



PWYLLGOR CRONFA ELUSENNOL CHARITABLE FUNDS COMMITTEE

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	28 November 2022
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Period Poverty
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Lisa Gostling – Director of Workforce and OD
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Robert Blake – Head of Culture/ Workforce Experience Sarah Russell – Culture and Workforce Team Assistant Dan Blyth – Culture and People Specialist

**Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)
Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)**

Ar Gyfer Penderfyniad/For Decision

ADRODDIAD SCAA SBAR REPORT

Sefyllfa / Situation

Period poverty is defined as the 'lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints (RCN, 2022)'. With the rising cost of living, consideration must be given to what is a fundamental need for women.

This report is being presented to the Charitable Funds Committee to consider and approve an application for £2908 of charitable funding to support the roll out of a pilot scheme to ensure that boxes containing menstrual products can be provided in work areas across the Health Board. This will initially be trialled on one acute site, Withybush General Hospital (WGH) and, should this project be successful, further charitable funds or other funding streams will be explored.

Cefndir / Background

A study undertaken by ActionAid in May 2022 showed that due to the cost-of-living crisis, 1 in 8 women (12%) have struggled to buy sanitary products for themselves or a dependant in the last 6 months. "Nearly half (46%) of women who struggled to afford sanitary products in the last 6 months kept sanitary pads or tampons in for longer or used tissues (46%). 10% doubled up their underwear".

Research shows that organisations that lack workplace policies and guidance around menstruation are much more likely to see presenteeism and absenteeism among their workforce. A study showed that women were losing up to 9.3 days annually due to menstrual related symptoms.

With the average women in the UK earning approximately £80 per day, the research highlights that this could cost an organisation £673 a year per female employee. With approximately 77% (8000) of HDdUHB staff being women, this could accumulate to a loss of over £5,384,000 a year. (Sharma, 2021).

No baseline exercise has been undertaken on how many women are absent from work due to menstrual issues and therefore, there is no tangible data to back-up this request for funds. However, national research, in addition to anecdotal evidence, proves that this is a significant issue for the workforce.

A project such as this would also challenge taboos and stereotypes across the entire organisation. Research by Wickeser, et al (2022) says that taboos around menstruation are much more evident in different religions and cultures. Owing to the diverse workforce, this is an important issue for consideration, as periods should not be a barrier in the workplace. The project would also promote the staff wellbeing agenda.

Staff in NHS Scotland have already called upon the Scottish Government to tackle this issue; calling period products a 'basic necessity' for staff (BBC News, 2022). The British Medical Association has called for universal access to sanitary products for in-patients in order to tackle poverty and reduce stigma (British Medical Journal, 2018). Whilst the research for hospital staff is limited, it is known that this is a significant issue.

This project will give greater visibility to a natural issue, and would contribute to educating colleagues who do not menstruate in supporting those who do.

Asesiad / Assessment

Whilst the Health Board provides a range of financial wellbeing resources, this project would be a significant change in the staff wellbeing offer. A recent report from the Nuffield Trust (2022) highlights that 40,000 nurses have left the NHS in the past year. The situation is equally as concerning in HDdUHB, with 20.9% of surveyed employees mentioning salary as their main reason for considering leaving. Providing support in this form may contribute to the reduction in turnover

Benefits

- Reduced absenteeism/ presenteeism
- Less financial burden on staff
- Reduced anxiety
- Greater awareness and openness around menstrual issues
- Reduced prejudice

Risks

- Products not being used
- Project not maintained
- Inequality across sites
- Patients using products designed for staff
- Environmental issues such as the use of single use products instead of reusable products

A meeting was arranged with a colleague from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB), who has piloted numerous period poverty programmes across Wales, whilst also accomplishing extensive research around this subject. The research outlined that many NHS workers such as junior doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, radiographers and porters are shift workers. Shift work, particularly night shifts, and stress are linked to menstrual irregularities and unpredictable period dates.

