

MOTIONS RECEIVED FOR FULL COUNCIL – 13 NOVEMBER 2018

1. TACKLING PERIOD POVERTY IN BRISTOL (LABOUR GROUP GOLDEN MOTION)

Motion to be moved by: Cllr Helen Godwin, Southmead Ward, Labour

Date submitted: 1st November 2018

“Full Council notes:

1. One in 10 girls and women aged 14-21 are unable to afford sanitary products while even more have had to improvise sanitary wear using items such as socks, tissues, newspaper, napkins, and/or toilet paper.
2. Almost 140,000 girls and young women, particularly amongst girls who are in receipt of Free School Meals, have missed school in the UK the last year because they cannot afford to buy sanitary products.
3. 91% of girls and young women say that they have been asked to buy a pad or tampon for a friend.
4. Research which shows that a majority of women who have suffered period poverty also experienced bullying, while many also feel that it has affected their mental wellbeing and physical activity.
5. That, in 2001, the then-Bristol South Labour MP Dawn Primarolo reduced the applicable VAT on such products to 5%, following a 1991 high of 17.5%.
6. Despite years of campaigning by women such as Laura Coryton, sanitary products are taxed as ‘luxury’ rather than ‘necessary’ products – while private helicopters and antiques are exempted.
7. The early successes of ongoing campaigns by Unite the Union and NASUWT around period dignity and period poverty, and the work of Labour-led Milton Keynes council and the Scottish Government in this area.
8. Hey Girls’, whose Buy One Give One model donated almost 1.4 million boxes of menstrual products to girls and women in need in the UK in just six months, and other social enterprises and companies including Fareshare, the Red Box Initiative, and Always, have been at the forefront of tackling period poverty.
9. Increasing awareness of environmental sustainability issues, particularly amongst girls and young women, around organic and reusable products such as period pants and menstrual cups.
10. Work with local trades unions and employers – including Unite, the CWU, and Unison – being led by Bristol City Council which could deliver tens of thousands of pounds to provide free sanitary products at school for all girls in the city.

Full Council believes:

1. Periods are natural and female health is important; neither should be taboo subjects, in this chamber or anywhere else.
2. Having a period should not be considered a luxury, it is not a choice but a decades-long and expensive reality of being a woman.
3. Everyone who needs sanitary products – including tampons, towels, pads, and other items – should have access to them.

4. Education for children and young people within science and PSHE lessons is crucial to eliminate misplaced stigma and awkwardness.

Full Council resolves:

1. To endorse Bristol City Council's efforts to work with civil society and other partners to ensure that nobody in Bristol suffers from period poverty.
2. To ask the relevant executive members to continue to encourage local schools, including primary schools given the increasing number of girls beginning their periods as early as age 8, to complete the Health Protection Badge which includes the provision of sanitary products.
3. To ask the relevant cabinet members to carefully consider the results of the Bristol Pupil Voice report, due to be published by the end of the year, and other data with colleagues from across the ACE directorate (**including observations of Members serving on the Adults, Children & Education Scrutiny Commission**) to monitor experiences and attitudes into the future.
4. **That Officers prepare a report on how many education days are lost every year to period poverty in Bristol. These findings should then be presented to the relevant Scrutiny body and form the basis of a formal submission to Central Government highlighting the educational problems this issue is causing and calling for a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to tackling this inequality.**
5. That its members should, while endorsing the work of the Labour administration to provide free sanitary products for all who need them in schools and civic buildings, reach out to local employers in their wards to encourage them to provide them on site for staff and visitors."