

West Lothian Council

Statement of Community-Based Provision for the 'Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021'

August 2022



Scottish Government
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West Lothian Council Free Period Product Provision

1. Background

The free period product provision act (2021) received Royal Assent on January 12 2021. The Scottish Government intend to bring legal provision into force in August 2022. Local authorities are therefore required to ensure that a wide range of period products are free and easy to obtain in a dignified manner. A written statement detailing plans for provision must be prepared by each responsible body. In order to prepare the statement, consultation with relevant groups, individuals and organisations must be carried out.

West Lothian was and is well placed to deliver on the act as it had for several years provided free period products as part of addressing poverty. This has seen access to free period products primarily being delivered in schools, community buildings and local sports centres. In our schools our young people and staff have access to a range of period products including re-usable items. In secondary schools the products can be uplifted in locations (which vary across schools), determined following consultation with the school's Pupil Council.

Additionally, the My Period app is available for download which provides information regarding where products can be accessed and which products will be available. The app will be updated to reflect any changes in the delivery of the service (e.g. changes in opening hours, changes in the availability of products) on a regular basis.

As required a Period Products consultation was carried out within West Lothian between May and July 2022. This process was carried out to engage with the local community regarding the accessibility of free period products which has subsequently informed the West Lothian Council Delivery Statement.

2. Consultation

2.1 Method

A Working Group of Council and Third Sector officers was established in March 2022 to develop the provision going forward. The first stage was to agree a consultation process. The agreed format to consult the West Lothian community in regards to free period product provision was to carry out an online survey promoted through the council's social media channels, through our Third Sector (VSGWL), displayed a link on the West Lothian Council webpage and cascaded out to community groups and individuals through our usual channels.

The survey consisted of 8 questions and received 560 responses from community members as well as those who are employed in the area. Respondents had the option to leave their name and email address at the end of the survey to be entered into a draw to win vouchers for the Centre in Livingston as an incentive to participate in the survey.

In order to prepare the statement, West Lothian Council were required to consult those who:

- Currently need to use free period products
- Will need to use period products in the future
- Need to collect products on behalf of someone who needs to use period products

West Lothian Council were required to obtain the views of individuals regarding:

- The premises in which period products should be obtainable and where in these premises these products should be situated
- The ways in which product users should be able to obtain period products free of charge
- The types of period products that should be available

2.2 Consultation Key Messages

Initial questions within the survey aimed to identify where in West Lothian respondents resided and identify whether people were aware of the service and whether they would be accessing the service for themselves or others.

Question 1: Where in West Lothian do you live (if Livingston please include where, i.e. Ladywell etc.)? Please specify in the text box

- Of the 560 responses to the survey, 553 individuals specified where they lived.
- Respondents resided in a range of different towns within West Lothian.
- The highest percentage of respondents lived within the Livingston area (35%), followed by the Broxburn and Uphall area (15%) and the Bathgate and Boghall area (14%).
- Two respondents (0.4%) noted that they worked in the West Lothian area, but did not reside there.

Question 2: Are you aware of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 which makes period products universally free in Scotland?

- Of the 560 responses submitted, 557 individuals specified whether they were aware of the existing provision.
- 71.8% of individuals stated that they were aware of the Free Period Product Act (2021), while 28.2% of those were unaware.

Question 3: Would you be accessing free products for yourself or on behalf of someone else?

- Of the 559 responses to this question, 56% of respondents declared that they would be accessing products for themselves, where 44% of those would be accessing products for others.

The following questions aimed to determine which types of period products the local community would prefer to be accessible and where these products should be made available.

Question 4: What type of period products would you want to be available?

- Respondents were given a list of sanitary products to choose from when declaring which products should be made available (sanitary pads, tampons, menstrual cup, period pants, reusable pads and reusable liners).
- A text box was also included to allow participants to enter any additional products.
- Of the 556 responses, sanitary pads (84.5%) and tampons (65.5%) gained the most votes, followed by period pants (48.2%).
- One additional response in the text box suggested that panty liners should be made available.

Question 5: Where do you feel most comfortable accessing free period products?

- Again, respondents were given a list of potential locations from which period products would be made freely accessible (Community & Partnership centres, Schools, Xcite

Venues, Council Buildings, GP Surgeries, Pharmacies, Foodbanks, Local Shop/Supermarket and Online).

- Of those who participated in the present question (555 individuals), 64.1% stated that they would feel most comfortable accessing products online.
- This was followed by pharmacies (61.4%) and community and partnership centres (56.9%).

Question 6: Following on from the previous question, where about in these places would you feel most comfortable collecting free period products?

- 69% of respondents stated that they would feel most comfortable picking up products in the toilets (including male, female and disabled toilets) of buildings.
- This was followed by 47.2% of individuals stating that they would feel most comfortable picking up period products within cubicles or somewhere in the venue where no one can see (45.2%).
- In the additional text box, participants reinforced that they would feel most comfortable if they were able to order free products online that could be delivered to their home.

