

# **Period Dignity Roundtable**

**9 December 2024**

**9:00 – 10:15**

## **Attendees:**

Cardiff University  
Colegau y Cymoedd  
Colegau Cymru  
Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW)  
Keep Wales Tidy  
NHS Wales  
Plan International  
Sport Wales  
Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)  
Women Connect First (WCF)

## **Welsh Government:**

Equality and Human Rights  
International Relations  
Nursing Directorate  
Public Health

## **Guest speakers:**

AtkinsRéalis  
Carmarthenshire County Council  
Flintshire County Council  
University of South Wales

## **Item 1: Welcome and Introduction – Senior Gender Policy Manager, Welsh Government**

The Welsh Government Senior Gender Policy Manager welcomed everyone to the meeting and detailed changes in personnel to the team.

The founder of the Love Your Period campaign, was congratulated for being honoured with the coveted British Citizen Award Medal of Honour for Services to Healthcare at the Palace of Westminster in July of this year.

Members were asked to confirm if they were content to approve the minutes from the last meeting, and this was agreed.

An update was provided on an action from the previous meeting:

- **Update members on progress made in resources being developed for NHS settings at the next roundtable meeting.** Update: Resources are currently being produced by NHS Bloody Brilliant and we hope to be able to share with members soon.
- **Period Dignity Roundtable members to signpost their networks regarding Endometriosis Cymru website and symptom reporting tool, Severe Period Pain Is Not Normal (SPPINN) project and provide feedback.** Checked with members to see if they were able to do this.
- **Welsh Government Officials to send presentations to Roundtable members.** This was completed.

The members were informed that as stated in the Terms of Reference for this group, these are to be reviewed annually. The updated version will be sent to members to review and feedback following this meeting.

**ACTION: Updated Terms of Reference to be sent to Roundtable members for review and feedback.**

## **Item 2: Menstruation and the construction industry - AtkinsRéalis**

A member of staff from AtkinsRéalis presented to members on the work she has undertaken to improve the provision of menstrual facilities in the construction industry.

### **Background**

Motivated to promote STEM career opportunities to young people and raise awareness of issues faced by others, especially women in the engineering and construction sector. Recognised that the provision of menstrual facilities was non-existent on construction sites, with women having to change menstrual products in fields or travel many miles to use facilities in supermarkets. Statistics show that women are twice as likely to leave engineering as men, particularly between the

ages of 20-39. Menstrual challenges are recognised to be one of the issues they face.

Schedule two of the [Construction Design and Management \(CDM\) 2015 Regulations](#) states that "*suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences must be provided or made available at readily accessible places*". This was not clear and as a result was open to interpretation, with many site managers viewing it as optional guidance rather than compulsory action.

## **Campaign**

She established an online campaign to capture women's experiences and get support for menstrual facilities to be implemented across all construction sites. A petition was used to unite women across the sector and highlight the change needed in the industry to private companies, MP's and Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

## **Achievements**

- Met with HSE in November 2022 to discuss the issues. The toolkit now includes more references about how sanitary facilities should be provided and these are checked as part of site inspections.
- Empowered others to make change within their companies.
- Raised awareness of menstruation in construction.

## **Members comments**

Period Dignity Roundtable members celebrated the work and successes that had been achieved to implement improvements within the construction industry and agreed more work was needed.

## **Item 3: Period Quality of Life, and Period Dignity at the University of South Wales**

A professor from University of South Wales gave a presentation to members on the work she has undertaken to understand the impacts heavy menstrual bleeding has on people's quality of life.

## **Background**

Through her research she has discovered a number of challenges facing women with heavy menstrual bleeding:

- Difficult to measure blood flow each month for women to confirm if they experience heavy bleeding. Typically more than 80ml of blood a month constitutes as heavy bleeding.
- It can take women up to five years before they seek support from their GP for heavy bleeding, prior to that many will try to tackle challenges independently.
- Sometimes GP's will dismiss women who present with heavy bleeding.

NICE guidelines state that the impact on the quality of life for a person should be the main driver for providing support, rather than focusing on the quantity of blood.

## **Research**

A Period QOL was at the University of South Wales to capture the physical, psychological and social impacts of heavy menstrual bleeding. The study involved 370 members of staff from University of South Wales and highlighted the quality of life reduced for women with extremely high blood flow. 20-55% of women involved in the study had missed working days due to bleeding and 80% reported absenteeism when at work as a result of their period.

## **Outcomes**

As a result of the study a number of recommendations have been identified to improve conditions for people who menstruate in the workplace:

- Ensuring sinks are available in every toilet cubicle to ensure any menstrual issues can be dealt with more easily and in private.
- Providing clarity to women about when they should take sick leave for menstrual pain.
- Having Period Champions in a workplace who provide link between staff and HR to deal with issues.

Work is now underway to capture the views of students at the University, as has been done for staff. New University buildings are also being designed to include sinks within toilet cubicles.

## **Members comments**

Members agreed toilets should include sink basins within them to support women, and men, with issues they may have. Opportunities were identified between members to collaborate on projects which aim to improve working conditions for women who menstruate.

**ACTION: Welsh Government officials to review and consider how best practice can be shared more widely to encourage more public and private premises to include sinks within toilet cubicles.**

## **Item 4: Update from Local Authority Period Dignity Leads, Carmarthenshire County Council and Flintshire County Council**

The Period Dignity Leads from every local authority met on 18 November to discuss issues and share best practice about how they are administering the Period Dignity Grant.

## **Carmarthenshire Period Dignity Lead:**

The period dignity grant is used to support a wide range of third sector organisations across Carmarthenshire. There are 75 access points, which ensures that people across the local authority can get products. Foodbanks are able to order products bi-monthly to retain a high level of stock. An outreach service is operating out of the community hubs to reach vulnerable people located in more rural areas.

