

Free period products for all schools and colleges

The new scheme is set to give pupils easy access to period products at school or college, helping to break down stigmas and ensure no young person's education is disrupted by their period.

From Monday 20 January, schools and colleges across the country will be able to order a range of period products from supplier phs Group, making period products readily available for all young people when they need them.

Children and Families Minister Michelle Donelan said:

Periods are a normal part of everyday life and we do not want young people missing out on lessons because of them.

We know that it is not easy for everyone to access period products where and when they need them. This scheme will deal with those problems so young people can go about their daily lives without getting caught out if they have come on their period unexpectedly, forgotten to bring products with them or if they can't afford the products they need.

This follows the Government's commitment last year to fully fund period products for all state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. It also forms part of the Department's ambition to improve provision of products for young people, helping to support campaigns to break the stigma around periods and raise awareness of menstruation.

The scheme also comes just months before health education becomes a compulsory for all state funded primary and secondary schools, under new guidance on relationships, sex and health education from September 2020 – to ensure all young people learn about living healthy lives, including menstrual wellbeing.

The Government also introduced the £15 million annual Tampon Tax Fund to support women's charities – and made a commitment to end period poverty globally by 2030.

Amika George, founder of #FreePeriods, said:

We have been waiting for this day for a long time! As a grassroots, student-led movement, Free Periods has been fighting for every single child in this country to be able to go to school without worrying about their next pad or tampon. For the first time in history, this scheme will ensure that becomes a reality.

We ask that schools have open conversations with students about what they need and start signing up to the scheme – no child must miss out. Free products in schools will ensure that every child can learn and be their very best, without periods holding them back.

David Taylor-Smith, CEO of phs Group, said

We have been busy preparing for the launch of this scheme and we are ready for the first wave of demand. We encourage schools and colleges to look out for their activation email and make their first order so they can start offering free products as soon as possible.

Period products are a necessity, not a luxury, and we believe providing free products for young people will be a catalyst for change in creating period equality. We are proud to be the supplier for such a worthy scheme.

Schools and colleges will receive an activation email from the phs Group on Monday 20 January which will enable them to order products for their organisation from the phs Group portal – a range of products will be available so that schools and colleges can offer choice to young people, including eco-friendly options.

Vital Industries to benefit from post-Brexit Britain

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, has today (Friday 17 January) set out how vital industries will benefit from free trade after Brexit.

Ms Truss met with key industry figures including the British Ceramic Confederation (BCC) in Stoke-On-Trent to discuss how the UK ceramics industry can reap the rewards of an independent trade policy. The Secretary of State also visited world renowned ceramics manufacturer Steelite International.

The Trade Secretary's discussion with businesses in Stoke focused on how new trade agreements will benefit the city, and what measures the government is taking to ensure local industry is protected from injury caused by unfair trading practices like dumping, where overseas firms sell goods to the UK market at below their fair market price.

The ceramics industry is vital to the UK economy – employing over 20,000 people – and is one industry that could benefit from reduced tariffs in a new US-UK free trade agreement. Currently, the simple average US tariff on

ceramic imports is 6.7%, but for ceramic tableware tariffs can go as high as 28%. Removing or lowering these tariffs would be a boost for the industry.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

British businesses such as the fantastic ceramics companies I have visited today have everything to gain when we leave the EU. They will be able to realise the brilliant opportunities that will come from securing new free trade agreements with countries around the world. And this government will ensure that UK industries will continue to compete on a level playing field.

People across the country in towns and cities like Stoke-on-Trent have put their faith in this government to deliver Brexit and improve both the local economy and the level of opportunity available to them. An independent trade policy that protects traditional northern industries like ceramics will help us repay that faith.

The government has already established its own trade remedies system, currently operating as part of the department as the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID). TRID will be responsible for investigating claims of harmful and unfair trading practices, such as dumping and subsidies after we leave the EU, protecting various UK industries.

As the UK takes back control of its independent trade policy, promoting British exports overseas and protecting key industries like the ceramics sector from unfair global trading practices remains high on the government's agenda.

