Period parcels provided every month
- A discreet card that learners can show to staff so that they can access / deal with menstruation more easily

**Feel
clean
and
comfort-
able**

- Provide sanitary wipes
- Having access to spare clothes for any accidents
- Access to showers or better wash facilities
- Make sure sanitary bins are provided and emptied regularly

**Talk to
others
about
concerns**

- Period conversations need to be normalised
- More conversations about menstruation with men
- Having products on show, helps you talk about them with others

**Be less
embarra-
ssed**

- All genders to learn about menstruation
- Don't use vague language such as 'time of the month'
- Improve awareness on how to help others that are menstruating
- Having open discussions about menstrual cycles so people understand their own bodies better
- More people accepting that periods are normal

**Try
different
reusable
/ plastic
free
products**

- Improve the availability of items
- To try them at home first
- More information and education i.e. how to wash them, what to expect etc.
- Learn about the economic benefits of reusable products
- To hear from others who have used them
- A wash bag to store dirty products

4.4 Key research question 5: How has funding, information and free period products been allocated and distributed to those that most need it across Wales?

4.4.1 Understanding of the grants purpose and expectations of the grant

The majority of organisations (84%, n=103) said they were aware of the grant's vision, and the large amount of funding was highly valued by all organisations. They felt it was inclusive, offering menstruation support, such as free products and education, to anyone who needs it.

Overall, the majority of participants reported their experiences of the grant were in line with their initial expectations – *“For me, it's very straightforward”* [Local authority]. Most felt it was clear what would happen, that they would get the money and would then distribute how they felt best for their area. It was also mentioned that when the grant first started it was much smaller and has since grown substantially – *“It was much significantly smaller than it is now”* [Local authority].

Alongside this, participants reported that as the grant has grown, so have the management requirements i.e., the resources and time needed to administer the funds – the implications of this are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

4.5 How and where best does the grant fit within organisations and teams

Just over half (51%, n=66) of organisations who completed the survey said they held lead responsibility for addressing period poverty and period dignity within their organisation (Chart 16). This was especially the case for local authorities and FEIs, while schools and community settings had slightly higher proportions who said they were administrators within their organisation. Most (86%, n=107) felt they were clear about their organisation's role in improving period dignity in Wales.

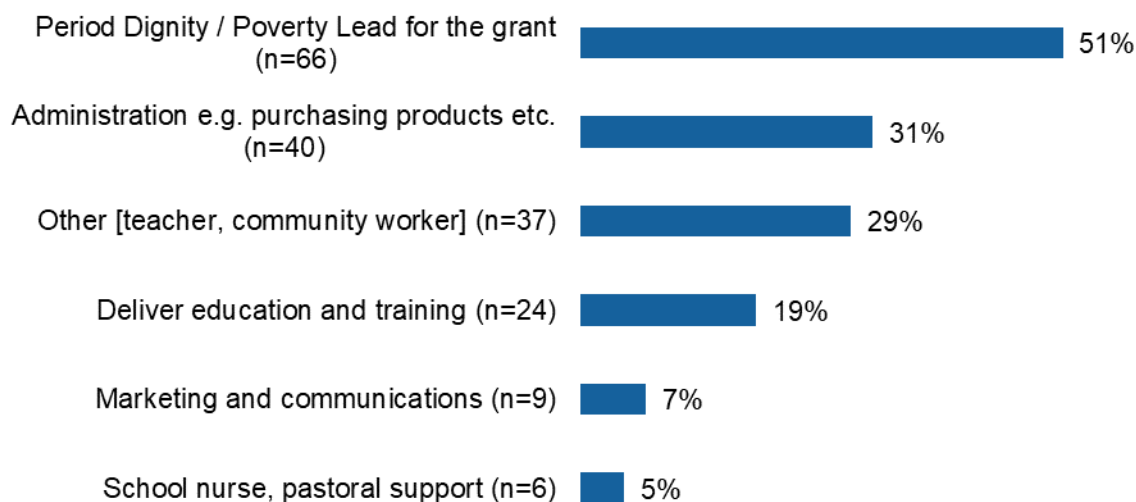
When where the grants sit in organisations were explored in the more in-depth work, it was found that there were variations. In local authorities, it is often difficult to pin point exactly where it should fit, as there are many areas it could sit including education, youth, health and wellbeing or in departments that manage grants and finances.

Regardless of where period dignity sat within the organisations contacted, there was collaboration across their different departments to manage and deliver the grant – *“Youth Services, I couldn't deliver it without their active involvement”* [Local authority] and *“It has*

actually helped us to be able to access and engage with the schools and find out what the young people and the schools need.” [Local authority]

Chart 16: What is your role in relation to addressing period poverty and period dignity for your organisation?

(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

4.5.1 What challenges did organisations face when offering free period products / support to people

Four in ten (40%, n=49) highlighted storage issues for period products as a key challenge through the survey (Chart 17). This was also highlighted as a concern for those who provided feedback through the qualitative work. For some, too much product was being ordered / provided, however, this varied from organisation to organisation and was attributed to various factors including premises size, appropriate storage facilities etc. In some cases this meant that products were thrown away – *“The problem we face is we are a small primary school, and we have a huge surplus of products. I have rung them but they keep on sending them, it’s so much waste.”* [Primary school]. Some felt there was no control over the amount of products received or when these come in, which makes it difficult to manage – *“We get too much product to really use so it’s just a waste of money... It’s great that we have the resources to look after everybody, but I think we get too much product.”* [Secondary school].

