

SPECIAL EDITION 24 PAGE MINI-MAGAZINE

# THE BIG ISSUE



The period issue

HEY GIRLS IS A DYNAMIC NEW BUY-ONE-GIVE-ONE PERIOD PRODUCTS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

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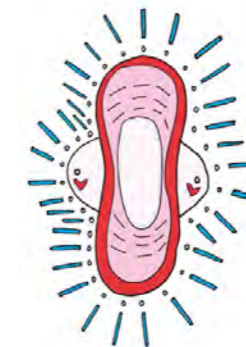
YES, REALLY

Hello and welcome to this exclusive mini-magazine, produced by us, Hey Girls, in partnership with The Big Issue!

We have worked to create a very special edition of the magazine that will enlighten, inform and entertain you (we hope!). Our aim is also to let you know why menstrual health, period dignity, poverty, education and the environment are not just 'women's matters' but are important to every single one of us. Above all we hope you will take some of the small steps we suggest that collectively can make big changes in our society – and all over the world.

**BEST WISHES**

*Celia and the team at Hey Girls*



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Photo: Louise Haywood-Schleier

# ‘YOU CAN’T GET AWAY FROM US!’

*But why would we want to?*

Hey Girls founder and CEO Celia Hodson tells Hannah Westwater about the social enterprise’s unstoppable rise

“My mum always says, ‘Look at what a can of worms you’ve opened!’” Celia Hodson is leading the charge to end period poverty and is on a mission to change the conversation around menstruation. She launched Hey Girls, a pioneering social enterprise based in East Lothian, with daughters Becky and Kate in early 2018. Now a team of 13, they manufacture and provide a range of sustainable, reusable and biodegradable period products, from pads, tampons and menstrual cups to period-proof underwear that won’t break the bank. And their buy-one-give-one model means for every product purchased, the social enterprise will donate one to someone in need in the local area. More than seven million products have been donated so far.

In 2018 charity Plan International UK found that one in 10 girls and women were unable to afford pads or tampons – which could cost up to £10 a month, Hey Girls reckons, no small amount for the 55 per cent of Universal Credit recipients who struggle to afford even the basics. Meanwhile nearly half of girls said they had missed a whole day of school because they were menstruating. But for the family behind Hey Girls, the drive to both end period poverty and promote period dignity comes from lived experience.

“I brought three kids up on benefits and that was pretty difficult,” says CEO Celia. “In those days you used to go to the post office and draw your benefits. I would go home and put money for the electricity, food, school in jam jars. There was never enough. So when I went shopping for my family, I couldn’t afford things for myself, whether it was tampons or shampoo.”

She adds: “Bringing kids up on benefits was really difficult, but it was nowhere near as fragile as it is now. People’s money can be stopped for what feels like no reason and it’s more expensive to live. What long-term poverty does to your sense of worth shouldn’t be underestimated – and that’s what pushes me to attack period poverty.”

Celia sank every penny she had into having the first batch of pads manufactured, and worried they would “never, ever” sell. But online sales picked up, and soon local authorities across Scotland were offering Hey Girls contracts to supply their schools with period products. Then the social enterprise was announced as a key player in the Scottish Government’s scheme to get pads and tampons to every school pupil and student. Later, with Big Issue backing, Celia and the team successfully pitched to some supermarket giants. >

Now their products are stocked by Asda, Waitrose, the Co-op and Scotmid, and they stock nearly all Scottish councils as well as a number of universities and colleges.

The team works with the business community to ensure companies are providing free menstrual products for their staff and customers, too – part of a drive to destroy the stigma around periods for good. Period dignity is, they say, key to reducing period poverty. The simple act of putting pads and tampons in toilets “instantly destigmatises” them, Celia says, mimicking an office worker hiding a tampon up her sleeve before walking to the loo. “We won’t even talk about it straightforwardly. We’ll say, ‘I’m on’. It’s a big thing to be honest about it, which is why we all should be!”

Periods only recently became part of the public conversation around poverty. “That’s because it’s a women’s issue, simply,” she observes. Hey Girls’ education and impact manager Molly Brown adds: “We just can’t talk about it. If you go to the supermarket you’re going to the ‘feminine hygiene’ aisle. All the language centres around shame and being dirty. It’s all built on shame, and shame sells products.”

Even with access to period products, lots of people start menstruating without being equipped with the knowledge they need, explains Molly, which is why Hey Girls are determined to make sure they, and their families, get the chance to learn. In 2018 the social enterprise found that problems were arising because lessons around periods were usually given to girls only – and only once.

