



Report by the Strategic Director, West Dunbartonshire Council

Management Group: Thursday 14 February 2019

Subject: Ending Period Poverty - Funding

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides CPWD with an update on recent activity to implement the Scottish Government funded provision of free sanitary products beyond initial education coverage.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Members of CPWD are asked to:
- note the required standard of provision within West Dunbartonshire
 - agree that this activity, managed by Council, should be linked to the empowered DIG action plan

3. Background

- 3.1** From August 2018 all Local Authorities in Scotland were provided with funding to introduce access to free sanitary products in schools. The Scottish Government made an additional commitment in the 2018 Programme for Government to go further than this, and *“aim to increase the number and range of places where sanitary products are available for those who need them. We will do this through working with a range of public and private sector organisations and with additional third sector partners to expand the geographical spread of support”*.
- 3.2** A paper was presented to West Dunbartonshire Council in December 2017, outlining proposals for provision of free sanitary products in all primary, secondary and ASN establishments. This is now in place with each establishment responsible for management of product supply, utilising a centrally agreed contract.

- 3.3** On 30th November 2018, COSLA Leaders agreed to proposed funding to expand access to free sanitary products. Following discussion between Scottish Government and COSLA officials it was suggested that the main route of the expansion of delivery could be through Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), in recognition of their links with communities, facilities and services to ensure delivery meets local needs.
- 3.4** The main intent of this commitment is tackling poverty however Scottish Government have indicated that Local Authorities should consider wider need, to address the overarching gender equality and dignity issues that affect all of those who menstruate regardless of income.
- 3.5** In addition to the funding provided to Local Authorities, both for education and wider provision, the Scottish Government has also made supplementary funding available. Scottish Funding Council has directly funded higher and further education establishment provision while Fare Share Scotland has been allocated funding to support community and voluntary organisation provision. The Fare Share Scotland funding is intended to be specifically targeted at community organisations whose core purpose is tackling poverty – such as food banks.

4. Main Issues

Funding and guidance

- 4.1** A funding letter was issued in December 2018 (appendix 1), detailing the funding model for provision of free sanitary products for all women who need it in the local area. The funding letter covers the period January 2019 to March 2020. As described in 3.3 above, there is a desire to utilise community planning structures for the delivery of increase provision. This recognises the relationship that wider community planning partners have with local communities.
- 4.2** An initial meeting has been held with key West Dunbartonshire services to discuss the implementation of free sanitary provision. This included representatives from Council services, West Dunbartonshire HSCP and West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust. This discussion focused on ensuring provision in key public facing buildings across the area, such as libraries, community halls/ centres, leisure centres, and GP practices / health centres.
- 4.3** The Performance & Strategy Manager attended the first meeting of the national implementation group, hosted by COSLA, on Monday 21 January, 2019. Discussions focused on the experience of the education focused roll out towards the end of 2018, and how this could inform wider roll out. The Strategic Group meet at the end of January and a number of points / questions will be raised on behalf of local areas. This will include the suggestion of a national procurement exercise rather than 32 separate contracts.

- 4.4** The funding letter also contains detail of guiding principles for roll out of provision, which were discussed and explored at the national implementation group. Essentially the focus for provision is on ensuring that those women who are experiencing poverty are able to access products, free of charge, in venues which are accessible and stigma free. Experience from pilot areas suggests the best delivery mechanism is the provision of baskets or cloth bags, stocked with a variety of products, in publicly accessible toilets in agreed venues.

Local Implementation

- 4.5** The funding includes the period January – March 2019, therefore work is progressing to provide an initial supplies of products locally until the national coordination is complete, with a small number of venues are identified for initial roll out of provision.
- 4.6** Proposed venues for initial implementation are:
- Vale Centre for Health & Care
 - Alexandria Community Centre
 - Alexandria Library
 - Dumbarton Health Centre
 - Meadow Centre
 - Concord Centre
 - 16 Church Street
 - Clydebank Health Centre
 - Clydebank Town Centre Office
 - Dalmuir Library
 - Glenhead Centre
- 4.7** The venues listed in 4.6 above would ensure a geographical coverage in initial stages as further work is undertaken to identify additional community venues for provision. This work would include identifying additional community venues and those managed by wider community planning partner agencies which are publicly accessible and likely to be used by those who require access to products.
- 4.8** Work will be required to raise awareness in the community of this provision and ensure that products are available and accessible to those who need them most. Based on feedback at the national meeting it is recommended that initial awareness raising and advertising of provision is done through posters and social media to begin with. Further activity can be explored in line with further implementation and complementary national activity.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There may be a modest increase in workload for Council employees initially in coordination and distribution of sanitary products. It is recommended that

contract provision for supply going forward should include distribution and restocking to reduce workload burden.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

Financial Implications

- 6.1** Funding from the Scottish Government will be in place from March 2019 for the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. The value of this funding is detailed in appendix 1 of this report.
- 6.2** The annual cost of provision should not exceed the value of funding provided through Scottish Government ring fenced funding for this purpose. As a result the manager responsible for the budget will need to monitor closely to ensure it is used proportionately throughout the period.

Procurement Implications

- 6.3** If, following discussion at the national strategic implementation group, a national contract is not agreed then an appropriate local procurement process will require to be undertaken.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is a risk that, following procurement exercise, the funding provided nationally may not cover sufficient provision. Uptake is as yet unknown and given the roll out in schools is still very recent it is challenging to accurately assess likely uptake based on that experience.
- 7.2** The cost of provision will be monitored following the procurement process and variances will be advised through normal budgetary control processes.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The funding provision allows WDC to ensure anyone who menstruates can access products, including transgender men/non-binary individuals. Funding is calculated based on claimant count of local income benefits; however provision is open to all who require access. A full impact assessment is being carried out alongside planning for implementation.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** As this is a Scottish Government initiative no consultation was carried out locally in advance of the funding decision. However engagement with key local partners is underway and future consultation activity is advised with those who benefit from provision to ensure the local model is meeting the aspirations of the funding commitment.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This activity will support delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities of:
- A Nurtured West Dunbartonshire
 - An Empowered West Dunbartonshire

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Access to free sanitary products - funding allocation for local authorities 2019/21 dated December 2018

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All Council Wards