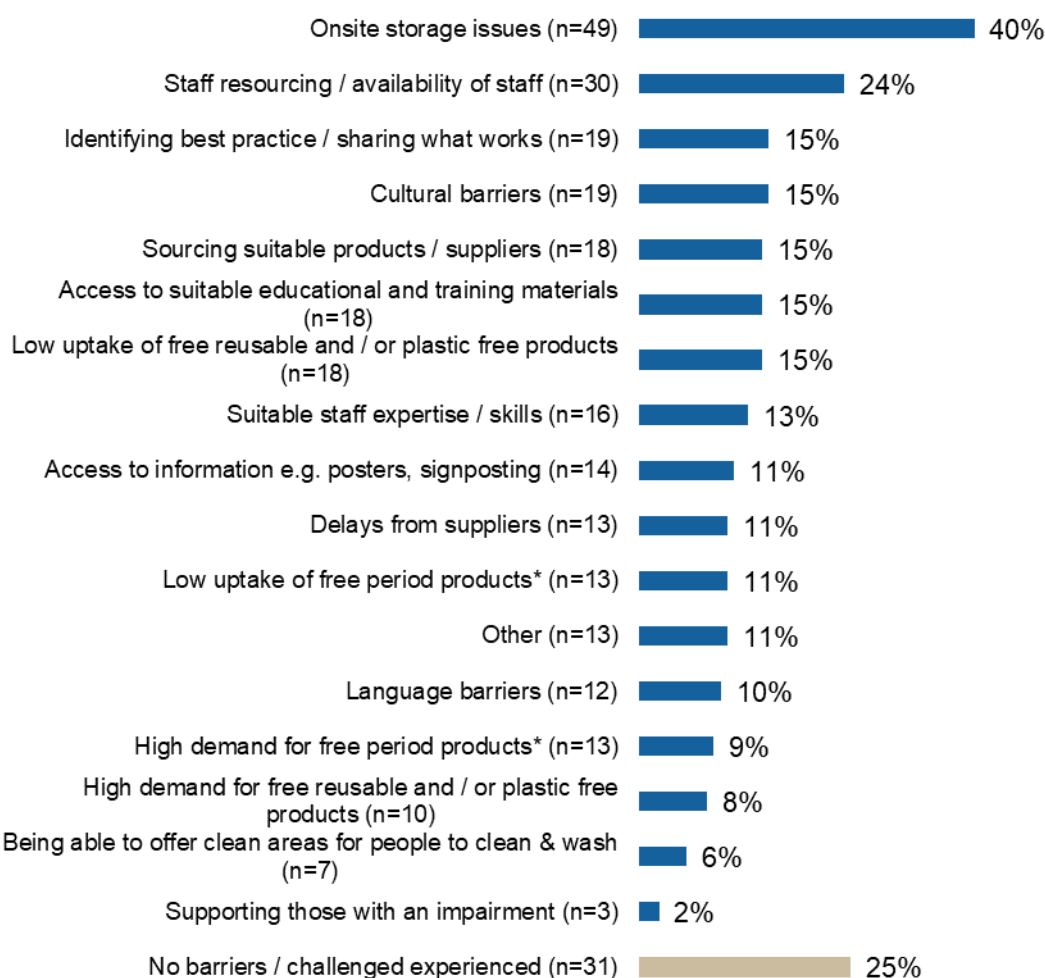
Another key challenge was the amount of staff resource needed to manage the grant. This was especially the case for local authorities – *“There are significant administration costs*

attached to this because of all the ordering, the tracking, the inventory of all the stock.”
“Most grants now do have admin in them, so it would be worth adding that in because you know it does take time.” [Local authority] Those who were more experienced in receiving grants said that being able to spend the grant on administration time is normally offered alongside other grants they receive – *“We wouldn’t accept this from any grant that I’m aware of.”* [Local authority].

Some of the community settings said they felt as if there was no consistency in getting products through the grant and that they were considered only when there were left over products – *Ohh, a second thought...ooh, we’ve got some extras do you want them.”* [Community setting]. This could potentially be down to the lack of resources within the local authorities to effectively manage this process.

Chart 17: What barriers has your organisation faced when offering free period products / support to people?

(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

* (ex. reusable and / or plastic free products)

One organisation said that due to the change in the funding model within their local authority due to the consolidation of the grant, it meant that for this school, buying power shifted away from the school, so their successful student-led approach was lost as a separate company had been commissioned to provide products. This had negatively impacted on learners in leading the decision-making on period products throughout the school – *“We’d empowered our students with this idea that they could support young people to access products and they were having some success with this, but then the biggest chunk of it [the funding] got allocated to a company. It’s now very difficult to monitor the actual spending of it.”*

[Secondary school]

4.5.2 What were the enablers of effective collaboration / communication between Welsh Government and local authorities, plus between different organisations

Overall, organisations reported that the Welsh Government were easy to communicate with – *“If you’ve got any queries or anything you know you can e-mail them direct and they will get back to you, so yeah, they’ve been quite good.”* However, most felt that they would like to see more shared learning and engagement with other organisations and to have a platform/forum within which they could do this.

A couple of participants felt that the grant has enabled them to work with organisations that they wouldn’t have normally been able to engage with, such as small, independent start-up companies that offer eco-friendly products. It has not only helped them provide eco-friendly products, but one organisation explained how these products have been co-designed by students. This in turn is having a knock-on effect for the company too, by increasing their sales volume – *“They have boomed because everywhere I go, I tell people this is who I work with and I know local authorities and schools and colleges have all approached [the organisation] there for her to meet their period dignity leads.”* [Local authority]

4.5.3 Improvements to the grant

- Guidance offered / provided

The majority were happy with the information and guidance that the Welsh Government provided, although one participant mentioned that they need to offer training on how to manage a grant, as some people may not have experience of doing this. A couple of organisations suggested via the qualitative work that more information should be provided about the grant offer, especially for community-based organisations – *“The Council needs to*

start disseminating the information in a much better way and Welsh Government need to let people know that this grant is available.” [Community setting]

- The inclusion of administration time built into the grant

Most frequently mentioned was the need for the grant to include administration time –

“There are significant administration costs attached to this because of all the ordering, the tracking, the inventory of all the stock.” [Local authority] Another said – *“Most grants now do have admin in them, so it would be worth adding that in because you know it does take time.”* [Local authority] Participants who were more experienced in managing grants said that it is normally offered with other grants they receive – *“We wouldn’t accept this from any grant that I’m aware of.”*

- Standardised training and educational resource offer

A high proportion of the organisations spoken to through the qualitative work also mentioned the need for the grant to focus more heavily on training and education, as they didn’t feel there was enough funding to ensure continuity – *“It has proven really difficult to find someone who wants to deliver this type of work on a part time and ad hoc basis”*. [Local authority] This is echoed in the survey responses, with most accessing further support for people who menstruate outside the grant such as information e.g., posters, leaflets (54%) and / or training and education (42%) (Table 8) - *“I think part of the grant could be spent on training them to lead peer-support networks. The nurse could come in and train them up and have them become more knowledgeable about delivering training or the eco-products. That’s an area that’s possibly overlooked at the moment because even though the idea is there, it never quite happens in reality.”* [Secondary school]

These organisations also felt producing educational material that can be used to support the products would be helpful. This would help with consistent messaging about periods across the country - *“I think it’s making sure people are aware and putting out the right information in the right way. If I’m working with a community that doesn’t read and write very well, then we need to have something that’s a nice easy read”*. [Community Setting]

Table 8: What additional support, if any, have you accessed outside of the grant to help support people who menstruate?

