

Report of:	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care
To:	Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	17th November 2020

Progress Report on Implementation: Tackling Period Poverty and Raising Period Awareness

Review Information

Date approved at City Council:	5 th November 2019
Member who led the original review:	Councillor Rob Pocock
Lead Officer for the review:	Rose Kiely
Date progress last tracked:	N/A

Introduction

'Period poverty' (or menstrual hygiene management, MHM) refers to having a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints. WHO/UNICEF (2012) has defined MHM as:

- Women and adolescent girls being able to use clean materials to absorb or collect menstrual blood, and to change them in privacy as often as necessary throughout their menstrual period.
- Being able to use soap and water for washing the body as required and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials.
- Women and girls having access to basic information about the menstrual cycle, and how to manage it with dignity without discomfort or fear.

Period poverty is a harsh reflection of poverty and inequality.

The report of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee into Period Poverty is welcomed. Action against the recommendations to date is detailed below. Unfortunately progress against a number of these actions has been deferred as Public Health resources are being diverted to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic.

1. In approving this Review the City Council asked me, as the appropriate Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, to report on progress towards these recommendations to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
2. Details of progress with the remaining recommendations are shown in Appendix 2.
3. Members are therefore asked to consider progress against the recommendations and give their view as to how progress is categorized for each.

Appendices

1	Scrutiny Office guidance on the tracking process
2	Recommendations you are tracking today
3	Recommendations tracked previously and concluded

For more information about this report, please contact

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Appendix 1: The Tracking Process

In making its assessment, the Committee may wish to consider:

- What progress/ key actions have been made against each recommendation?
- Are these actions pertinent to the measures required in the recommendation?
- Have the actions been undertaken within the time scale allocated?
- Are there any matters in the recommendation where progress is outstanding?
- Is the Committee satisfied that sufficient progress has been made and that the recommendation has been achieved?

Category	Criteria
1: Achieved	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.
2: Not Achieved (Obstacle)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved, but all possible action has been taken. Outstanding actions are prevented by obstacles beyond the control of the Council (such as passage of enabling legislation).
3: Not Achieved	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved, but there has been significant progress made towards full achievement. An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved must be advised.
4: In Progress	It is not appropriate to monitor achievement of the recommendation at this time because the timescale specified has not yet expired.
5: Achieved (outcomes to be monitored)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified. However, the outcome has not yet materialised, or "work on the ground" has yet to be seen. Reporting on the recommendation as part of the tracking process ceases. However, a report back on the outcome or continuing implementation will be reported back to the Committee as determined by the members in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

Appendix 2 : Progress with Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R01	That a plan be developed, aimed at supporting schools and teachers in educating and informing students about period poverty and period awareness. This plan should, in particular, deal with stigma and provide information about the range of products, including reusable products available and their use and disposal.	Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Culture	September 2020	1

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

The teaching of Health Education, as part of the RSHE requirements that became compulsory in September 2020, is clear that menstruation should be covered to ensure all pupils are prepared for changes they and their peers will experience. Pupils must be taught key facts about the menstrual cycle including what is an average period, the range of menstrual products and the implications for emotional and physical health. All schools should also make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls prepare for and manage menstruation including with requests for menstrual products. Schools must consider the needs of their cohort of pupils in designing their curriculum content in this area.

The Birmingham Approach to Relationships and Health Education resource fully integrates period awareness and support within primary schools. Link: birmingham.gov.uk/rshe

Learners at all state-maintained schools and 16 to 19 education organisations in England now have access to free period products in their place of study through a national scheme

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R02	That the City Council should: (1) declare its support for the pledge promoted by Girlguiding Birmingham to prevent stigma around periods; and (2) initiate a programme to tackle stigma around periods in the workplace centred on the City Council workforce and that ways of developing a wider programme for partner organisations and Small and Medium Enterprises, with special reference to sectors employing significant numbers of female employees in low pay sectors, be pursued.	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	September 2020	

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

Due to the ongoing pandemic, evidence of progress is deferred until September 2021

