

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Period Poverty Community Initiative	Chantal Noble

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

Runnymede Borough Council are implementing a scheme that will see free period products being placed at a range of accessible locations around the borough. These products will be available in toilets within the venues that have joined the scheme.

This activity aims to alleviate period poverty within the borough. It will ensure individuals have access to sanitary pads and tampons if they are unable to purchase them themselves. It will also provide products to individuals who find themselves in a situation where they need them, allowing individuals to menstruate with dignity.

This is needed, due to the prevalence of period poverty across the globe and within the UK. Studies have shown that 21% of girls, women and people who menstruate in the UK are now struggling to afford period products – an increase of 12% (Action Aid). This project allows Runnymede Borough Council to support in the fight against period poverty.

This project aims to reduce the impact period poverty has on individuals. By providing products for free, it hopes to reduce the financial pressures some individuals face when menstruating, with statistics stating 60% of people who menstruate prioritise buying food over period products. Both food and period products are necessities, so no one should have to prioritise one over the other.

Providing period products for free will positively impact the wider community, by promoting equality, reduce financial pressures, and increase safety for all those who menstruate.

B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential for adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.

The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

Runnymede Borough Council operate to support residents in the whole borough. This project aims to support all individuals who menstruate regardless of their characteristics.

Sex: This project aims to reduce the financial pressures women and those who menstruate face when menstruating. Men and those who don't menstruate do not face the same financial pressures as those who are menstruating, as they do not need to budget for period products.

Providing products for free, will help bridge this gap and alleviate the financial pressures faced by those who menstruate.

Gender reassignment: Those who have undergone gender reassignment may still have periods and so it is important to ensure they are not discriminated against. Gendered toilets often do not have period related products within them, such as sanitary bins or vending machines offering products, meaning their access to products is more limited than those who use female washrooms. Products will be placed in both female and male toilets to ensure those who menstruate, regardless of their gender identity have access to products.

Age: The average age of starting a period in the UK is 12 and these usually occur monthly until an individual is in their 50's. Despite these averages, periods can begin and end at any age. Regardless of age, all individuals should be provided with products if they are menstruating. If an individual is younger or older than the average age, it does not mean that individual does not menstruate. It must be acknowledged, and provisions put in place to ensure everyone who menstruates have equal access to period products, regardless of their age.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected of Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

This project is relevant to Equalities and a full impact assessment has been conducted

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off.

Date completed: 01.03.2024

Sign-off by senior manager:

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCOPING

1. What aspects of the policy function or activity are particularly relevant to equality? Other aspects should not necessarily be excluded from the assessment, but attention should be focused on the most important areas and include which of the equality strands the policy function or activity is relevant to. Diversity within the strands should also be considered. Please consider whether any comments made in Part B of the Screening form are relevant here.

Sex

Gender reassignment

Age

2. Set out the available evidence that will help you assess the impact of this policy function or activity on equality. This could include service-level monitoring data, analysis of complaints/enquiry records, existing user feedback, data obtained from external sources and information about the local community. You may find it useful to compare your service-user statistics against the [Runnymede population profile](#).

Research has been conducted on the impact period poverty has on individuals.

Sex: Those who menstruate and do not have access to products are more likely to miss education which can lead to negative consequences in relation to their educational progression and future careers. 28% of young women who have had a period in the last 12 months (aged 16-24) report having avoided or missed school, college or university in the last year because of their periods (Action Aid). 14%, or an estimated 6 million women have avoided or missed exercise and 2 million women have avoided or missed work due to being on their period in the last year (Action Aid). In the UK, 1 in 10 girls cannot afford to buy menstrual products. This online research highlights the negative impact experiencing period poverty can have on one's education, fitness and life progression.

Gender reassignment: Individuals who have undergone gender reassignment experience, financial barriers, lack of inclusive products, discrimination, limited access to healthcare and bathrooms and a lack of awareness and support, which contribute to difficulties in managing their periods effectively (IGLYO, 2023). Trans and non-binary individuals are more likely to live in poverty than cisgender people. Trans, non-binary, gender fluid, and intersex individuals may already face financial constraints related to their gender identity, such as healthcare expenses and other related gender-affirming items. These additional challenges make it even more difficult to afford menstrual products, exacerbating the issue of period poverty within these communities (IGLYO, 2023). Trans, non-binary, gender fluid, and intersex individuals already face discrimination and stigma in various aspects of their lives. Period poverty compounds these challenges, intensifying the marginalisation and isolation experienced within the LGBTQIA+ community (IGLYO, 2023). Online research has highlighted the impact period poverty has on exacerbating a range of negative experiences those who have undergone gender reassignment.