	Count	%
Information e.g. posters, leaflets	32	54%
Training and education	25	42%
Funding (which was not part of the Period Dignity Grant)	12	20%
Other	9	15%
Respondents	59	

(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

- Flexibility of grant spending

As previously highlighted, organisations mentioned how they have stockpiles of products that weren't being used - *"the feedback we get from the schools you know is that they've got too many products"* [Local authority] - and felt the funding should be used elsewhere, for example on education and marketing the free products, rather than ring fencing it to be used against specific criteria. Other organisations felt that there was a need to increase the range of products that the grant could fund, for example wash items for example, laundry detergent - *"What would be helpful is if toiletries were included in the grant money to help with washing."* [School] In summary, organisations would like more flexibility on how the grant is spent so that they are responding to a need as this can vary quite drastically.

Organisations reported some challenges with working with smaller companies that are providing products, such as the amount of volume they can produce. One organisation mentioned that it was a challenge to find eco-friendly products produced locally and felt it would be beneficial if there were a few suppliers that everyone could use in the longer term - *"A directory of preferred suppliers that we could look at...we are spending a fair bit of time sourcing the products"* [Local authority].

Finally, organisations would welcome funding for IT infrastructure or the development of a central ordering and purchasing system - *"My hope would be that it would be some kind of regional partnership working and that you know that collectively those regional partners*

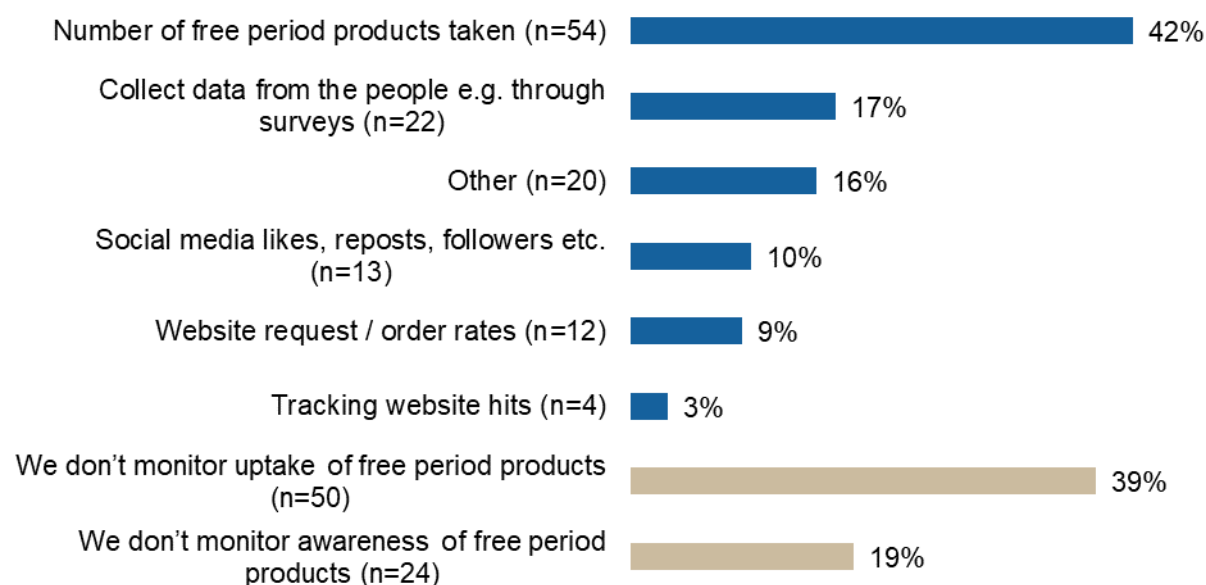
would procure in a service and develop the IT infrastructure to enable that to run efficiently."

[Local authority]

- Monitoring awareness, uptake and an improved feedback process

Local authorities and FEIs felt that the feedback and monitoring forms have become more complex and demanding, with no pre-notification of what information would need to be reported back - *"We find it difficult to understand why they want that amount of data when you haven't really suggested you want it at the beginning"* [Local authority]. When exploring what organisations were monitoring in terms of period products, almost four in ten (39%, n=50) said they weren't monitoring who took the period products and 19% (n=24) said they didn't monitor awareness either. These organisations were more likely to be community settings and primary schools.

Chart 18: How are you monitoring awareness and / or uptake of free period products?
(n=129)



(Period Dignity evaluation organisational survey 2023)

- Shared learning

Almost a fifth (15%) of organisations had encountered barriers in identifying best practice or sharing what works well when supporting people who menstruate. This was further echoed by the majority of organisations that we spoke to through the qualitative work, who also felt that there needs to be more shared learning on what is working and what isn't. Although most mentioned that they had attended sessions, they want to see more of these

discussions taking place - *They should do more shared learning*". One participant felt the Welsh Government should be sharing information on the impact of their work and the grant as a whole.

5. Conclusions

The evaluation of the Period Dignity Grant looked to explore the **efficacy of the funding** process, to identify what **impact the grant is having on recipients** of the free period products and information provided, and to **provide insight and recommendations** for the future of the grant. Overall, the success of the grant and programmes of work was measured against five outcomes, with the paragraphs below presenting a summary of this based on the evaluation findings.

It should be noted that the findings are limited in the sense that the small sample sizes meant it wasn't possible to stratify the main findings by the key under-served groups. Future research activities should focus on under-served groups specifically.

