

Strategy and Resources Committee 17/04/2024 – Written responses to Public Questions

1. Questions from Chella Quint, on behalf of the Period Positive project

Comment: Trans Inclusion and Language: There are concerns about the language used in the charter not being inclusive enough of trans and non-binary individuals who menstruate. The council is urged to undertake training in trans inclusion and amend the charter accordingly.

Question: Could the council provide details on plans to ensure that the language used in the charter is inclusive of all individuals who menstruate, including trans and non-binary individuals?

Response: *We have used the Equality Act 2010 as the basis for our understanding and looked at the impact on all protected characteristics. This has included feedback that language has to be simple and understandable to people of different backgrounds and protected characteristics. We have tried to reflect this feedback in the Charter and feel that it is inclusive. However, as noted during the Committee meeting, the document is published in draft, and we will be pleased to take feedback. It will go on Have Your Say Sheffield (the council's digital engagement website), but this will be after the local election, due to rules around the pre-election period (PERP). We will let you and others know when it goes live but this is likely to be May 6th. We would welcome you sharing any comments that you have via Have Your Say Sheffield.*

Comment: Environmental Impact of Menstrual Products: The document highlights the environmental impact of disposable menstrual products and advocates for legislation to ensure transparency in packaging regarding green credentials. It also mentions campaigns for plastic-free and reusable products.

Question: What measures does the council plan to take to address the environmental impact of menstrual products, including promoting reusable and plastic-free options?

Response: *People, planet and prosperity are the main focus of our new Council Plan and therefore it's important to us that women, girls, and people who menstruate have a choice of products available and this will include promoting reusable and plastic free options. We will work with providers to make sure these options are available wherever possible. We don't currently procure any menstrual products as a council, but we are aware of the impact of some of the products that are on the market. We will continue to work with women, girls and others who menstruate and families to promote the most appropriate choices for them, including those that are reusable and plastic-free.*

Comment: There are concerns about the proposed charter is not acknowledging the Period Positive initiative and its contributions to the city, and may appear extractive of the existing Period Positive Pledge, a charter which was developed with and by Sheffield residents which Period Positive promotes to other organisations. This is the founding part an inclusive, youth- and community-led grassroots campaign which has had longstanding support from the council for over a decade. The lack of acknowledgment is seen by a number of our participants and partners as erasing the work done by Period Positive, and that the throughline connecting past and current activism in the city could be erased. **Page 1**

Question: Can the council clarify how it plans to acknowledge and credit the longstanding Period Positive initiative and its founder and participants in the charter, considering its significant contributions to menstrual literacy in the city, within the council departments and motions, and toward the charter specifically?

***Response:** The council is proud to have worked alongside a variety of partners over months and years on matters of period equity, menopause and matters of sex and gender equality. Many partners are specifically acknowledged in the Annex 2 of the committee report, including the Period Positive Initiative. We were really pleased that Period Positive was able to participate in the International Women's Day event in March, as well as the significant work that it has done with Learn Sheffield and with schools in the city, and we hope that this will continue into the future.*

Comment: There are concerns about transparency and choice in the procurement process for menstrual products, especially regarding existing relationships between councillors, charities, and product companies, including the accepting of donations of menstrual products.

Question: How does the council plan to ensure transparency and choice in the procurement process for menstrual products, particularly regarding any existing relationships between councillors, charities, and product companies (including partnerships that also include donations rather than purchases as these still imply tacit promotion and endorsement of specific brands and products) and the well-documented impact of menstrual product company relationships and their influence on consumer attitudes toward menstrual taboos?

***Response:** Most of the donations we are aware of are partner to partner rather than via the council, so this response has been restricted specifically to council procurement activities. The council does not currently purchase menstrual products at this time and would be subject to our existing procurement regulations and our own policies if we do in the future, including in relation to social value and ethical procurement. It is important to note that we do not have any existing relationship with any providers of period products.*

In terms of donations, the council will seek to work with a diverse range of partners so to enable choice where possible and will not endorse particular manufacturers or providers of menstrual products.

Comment: The document recommends using correct language such as "menstrual products" instead of euphemistic terms like "sanitary products." It also highlights the importance of inclusive language.

Question: Could the council provide details on how it plans to ensure that the language used in the charter is inclusive and avoids euphemisms that may perpetuate stigma?

***Response:** We wholeheartedly agree with the proposition behind this question of avoiding stigma, and we have sought to use the term 'menstrual products' in the Charter. We also have listened to a variety of views, as part of feedback. We will therefore work to ensure the final version of the Charter is appropriate and avoids stigma and euphemisms of the sort that you have highlighted.*

Answers to all other public questions were provided at the meeting and details will be available in the minutes (when published) and in the webcast here: [Agenda for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on Wednesday 17 April 2024, 2.00 pm | Sheffield City Council](#)

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