Studies show that a happy workforce leads to a better team culture and reduced absenteeism and presenteeism, which a lack of access to free sanitary products for emergency or unexpected need at work might impede. A large, cross-sectional study has linked menstruation

with an increased level of presenteeism, which is more profound where more prominent symptoms such as pain are reported. The feedback below was collated from a short survey that was completed following the boxes being in place in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board:

- **“Relief knowing there are products there if caught short!! It's really *stressful* starting a period and realising you have no supplies. I once bled right through uniform and had to wear scrub trousers and had the whole shift with people asking, why was I in scrubs and not uniform. Anything which can *minimise embarrassment* is a bonus!”**
- **“This may be an absolutely amazing thing and genuinely *save the day* in some cases.”**
- **“It's very useful. Often staff get *caught out*. Ladies do not always have a regular cycle. No shop available at the Grange which sells period products.”**
- **“To the girls, they are a *god send*”**
- **“Makes you *feel valued* as a member of staff that *we are human* too”**

The proposal is to **trial** period poverty boxes on one acute site for a period of three months, by placing 30 boxes in staff toilets across WGH. Weekly monitoring of usage will be undertaken with support from Hotel Facilities staff and Ward Managers. A QR code, attached at Appendix 1, will be placed on the box, which links to a form and a location code where anyone can request that the box be replenished.

Evaluation

Each box will be numbered and allocated to a specific location. This will allow the Culture and Workforce Experience Team to monitor the usage of products over the three months. At the end of the pilot, usage statistics will be available that will allow forecasting of usage and measurement of the success of the pilot scheme.

Each box will have printed information on the scheme and a QR link to an evaluation, attached at Appendix 2, to enable the collection of meaningful data that will inform any future rollout.

Item Description	Price Per Unit (£)	Quantity Needed	Total Price (£)
Regular tampon – non applicator (18pk)	1.93	1	1.93
Regular tampon – with applicator (16pk)	2.58	2	5.16
Super tampon – with applicator (14pk)	2.70	2	5.40
Sanitary Towel – Wings – Long (12 singles)	0.90	4	3.60
Sanitary Towel – Wings – Normal (12 singles)	0.87	4	3.50
9 litre plastic storage box	9.49	30	284.7
Total cost per box			29.08
Total cost			
30 full boxes + 3 months replenishment cost (Equivalent to 100 boxes)			£2908

It will be extremely difficult to assess and evaluate what success looks like for this trial. Research demonstrates that organisations who implement these types of initiatives see more positive workforce key performance indicators (KPIs) and boosts feel-good factor. The evaluation of this pilot would be undertaken via a short questionnaire attached to the boxes in the form of a QR code to collate qualitative feedback on the scheme. The Culture and Workforce Experience team would also review areas of high usage and develop a poster to encourage staff to attend focus groups at the end of the pilot to measure the impact of the scheme.

On analysis of this data, a report will be presented to the People, Organisational Development and Culture Committee (PODCC) to consider roll out across sites and alternative funding. Given the potential impact for 78% of the workforce, there could be a request to the Pennies from Heaven fund. The number of boxes that would be required would roughly equate to 400 boxes, amounting to £11,632 per annum.

The amount being requested for charitable funding for the pilot is £2908.

Update 5th January 2022

Following a request made at the November 2022 Charitable Funds Committee meeting, Dan Blyth (Culture and People Specialist) and Nicola Llewelyn (Head of Hywel Dda Health Charities) met with Lisa Humphrey (General Manager Women & Children's Services) to explore linkage between this initiative and the Women's Health Plan (due to be published in Spring 2023).

The conclusion was that this pilot supports the aims and objectives of the Women's Health Plan, with particular reference to the quality statement and quality attribute 4:

"The health and care sector is predominantly composed of women, and any approach which minimises avoidable ill-health in this workforce presents a significant opportunity to improve NHS Wales efficiency, as well as care for individuals. Health boards need to ensure their staff are appropriately supported whenever they need to access services, including through experiences of menstrual related pain and menopause".

