# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Consultation launch of the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan**  |
| **DATE**  | **20 October 2021** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt MS Minister for Social Justice**  |

Today I am pleased to announce the consultation launch of our Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan. This launch marks delivery of a Programme for Government commitment, is a key deliverable of our Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan and further demonstrates our commitment to becoming a feminist Government.

In 2014 the UN Human Rights Council acknowledged that lack of menstrual health management and stigma associated with menstruation have a negative impact on gender equality.

In Wales, 15% of girls are unable to afford period products, while one in three say they struggle to pay.[[1]](#footnote-1) More broadly, across the UK more than 52% of teenage girls have missed school or college because they were menstruating, with one in 10 saying they didn’t go to school as they were embarrassed about being on their period.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Tackling period poverty has been a priority of the Welsh Government for some time. Since 2018 we have invested almost nine million pounds to ensure that children and young people and those on low incomes have access to free period products. The launch of the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan demonstrates our growing ambition, not only to eradicate period poverty but also to move towards period dignity for everyone in Wales.

This Plan outlines a broad vision of period dignity. This vision involves ending any sense of stigma and shame associated with periods; normalising people’s experience whilst also acknowledging the distress suffered by those whose periods are painful, disruptive and debilitating.

Period dignity considers the link between periods and broader health issues, the environmental impact of many disposable products, the impact on the workplace and on engagement in sport and culture. The plan aims to be intersectional, in that it considers period dignity for those with additional protected characteristics and seeks to make provision for additional challenges or cultural requirements. Period dignity and period poverty are children's rights matters and the plan considers the ongoing work of schools and young people’s services in relation to that.

The plan also takes a life course approach to period dignity, identifying areas of support to be in place pre-puberty, through adolescence, during peri-menopause, menopause and beyond.

I would like to express my thanks to our stakeholders, including the Period Dignity Roundtable, who have been instrumental in the development of this Plan and who will play a vital role in its implementation.

Achieving our vision for period dignity is an important step in ending gender discrimination and, therefore the implementation of a Gender Equal Wales. We all either have periods, have had them or know people who do but the negative consequences of menstruation; impact on work; absence from education or ending sports participation are experienced by women, girls and others who menstruate.

Achieving period dignity requires engagement with men and boys, women and girls and those who identify outside of this binary, to raise awareness and understanding and to end stigma. It is a conversation and a process that everyone needs to be involved in.

The consultation on the Strategic Action Plan is open until 12th January 2022. I encourage everyone to consider the document and share their [views](https://gov.wales/period-dignity-strategic-action-plan) with us as we work towards our vision for period dignity.

1. 2018, Plan International – refers to girls aged 14-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Research by PHS [↑](#footnote-ref-2)