Dr Laura Cohen MBE, Chief Executive, British Ceramic Confederation said:

We and our members want to help Government achieve their ambitious timescale for an UK-EU trade agreement by the end of the year, as 57% of our members' exports are sent to the EU. We appreciate the opportunity to raise this and other important issues on trade with the Secretary of State.

Steelite president and CEO Josh Miles said:

I have been in this industry for more than 30 years and am truly passionate about our employees and products – which I love taking to markets across the world.

As Steelite and the ceramics industry look at our next chapter of global expansion, we welcome the comments made by the Secretary of State and the government's continued support for our industry.

Elizabeth Truss champions 'Lionesses of Africa'

Thank you very much Emma Wade-Smith, HM Trade Commissioner for Africa and thank you very much too to the Lionesses of Africa for organising this fantastic evening. And congratulations on reaching the one million figure, it is really great to hear. It is clear that our investments in Africa are growing rapidly.

The UK has overtaken the US and is now the second largest G7 investor in the African continent. And why is that? It is because all of us here in the UK see the massive opportunities available. And what we know is that as the UK leaves the European Union, only a few days away, there are huge opportunities around the world. 90% of GDP growth is outside the EU. And the continent of Africa is one of the largest opportunities there is. In Africa there are 8 of the world's 15 largest growing economies. By 2030, 5 cities will have more than 10 million people. Kinshasa and Cairo will be in the global top 10.

World trade

As we leave the European Union, my job as Trade Secretary is to build those future relationships right around the world. Of course, we want to secure a fantastic trade deal with the European Union. But what we also want to do is to secure those deeper relationships, reach out more widely across the world and really work together to improve the livelihood of people across our nations.

Now my ambition is to cover 80% of all the UK's trade with free trade deals within the next three years. What does that mean? Everyone says that free trade deals are quite abstract. What it means is that businesses in Kenya or in Ghana are able to sell at a very low cost into the UK and that businesses in the UK are able to sell very cheaply. It removes barriers, it removes tariffs, and it makes it easier for us to trade.

What does that mean? It means better livelihoods for everyone. We are making good progress so far with signed trade deals, covering 43% of the African continent in terms of value and I recently signed a deal with the Southern African Customs Union in October 2019.

We are also continuing with our preferential access programme that we have as part of the EU. And I think there are opportunities for the UK to be more flexible on that in the future.

But where I think one of the biggest opportunities is, and it was good to meet a tech investor here earlier this evening, is in services and digital trade. We have got an opportunity to deepen our relationships, to deepen some

of those trade deals to cover those areas.

Why do I love being Trade Secretary? Why is it in my view such an important job? What we know is that setting up your own business, establishing your own enterprise is not just about making money, although that is important. It is also about being able to control your own life and chart out your own future. It is about talent, it is about independence, and it is about being able to help yourself, your family, and your community. It is what makes us all grow. And I believe entrepreneurs are key in this, often taking on vested interests in established markets to do things differently. It is what makes us make progress across the world.

The way I look at it, free trade is simply doing that across borders, so that the opportunities we currently have within a country or within a free trade area are expanded. So we can expand those opportunities, so we can share those ideas, those products, those services, much more widely.

Women in business

As well as being International Trade Secretary, I am also Women Minister. You might not think that that there is an obvious link: why am I doing both of those jobs? But I think that enterprise and trade are incredibly important for women to be able to gain that equal status in society, to be able to have control of your own life, to be able to make your own decisions, to be able to decide your own destiny. It is a huge route forward for women. I noted the earlier point about the number of women entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa, the highest rate of women entrepreneurs in the world. That also applies to cross-border trade. If you look at cross border trade out of Rwanda, 80% is done by women-led businesses. So these free trade opportunities, the opportunities from a free trade area in Africa, this opportunity for the UK to deepen our relationship with countries in Africa, that is of particular benefit for women.

I think that economic empowerment is very important. You cannot control your own life if you do not control your own money. We also know that economic empowerment goes hand in hand with social progress. That means tackling things like FGM and forced marriage that have held women back. We are making massive progress in this area. Côte d'Ivoire passed an equal marriage law last year. Kenya has committed to eradicate FGM by 2022. And the UK is supporting the Africa-led movement to end FGM with £50 million.