3. What consultation and involvement has been undertaken in relation to this (or a similar) policy, function or activity and what are the results? If none have been carried out, what consultation will be needed? Data may be available from recent consultation activities on a related policy or Equality impact assessment.

Discussions with social enterprises and product providers have given advice and information on how to best provide products whilst being inclusive. Hey Girls recommended products should be placed in freely accessible locations, that does not require one to ask to access them. This has helped decide where products should be placed, with the outcome being in private washrooms.

Hey Girls, and Here We Flo, informed us of the importance of placing products in all bathrooms, female, male and disabled. This will ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all who menstruate.

A webinar was attended which explored the theme of period poverty. The CEO of See Her Thrive, explored key information about period poverty, and what can be done to make periods more inclusive and a less stressful experience.

Research has been conducted into what other councils across the UK are doing and what they have done to alleviate period poverty within their boroughs.

4. Are there any gaps in the information established from the consultation and involvement undertaken and referred to in Part 3? If so, set out how these gaps will be filled?

No gaps have been identified at this stage but data will be gathered over the three years of the project

Where it is not possible to fill information/data gaps in time to inform this assessment, specific action points will need to be included in the action plan section Part 10 below, with a focus on monitoring the actual impact of the policy function or activity.

ASSESSING IMPACT

It is essential to consider not just the intended consequences of the policy but also any unintended consequences and barriers that might prevent it being effective for people within any of the Protected Characteristic groups.

Please use the Grid included below to assess the impact of the Policy/function/action on each of the Protected Characteristics. When completing the assessment, please bear in mind the following questions;

- 1. What are the main findings of your consultation and involvement activities, and do they demonstrate problems that need to be addressed? For example, could the policy, function or activity outcomes differ according to people's ethnic group, disability, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation, or age?** For instance, there might be evidence of higher or lower participation/uptake by different groups.
- 2. If there is a disproportionate impact on one group, is it appropriate and consistent with the objective?** For instance the policy may include lawful positive action or other

methods to address particular needs or may be considered to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

Protected Characteristic	Positive		Neutral	Negative		Comments
	High	Low		High	Low	
Age					X	Younger individuals may not have access to these locations without help from a parent / guardian. This could limit their access to these products. However, the government scheme to provide free sanitary products to all secondary schools, helps to ensure younger individuals have access to products.
Disability						
Gender Reassignment				X		Although products will be placed in all toilets, ensuring everyone no matter their gender identity has equal access, male bathrooms do not usually have sanitary disposal bins. This could negatively impact this group when it comes to disposing of products that are being supplied. However, this is down to the venues, and outside of the council's control.
Marriage / Civil Partnership						
Pregnancy / Maternity						
Race						
Religion / Belief						
Sex	X					This project aims to directly impact women and those who menstruate positively. This project will provide products to these individuals to reduce the added financial pressures experienced due to menstruation. Products will, however, be placed in all bathrooms to ensure individuals are not discriminated against.
Sexual Orientation						

7. Does the policy, function or activity miss potential opportunities to promote equality or positive attitudes to (and between) different Protected Characteristics or communities?

N/A

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT: ACTION PLANNING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

8. Does the policy, function or activity require reconsideration or amendment? If not, explain the reasons for this conclusion. If an adverse impact has been identified, you will need to set out the justification for continuing the policy, function or activity or outline measures to mitigate the impact.

No, this project has considered all areas to ensure that accessing period products is accessible to all and does not exclude any individual. Locations that these products will be available have been considered with equality in mind, ensuring all individuals have equal access.

9. What actions have you identified as a result of this equality impact assessment? These might include improving data collection in order to give a clearer picture of your service-users, physical adjustments to a building, arranging for information to be sent out to individuals in alternative formats or languages, or consulting with a wider group of people to understand the impact of the policy.

Any actions emerging over the three years of the project's duration will be taken into account including success of the project and feedback from service users, providers and participating local organisations. We will also consider how people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds are affected by this initiative.

10. Action Plan (where applicable): Who will be responsible for completing these actions and in what timescale? How will you review the actual impact of this policy function or activity? Provide details of timescale and actions for review, and details of how the actions will be evaluated to measure if expected outcomes are achieved in practice. You may have identified 'triggers' that would indicate a problem with the policy, function or activity and suggest a revision is needed.

There are plans for this project to last three years. After this time, a review will take place by relevant Officers on the project team to look at the impact this project has had.

This assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge.

Date completed: 01.03.2024

Sign-off by an authorised Officer/Manager: