



## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2018

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF MOTION – THAT CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL INTRODUCE FREE FEMALE HYGIENE SUPPORT FOR ALL YOUNG FEMALES WITHIN OUR SCHOOL SETTING**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report and make a recommendation to Cabinet.
- 1.2 The report is seeking the views of Members prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 A Notice of Motion has been received from Councillor Elaine Forehead and is supported by Councillor James Pritchard.
- 2.2 The Notice of Motion meets the criteria set out in the Council's Constitution and, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure, is now referred for consideration.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Notice of Motion meets the criteria set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 3.2 Supporting the introduction of free female hygiene support for all young females within our school setting, contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
  - *A prosperous Wales – the development of the PSE Curriculum will ensure a well-educated population able to meet their own needs.*
  - *A healthier Wales, a more equal Wales and a globally responsible Wales – the PSE curriculum is developed to ensure that young people, both male and female, understand the impact of 'period poverty' on young people's health and wellbeing*

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 *Councillor E Forehead requests in her Notice of Motion that "CCBC adds its support to introducing free female hygiene support for all young females within our school setting. Female sanitary products are a necessity of life and period poverty is an unfair pressure on all women".*

## Background Information

- 4.2 It is widely accepted that some women and girls in Wales cannot afford to buy essential feminine hygiene products when they need them.
- 4.3 It is crucial that all pupils have appropriate equal access to a high quality Personal Social Education (PSE) curriculum that is delivered well consistently across schools and other educational settings. This provision will increase understanding of the issues and will support girls to identify their own needs and to be able to access advice and support where necessary. When delivered effectively, this curriculum will contribute towards establishing a culture of openness which is without stigma.
- 4.4 Girls should have a clear understanding of how to access support and sanitary products within their settings and poverty should not be a barrier to this.
- 4.5 In the latest research on 'Period Poverty', it is acknowledged that this inequality impacts upon attendance rates of up to 2%, as there is evidence that girls have been unable to stay in school when they cannot access products or adequately dispose of products. There is also strong evidence to suggest that where this issue is not managed well, girls suffer from increased levels of anxiety which may impact upon their mental health.
- 4.6 Schools and other settings need to be adequately equipped and resourced to manage the distribution and disposal of sanitary products efficiently, in such a way as to respect the discretion of those who need to use the facilities.
- 4.7 Since the receipt of the Notice of Motion, the Local Authority (LA) has received a letter from Julie James AC/AM, (dated 21st March, 2018), attached as Appendix 1, which outlines the commitment of Welsh Government (WG) to supporting the essence of this motion and identifies a capital funding allocation for 2017/18 and revenue grant allocation for 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years.
- 4.8 At present, it is acknowledged that the delivery of the PSE curriculum is variable across topics and across schools. Whilst no complaints or concerns have been raised directly with the LA, attitudes towards the management of female hygiene are unknown and, therefore, also unknown is the level of impact upon girls. In the absence of a comprehensive audit of how equipped schools and education settings are to distribute and dispose of sanitary products, it is difficult to assess the need for additional resources. In order to agree appropriate actions to respond to the motion, it is important to
- conduct a bespoke survey of all stakeholders to gauge attitudes and needs, particularly those of young girls
  - audit the PSE provision of this aspect in the curriculum and reveal areas for development
  - following the PSE audit, work with schools and educational settings to develop appropriate up to date resources
  - audit Sexual Relationships Education (SRE) policies and implementation
  - survey schools and educational settings to identify how the supply of free sanitary products is managed currently, thus also identifying good practice
  - audit schools and settings to establish equipment for disposal of sanitary products
  - produce a comprehensive financial breakdown of the likely costs of any agreed actions so that, should they be taken, they are sustainable.

- 4.9 If Scrutiny Committee were minded to support the Notice of Motion, Members may wish to consider recommending to Cabinet that a Task and Finish working group is set up to co-ordinate and manage the actions outlined in paragraph 4.8 and to produce a comprehensive report, so that clear recommendations can be brought back to the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The working party should include the Cabinet Member for Education, representative Elected Members, representative stakeholders (including pupils, LA officers and other relevant professionals).

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that, prior to any development of PSE curriculum, or female resources, we will ensure that we will involve young people and collaborate with partners to ensure an effective long term and sustainable solution to the 'period poverty' can be reached.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A quality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the remit of the Task and Finish Group.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 In March 2018, the Authority accepted a one off discretionary grant payment from Welsh Government of £41,657 to be spent in relation to the investment in the improvement of toilet facilities and feminine hygiene hardware in schools. If Members are minded to recommend the creation of a Task and Finish Working Group, it is proposed that the group will give consideration to the allocation of spend in relation to this amount.
- 7.2 In addition, Welsh Government has made available revenue grant funding of £13,206 for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. This funding must be used to provide feminine hygiene products to those women and girls most in need in the Authority.
- 7.3 Any financial implications will need to be considered in detail should Members recommend the creation of a Task & Finish Working Group. However, to advise on the most recent pupil data, there are currently 4,774 girls in our Secondary Schools (Years 7 to 11). On this data alone it is estimated that the cost to provide feminine hygiene products for all would be in the region of £100k. This is based on a monthly cost of £2 per pupil per month.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 At this stage, we do anticipate there will be any personnel implications associated with this report.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion and make a recommendation to Cabinet.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 To be in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

12.1 Education Act 1996.

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Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive  
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services  
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property Services.  
Councillor Philippa Marsden, Cabinet Member, Education and Achievement  
Councillor Wynne David, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Gaynor Oliver, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Elaine Forehead  
Councillor James Pritchard  
Directorate Senior Management Team  
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance  
Lynne Donovan, Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational  
Development  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)  
Lisa Lane, Corporate Solicitor  
Headteacher, Lewis Girls School  
Youth Forum  
Childrens' Commissioner

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 Letter from Julie James, AC/AM dated 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2018