“A lot of girls don’t know what periods are or feel terrified, thinking they’re dying when they start their periods,” Molly says. “One girl told me she had started

her period and was relieved it was out of the way – she thought that was it. Some girls put pads in the sticky side up, which sounds silly, but how would you know?”

But thanks to the social enterprise, everyone from primary school children to groups of dads are getting a crash course in everything to do with periods. When given the space to be curious, Molly explains, even children relax about menstruation. Some boys in an Edinburgh school wrapped some reusable Hey Girls pads round their arms like boxing gloves, Molly remembers; others turned a menstrual cup into a spinning top. During a session with a group of builders, they were thrilled to discover a cup had a measuring gauge on the side.

‘A lot of girls don’t know what periods are or feel terrified, thinking they’re dying when it starts’

Molly Brown,  
Education and Impact  
Manager



Meet the team

(L-R) Lesley Anne, Kirsten, Tracy, Molly, Tom, Becca, Amy, Ildiko, Celia, Marianne, Pamela, Steve, Karen



Photos: Louise Haywood-Schiefer



Drop red gorgeous Many employees at Hey Girls HQ are mums who appreciate the flexible working hours

The Hey Girls ‘My Period’ education pack is a starter kit for getting hesitant people chatting about menstruation. Each contains 50 conversation starter cards, covering all the questions someone might be too embarrassed to ask themselves. It comes with a booklet full of activities, plus extra teaching resources for schools and youth clubs.

Celia remembers the day the first container of products arrived as one of her proudest. But she has been most touched by the generosity of those without much themselves. “One lady recognised my Hey Girls T-shirt in the street and she gave me a £5 note – she said it was her prize money from bowling and she wanted me to use it to buy pads for girls.

“Someone else had bought The Big Issue, where she read about us. She then went to the library, got help to find out company details and sent us a fiver through the post. She had gone to all that bother!”

The social enterprise creates jobs for people who have difficulty getting into the labour market, too. Many of the workers packing and shipping Hey Girls products are mothers who, thanks to the flexibility of the work, can drop their children off at school in the morning and pick them up when they finish.

“Our team feels like a family,” Celia says. “We walk the talk. That includes doing our best to make sure what we buy, whether for our subscription gift boxes or for in the office, is from a social enterprise. Someone might see Divine Chocolate, or Cafédirect hot chocolate, and think to go and buy it for themselves. That lifts everybody up.”

One of Molly’s proudest moments with Hey Girls was a programme she ran with a group of young people from a local school who had been working hard to push for period products to be put in toilets rather than at reception where pupils had to ask for them.

“They were really interested in reusable products and being environmentally friendly,” she recalls. “We went with them to Easter Road, [Hibernian FC’s ground] and we were giving out menstrual cups before the game. That was a real moment. The conversations we were having with women there – some of whom were horrified and running away – others thought it was the most amazing thing ever, and really exciting to see at a football game. At that point I knew we were really getting somewhere.”

And that’s how Hey Girls has changed the narrative around periods in just two years – by starting, and leading, the conversation while offering practical solutions to period poverty. “We popped up just at the right time,” Celia says. “We’ve kicked a bit of ass, but very politely. Hey Girls is fun and upbeat, but it’s steadily pushing. You can’t get away from us.”

@hannahjtw

# Hey Girls in numbers

- More than 7 million products have been donated
- More than 220 donation partners have received free products from Hey Girls
- Over 1,400 schools have benefited
- Education sessions have been provided for over 140 vulnerable women and 380 girls
- 290 teachers and community workers have been trained to “teach periods with confidence”
- More than 4,220 information booklets sent to girls
- 41 businesses championing period dignity at work



**Menstrual health and period poverty are still all too often a taboo subject, here in the UK and across the globe, and the consequences are very real for many women and girls: a study published by Plan International in 2017 found that one in seven girls have struggled to afford sanitary protection – a figure Hey Girls believe to be higher.**

In the UK one in 10 girls have been forced to use makeshift material – like rags, socks or loo roll – at some point.

But through this special magazine and their ongoing drive to shape a community of influencers who can enable change, Hey Girls are putting it top of the agenda, talking about issues that need to be spoken about, like period poverty, dignity and environmental concerns.

We've been supporters of Hey Girls since their inception in 2018 and have seen the team grow from strength to strength. We're thrilled to see their success promoting an issue that's had limited exposure, and our hope is that this campaign will drive more stakeholders from across the public and private sector to engage in causes for good.

As accountants and business advisers, we pride ourselves on being the champions of the entrepreneurially-spirited businesses that drive what we call the UK's Economic Engine.

