



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

## Access to Free Sanitary Products 2020-21

# SFC Announcement

Issue Date: 12 February 2021

## Access to free sanitary products at colleges and universities in 2020-21

Issue date: 12 February 2021

Reference: SFC/AN/02/2021

Summary: Announcement of continued additional funding in FY 2020-21 for access to free sanitary products at colleges and universities.

FAO: Principals/Directors, Finance Directors, Chairs and Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges and universities.

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## Access to free sanitary products at colleges and universities in 2020-21

### Summary

1. I am writing to announce continued additional funding to provide students access to free sanitary products at colleges and universities in 2020-21. This funding has been provided and allocated by the Scottish Government.

### Context

2. 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*". SFC announced the first year of this funding in August 2018<sup>1</sup>. The purpose and principles behind this commitment have not changed since the original announcement.
3. In November 2020, the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament<sup>2</sup>. When it comes into force<sup>3</sup>, this Act will place a legal duty on schools, colleges and universities to make available a range of free period products. The Scottish Government and SFC will work towards mainstreaming this provision prior to the Act coming into force.

### Funding for period products

4. The Scottish Government has provided funding for both colleges and universities for Financial Year (FY) 2020-21, totalling £1.3 million.
5. The funding allocations have been calculated on the following basis:
  - Proportion of female student numbers (excluding school pupils) at each institution.
  - An estimated 5% uptake from those students at colleges and a 10% uptake at universities, reflecting the estimated average uptake in Academic Year (AY) 2018-19.
  - An increased cost of 19.4p per product, reflecting the average unit price of sanitary products purchased by colleges and universities during AY 2018-19.
6. This funding methodology is based on available data regarding uptake and spend, and does not necessarily represent future years' allocations. We will continue to develop an evidence base to ensure that a fair and appropriate level of mainstreamed funding can be determined for future years of provision. Funding for FY 2021-22 will be announced in due course.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> By January 2023 at the latest

7. A breakdown of funding for individual colleges/regions and universities is shown in Annexes A and B respectively.
8. Funding for colleges/regions and universities will be paid in one instalment in March 2021.

### **Conditions of grant**

9. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires.)
10. We recognise that the COVID-19 situation will have affected institutions' ability to implement this programme, with fewer students currently on campus. Where possible or required, institutions should continue to implement local delivery models that take account of the views and needs of their students at this time, and the Guiding Principles set out in the original guidance letter.
11. Institutions should ensure that a suitable level of provision is available for any students remaining on campus, but are not required to provide products for students who are off campus during the COVID-19 emergency (such as through voucher or delivery services). However, institutions may use the funding to provide this service if they wish. Students who are at home should contact their local authority to access free period products.
12. We will approach institutions later in the year for some further information on their use of this funding as we work towards mainstreaming this provision. Institutions should therefore ensure that they keep a record of how much of this funding has been spent and the number of products purchased. **Please also ensure that you confirm your lead contact for this to Emma Roberts, [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk).**

### **Acceptance of grant**

13. Institutions are invited to formally accept this offer of funding by writing to Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: [gscotland@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:gscotland@sfc.ac.uk) by Friday **26 February 2021**.

## Further information

14. Should you require any further information, please contact Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer, tel: 0131 313 6570, email: [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. MacDonald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

**Lorna MacDonald**  
Director of Finance