By working with local authority leads for vulnerable groups, they are able to provide suitable provision. One example is the collaboration with the Gypsy, Roma Traveller lead who delivers period products discreetly to members of the community. They are now looking for ways in which they can work with sports clubs to ensure that products are readily available, and menstruation is not a barrier to people participating in sports.

All schools have period products that are accessible to students. The number of available dispensers and reusable products in schools is being increased and a pilot subscription service for year 7 and 8 pupils is due to begin in January 2025.

Online training sessions were organised for primary and secondary schools to give education professionals an overview of the Welsh Government Period Proud Plan and Carmarthenshire's specific campaign. They also used the sessions to discuss how period dignity can fit into Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum and identify what support or resources schools need to do this effectively.

Carmarthenshire are utilising their website and social media platforms to promote period dignity, the availability of products and links to further information such as the Bloody Brilliant website. Work with a social media influencer has also taken place in addition, in an effort to reach more young people.

## **Flintshire Dignity Lead:**

Period Dignity sits within the School Improvement Department and Health School team in Flintshire County Council, which has strong links with schools and the wider community.

A new subscription and supplier service launched on 9 December. Schools and community groups have been allocated e-vouchers that they are able to use to purchase period products as and when they are required. The service will also be open to young people up to the age of 18. All products will be environmentally friendly, which will help the local authority meet the targets set out by the Welsh Government.

Welsh Government guidance is shared with schools on how the Period Dignity Grant should be used and work that is required to support the Period Proud Wales Plan, including reducing the taboo of periods for young people.

In spring 2024, menstrual health training provision was organised for Flintshire County Council Staff and community leads. A review of secondary menstrual health

education was completed and, as a result of this, they will be piloting a local menstrual health curriculum Autumn 2025.

Information about period dignity and menopause continues to be shared widely to raise awareness. Sports clubs are also adapting to provide period products more readily by including them as standard items within first aid kits.

### **Item 5: Welsh Government Update – Progress against A Period Proud Wales Plan, Senior Gender Policy Manager, Welsh Government**

Welsh Government will launch an online Period Dignity Tracker in January 2025 which will include regular updates against each of the actions. This will replace the annual report that has been produced before and seen as a positive way to proactively share progress.

Members were asked to inform Welsh Government officials if there were any elements of the plan they could provide help or advice towards tackling barriers and issues people experience as a result of periods.

Key achievements since the last Period Dignity Roundtable meeting, held in February 2024 included:

- Building stronger links with Period Dignity Leads to improve to data collection and good practice sharing, in part through the development of a case study template. Collating and sharing this information has enabled us to develop an evidence base of who the grant is reaching and the impact of this.
- Education officials awarded a contract for a wide range of health and well-being curriculum related resources in November 2024. These will include resources to support learning on menstrual well-being. It is anticipated that these will be available from March 2025
- In February 2024, Welsh Government published HR Guidance and Procedures Period and Menopause. Officials in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are now developing a women's health hub intranet page, which will go live soon.
- A new menopause awareness programme called 'Menopositive' has been made available to all Welsh Government staff. This has helped staff make positive changes both professionally and in their person life.
- Period Dignity officials have been working with Sport Wales and roundtables were held in April and November this year with over 20 different sporting governing bodies. The initial roundtable explored the challenges and barriers of menstruation on Sport. The most recent roundtable reviewed how governing bodies are moving forward with their period dignity plans.
- Plan UK have received funding to offer free workshops to develop and support period peers that community organisations can access. In January

2025, they will hold the first workshops with the Period Dignity Leads from each local authority and then look to open up to other community groups.

- Health and Care Research (HCRW) undertook a rapid evidence review to examine existing evidence in relation to the impact of periods on participation in sport. This has been published and available via [Researchsquare](#).

### **Forward look**

- Via the Wales TUC and third sector partners, increase the provision of free period products for staff and visitors, including at sports and cultural venues.
- Increase provision of plastic free products, products with reduced plastic content, reduced plastic packaging, packaging in general or reusable products year on year. This aim will be balanced with ensuring there is a choice of products available for those for whom reusable products are not culturally acceptable, restricted by the experience of poverty, living conditions (houses of multiple occupancy etc) or are unsuitable due to an impairment or neurodivergence.
- Engage with the Disability Rights Taskforce, the Disability Equality Forum and other representative groups to identify barriers and options through which provision and guidance can be improved.
- The impact of periods on the participation of women, girls and those who menstruate in sport will be understood and actions will be designed to improve participation levels.

**ACTION: Roundtable members to contact Welsh Government Officials if they are able to help towards achieving objectives within A Period Proud Wales Plan.**

**ACTION: Welsh Government officials to share written update of the progress against the plan with Roundtable members.**

### **Item 6: Any other Business – Head of LGBTQ+ and Gender Policy, Welsh Government**

Members were thanked for their contributions invited to share any comments. The chair encouraged members to share any feedback regarding meeting content and suggestions for future agenda items with Welsh Government.

Members were encouraged if they have any information or events they would like to highlight or share with the roundtable members, please send them into the team and they will circulate the details.

Any information which members wish to share with Roundtable members or with the Period Dignity Leads in local authorities can be sent to Welsh Government officials for circulation via the Period Dignity mailbox: [perioddignity@gov.wales](mailto:perioddignity@gov.wales)  
The next meeting is being arranged and diary markers will be sent shortly for 2025 .

**ACTION: Sports Wales and Plan UK to present to Roundtable members at the next meeting.**

**ACTION: Welsh Government Officials to send presentations to Roundtable members.**