



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

SFC ANNOUNCEMENT

REFERENCE: SFC/AN/19/2022

ISSUE DATE: 11/10/2022

ACCESS TO FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS 2022-23



ACCESS TO FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS 2022-23

ISSUE DATE:	11 October 2022
REFERENCE:	SFC/AN/19/2022
SUMMARY:	Announcement of continued additional funding in Financial Year (FY) 2022-23 for access to free period products at colleges and universities.
FAO:	Principals/Directors, Finance Directors, Chairs and Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges and universities, and the general public.
FURTHER INFORMATION:	CONTACT: Fiona Burns JOB TITLE: Assistant Director - Student Interest, Access & Pathways DIRECTORATE: Access, Learning & Outcomes TEL: 0131 313 6517 EMAIL: fburns@sfc.ac.uk

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ACCESS TO FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN 2022-23

SUMMARY

1. I am writing to announce continued additional funding to provide students access to free period products at colleges and universities in Financial Year (FY) 2022-23. This funding has been provided and allocated by the Scottish Government.
2. I also wish to advise you of the provision of additional 'bid-in' evidence-based funding from the Scottish Government which can be made available to colleges and universities, as well as local authorities, across the period 2022-23 to 2025-26.

CONTEXT

3. The Scottish Government made a commitment in its 2017 'Programme for Government' to provide "access to free sanitary products to students in schools, colleges and universities". The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) announced the first year of this funding in August 2018¹.
4. In November 2020, the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 (the Act) was passed by the Scottish Parliament². The main duties on local authorities and education providers in the Act came into effect on 15 August 2022. In October 2021 the Scottish Government published guidance to support institutions in delivering these products³.
5. There is therefore now a legal duty on colleges and universities to establish and maintain arrangements for period products to be available:
 - Free of charge.
 - During term time on their premises.
 - In at least one location in every building normally used by students.

FUNDING FOR PERIOD PRODUCTS 2022-23

6. The Scottish Government has provided funding for both colleges and universities for

¹ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/announcements/announcements-2018/SFCAN132018.aspx>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2021/1/contents/enacted>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/period-products-free-provision-scotland-act-2021-guidance-responsible-bodies-september-2021/pages/1/>

FY 2022-23, totalling £1.3 million. Funding has been allocated on the same basis as in FY 2021-22⁴. A breakdown of funding allocations for individual colleges/regions and universities is shown in Annexes A and B respectively.

7. With the commencement of the Act, the duties on colleges and universities are less onerous than under the previous voluntary policy. For example, in previous SFC guidance, colleges and universities were asked to make products available to students outwith term-time. However, under the Act, the duty is to make products obtainable in at least one location in each building normally used by students, and only during term-time.
8. Funding allocations are therefore expected to continue to be sufficient to meet the duties under the legislation. However, if an institution can evidence increased uptake which means that their allocation for FY 2022-23 is going to be insufficient to meet their duties, they should contact the Scottish Government (financialwellbeing@gov.scot) to initiate an application for additional funding through a 'bid-in' process (see paragraphs 10-12 below).
9. Subject to the acceptance of this offer of funding, allocations for non-incorporated colleges and universities, as set out in Annexes A and B, will be made in November 2022. Incorporated colleges/regions should draw down funds as required, as per their monthly cash flows, from November 2022 up to the end of March 2023.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE-BASED BID-IN PROCESS

10. Additional funding through this process will only be made available to support delivery where evidence shows full funding allocations have been (or are projected to be) fully spent as a result of increased uptake or for relevant one-off costs, for example costs associated with implementation of the Act or changed delivery approaches.
11. An application form will be provided, and applications must be submitted between 1 October and 31 December 2022 to be considered, with the same deadlines likely to be applied to future years.
12. Following the deadline, the Scottish Government's Financial Wellbeing Unit will review all applications and the evidence provided on an individual basis, taking into account local circumstances as is appropriate and in line with the guidance. Further details of the Scottish Government's additional bid-in evidence-based fund are provided in [Annex C](#).

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

13. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated, as set out in this announcement. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional

⁴ <https://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/announcements/2021/SFCAN282021.aspx>

documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires).

14. Institutions should ensure that a suitable level of provision is available for any students on campus but are not required to provide products (such as through voucher or delivery services) for students who are off campus, including hybrid learning. Students who are at home should contact their local authority to access free period products.

ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT

15. Institutions are invited to formally accept this offer of funding by writing to Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: gscotland@sfc.ac.uk by **28 October 2022**.

FURTHER INFORMATION

16. Should you require any further information, please contact Fiona Burns, Assistant Director - Student Interest, Access & Pathways, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: fburns@sfc.ac.uk.



James Dunphy

Director of Access, Learning & Outcomes

ANNEX C

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT EVIDENCE-BASED ADDITIONAL FUNDS

1. An additional 'access to free period products' fund will be open to bids from October 2022 to colleges and universities for the period 2022-23. Bids must be received by the end of December 2022 at the latest to be considered for this Financial Year, with the same deadlines likely to be applied for FYs 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.
17. This additional fund will be open to bids only where evidence is provided demonstrating full spend or projected full spend of allocated annual funding allocations, due to increased uptake or one-off costs.
18. The fund will be open to bids to cover either:
 - a. **Ongoing policy delivery costs**, arising due to uptake in excess of the funded level e.g. period products purchase costs, administration costs, period dignity related products (tights, pants, etc.).
 - b. **One-off costs**, such as marketing or promotional campaigns, expansion or revisions to existing policy delivery approaches that cannot be met from existing funding allocations.
19. The additional funding *cannot* be used to cover:
 - c. **Provision of products in education settings outwith term-time**. There is no requirement on education providers to make period products obtainable for use outwith term-time in education settings.
20. Bids to the fund will require institutions to provide evidence of delivery and increased uptake. This will include:
 - Evidence of spend against full year funding allocations, including a breakdown by product costs and administrative costs.
 - Projected spend for the remainder of the Financial Year to 31 March 2023 and a narrative explaining the basis for this projection.
 - Numbers and types of products purchased.
 - Product unit cost (where this information is not provided, the median unit cost from 2021-22 baseline data will be assumed).
21. In order to access the bid-in fund, please contact financialwellbeing@gov.scot.
22. In January 2023, the Scottish Government's Financial Wellbeing Unit will review all

applications and the evidence provided on an individual basis, taking into account local circumstances as is appropriate and in line with the guidance.

23. The Financial Wellbeing Unit will aim to inform you of the outcome of any application as soon as is practical following the deadline for bids.