

Period Poverty Taskforce meets for the first time

- Taskforce chaired by Minister for Women & Equalities, Plan International UK and Procter & Gamble
- Work to focus on tackling period poverty and stigma around menstruation
- Providing a joined-up approach, working with experts from all sectors and beginning by learning from and building on existing initiatives

The newly formed Period Poverty Taskforce met for the first time today (23rd July).

Announced earlier this year, the taskforce will focus its efforts on tackling the issue of period poverty and wider stigma around menstruation in the UK.

The group is co-chaired by Plan International UK, Procter & Gamble and the Minister for Women & Equalities. Following today's meeting, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) is announcing several convenors who will lead specific areas of the taskforce's work:

- Bloody Good Period – focusing on improving access for to period products for everyone
- phs Group – also focusing on improving access
- Irise International – focusing on providing improved data and evidence on period-related issues
- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine – also focusing on providing improved data and evidence
- Binti International – focusing on breaking down stigma, shame and taboos around menstruation
- PSHE Association – also focusing on tackling stigma
- Sport England – also focusing on tackling stigma

Today's meeting looked at the work that needs to be done in these three key work areas, as well as agreeing a united vision which all organisations involved will work towards.

Tom Moody, Vice President & Managing Director, P&G Northern Europe said:

"Tackling the societal challenge of period poverty and related issues in a holistic way is critical to supporting girls' confidence and wellbeing. This ambition is fully in line with what we stand for as Always.

"I am happy that as Always and P&G, we are part of the taskforce, a diverse group working together to make a meaningful difference."

Tanya Barron, Chief Executive of Plan International UK, said:

"We're delighted to have co-chaired the first meeting of the Government's Period Poverty Taskforce, which represents the first real opportunity to tackle period poverty and stigma.

“We’ll be working hard to make sure the voices of UK girls are heard and that any course of action reflects their needs and concerns. Together we can put an end to period poverty and stigma once and for all.”

David Taylor-Smith, Chief Executive Officer of phs Group, said:

“We’re delighted to contribute to the period poverty taskforce, to make a difference to millions of girls in the UK by ending the stigma and taboo surrounding periods in the UK. Sanitary products are not a luxury and our research has proven that being unable to afford these items can have a detrimental affect. We’ll be looking to provide practical solutions to ensure no girls or women in the UK miss work or school because of lack of access to period products.”

Working with the new convenors and a host of other membership organisations, the taskforce is set to begin working on:

- Improved data and evidence – those working on this area will produce a research paper looking at existing information on period poverty, menstrual health and the associated stigma. Following this they will commission new research where necessary, encouraging other bodies to do the same.
- Tackling stigma, shame and taboo – this work will focus on putting forward a plan which sets out how the taskforce can take meaningful steps to end stigma and taboo across the UK through knowledge, awareness and education. All work in this area will engage closely with Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.
- Ensuring access for all – there are already a number of productive initiatives working towards the same goals as the taskforce, this work will seek to identify these, developing a clear example of what good access looks like. We will then identify gaps and develop new approaches to improve access to period products.