"Health boards will ensure the women's health workforce is supported and developed, to address staff retention, comply with relevant standards including anti racist and anti-oppressive skills, and provide sustainable capacity to meet demand".

This initial request for funding is to fund a pilot project at Withybush Hospital at a cost of £2,908. Following the pilot and evaluation it was agreed that an update would be provided to the Hywel Dda Women's Health Implementation Group. The Group may be able to support with accessing additional funding and support the development of a future charitable funds request to extend the pilot across the organisation.

Although the title of this paper is 'Period Poverty', this charitable funds request is being made under the theme of staff welfare and wellbeing rather than the relief of poverty, in line with the charity's eligibility criteria: *Eligible for funding: Initiatives that promote staff wellbeing which demonstrate a clear improvement in the wellbeing of staff that translate to improved care to patients.*

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

the Charitable Funds Committee is requested to consider and approve an application for £2908 of charitable funding to support the roll out of a three month pilot scheme to provide sanitary products for staff in Withybush General Hospital.

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau) Objectives: (must be completed)	
Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	4.21 In addition, the following expenditure types regardless of value require Charitable Funds Committee consideration and approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research & development expenditure. ▪ Pay expenditure. ▪ Requests of any nature resulting in ongoing charitable funds commitment.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	Not Applicable
Safon(au) Gofal ac Iechyd: Health and Care Standard(s):	1. Staying Healthy 7. Staff and Resources
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	4. The best health and wellbeing for our individuals, families and communities 1. Putting people at the heart of everything we do 4. The best health and wellbeing for our individuals, families and communities
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	1F HR Offer (induction, policies, employee relations, access to training)
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2018-2019	9. All HDdUHB Well-being Objectives apply

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity loss due to menstruation-related symptoms: a nationwide cross-sectional survey among 32 748 women BMJ Open • Menstrual leave: a positive step to keep people in the workplace? (brownejacobson.com) • Cost of living: 12% of British women are affected by period poverty ActionAid UK

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menstrual Health in the Workplace - MLP Law • Lack of period workplace policies costing businesses billions - HRreview • The average woman spends around £5,000 on period products in lifetime Metro News • Peak leaving? A spotlight on nurse leaver rates in the UK The Nuffield Trust • BMA calls for end to period poverty The BMJ • Period products for NHS staff 'a basic necessity' - BBC News
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Incorporated within the report
Partion / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Cronfa Elusennol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to Charitable Funds Committee:	None

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	No long term impacts. This is a request for a one-off payment from the CFC. If the pilot is successful, we will seek funding from other funding streams.
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	There would be no adverse impacts to patient care. We are hopeful that this will reduce sickness rates and therefore increase staffing levels.
Gweithlu: Workforce:	There are no adverse impacts to staff.
Risg: Risk:	There are no major risks except those identified in the paper.
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	There are no adverse legal implications.
Enw Da: Reputational:	It is hoped that this will promote Hywel Dda's reputation a compassionate and caring employer. As with any spending decision, there is always reputational risk from the general public.
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	None
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	This project would promote equality and would level the playing field for women who menstruate by easing the financial burden that comes with purchasing sanitary products.

Appendix 1

Nobody should get caught short on their period

These products are here for you
when you really need them.

When the products are running low,
scan the QR code to let us know.



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Period Boxes

Times are tough, and none of our staff should have to worry about the cost of period products. If you're in an emergency, please use the products from these boxes. Once the products are empty, please let us know so we can re-fill them.

1. What is the number on the box? *

The value must be a number

2. What needs refilling? *

- Regular tampon - non applicator
- Regular tampon - with applicator
- Super tampon - with applicator
- Long sanitary towel
- Normal sanitary towel

3. Are there any other products that would be useful in the box? *

Enter your answer

4. Have these boxes helped? Let us know your thoughts *

Enter your answer