

Period Dignity Roundtable

Meeting: MS Teams

Date: 16 February 2023

Time: 11.30-13.00

Attendees:

Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW)
WINGS Wrexham
Coleg y Cymoedd
Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
NHS Collaborative
Plan International UK
Denbighshire County Borough Council
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
PadMad Kenya
Love your Period Campaign
Women Connect First (WCF)

Welsh Government:

Equality officials
Knowledge and Analytical Services officials
International Relations official
Nursing Directorate officials

Guest speakers:

Cardiff University
Queen's University

Item 1. Welcome – Head of Gender and Disability Policy

Members were welcomed to the meeting and explained that due to the Minister for Social Justice attending the funeral of Clare Drakeford, this meeting would be chaired by an official.

The Head of Gender and Disability Policy explained that the minutes of the last roundtable meeting would be shared with members after today's meeting and apologised for the delay. Members were informed and that any issues could be raised over email.

Item 2: Publication of A Period Proud Wales – Head of Gender and Disability Policy

The group were informed that the Period Proud Wales plan had been published on 15 February and there had been good media coverage. Ahead of the plan being

published, members were emailed out resources to help promote the plan which included social media graphics and videos of lived experience. Members were thanked for their support in developing the plan.

Members raised several points/questions including:

- They were pleased that Wales was leading the way in this area.
- Concern over how easy it is to contact local authorities to find out where to access products
- Whether there would be central resources available for menstrual wellbeing in schools
- Is there scope to include a lived experience video that young carers have recently created?

Head of Gender and Disability Policy informed the group that there were some outstanding issues with the map to free period products and therefore it could not go live at the same time as the plan. Officials are now looking at different options to make it as easy as possible for people to locate products as a priority and will update members as soon as possible.

Officials in education are considering procuring resources to support menstrual wellbeing in the curriculum and will attend a future roundtable meeting to discuss with members.

ACTION: Period Dignity Manager to get in touch with Plan International about adding the video created by young carers to the resource list.

Item 3: Severe Period Pain is Not Normal project - Professor of Health Psychology, Cardiff Fertility Studies Research Group

Members were provided with an overview of the Severe Period Pain is Not Normal project and the shared aims of the project with the Period Proud Wales plan.

Members raised the following points:

- Importance of linking together resources such as the Endometriosis Wales website and Bloody Brilliant
- Offer of support in reaching young people from the Love your Period Campaign

Item 4: Feedback from the Period Dignity Local Authority Leads meeting, Denbighshire County Borough Council (DCBC)

DCBC explained to members that a Period Dignity Local Authority leads meeting took place a week before the roundtable meeting and they would be providing an update to the group on the issues raised during that meeting. Period Dignity Leads are responsible for administering the Period Dignity Grant which is issued from Welsh Government to all Local Authorities to provide free period products to learners and those on low incomes. DCBC shared the following updates:

- Local Authority (LA's) Leads welcome the announcement that WG have secured M.E.L Research to evaluate the grant and how it could be developed moving forward. It is hopeful that the funding will move to a 2-3 year award to allow for more strategic planning and coordination to create efficiencies and maximise the grant potentially through partnership or regional working.
- Concern amongst LA's that there is no direct funding for staffing in the grant and this could be impacting the delivery of the grant in some areas or at least not able to maximise benefits through the funding. However, if the existing grant was top-sliced for purpose of staffing then this will impact the total funds available to deliver services.
- The Period Dignity leads meeting is a good platform for local authorities to share best practice, ideas and generic promotional materials. With the recent launch of Period Proud Wales and the sharing of the Welsh Government assets for internal and external communications this will support LA's with being able to promote the grant in their own areas.

The Head of Gender and Disability Policy responded that there would be changes made to the grant in the next financial year as a result of early findings from the evaluation and that this means a 1 year funding offer will be issued to all Local Authorities to test the revised eligibility in 23/24. She also noted that there is no opportunity to increase the Period Dignity Grant and any consideration to fund staffing will have to come from the existing budget. The Head of Gender and Disability Policy welcomed the Period Dignity leads meeting and the ability to share best practice as well as to enable Welsh Government to go along to provide specific updates and answer queries.

DCBC then shared some examples of best practice from Pembrokeshire County Borough Council which included a 'Pick and Mix' stand filled with different period products.

Item 5: Evaluation of the Period Dignity Grant - Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS)

Officials from KAS provided Members with an update on the evaluation of the Welsh Government's Period Dignity Grant.

They explained that M.E.L Research have been awarded the contract to undertake the evaluation in November and are due to report interim findings at the end of February in order to inform the 23/24 grant. The final report is due in October 2023. The purpose of the grant is to assess the efficacy of the funding and period product dissemination process and to evidence the impact the grant is having on recipients.

Item 6: Any other business

Members raised the following points:

- Teaching young people how to effectively use products such as tampons is important in preventing toxic shock syndrome.
- There is still a problem with students being sent home from school due to lack of period products.
- Young people are still being asked to go to reception to ask for free period products.
- In colleges where members have visited, products and information have been freely available and easily accessible.