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
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R03	That the feasibility of commissioning a research programme aimed at establishing the nature and extent of period poverty in Birmingham be explored. A further focus of this review should be on the impact of cultural attitudes and ways of widening 'period awareness' within a super-diverse city.	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	September 2020	
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Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

Due to the ongoing pandemic, evidence of progress is deferred until September 2021

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R04	That ways of establishing a more collaborative approach to providing co-ordination and support to third sector organisations working to alleviate period poverty across the city be developed, with particular reference to accessing marginalised communities. This should include examining whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a programme to provide free period products to the full spectrum of homeless people and those in temporary or supported accommodation can be developed through the relevant support agencies; and (2) a central location in Birmingham for the storage of donated products by third sector organisations can be provided. 	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods	September 2020	3

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

The impact of Covid-19 and the requirements to act in response to the crisis has had bearing upon the delivery against this requirement. At the same time Covid-19 has required actions which have led to some elements of the action being undertaken, as follows:-

The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS) who have been central to the City Council response regarding food poverty, food distribution and other welfare requirements, have had an active role in terms of distribution of items to relieve period poverty.

TAWS report that, "As a result of the £100k Direct line funding and working with the Penny Appeal, as well as smaller individual donations from the community, we had 80,000 individual items of toiletries and household cleaning products. These included shower gel/soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, razors, sanitary products, deodorant, toilet paper, washing powder, washing up liquid and hand sanitiser.

These were made up of 11,000 essential supply packs, which included 6,500 hygiene packs. They were distributed to individual households via a doorstep delivery or provided in bulk to our partner community organisations to further distribute to communities."

This provision would include many homeless households, including those in Temporary Accommodation.

Feedback from partner agencies working with homeless people also reflects positive action

St Basil's report having received a 'substantial supply of sanitary products via TAWS' and that 'all females are given sanitary products in the standard packs we give out'. St Basil's provide for young people 16-25, rough sleeper outreach, HUB, emergency and longer-term accommodation.

Sifa-Fireside Daycentre report that they are 'very well supplied with sanitary products and can supply to any women approaching their services'. Sifa-Fireside includes specific services for rough sleepers in Birmingham and specific sessions for women.

Trident Reach confirm sanitary products are available via rough sleeper outreach and to all females in their emergency and longer-term homeless accommodation.

Further Actions

Reflecting the changing landscape of the past six months, and the evidence of period poverty being met across homeless services, including with TAWS as a significant distribution point, we will be carrying out a further enquiry via "Female Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: Research and Development Work". This work is in association with Spring Housing and Rough Sleepers Initiative and will include questions relating to homelessness and period poverty. This will include interviews and panels to include partner providers as well as homeless women in Birmingham.

The initial report aims to complete for March 2021. It is proposed that this opportunity to look at wider issues relating to homelessness for women, and including period poverty as a specific element, be used to address the action 'to examine whether' – that is to identify what gaps exist and how they might be addressed.

October 2020 – March 2021
Continuation of current provision

Oct 2020 – March 2021
Female Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: Research and Development Work. Initial report March 2021 to include response in relation to period poverty – gaps, and actions.

March 2021 forwards actions as required.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R05	That where a service is commissioned by the City Council the possibility of including a clause about alleviating period poverty and raising period awareness be considered for inclusion in future contracts wherever appropriate.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	September 2020	3

Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')

The current Charter guidance on the birmingham.gov.uk web site will be updated to include reference to period poverty and how businesses can support this agenda by awareness raising and practical actions. A reference link will be included where further information can be obtained.

The MS Teams Social Value Channel will be used to inform commissioning and procurement colleagues to consider, where relevant, including period poverty as a specific area for attention in their social value specification.

These two actions will be completed by the end of November 2020. The updated guidance and information sources will be carried over when the Charter is reviewed in March 2021.

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R06	That an assessment of progress against the recommendations in this report be presented to the Health & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	November 2020	4

Appendix ③: Concluded Recommendations

These recommendations have been tracked previously and concluded.

They are presented here for information only.

concluded

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Date Concluded by Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Tracking Assessment