I am very impressed by the businesses I have met so far this evening. What we are looking forward to tonight is to hear you pitch. We have just had an election, now you will have your opportunity to put your case forward! We have some very exciting things here tonight, so VR powered eye tests, eco-friendly hand-bags made from plastic bags, we have transformational technologies in areas like fencing and power generation. There really are a huge number of things to invest in this evening.

We have already heard it but, to the people in this room: you have the opportunity to invest in these great businesses so get out your chequebooks, get out your M-Peso, apparently you can invest using that. Make sure you get

a share of those huge opportunities. That is what we will be focusing on, on Monday (20 January 2020).

We have a huge opportunity ahead of us. The UK is moving into new territory. We are opening up our trade with fast growing markets around the world and we want Africa to be part of that. Africa women entrepreneurs are also opening up opportunities here. We have a huge positive future ahead of us. We have a future of greater independence and empowerment. So I say let us make the next decade the decade of trade.

[Protecting the future of ash trees on Salisbury Plain](#)

To protect the future of uninfected ash trees, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), together with its strategic partner, Landmarc Support Services (Landmarc), is carrying out a tree-felling clearance scheme to remove infected trees, beginning in early 2020.

There is no cure or treatment for the disease and over time infected trees will weaken, causing branches to fall and trees to eventually collapse and die. This presents a significant health and safety risk, especially alongside roads, public rights of way and woodland areas used by the public for recreation activities and soldiers for training.

Infection can lead to the death of young trees in just two to three years and of mature trees within three to five years. Approximately 14,000 trees across 250 locations have been affected by the disease on the Salisbury Plain Training Area.

To protect the public and estate users, DIO foresters and ecologists are working with Landmarc, the Forestry Commission and Natural England to inspect and remove infected trees. A replanting scheme will also take place to replace lost trees in accordance with the requirements of the felling licences. The DIO and Landmarc are also working closely with Wiltshire Council to manage the effect on roads and any potential road closures.

Jeremy Kalkowski, DIO's Senior Forester, said:

We are working closely with Landmarc, the Forestry Commission and Natural England to protect the public and estate users, remove hazards and reduce the impact on the wider environment. Where possible, we will use this as an opportunity to enrich and improve our woodland resource.

We are felling the minimum number of trees to reduce risk to an

acceptable level and only in areas where there is a clear risk of harm to people.

The MOD takes conservation very seriously and we are committed to completing a replanting scheme to replace felled ash trees with a range of native species trees.

Chris Sorensen, South West Woodland Resilience Officer, from the Forestry Commission said:

Since ash dieback was identified in 2012, we have been working with a range of stakeholders and have invested more than £37 million into tree health research, including funding research into the biology and pathology of the disease.

We encourage all owners of woodland to think strategically about the management of their ash trees and adopt best practice to help reduce the impact of the disease.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation consulted with us and agreed a plan of action to tackle this damaging tree disease which includes the commencement of felling operations in the interests of public safety.

Judith Peachey, Landmarc's Forestry Harvesting and Marketing and Arboriculture Advisor said:

Sadly, the felling of trees with Ash Dieback is a necessary step to protect the public and all other training estate users. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank our local communities for their support by adhering to any site safety signs and not entering any areas where forestry work is taking place. Trees are only being felled where we must and unaffected trees will remain to support the biodiversity associated with ash.

The work will take place in phases and should be completed in approximately 3 years, with tree health surveying and monitoring continuing once felling is complete. The first phase of felling will target Ashdown Copse and along the A345, and will run until the end of March 2020, when work will stop to protect nesting birds. Phase two will begin in September 2020 to continue work at Ashdown Copse, as well as other locations where Ash Dieback has been identified including Erlestoke, Everleigh, Heytesbury, Warminster and along neighbouring roadsides.

Areas where work is taking place will be closed to the public for safety reasons. Areas available for recreation will be signed as open to the public.

For more information on road closures and the programme of work, please refer

to your local Parish Council, or visit the [GOV.UK website](#) and the [Wiltshire Council website](#).