Outcome: Learners and those on low incomes can access free period products easily

The Period Dignity Grant is being accessed by people who menstruate and those who find it difficult to access period products. Although the grant is open to all who menstruate, there is a need to make sure those who normally find it difficult to access period products - to make their periods more comfortable - are aware and have regular access to products across a range of settings. When looking at the different models across organisations, a straightforward approach of making products available in toilets so that people don't have to ask, seems by far the most effective approach.

Outcome: Free period products and information has been allocated correctly and effectively across schools, FEIs and other community settings in Wales

The grant is being allocated to all FEI's and local authorities, which is being filtered down to schools (local authority only), but more work is needed to reach community settings, such as voluntary groups and grassroots organisations, that are most likely to be supporting under-served communities – therefore resulting in greater reach. Local authorities require more resources to facilitate a joined up approach and to enable better reach with schools and community settings across their areas.

Outcome: Learners and those on low incomes are more knowledgeable and confident in using reusable and / or plastic free period products

Learners are more knowledgeable about reusable and plastic free period products as a result of the grant, but further work needs to be done to improve the uptake of eco-friendly options. Positive efforts have been made in offering reusable period products (such as menstrual cup, period pants etc), however the standard disposable period pads were most commonly offered, followed by more eco-friendly plastic free disposable period pads. Reasons for this ranged from the quality of the products, leakage concerns and hygiene-related concerns, such as how to clean them, the time required to clean them and having to carry bulky, dirty products around. People would like to hear from those who have used reusable products, to better understand what to expect and how to best use these products. There were concerns with using reusable products, such as how to change products whilst away from home and how this would be dealt with. Whilst these are barriers that need to be overcome, people need to be made aware that good quality reusables are generally more absorbent, therefore needing to be changed less frequently. The general consensus is that more education and information need to go hand in hand with the provision of these products to result in an increase in uptake.

Outcome: Learners and those on low incomes are less likely to be disrupted by their period and have improved experiences of menstruation

The grant offered positive outcomes for people, such as financial savings, but the most positive outcome is that people are less worried and embarrassed about menstruating. People were also more comfortable when away from home and the grant allowed them to change more regularly and reduce any concerns around leakage etc. There were still gaps in support for under-served communities, such as having regular access to products (disposable or reusable) and understanding how to use and wash reusable products effectively. Being able to wash and clean these products present barriers for some end users, not just in their understanding of how to deal with the reusable products, but with the situation they were in such as not being able to afford to wash and dry them or even access facilities to wash them in.

Outcome: The stigmas and taboos around menstruation have been reduced

There were still concerns about the cultural taboos and stigmas around periods that exist in the home. There was an acknowledgement that further work and support needs to be done on breaking down the myths associated with periods and that this process will take time.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for Welsh Government:

1. **Map out the community networks and grassroots organisations** within communities to make sure the grant is reaching those areas most in need.
2. **More flexibility in how and when money is spent** e.g. carrying monies over, using more of the grant on information and education etc. within a given financial year is needed, alongside the range of items the grant can fund.
3. Due to the growing amount of resource required to manage the grant, the Welsh Government should look to **include administration costs** especially for local authorities.
4. Provide a **standardised training and educational offer** which all organisations can adopt. But within this, offer tailored, accessible information to suit those with literacy or language barriers.
5. Look at **offering a centralised ordering system**, but this offer would need to be scoped out and co-designed by organisations for it to work effectively.
6. **Improve the way the grant is monitored** – in terms of the outputs - **and the overall feedback** – in terms of more regular, meaningful shared learning sessions - **process** from organisations. Overall this would improve the quality of data and consistency of data collected in order to track outcomes and impacts for both organisations and end users alike.

6.2 Recommendations for organisations

1. Make sure that there are **trained and dedicated staff in educational settings** that learners are both comfortable with, and are aware of, and capable of supporting more complex needs.
2. **Period products should be freely accessible across all settings**, without the need to ask staff for products.
3. **Improve the levels of co-design and co-delivery** of free period products and education in academic settings.
4. Organisations should look to **improve the availability of items** including the range of absorbency levels for both reusable, plastic free and standard disposable period products.

5. **Information, alongside education**, needs to be offered as wraparound e.g. education, information, financial support across all organisations, both with people who do and don't menstruate to help overcome the stigma and taboos around periods. This ideally needs to be started at a young age e.g., the later years of primary school.
6. **Learners' experiences with using reusable products need to be offered to other learners** in an educational setting. This would potentially help to overcome people's concerns around leakage, hygiene concerns etc. and encourage people to give these products a try.

7. Appendices

Annex A: In depth discussion guides

Annex B: Visual examples of the online community board

Annex C: Quantitative survey (end users and organisations)

