

Subject:	Implement a Policy for the Distribution of Free Sanitary Products to Schools to Counter Period Poverty – Petition for Debate: Extract from the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on the 19 July 2018		
Date of Meeting:	08 October 2018		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Wall	Tel: 01273 291006
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee

To receive the petition referred from the Council for consideration.

Recommendations: That the petition be referred to the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee meeting on the 8th October, 2018 for consideration.

Petition: 1, 528 Signatures

We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to implement a policy for the distribution of free sanitary products to schools to counter period poverty. We see this as an integral part of the Council's Health and Wellbeing strategy.

Lead petitioner: Samantha Whittaker

Additional Information:

Girls and young woman are feeling stigmatised, experiencing bullying and often missing school due to not being able to afford sanitary products. Research undertaken by Plan UK in 2017 found that:

- 1 in 7 girls (15%) have struggled to afford menstruation products.
- More than 1 in 10 (12%) have had to use items other than menstruation products to stem their menstrual flow (i.e. they have had to improvise menstruation towels/tampons).
- Almost half (48%) are embarrassed by their periods.
- Only 22% feel comfortable to talk to a teacher about their periods.
- More than a quarter (26%) said they did not know what to do when they started their period.
- 1 in 7 girls (14%) said they did not know what was happening when they started their period.

Brighton and Hove Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to make Brighton and Hove a healthier, more equal city, with a thriving population by 2020 including the goal to improve the emotional health and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We believe that the provision of sanitary products for all girls and young women at school will remove the stigma and bullying experienced by these young women and help support their educational engagement and attainment in school.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**COUNCIL****4.30pm 19 JULY 2018****COUNCIL CHAMBER - HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

Present: Councillors Simson (Chair), Phillips (Deputy Chair), Allen, Atkinson, Barford, Barnett, Bell, Bennett, Bewick, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Gilbey, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hill, Horan, Hyde, Inkpin-Leissner, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Marsh, Meadows, Mears, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morris, Nemeth, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Platts, Robins, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls, West and Yates.

PART ONE**17 PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE****(3) IMPLEMENT A POLICY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF FREE SANITARY PRODUCTS TO SCHOOLS TO COUNTER PERIOD POVERTY**

17.10 The Mayor then invited Ms. Whittaker to come forward and present the second petition.

Distribution of Free Sanitary Products to Schools

17.11 Ms. Whittaker thanked the Mayor and stated that the petition had secured 1,528 signatures of support and called on the council to implement a policy for the distribution of free sanitary products to schools to counter period poverty. She stated that this was a national problem with 1 in 10 girls unable to afford sanitary ware. She hoped that the city could lead the way and ensure that all schools in the city were able to provide free products to all girls who were in need, thereby meeting the council's own objectives for child poverty and equality.

17.12 Councillor Daniel thanked Ms. Whittaker for presenting the petition and bringing the issue to the council's attention. She stated that the council was working with schools to provide products and noted that success of the Red box scheme that encouraged people to donate products for distribution within schools. It was a voluntary based scheme which meant that its success was dependant on those volunteers but she hoped that it would expand across other schools and noted that a collection box had been set up in the reception of Hove Town Hall. She felt that it was an important issue and one that needed to be discussed further at the next NICE committee meeting.

17.13 Councillor Brown welcomed the petition and stated that the subject needed further consideration and access to products needed to be made less intrusive and more convenient.

- 17.14 Councillor Phillips also welcomed the petition and stated that the consequences of not providing these products should be noted i.e. increased levels of absenteeism; bullying and an impact on well-being. The products should be easily available and pupils should not have to ask but get them anonymously.
- 17.15 Councillor Daniel noted the comments and stated that she looked forward to considering the matter at the committee meeting in October.
- 17.16 The Mayor thanked Ms. Whittaker for attending the council meeting and presenting the petition. She noted that it was recommended to refer the petition to the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee and put the recommendation to the vote which was carried unanimously.
- 17.17 **RESOLVED:** That the petition be referred to the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee meeting on the 8th October, 2018 for consideration.