

# 2022- Free Period Products Consultation Overview

As part of [The Period Products \(Free Provision\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#), local authorities are required to consult with anyone in the community who uses sanitary products, who may use them in the future, and those who collect them on behalf of others. The consultation should ask where people would like those products to be made available, how people would like to obtain them, and the type of products that may be wanted.

Shetland Islands Council carried out a community consultation in May and June 2022. The consultation was open to any member of the public regardless of gender, age or menstruating status. The survey was issued via online platform SmartSurvey and accessed via the Shetland Islands Council website for people to fill in online. A paper copy was also available to anyone who required one. The survey received 395 responses. The key findings are summarised in the following pages and have helped inform the roll out of our Free Period Products provision.

Types of Products - Question 1 focussed on which free period products should be available in the community.

1. What free period products do you think should be available in your community?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Pads	91.37%	360
2	Tampons	84.26%	332
3	Menstrual cups	50.51%	199
4	Reusable pads	52.79%	208
5	Period pants	49.49%	195
6	Other (please specify):	5.33%	21
		answered	394
		skipped	1

394 answers were provided to this question, with 1 skipped.

- 91.37% selected pads which was the most popular choice (360 responses in total).
- 84.26% chose tampons, the second most favoured option (332 responses in total).
- 52.79% thought that reusable pads should be available (208 responses in total).
- 50.51% thought menstrual cups should be available (199 responses in total).
- 49.49% selected period pants (195 responses in total).
- 5.33% selected “other” (21 responses in total).

21 people responded “other” and specified that a mixture of products, environmentally conscious products and sanitary disposal bins were important. There was more than one comment about a mixture of products, liners being available, reusable bags to place products in, sanitary bins being provided,

biodegradable pads and tampons and environmentally friendly options. Other items mentioned were pain relief, leaflets on how to use menstrual cups (although this was an option in the survey) and wipes.

Best Place to Access Products - Question 2 focussed on the best place to get period products from.

2. Where do you think would be the best place to get free period products from?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Community venue		45.06%	178
2	Council building		35.19%	139
3	Leisure centre		55.19%	218
4	Health centre		67.59%	267
5	Local shop		35.44%	140
6	Foodbank		39.49%	156
7	Order online for postal delivery		85.82%	339
8	Order by phone for postal delivery		34.18%	135
9	Other (please specify):		12.15%	48
			answered	395
			skipped	0

395 answers were provided to this question, with 0 skipped.

- 85.82% selected 'order online for postal delivery' which was the most preferred option (339 responses in total).
- 67.59% chose health centres which was the second most popular choice (267 responses in total).
- 55.19% thought leisure centres would be the best place to get period products from (218 responses in total).
- 45.06% chose community venues (178 responses in total).
- 39.49% chose foodbanks (156 responses in total).
- 35.19% said council buildings would be the best place to get free period products from (139 responses in total).
- 34.18% chose order by phone for postal delivery (135 responses in total).
- 12.15% said 'other' (48 responses in total).

Where 'other' was selected - public toilets, supermarkets and shops, workplaces and chemists and pharmacies were the most frequently referred to (other than schools where period products are already provided).

Access in Buildings - Question 3 focussed on where products should be if being picked up from a public building.

3. If picking up products from a public building, where in the building would you like to access free period products?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	In toilets, including male/female/disabled and changing places		79.79%	308
2	In reception areas		19.43%	75
3	On a display stand that is easy to access		33.68%	130
4	Somewhere out of the way		35.49%	137
5	Other (please specify):		4.40%	17
			answered	386
			skipped	9

386 answers were provided to this question, with 9 skipped.

- 79.79% chose in toilets including male/female/disabled and changing places (308 responses in total).
- 35.49% selected somewhere out the way (137 responses in total).
- 33.68% chose on a display stand that is easy to access (130 responses in total).
- 19.43% chose reception areas (75 responses in total).
- 4.40% chose 'other' (17 responses in total).

17 people answered 'other'. Being available discreetly was important with 5 people mentioning this in addition to the options above. Clear signage and visibility of products or where to get products was mentioned by 3 people as were toilets. This included both male and female toilets. Other areas mentioned were changing rooms, somewhere visible in the food bank and that there should be options.

Barriers to Accessing Products - Question 4 focussed on what might stop people from accessing products.

4. What, if anything, would stop you from accessing products?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Not knowing where to get them		75.87%	283
2	Embarrassment		38.34%	143
3	Can't get out to shops or other buildings		21.45%	80
4	Don't have access to online ordering		7.77%	29
5	Not sure how much I can take at any one time		43.97%	164
6	Other (please specify):		4.56%	17
			answered	373
			skipped	22

373 answers were provided to this question, with 22 skipped.

- Not knowing where to get them was the most popular answer with 75.87% choosing this option (283 responses in total).
- Not being sure how much can be taken at any one time was the second most selected answer with 43.97% (164 responses in total).
- Embarrassment was third with 38.34% (143 responses in total).
- 21.45% chose 'can't get out to shops or other buildings' (80 responses in total).
- Not having access to online ordering was selected by 7.77% of respondents (29 responses in total).
- 4.56% chose 'other' (17 responses in total).

Where 'other' was selected, key themes were:

Not feeling any barriers, being able to afford themselves, having to ask for products, choice of products and having to go somewhere to access were the most common additional responses. Not knowing who should access them and the time the venue was open was also mentioned.