Question 7: What, if anything, would stop you from accessing free period products?

- Of the 533 responses to the following question, 67.4% of people said that not knowing where to access products for themselves would be the main barrier preventing them from using this service.
- Individuals also noted that not knowing where to access products on behalf of someone else (50.5%) and not knowing how many products they can take at the one time (49.7%) would stop them from utilising this service.
- In the additional text box, respondents noted that the embarrassment of accessing these products may be a potential barrier.

Question 8: Please leave any other comments below that would help us improve the service.

184 additional responses were left in order to assist West Lothian Council in improving the Free Period Product Provision and some key themes have been drawn out.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Wider Range of Products

The responses from the consultation highlighted the need for the availability of a wider range of products. It highlighted the need for staff within venues to ensure that products are stocked in order to meet the needs of individuals using the service. This includes maintaining a wide range of products (pads, tampons, liners etc.) with a range of absorbencies.

3.2 Locations within Buildings

Many respondents noted that conversing with any members of staff in venues where products are available would be a deterrent and would stop them from accessing this service. In order to minimise the embarrassment some individuals experience when collecting period products, it is suggested that products are readily available in a range of location with clear signposting.

3.3 Reusable Products

Individuals reaffirmed the need for reusable products. It was noted that reusable products are both better for the environment and more cost effective. It was suggested that these period

products should be made available and should be accompanied by an information leaflet to educate users.

3.4 Promotion

With 28% of respondents being unaware of the Act some work is needed to promote awareness.

3.5 Online

There was also a significant interest in online ordering (64.1%).

4. Provision Plan

A provision plan is being developed using the feedback received on existing provision and through the responses to the consultation as we move forward. With the Act comes in to effect on 15 August the existing network provides a good coverage across West Lothian through community facilities and schools to build on. These will be developed as demand becomes better understood both in terms of types of product and the level of stock required in each venue. This will take time to adjust.

4.1 Promotion

With **28% of respondents stating they were unaware of the Period Product Act**; West Lothian Council will aim to increase awareness of Free Period Product provision by working with Corporate Communications to increase the promotion of the service through press releases and through online platforms. These platforms include:

- The WLC Facebook page ([West Lothian Council | Facebook](#))
- The WLC Twitter page ([West Lothian Council \(@LoveWestLothian\) / Twitter](#));
- And the WLC webpage ([West Lothian Council - West Lothian Council](#))

Additionally, the service can be promoted across Council services and Community Planning Partners who have the capacity to distribute information regarding the details of the service provided across West Lothian including locations products can be found and products available.

To promote the service within community venues, the following posters will be displayed:



Many responses to the survey highlighted that individuals were unsure how many products they were able to take for both themselves and others. To ensure that local community members are aware of the full details of the service, and how many products they are able to take at one time, it is important to promote the full details of the service within venues and online. There is particular scope to promote better awareness of reusable products.

4.2 Locations

The locations will be promoted but further work is needed in each to ensure that products are situated in areas that users are comfortable with and that the right stock is in place to meet that demand. Work is also needed to develop locations further both in terms of suitability and geographic coverage.

4.3 Ongoing Consultation

The consultation has helped shape some of the areas for further development but this will be fluid and further engagement will be carried out on a regular basis to ensure it is meeting the need of our communities.

Further consultation will also be targeted around key groups that will also help ensure that some harder to reach groups are not missed out.

4.4 Reusable Products

As part of the promotion these will be specific work carried out around the reusable products and to increase the use and understanding of these products, an important environmental message.

4.5 Online Ordering

Whilst on line ordering is currently available locally it is not widely used. There will be further work needed to see what the Act might mean for this and importantly affordability. Currently this is based on home delivery but could involve ordering and pick up at local locations for example.

5. Fare Share

Whilst not picked up from the consultation, another factor that will need to be worked through is what the likely effect and the best way to support the end of the Fare Share funding in late September 2022 and the impact on our Food Network linked outlets. However this network provides a valuable number of locations that provided free products.

6. Next stages

The Statement is a starting point and the work will develop and adjust as to ensure we continually meet the needs of our customers and what can be delivered within available funding. It will take time to fully understand the demand and adjust to that, particularly following COVID when most if not all venues were closed, and that will also help understand possible gaps to be addressed.

