

Over three quarters of secondary schools order free period products

More than three quarters of state secondary schools and colleges in England have accessed period products from the free Government scheme, [according to new data](#) released today (Thursday 21 January).

Since the programme launched in January 2020, 9,702 schools and colleges have ordered period products, making them free and available to all their pupils and helping to reduce stigma around menstruation.

The Government is encouraging all schools and colleges to access period products through this scheme, as it is the quickest and simplest way of making sure they are available to everyone who needs them.

Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford said:

No pupil should ever have to miss school because of their period. I am pleased to see over three quarters of secondary schools and colleges have accessed free period products, but I want everyone to know this support is available.

If you are a school or college leader, I urge you to please get in touch and order these products for your pupils so that together we can help end period inequality for good.

[New data](#) published by the Department for Education shows:

- 68% of secondary schools ordered eco-friendly or reusable products as part of their orders, rising to 80% for colleges.
- Pads accounted for two-thirds (66%) of all products ordered, while tampons accounted for most of the rest (32%). The total value of orders by the end of December 2020 was £2,791,000 – amounting to 48% of the total spend cap for all organisations.
- The number of orders increased steadily between January and March then remained constant during April and May, when schools were closed to most pupils due to the pandemic. Orders increased again in June as schools and colleges began to fully reopen. The scheme was – and continues to be – open throughout the pandemic.
- In November, for example, schools and colleges placed over 3,000 orders for period products through the scheme.

Warren Edmondson, managing director of supplier phs Direct said:

The high number of secondary schools and colleges participating in the scheme means that a significant proportion of menstruating-age pupils now have access to free period products. It is encouraging that so many have also ordered eco-friendly or reusable products to provide a more sustainable, long-term solution which is better for the environment.

The last year has been unprecedented with widespread closures across the education sector. Despite this, many have clearly recognised how important it is to order free period products and the phs order portal has been open throughout.

As the scheme has now been extended, we invite all schools and colleges to order free products now – whether it's their first or a repeat order. Deliveries are contactless and can be redirected to neighbouring schools in the event of closures. We'd urge anyone that needs support ordering to contact phs directly.

The free period product scheme for all young people in English state schools and colleges has been extended and will continue at least throughout 2021.

The scheme provides period products to all those who need them, including students who cannot afford products, have forgotten them, or come on their period unexpectedly.

The programme, delivered by phs Direct, part of [phs Group](#), is designed so that schools can order what they need and are given the option to order environmentally friendly or reusable products. Schools are not charged for the products or for delivery.

Schools and colleges should ensure they are making the products available and communicating with their students about the products and how to access the scheme.

This is part of the Government's drive to end period poverty, tackle inequality and support disadvantaged children in the additional challenges they face. At the start of the year the tampon tax was abolished, meaning from the 1st January VAT no longer applied to period products.