



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

SFC Announcement

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Access to Free Period Products FY 2023-24



Access to Free Period Products FY 2023-24

Issue Date:	21 June 2023
Reference:	SFC/AN/16/2023
Summary:	Announcement of continued additional funding in FY 2023-24 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: Eilidh Fulton JOB TITLE: Senior Policy Officer - Student Interest, Access & Pathways DIRECTORATE: Access, Learning & Outcomes EMAIL: efulton@sfc.ac.uk

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Access to Free Period Products at Colleges and Universities in 2023-24

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) 2023-24. 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 access to free period products for FY 2023-24

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 2023-24, totaling £1.2 million. Funding has been allocated on the same basis as in FY 2022-23⁴, minus funding for the Open University in Scotland which has been discussed and agreed with the University. 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 SFC guidance prior to AY 2022-23, 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 2023-24 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 10-13 below).
9. Funding allocations for colleges and universities are set out in Annexes A and B respectively. Subject to the acceptance of this offer of funding, allocations for universities and non-incorporated colleges will be made in July 2023. Incorporated colleges/regions should draw down funds as required, as per their monthly cash flows, up to the end of March 2024.

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, or changed delivery approaches. As outlined in Annex C, the bid-in fund cannot be used to cover postage costs.
11. There is no requirement on education providers to provide a postage service of period products to students. In practice this means that should a college or university spend its funding on postage costs purely for convenience or preference purposes, this spend will be considered to be still available and will be taken into account when calculating any bid-in fund award.
12. An application form will be provided on request by Scottish Government (see paragraph 8), and applications must be submitted between 1 October and 31 December 2023 to be considered, with the same deadlines likely to be applied to future years.

⁴ <https://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/announcements/2022/SFCAN192022.aspx>

13. 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

14. 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 documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires).
15. 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

16. 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 **7 July 2023**.

Further information

17. Should you require any further information, please contact Eilidh Fulton, Senior Policy Officer - Student Interest, Access & Pathways, email: efulton@sfc.ac.uk.



James Dunphy

Director of Access, Learning & Outcomes

Annex A: College funding for access to free period products: FY 2023-24

College/Region	Period product funding	Admin funding	Total funding for AFPPs FY 2023-24*
	£	£	£
Ayrshire College	19,286	1,657	21,000
Borders College	5,341	459	5,750
Dumfries & Galloway College	7,955	683	8,750
Dundee & Angus College	20,744	1,782	22,500
Edinburgh College	31,118	2,673	33,750
Fife College	19,574	1,682	21,250
Forth Valley College	16,361	1,406	17,750
Glasgow Region	77,851	6,688	84,500
Highlands & Islands Region	25,614	2,200	27,750
Lanarkshire Region	26,202	2,251	28,500
Newbattle Abbey College	198	17	250
North East Scotland College	24,150	2,075	26,250
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	1,700	146	1,750
SRUC	4,957	426	5,500
West College Scotland	35,190	3,023	38,250
West Lothian College	12,591	1,082	13,750
Total	328,830	28,250	357,250

* Rounded to the nearest £250

Annex B: University funding for access to free period products: FY 2023-24

Institution	Period product funding £	Admin funding £	Total funding for AFPPs FY 2023-24* £
Aberdeen, University of	50,371	4,327	54,750
Abertay University	12,447	1,069	13,500
Dundee, University of	59,844	5,141	65,000
Edinburgh Napier University	44,104	3,789	48,000
Edinburgh, University of	121,700	10,455	132,250
Glasgow Caledonian University	57,221	4,916	62,250
Glasgow School of Art	8,862	761	9,500
Glasgow, University of	105,289	9,045	114,250
Heriot-Watt University	25,593	2,199	27,750
Highlands & Islands, University of the	33,668	2,892	36,500
Open University in Scotland	-	-	-
Queen Margaret University	23,261	1,998	25,250
Robert Gordon University	44,308	3,806	48,000
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	4,285	368	4,750
SRUC	5,364	461	5,750
St Andrews, University of	36,204	3,110	39,250

Institution	Period product funding £	Admin funding £	Total funding for AFPPs FY 2023-24*
Stirling, University of	46,727	4,014	50,750
Strathclyde, University of	68,152	5,855	74,000
West of Scotland, University of the	63,109	5,422	68,500
Total	810,508	69,631	880,000

* Rounded to the nearest £250

Annex C: Scottish Government evidence-based additional funds

18. An additional 'access to free period products' fund will be open to bids from 1 October 2023 to colleges and universities for the period 2023-24. Bids must be received by 31 December 2023 at the latest to be considered for this Financial Year, with the same deadlines likely to be applied for FYs 2024-25 and 2025-26.
19. 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, related to core delivery of the Period Products (free provision) (Scotland) Act, such as increased uptake or one-off costs.
20. 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.
21. 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.
 - d. **Postage of products**. There is no requirement on education providers to provide a postage service of period products to students.
22. 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 2024 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).
23. In order to access the bid-in fund, please contact financialwellbeing@gov.scot.

24. In January 2024, 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.
25. 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.