Community Wealth Building Team

August 2022

Appendix 1 - List of current locations and products

Location	Opening Times	Products Available
Armadale and Blackridge Ward		
Armadale Partnership Centre	Monday - Friday 8am-9:30pm Saturday 9am-1pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads, Menstrual Cups
The Dale Hub	Monday-Friday 9am-4pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads
Xcite Armadale	Monday 7:30am-8pm Tuesday-Thursday - 8:30am-9pm Friday 8:30am-8pm Saturday Sunday 9am-4pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads
Bathgate Ward		
Bathgate Partnership Centre	Monday – Friday 8:30am-8pm Saturday 9am-5pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads
Simpson Medical Group	Monday-Friday 8am-6pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads, Menstrual Cups
Xcite Bathgate	Monday – Friday 6am-10pm Saturday 8am-6pm Sunday 8am-8pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads
Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh Ward		
Almond Group Practice Winchburgh	Monday 8am-6pm Tuesday 8am-6pm Wednesday-Thursday 8am-1pm 2pm-6pm Friday 8am-6pm	
Almondell Country Park	Monday-Sunday April-October 9am-5pm November-March 10am-4pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Low Absorbency Sanitary Pads, Large and Small Menstrual Cups
Ferguson Medical Practice Broxburn	Monday-Friday 8am-6pm	
Strathbrock Partnership Centre	Monday-Friday 8am-5.45pm Thursday 8am-6.45pm Saturday 8.30am-1pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Menstrual Cups, Sanitary Pads
Wood Medical Practice Broxburn	Monday-Friday 8am-6pm	
Xcite Broxburn Sports Centre	Monday 6.30am-9pm Tuesday 8.30am-9pm Wednesday 6.30am-9pm Thursday 8.30am-9pm Friday 6.30am-9pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads
Xcite Broxburn Swimming Pool	Monday - 8:30am - 3:30pm Tuesday - 8:30am - 5:30pm Wednesday - 8:30am - 9pm Thursday - 8:30am - 6pm Friday - 8:30am - 2:30pm Saturday - Closed Sunday - 9am - 4pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads

Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Ward		
Fauldhouse Health Centre	Monday-Friday 8am-6.30pm	
Polbeth Community Hub	Monday - Thursday 9am-2.45pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads, Menstrual Cups, Reusable Pads
Stoneyburn Community Centre	Monday - Friday various	Tampons, Sanitary Pads, Menstrual Cups
The Community Woods and Garden	Monday-Thursday 9am-5.30pm	
West Calder Hub	Currently Closed for 9 weeks - will update info when reopens	
West Calder Medical Practice	Monday-Friday 8am-6pm	
Livingston South Ward		
Civic Centre	Monday-Friday 9am-5pm	
Dedridge Medical Group	Monday- Friday 8am-6pm	
Forestbank Community Centre	Various between 9am-10pm	
Howden Park Centre	Monday-Friday 9am-5pm Saturday-Sunday 10am-5pm	
Xcite Livingston	Monday-Friday 6am-9pm Saturday-Sunday 9am-5pm	
Linlithgow Ward		
Beecraigs Country Park	Summer Monday-Sunday 9am-7pm Late Summer Monday-Sunday 9am-5pm Winter Monday-Sunday 10am-4pm	
Linlithgow Partnership Centre (Tam Dalyell House)	Monday: 9am - 5pm Tuesday: 9am - 7pm Wednesday: 9am - 5pm Thursday: 9am - 7pm Friday: 9am - 5pm Saturday: 10am - 1pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Large and Small Menstrual Cups, Day and Night Sanitary Pads
Xcite Linlithgow	Monday-Friday 6am-10pm Saturday 8:45am-6pm Sunday 8:15am-8pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Menstrual Cups, Sanitary Pads
Livingston North Ward		
Carmondean Medical Practice	Monday - Friday 8am-6pm	Tampons, Sanitary Pads, Menstrual Cups
East Livingston and East Calder Ward		
Almondell Country Park	Monday-Sunday April-October 9am-5pm November-March 10am-4pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Low Absorbency Sanitary Pads, Large and Small Menstrual Cups

Almondbank Library	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: 9am - 6pm Thursday: 9am - 7pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Large and Small Menstrual Cups, Day and Night Sanitary Pads
Craigshill Health Centre	Monday - Friday 8am-6pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Sanitary Pads, small and large Menstrual Cups
East Calder Health Centre	Monday-Friday 8am-6pm	
Xcite Craigswood	Monday-Friday 6:30am-10pm Saturday 9am-6pm Sunday 9am-9pm	
Xcite East Calder	Monday-Friday 9am-9pm Saturday 9am-4:30pm Sunday 9:45am-3:30pm	
Whitburn and Blackburn		
Ashgrove Group Practice Blackburn	Monday-Friday 8am-6pm	
Blackburn Partnership Centre	Monday-Friday 8am-10pm Saturday 9am-1pm Sunday 6pm-9pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Menstrual Cups, Sanitary Pads
Seafeld Community Centre	contact centre for details - self access	boxed and loose sanitary pads (no night ones) boxed tampons
Xcite Whitburn	Monday - Friday 8am-9pm Saturday-Sunday 9am-3.30pm	Super and Regular Tampons, Menstrual Cups, Sanitary Pads
Various locations		
West Lothian Foodbank and Food Network	Various between Monday-Saturday 9am-4pm	See web page: https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/access-to-food