

As requested, please see below comments for consideration by the Education Committee regarding the logistical, financial and legal impacts anticipated by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding the Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

<p>Logistical matters:</p>	<p>If Councils are to be designated public service bodies under the scope of this draft Bill as set out in Section 2 subsection (3) Each public service body specified in regulations made by a department (a "specified public service body") under subsection (1) must ensure that period products are obtainable free of charge (in accordance with arrangements established and maintained by the body) by persons in its premises who need to use them.</p> <p>Logistically this would require provision of free period products at Council premises and would apply to anyone who menstruates (including transgender and non-binary persons), and not just to women and girls. Council would have to decide upon how and where within premises said period products would be made available.</p> <p>Newry, Mourne & Down District Council has multiple premises including three Office-based sites, Town Halls, Art Centres, Leisure Centres , Museums, Community Centres, country and forest parks etc Without a clear definition as to what constitutes a 'premise' there is potential every Council premise would be required to provide this service as to do otherwise could not be objectively justified.</p> <p>In terms of implementation it must be noted the draft Bill would effectively establish an additional new service / function for Councils which will be required to be designed and delivered giving appropriate due regard to Council's equality, disability and rural needs statutory duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998, section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006) and Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 respectively. This will require undertaking equality screening, potentially an equality impact assessment and rural needs impact assessment of the proposed policy, and associated actions and decisions.</p>
<p>Financial impact:</p>	<p>In terms of financial impact, as set out within the Member Explanatory Note, given the provisions of the Bill requires Departments to designate public service bodies (such as Councils), exact costs will be in part dependent on the implementation of the scheme.</p> <p>From a practical position, as the draft Bill would confer additional service requirements for Council this will lead to additional costs to implement.</p> <p>However, at this stage of the draft Bill's development, and without having undertaken the expected consultation requirement (Section 5 of the draft Bill) and decision-making processes to identify the designated premises, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is in</p>

	<p>no position to be able to effectively or appropriately quantify the financial impact of providing free period products.</p>
Legal considerations:	<p>As stated previously, the draft Bill will lead to the establishment of an additional new service / function for Councils which will be required to be designed and delivered taking appropriate due regard of Council's equality, disability and rural needs statutory duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998, section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006) and Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 respectively.</p> <p>This will require Council to undertake equality screening, potentially an equality impact assessment and rural needs impact assessment of the proposed policy, and associated actions and decisions.</p>