Unique 300 year old scientific drawings at risk of leaving the UK

- Work contains hand painted early depictions of newly introduced plant specimens from all over the world

An export bar has been placed on a group of 18th century albums containing what experts claim are amongst the finest examples of botanical drawing in existence.

The works, 'The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands' and 'A Commonplace Book' are valued at £2,500,000 and were completed in the mid 1700s. They are at risk of being lost abroad unless a UK buyer can be found.

The two volumes of Mark Catesby's 'The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands' are a first edition set published in 1731 and 1743 . They were owned by Peter Collinson and contain printed text and hand-coloured etched plates, depicting indigenous plants, birds and animals. Unique to this edition, the high-quality illustrations include an additional frontispiece, illustrations and watercolours by William Bartram and Georg Ehret – the most renowned botanical watercolourist of his time. Catesby presented these volumes to Peter Collinson, a critical figure in British natural history, in gratitude for his support.

Another volume also at risk of export is Peter Collinson's own 'Commonplace Book' which includes 75 original drawings and prints by Catesby, William Bartram, Georg Ehret, and the 'father of British ornithology' George Edwards. The work includes exceptional early depictions of botanical and zoological subjects from across the globe, some of which were in the collection of Sir Hans Sloane and later formed the basis of the collections of the British Museum.

The group of works are of immense significance for the understanding of British culture at the time, including contemporary approaches to the history of science and horticulture, and collecting, illustrating and recording the natural world.

Arts Minister Helen Whately said:

The intricate drawings in this collection offer us a special insight into how new discoveries and images of plants and animals

in far off lands were shared before the advent of modern technology.

This collection is a hugely important resource for future generations and I hope that a buyer can be found so these works can be saved for the nation.

The Minister's decision follows the advice of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA). The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the collection's historical importance and outstanding significance for the study of the history of science and the natural world in 18th century Britain.

The Committee noted that the fact that the volumes have remained together since Collinson's ownership of them, says much about their remarkable historical importance and the way in which they document a period of huge expansion in global knowledge and understanding.

Committee Member Peter Barber said:

Peter Collinson was a key member of the circle around Sir Hans Sloane the founder of the British Museum, British Library and Natural History Museum. He was himself a figure of European importance and the patron of Mark Catesby, whose Natural History was the most important work of natural history produced in early eighteenth-century Britain.

This is Collinson's own presentation copy and has additional watercolour drawings by some of the most distinguished botanical artists of the time as well as proof states of some of Catesby's prints. Further watercolours in Collinson's commonplace book complement and enhance the importance of the printed volumes. They constitute the defining icons of the group of people responsible for some of the greatest and most enduring cultural achievements of British civilisation. Among the later enthusiasts for botany and zoology who owned the volumes was Edward Lear's first and most important patron.

The volumes have not previously been easily accessible for research. Retention in this country could lead further light to be shed on relationships within Sir Hans Sloane's circle.

The decision on the export licence application for the albums will be deferred until 16 April 2020. This may be extended until 16 August 2020 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £2,500,000 .

Offers from public bodies for less than the recommended price through the private treaty sale arrangements, where appropriate, may also be considered.

Such purchases frequently offer substantial financial benefits to a public institution wishing to acquire.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Mark Catesby (1683 – 1749) was one of the first naturalists to explore south-eastern North America at a time when it was still part of the British colonies. He is acknowledged as a key player in the development of early 18th century plant exchange and was part of an active network of scientists, explorers, gardeners and horticulturalists that included Peter Collinson.

Peter Collinson (1694 – 1768) is another critical figure in British natural history. A patron, gardener and plant collector, Collinson was integral to the international exchange of scientific ideas in the mid-18th century.

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the albums should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.
2. Details of the albums are as follows: Two volume set of Mark Catesby's The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands by Mark Catesby, London 1731 and 1743. 2 large folios (529 x 363 mm); Good condition.
3. Provenance: Mark Catesby to Peter Collinson (1694-1768) and then by descent to his grandson Charles Streyntsham Collinson. Purchased by Alymer Bourke Lambert in 1834 and then by Edward Stanley Smith, 13th Earl of Derby in 1842. Thence by descent to the present owner.
4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
5. The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk>

Find the images on [Flickr](#)