Annex D: Example of monitoring form used by Welsh Government

Annex A: In depth discussion guide - organisations

<p>O1: Learners and those on low incomes can <u>access free period products easily</u> Research question: How are learners and those on low incomes easily accessing free period products?</p>	<p>20 mins</p>
<p>1. How did you approach offering free period products?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does someone want to give me an example? ○ Did your approach vary at all i.e. to different types of people (older vs younger; disabled people; ethnic minorities; etc), locations etc? How did this vary and why? <p>2. How <u>aware</u> are your learners or the people you support of the free period products on offer, would you say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ And to what extent are the period products taken? ○ What do you think stops people taking the products or taking the products on a more regular basis? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does this vary across your learners or people you support e.g. characteristics (older vs younger; disabled people; ethnic minorities; etc)? ▪ Has the grant helped overcome this at all? If so, how? <p>3. Can anyone give me an example of what has <u>worked particularly well</u> in offering free period products?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What aspects of your approach were key to creating awareness of the free period products? ○ And what about people taking the products - was there anything that enabled take-up of products? ○ Were there any particular products that worked better than others? Why were those more successful? <p>4. Does anyone have an <u>example of a challenge</u> they faced when offering free period products?</p> <p>5. What other barriers, if any, have you faced as an organisation in making your learners / the people you support <u>aware</u> of the free period products on offer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How have you overcome these barriers? How did the grant help, if at all? <p>6. What other barriers, if any, have you faced as an organisation in <u>encouraging take-up of the free period products</u>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How have you overcome these barriers? How did the grant help, if at all? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were there any variations between the different types of student / people you support (older vs younger; disabled people; ethnic minorities; etc)? 	
<p>O2: Learners and those on low incomes are <u>less likely to be disrupted</u> by their period and have <u>improved experiences</u> of menstruation Research question: How has the grant led to learners and those on low incomes being less likely to face day to day disruption because of their period?</p>	<p>10 mins</p>
<p>7. How else did you <u>support and inform people about menstruation</u> through the grant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Was there anything that <u>worked particularly well</u>? Why was this? ○ How was the support and information around menstruation <u>tailored to the different types of learners / people</u> you support? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did anything work particularly well with any group of people? ○ To what extent has the grant addressed the barriers faced by learners and the people you support, it at all? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have you heard anything from your learners /people you support at all, if so, what? ▪ What about their day to day lives being disrupted when menstruating e.g. taking part in sports, attending school, other social activities? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What barriers still exist? In what way could the grant help overcome these barriers? What needs to change? 	
<p>O3: Learners and those on low incomes are more knowledgeable and confident in using reusable and / plastic free period products</p> <p>Research question: How has the grant led to learners and those on a low income being more knowledgeable and confident in using reusable and / or plastic free period products?</p>	15 mins
<p>8. Do you offer eco-friendly products?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, why not? ○ What, if any, challenges exist to offering eco-friendly products? What would help overcome these challenges? <p>9. How was information and education around <u>eco-friendly products</u> provided?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Were there any <u>variations in your approach</u> at all e.g. characteristics (older vs younger; disabled people; ethnic minorities; etc)? <p>10. How <u>knowledgeable</u> would you say people are of the eco-friendly products on offer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does this vary at all between the different type of student / people you support (older vs younger; disabled people; ethnic minorities; etc)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What types of eco-friendly products are favoured and why? ○ And what about people <u>taking</u> the eco-friendly products? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there any specific types of people who are more likely to take the eco-friendly products (older vs younger; disabled people; ethnic minorities; etc)? ▪ And are there any that are less likely to? How do you think this can be improved? <p>11. What are the <u>experiences</u> of people using the eco-friendly products?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think people who have had the products continue to use them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If not, why not? ○ Have there been any barriers you are aware of in people taking/using the eco-friendly products? 	
<p>O4: The stigmas and taboos around menstruation have been reduced</p> <p>Research question: How has the grant led to a reduction in stigmas and taboos associated with menstruation?</p>	15 mins
<p>12. What <u>impact</u> do you think your approach has had on your learners / the people you support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What aspects of your approach had the greatest impact e.g. the type of products provided, support/information provided, training, education approaches etc. ○ What about the informational resources / training provided? What has the impact of this been? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do you think this has helped address the stigmas and taboos around menstruation? <p>13. What, if anything, would you change to improve <u>how you would use the grant to positively impact the people that experience menstruation e.g. product awareness, product uptake, communication with users, information, advice available for users?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can someone give me an example? ○ What about the informational resources / training – what can the grant support organisations offering these? <p>14. Has your involvement with the grant changed the way your organisation sees period poverty / period dignity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What has changed within your organisation e.g. policy, strategy, ways of working etc.? 	

<p>O5: Free period products and information has been allocated correctly and effectively across schools, FEIs and other community settings in Wales</p> <p>Research question: How has funding, information and free period products been allocated and distributed to those that most need it across Wales?</p>	<p>20 mins</p>
<p>In this last section I would like to talk about the grant process...</p> <p>15. What, if any, improvements could be made to the grant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What about the grant's purpose and its focus and the guidance offered / provided? ○ What about the eligibility requirements and targets of the grant e.g. what it can be spent on e.g. admin costs, % spent on eco-friendly products, items that can be purchased, % used towards education / training etc.? ○ What about the purchasing / ordering process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How useful is ordering by local authorities to you / your organisation? ▪ How could the ordering purchase be improved? E.g. LA's ordering from a central hub <p>16. A condition of the funding meant that a proportion of this had to be used on products that were plastic free and/or reusable. What, if any, impact did this have on the funding and or period product dissemination process?</p> <p>17. [Only LAs] Has the consolidation of the Period Dignity Grant allocations into a single grant for period dignity in schools and the community worked well?</p>	

Annex B: Visual examples of the online community board

LET'S TALK ABOUT PERIODS

Hello – we're Naba and Sophi, we are social researchers working with Welsh Government. We'd like to welcome you to our Period Dignity discussion page where we are discussing all things, period!

We want to learn about your experiences of periods and if the free period products have helped you.

To the right of this box you'll see your next activity. Click the 'play' button each day to access the activity. Your next activity will appear as soon as you've finished your first one.

Underneath the activity box you can see whether we're online now, or how recently we've been online. As your researchers, we will be online from the 22nd to the 24th May (during standard office hours) to interact with you and ask about your responses to certain questions.

If you have any questions about the platform or the study itself - you can email us at naba.hassan@meiresearch.co.uk, or sophi.ducie@meiresearch.co.uk.

Naba Hassan

Sophi Ducie

Free period products used

Using the cards below, please tell us the type/s of free period products which are available to you and / or you would like to be available to you by dragging and dropping the cards into the appropriate boxes:

Reusable period pants

Period pads that are plastic free

Period pads that you can reuse

Mooncup or menstrual cup

Disposable tampons

Disposable pads

Wash kit / bag

Clothing (due to leak)

Available and I have used them

Available, but I haven't used them

Not available, but I'd like to use them

Not available and wouldn't use them

Your period needs

When you have your periods, what things would make it easier for you to get on with your life?

Using the board below, click on each box to leave a comment about your period needs. There is also a box at the bottom of the page for any additional feedback you would like to leave.

Click on the image and select a marker

Markers
Zoom

During your period, what would help you to...

Stop missing out on school / college / other activities

Talk to others about your period or any concerns you have

Be less embarrassed about periods

Access free period products more easily

Try different reusable / plastic free period products

Feel clean and comfortable

My period needs

Reusable and plastic free period products

There are many types of reusable and plastic free period products available. Your school, college or some places in your community, such as libraries, medical centres, community hubs etc. may have offered you free reusable and plastic free period products. We'd like to get your views on reusable and plastic free period products, regardless of whether you have used them before.

