

> Tackling **period poverty**

[#endperiodpoverty](#) [#phsperiodpoverty](#)



“ After being extensively trialled within schools, we’re confident free-vend machines are the most accessible, convenient way of tackling period poverty. ”

Clare Noble, Head of Healthcare at phs

> We’re tackling period poverty

We believe that all girls should have access to free sanitary products – because they’re a necessity not a luxury. **One in 10** young women are unable to afford period products, according to research from children’s charity Plan International UK.

What’s more, nearly 140,000 girls have missed school because they couldn’t afford sanitary wear. The campaign to tackle period poverty is growing nationally with Scotland being the first government to announce a directive for free sanitary products in schools, colleges and universities.

phs is working with educational institutes across the UK to develop the best solution possible to providing free products to girls. This includes creating a new free-vend machine which is already being used to offer free sanitary products to young girls. **phs** has also been approached by businesses in the private sector who want to do more for their staff and offer them free sanitary products and have subsequently installed their own free vend machines.

As we strive to help overcome period poverty, phs free-vend machines offer a discreet and convenient solution to organisations enabling them to offer products to young girls who cannot afford them.

#endperiodpoverty #phsperiodpoverty

> Coin free vends

Period poverty is a serious issue that's affecting women and girls today, in the towns and cities that we live in, and unfortunately, it's on the increase. **phs** has introduced a coin free vending machine, to help alleviate some of the anxiety and embarrassment young women feel every month when faced with having to purchase hygiene products they can't afford.

The purpose-designed free-vend dispenser has been created in response to the growing period poverty agenda and rise in demand from customers. It offers customers a discreet and complimentary hygiene service, dispensing two stock lines of leading branded feminine hygiene products. The machines stock individually-wrapped sanitary products and can be accessed without the use of a coin.



Product specification	
Size	31 x 73 x 8.5cm
Weight	3.75kg
Operation	Manual Operation

Key features:

- 'Feminine Hygiene Coin Free' vending for customers who want to offer a discreet, complementary hygiene service
- One of the most compact vending machine designs on the market
- Dual column vend dispenses two stock lines of leading branded feminine hygiene products
- Customers will manage their own stock in the vending machine

Operations:

- No coins are required to operate the vending machine
- The drawers will open without use of a coin, until the vending machine is empty, when the drawer will lock closed
- If a coin is placed into the coin slot by mistake, it will fall straight through into the coin refund outlet
- Customer will have their own keys to manage the stock of consumables
- Vending machine only available in white
- Easy to install
- Ideal for schools
- Vandal resistant wrap-around front cover

> The University of St Andrews Testimonial

The **University of St Andrews** provides 15 free-vend machines for students within its washrooms, including within student residences, the student association building, the library and sports centre.

#endperiodpoverty

“ Providing a range of sanitary products in educational establishments gives girls choice and less worry around their periods, particularly if they have a low income.

We collectively decided that free-vend was the most discreet way of doing this and they are now in place in the most appropriate and busiest buildings to ensure products are available for girls who need them. The feedback from students has been positive. ”

Gillian Jordan, estates cleaning manager at the University of St Andrews



DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 10

girls can't afford to buy menstrual products in the UK?

Plan International UK

➤ Blaenau Gwent County Council Testimonial

More than 30 coin-free vending machines have now been installed by phs within every secondary school in Blaenau Gwent, dispensing free sanitary products to pupils. In addition, sanitary products have also been provided to primary schools and will be dispensed by teaching staff.

As part of a drive to tackle the issue of period poverty across Wales, the Welsh Government awarded a grant to enable the Blaenau Gwent Council to provide the free products. The Council worked with local schools, the Youth Service, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and other partners including voluntary groups to implement the scheme as well as phs.

Clare Noble, Head of Healthcare at phs, said: "phs has been engaging with schools, colleges and universities to develop a solution to period poverty which best suits the needs of young people. We have created a new

free-vend sanitary machine which can be positioned within washrooms, offering free sanitary products at any time. They are discreet, hygienic and convenient, saving young girls the potential embarrassment of having to go and ask for products which they may not be inclined to do.

"After being extensively trialled within schools, we're confident free-vend machines are the most accessible, convenient way of tackling period poverty. Blaenau Gwent has taken a comprehensive, hands-on approach to period equity which we are sure will make a real difference."

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Clare Noble,
Head of Healthcare at phs

In the last 12 months
one third

of girls have had to give
sanitary products to a friend.

phs White Paper report



More than
52%

of teenage girls have
missed school or college
because of their period.

phs White Paper report

Luisa Munro-Morris is the head teacher of Bryn Bach Primary School in Tredegar and thinks the scheme is a great idea.

She said: "We were absolutely delighted when the Council got in touch to offer us the scheme. Period equity can seem like a taboo subject, but it is important that we support our young people in a variety of ways by offering free products but also by talking about the issue so that we can remove any stigma and embarrassment about having periods that may hold young people back."

Blaenau Gwent's Deputy Youth Mayor Charlotte Clark is also supporting and promoting the scheme and recently helped launch a survey from Aneurin Bevan Health Board to find out the extent of the problem of period equity in the wider community, not just among young people.

Councillor Clive Meredith, Blaenau Gwent Council's Executive Member for Education said: "It's not acceptable that in 2019 some young females are unable to access and use feminine hygiene products, due to financial or other circumstances. This can have a negative impact on a young person's life, especially in relation to their education and social lives. Thanks to funding from the Welsh Government, we have been able to work in partnership with our schools and Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board to set up this much-needed scheme and I hope it will help to make a difference to our young people."

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