Have you ever used reusable period products such as pads, period pants or a mooncup that you can wash and use again?

Have you ever used plastic free period products?

If you have used reusable and / or plastic free period products, did you get these for free from your school, college or other community group/setting?

How confident would you feel if you had to use reusable period products such as pads, period pants or a mooncup?

What, if anything, do you think would help improve your confidence if you had to use reusable period products such as pads, period pants or a mooncup?

[More information](#)

Skip
Next >
Save Draft

Likes and dislikes

Let's look at reusable and plastic free period products now.

What do you like about reusable and plastic free period products and what you don't like - even if you haven't used them before.

You can place your comments on the board below under likes and dislikes.

The options are:

- Reusable period products such as period pants, reusable pads, mooncup
- Plastic free period products (that don't have plastic in them)

Click on the board, use the icon to select which period product you are commenting about and tell us what you like or dislike about them.

Click on the image and select a marker

Markers
Zoom

LIKE ❤️

What do you like about the reusable / plastic free period products?

DISLIKE ❌

What do you not like about the reusable / plastic free period products?

Annex C: Quantitative survey (end users and organisations)

End user survey

Images courtesy of Vecteezy.com



Period Dignity

We want to hear about your experiences

We've got some questions we want to ask you about the **free period products** your school/college or community setting provides. It should only take 3 minutes to complete.

We will share the findings with Welsh Government, but no one will ever know who you are as we will not be asking for any personal information. Only the research team at M-E-L Research will be able to see your answers. We won't use them for anything other than this research.

1. Please tick the boxes below confirming you are happy to take part in the research:

- I have decided to take part in the research by myself.
- I know I do not have to take part in the research (it's 100% voluntary) and I can drop out any time if I change my mind

2. Are you completing this survey from your... [Please tick one only]

- Primary school Secondary school College Other e.g. from a community setting

3. Thinking about the past year, have you accessed, and if so, why have you needed to access, free period products from your school/college or community setting [Please tick all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – I forgot / ran out of / didn't have the period products I needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – I prefer not to say why
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – I generally find it difficult to get access to period products	<input type="checkbox"/>	No – I have never needed to access the free period products provided
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – I don't like to ask my family for period products	<input type="checkbox"/>	No – I was not aware they offered free period products
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes – Because of something else, please tell us here		

4. Have you ever used any of the following free eco-friendly / reusable period products or received information on them from your school/college or community setting? [Select all the products / boxes that apply to you]



Eco-friendly / reusable period products are, for example, pads you can wash and use again, moon cups and products that don't have plastic in them.



- Period pants Period pads that are plastic free Period pads that you can reuse Menstrual cup / moon cup Something else - tell us in the box above

I have **received information and education** about eco-friendly/reusable period products from my school/college or community setting

I **have not used** any free eco-friendly/reusable period products provided by my school/college or community setting

5. Thinking about the past year, what, if anything has stopped you from accessing free period products when you need them from your school/college or community setting? [Tick all that apply for both eco-friendly / reusable and / or disposable period products where applicable]



Disposable free period products are, for example, products that contain plastic and / or you throw away after one use.

	Eco-friendly / reusable period products	Disposable free period products
They are not always available to take	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They are hard to access e.g. I have to ask someone for product (s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They are not kept in convenient or easy to access locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer to use other brands / products bought elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't like the products / design of them / quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't know how to use them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't know how to clean the product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was not aware free period products were on offer at my school/college or community setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Something else, tell us here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nothing prevented me accessing free period products when I needed them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not applicable to me as I haven't needed to access free period products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. As a result of the scheme at your school/college or community setting that provides free period products and / or information, please tell us if you agree, are not sure or if you disagree with the following...

I am less likely to miss school/college, sports or other social activities when I am on my period now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I can get free period products easily now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I can get eco-friendly/reusable period products easily now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I feel more able to speak to people openly about periods than I did before	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I have more money to save/spend on other things now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I am less embarrassed about my period now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I know more about eco-friendly/reusable period products than I did before	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
I am less worried about my period now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me
Overall, I have a better experience when I am on my period now	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant to me

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK – PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY USING THE FREEPOST ENVELOPE PROVIDED.

Organisational survey

A bit about your organisation and the people you support

1. What is your role in relation to addressing period poverty and period dignity for your organisation? [tick all that apply]

- a. Period Dignity / Poverty Lead for the grant
- b. Administration e.g. purchasing products etc.
- c. School nurse, pastoral support
- d. Marketing and communications
- e. Deliver education and training
- f. Other, please describe in the box below

2. What best describes the organisation you represent?

- a. Local authority [Go to Q8]
- b. Further Education Institution / College
- c. Primary School [multi code]
- d. Secondary School [multi code]
- e. Other community establishments [Go to Q3]

3. What other community establishment do you represent?

- a. Community hub, group or association
- b. Library
- c. Food bank
- d. Leisure centre
- e. Other, please describe in the box below

4. Which of the below age groups do you cater for? [tick all that apply]

- a. 8-11 years old
- b. 12-15 years old
- c. 16-17 years old
- d. 18-24 years old
- e. 25-34 years old
- f. 35-44 years old
- g. 45-54 years old
- h. 55-64 years old
- i. 65 or older
- j. All of the above [exclusive]

5. So that we can understand the range of organisations that have taken part, please can you provide the full postcode of your organisation. If you have multiple sites, please specify the postcode you are mainly located at.

6. Do you service / support any of the below groups of people? [tick all that apply]

- a. People living in households on low incomes
- b. People who live in rural areas
- c. People who may have an impairment or long-term health need (either physical or mental)
- d. Forced migrants, including Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- e. Ethnic minority groups [Go to Q7]
- f. People who may be homeless such as those who are rough sleeping, couch surfing etc.

- g. LGBTQ+ communities

7. Please select the main ethnic minority groups you service and / or support:

- a. Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma
- b. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- c. Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British
- d. Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African
- e. Other ethnic minority group- please describe in the box below

**8. [all] From which time period have you received funding from the Period Dignity Grant?
[tick all that apply]**

- a. 2017/18
- b. 2018/19
- c. 2019/20
- d. 2020/21
- e. 2021/22
- f. 2022/23

Prior involvement

9. Prior to the Period Dignity Grant, how did your organisation support people who menstruate? (Tick all that apply)

- a. Offered free period products (ex. reusable and / or plastic free products)
- b. Offered free reusable and / or plastic free period products
- c. Offered paid for period products
- d. Offered information on menstruation to people who have their periods
- e. Offered information on menstruation to people who do not experience periods
- f. Offered funding to other organisations
- g. Offered free postage / delivery of period products to home address
- h. Other, please describe in the box below
- i. Did not provide support [exclusive]

10. Prior to the Period Dignity Grant, has your organisation ever accessed funding for...

Grid: Free period products, Educational resources on menstruation

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

How you supported people

We now want to ask you some questions about the Period Dignity Grant and how this has helped your organisation support people who menstruate.

11. [If Q2 = a and options selected in Q8] For each period, please tell us how many primary, secondary and / or community establishments you have supported through

the Period Dignity Grant. Please use numerical figures only.Error! Bookmark not defined.

	Primary school	Secondary school	Community establishment e.g. groups, libraries, leisure centres etc.
2017/18			
2018/19			
2019/20			
2020/21			
2021/22			
2022/23			

12. Have you done or are doing anything that has worked particularly well in how you approached supporting people who menstruate? (If so, please tell us about it below) [Free text]

Info box: - For example staff placement; period product distribution methods; targeting under-served communities; ways to collaborate; promote awareness / take-up of scheme; how to normalise periods / remove stigma; bring about environmental benefits

13. How are you promoting / raising awareness of the free period products available? [tick all that apply]

- a. Social media posts
- b. Newsletters
- c. Website
- d. Posters / leaflets
- e. Group meetings / assemblies
- f. Educational talks / sessions
- g. Links with other stakeholders such as GPs, sexual health clinics, sport facilities, groups and associations etc.
- h. Other, please describe below

14. Which of the following types of free period products or other products supporting people with periods do you currently offer/purchase through the grant? [tick all that apply]

- a. Disposable period pads
- b. Plastic free period pads
- c. Reusable period pads
- d. Applicator tampons
- e. Non-applicator tampons
- f. Menstrual cups
- g. Period pants
- h. Sanitary disposal bags

- i. Storage purses / wet bags for use with reusable products
- j. Clothing e.g. due to stained or soiled clothing
- k. Other, please describe in the box below

15. [if options Q14 b, c, f, g selected] During the 2022/23 funding period, what proportion of the funding / products you purchased was spent on reusable and / or plastic free products?

- a. At least 50%
- a. More than 50% but less than 90%
- b. 90% or more

16. In your own words, please summarise how you have approached educating people on using reusable and / or plastic free period products? [Free text box]

17. [only options selected in Q14 will show] How frequently are the free period products taken up by the people you support?

Response anchors: Often, Occasionally, Rarely, Never, Don't know

- a. Disposable period pads
- b. Plastic free period pads
- c. Reusable period pads
- d. Applicator tampons
- e. Non-applicator tampons
- f. Menstrual cups
- g. Period pants
- h. Sanitary disposal bags
- i. Storage purses / wet bags for use with reusable products
- j. Clothing e.g. due to stained or soiled clothing
- k. Free text option

18. How are you monitoring awareness and / or uptake of free period products? [tick all that apply]

- a. Tracking website hits
- b. Website request / order rates
- c. Social media likes, reposts, followers etc.
- d. Collect data from the people you have been supporting for example, through surveys
- e. Number of free period products taken by the people you support e.g through counting or refill rates of free vending machines
- f. Other, please describe in the box below
- g. We don't monitor uptake of free period products [exclusive]
- h. We don't monitor awareness of free period products [exclusive]

19. With the exception of offering free period products, how else have you supported people through the funding you received? [tick all that apply]

- a. Offered training and education to professionals / community representatives with the opportunity to take home reusable and/or plastic free products
- b. Offered training and education on menstruation to people who have their periods with the opportunity to take home reusable and/or plastic free products

- c. Offered training and education on menstruation to people who do not experience periods e.g. men, boys with the opportunity to take home reusable and/or plastic free products
- d. Provided general information e.g. posters, leaflets, signposting
- e. Free postage / delivery of period products to home address
- f. Other, please describe in the box below
- g. None [exclusive]

20. What barriers, if any, has your organisation faced when offering free period products / support to people? [tick all that apply]

- a. Sourcing suitable products / suppliers
- b. Delays from suppliers
- c. Onsite storage issues
- d. Staff resourcing / availability of staff
- e. Suitable staff expertise / skills
- f. Access to suitable educational and training materials
- g. Access to general information e.g. posters, leaflets, signposting
- h. Identifying best practice / sharing what works
- i. Language barriers
- j. Cultural barriers
- k. Supporting those with an impairment
- l. Being able to offer clean areas for people to clean and wash
- m. Low uptake of free period products (ex. reusable and / or plastic free products)
- n. Low uptake of free reusable and / or plastic free products
- o. High demand of free period products (ex. reusable and / or plastic free products)
- p. High demand of free reusable and / or plastic free products
- q. Other, please describe below
- r. No barriers / challenged experienced [exclusive]
- s. Not applicable [exclusive]

21. [asked unless Q20 = r & s] What, if anything, have you done to overcome these barriers? [free text]

22. [asked if Q20 = m & n] What do you think are the main reasons for the [prepopulated based on option/s selected in Q18]? [free text]

23. What, if any, gaps in support and / or take up of free period products exist for underserved communities? [tick all that apply]

- a. Regular access to free period products
- b. Being able to talk about menstruation to family networks
- c. Being able to talk to other about menstruation outside of the family network
- d. Understanding how to use reusable period products like moon cups etc.
- e. Being able to wash / clean reusable period products like absorbent underwear etc.
- f. Access to clean underwear when menstruating at home or outside the home
- g. Privacy issues
- h. Access to pain relief
- i. Something else, please describe in the box below

24. What additional support, if any, have you accessed outside of the grant to help support people who menstruate?

- a. Funding (which was not part of the Period Dignity Grant)
- b. Information e.g. posters, leaflets
- c. Training and education
- d. Other, please describe in the box below

25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

As a result of the Period Dignity Grant, the people who you work with/support who have periods are now:

	Definitely agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Definitely disagree	Not sure / not applicable
a.	Less likely to miss school and / or other social activities when menstruating					
b.	Accessing free period products easily					
c.	Accessing free reusable and / or plastic free period products easily					
d.	More able to speak openly about periods					
e.	Less likely to feel embarrassed about their periods					
f.	More knowledgeable on how to use reusable and / or plastic free period products					

26. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

As a result of the Period Dignity Grant...

	Definitely agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Definitely disagree	Not sure / not applicable
a.	I feel more able to support people who may be experiencing period poverty					
b.	I feel more confident in providing advice and information around menstruation to people who need it					
c.	I feel more informed about the aims and vision of the grant					
d.	I am clearer about my organisation's role in improving period dignity					

Feedback on the grant allocation and distribution

In this last section we'd like to get some feedback on the grant process.

**27. [ask if Q2 = a, b] How do you approach the allocation and / distribution of the funding?
[Free text]**

For Primary / Secondary schools [ask if Q2 = a]	
For Community Hubs, groups etc. [ask if Q2 = a]	
[standard box for Q2=b]	

28. To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither agree nor disagree	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure / not applicable
1. The guidance materials						
2. The claims process						
3. The communication and support from Welsh Government						
4. The communication and support from the local authority [option only shown if Q2 = c,d,e]						
5. The eligibility criteria / terms and conditions						
6. Resource allocation and distribution of free period products						
7. The purchasing and ordering process						
8. The overall grants process						

29. [If fairly or very dissatisfied at Q28] You mentioned you were dissatisfied with [PRE POPULATED based on Q28] of the Period Dignity Grant process, why is this? [Free text]

Further research

Thanks, you for answering this survey, your feedback is really important! Welsh Government still needs your support in understanding how the Period Dignity Grant has impacted the people you support.

30. Would you be willing to help them understand your experiences of the Period Dignity Grant in more detail.
- a. Yes please – you will be taken to a new form where you can tell us how you'd like to help us
 - b. No thanks [SURVEY END]

New survey opens:

Thank you for helping us to further understand how the Period Dignity Grant has impacted the people you support.

1. Please select how you would like to help us: [tick all that apply]

- a. I am willing to take part in an online workshop. The workshop will be run with other professionals / colleagues in your sector and facilitated by an independent social researcher.
- b. I am willing to give feedback to an independent researcher on a one-to-one basis e.g. over the phone.
- c. I am willing to circulate / promote a short survey to people and / or groups I have supported through the Period Dignity Grant so that we can learn how your activities have impacted them. We will send you separate email with an information sheet and a link to the survey which you can quickly and easily circulate to your contacts.
- d. None of the above [Survey end]

If you agree, we will ask for some personal contact information. These details will be stored securely by MEL Research, separate to the survey data, and your responses will be linked to future research by an anonymous identifier code. Your personal information will be held until the 3 months after the research has been completed and destroyed at the earliest opportunity in line with MEL Research and Welsh Government policy. For more information please refer to the Welsh Government privacy notice. You can view MEL Research [privacy policy here](#) All other data provided will be anonymised.

2. What best describes the organisation you represent?

- a. Local Authority
- b. Further Education Institution / College
- c. Primary and / secondary school
- d. Other community establishments

3. So that MEL Research can get in touch with you, please tell us:

- a. Your name:
- b. Your email:
- c. If you have any access requirements e.g. language, BSL etc. please let us know here:

END

Annex D: Example of the most recent 2022-2023 monitoring form used by Welsh Government

**Period Dignity Grant 2022-2023
Monitoring form (to September 30th 2022)**

Local authority: _____

Officer completing form: _____

Total grant allocated: _____

Please complete Table 1 below giving details of the organisations which have benefitted from the Period Dignity Grant.

How many primary schools have received funding or products as a result of the period dignity grant during this monitoring period?		
How many secondary schools have received funding or products as a result of the period dignity grant during this monitoring period?		
How many community-based organisations (leisure centres, libraries, hubs, food banks etc.) have received funding or products as a result of the period dignity grant during this monitoring period?	Organisation type	
Has any additional action (separate to the distribution to schools and community organisations above) been taken to distribute products directly to children or people on low incomes? If so, how many people have been directly provided products?		

<p>What action have you taken to target under-served communities, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, Asylum seekers and refugees, disabled people and LGBTQI+ communities through the grant?</p>	
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Please complete Table 2 below giving details of the activities that have taken place as a result of the 2022-2023 Grant. An example is shown in *italics*. Please add more rows as necessary.

Table 1 – activity – 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022				
Type of product purchased	Amount of product purchased	Receiving organisations	Grant funding spent	Benefits realised

What percentage of primary schools in your Local Authority received funding or products via this grant during 2022-2023?

What percentage of secondary schools in your Local Authority received funding or products via this grant during 2022-2023?

What % of your grant has been spent on eco-friendly (reusable and/or plastic free) products?

Training activity

Under the amended terms and conditions outlined in the grant award letter issued in June 2022, up to 20% of the total combined grant may be used for the purposes of training or education within schools and communities, for professionals, learners and community members.

Please outline below what training has been provided under the grant monitoring report and that this monitoring include information on participants' intention to try/use reusable products.

Training provider	Location of training (school or community venue)	Number of participants	Training cost	Evaluation information (please provide links to relevant reports including information on participants intention to try/use reusable products)

Period Dignity Grant 2022-2023

Local authority: _____

Total grant claim: _____

Declaration:

I hereby make a claim on behalf of the above mentioned Local Authority for grant payable under the above grant programme. I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (a) The information given is correct
- (b) The grant claimed is within the approved expenditure limits.
- (C) All expenditure declared is eligible for funding within the Period Dignity Grant Scheme, and has been or will be applied in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

(d) All expenditure declared has been incurred during the claim period to which it relates.

TWO SIGNATORIES ARE REQUIRED

_____ Signature

_____ Name

_____ Job Title

_____ Date

_____ Signature

_____ Name

_____ Job Title

_____ Date

Thank you for completing this form.

Please return by email no later than 31st October 2022 or direct any queries to

equalitybranch@gov.wales