In equal measure, we're proud to support social enterprises that channel that entrepreneurial mindset into ventures focused on making a positive impact on society and the environment.

Our approach to social and environmental responsibility is deliberately open and recognises that we're not all the same. There are things we need to do as a firm to maximise our positive impact on the world around us, but if we enable our people to make a difference at the same time then our impact will be far greater.

We're determined to be a responsible business, but in a way that truly reflects our people. That's why we're delighted to be supporters of Hey Girls and a growing number of social enterprises that are driving positive change throughout the UK and globally.

**ANDREW MCNAMARA**  
Partner, BDO UK LLP

[www.bdo.co.uk](http://www.bdo.co.uk)

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST




**The Places Foundation is an independent charity supported by Places for People which aims to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged people.**

→ The Foundation recently invested in Hey Girls through a loan facility with Big Issue Invest.

Hey Girls will be providing free sanitary products to 20 schemes run by Places for People including homeless services, domestic violence refuges and community centres which will help to make a positive difference to its most vulnerable customers.




**Firstport supports social entrepreneurs in Scotland to get their ideas off the ground.**



Inspiring ideas just like Hey Girls - set up by individuals passionate about making a change - come through our doors every day and we like to think that with a bit of help from us, they can have a massive impact in the lives of people across Scotland.

A social enterprise is about running a business, making a profit, and using that money to create a positive impact. We have supported zero-waste shops, gaming competitions, photo agencies, community cafés, sandwich shops and everything in between, so literally, any business can be a social enterprise!

If you've ever harboured an idea but don't know where to start, visit our website and find out how we can help you turn that idea into reality!

[www.firstport.org.uk](http://www.firstport.org.uk)

**'By changing brand, you can save the world one month at a time'**



**H**ey Girls is proud to be a social enterprise – a business that prioritises purpose over profit. We are lucky to be supported by Caitlin Moran, bestselling author, journalist and general badass feminist. Caitlin has written about experiencing period poverty when growing up. Now she's backing social enterprise as a way to end period poverty.

"If social enterprise didn't exist, I'd like to think I'd invent it myself," she says. "They are, in short, businesses that do good – ploughing profits back into the community, and always finding some new, brilliant way of just doing good and being lovely, and all those old-fashioned ideals we need so badly these days."

In October, Caitlin teamed up with Hey Girls and Social Enterprise UK for the 'Buy Social for a Better World' campaign spotlighting the incredible work carried out by social enterprises (even creating an exclusive bag for Social Saturday, on sale at [bigissueshop.com](http://bigissueshop.com)). There are 100,000 social enterprises in the UK, selling goods and services on the open market but trading to create a fairer and more sustainable society.

The campaign called on shoppers to Buy Social by switching to social enterprise goods from their local Co-op store. Our augmented reality campaign saw Caitlin appearing inside a menstrual cup!

Not only is she an avowed champion of social enterprise, Caitlin is absolutely determined that no girl should miss out on life chances simply because of her period.

"Period poverty is a real and present problem across the world – with women and girls hiding away, missing out on jobs and education because they have no way of dealing with something very simple: their periods," she says.

"Social enterprise Hey Girls set themselves the task of being a successful business with a brilliant product who also do good: giving one girl or young woman in need a packet of products for every one you buy. By changing your brand, you can be saving the world – just a little bit, one month at a time."

**i Find out more about how buying social can make a real difference at [socialenterprise.org.uk](http://socialenterprise.org.uk)**



[www.heygirls.co.uk](http://www.heygirls.co.uk)

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# ENDING PERIOD POVERTY STARTS IN THE CLASSROOM

In March 2017, the news broke that girls in Leeds were missing school because of period poverty. Ever since, there have been projects and campaigns across the UK to make pads and tampons widely available in schools. In August 2018, Scotland became the first country in the world to provide free products in all schools, colleges and universities. Other parts of the UK have followed suit, and soon there should be products available to pupils everywhere.

Hey Girls has been working closely with schools from the beginning to collect and share best practice. Here are four examples of what's been happening.



*"It's very empowering work, it's good to know I'll be a part of something that's going to change the way we look at things"*

MEMBER OF THE PANDA POSSE, STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL

## BRISTOL

Since November 2018, Bristol City Council has taken a lead on period poverty in the South West. Throughout 2019 they worked with local partners The Real Period Project, City to Sea and Brook Bristol to develop Period-Friendly Schools guidance and training for school leaders, staff and public health nurses. The council has established a new charity to manage distribution of products across the city as part of Bristol's aim to become England's first Period-Friendly city and recently launched the Period-Friendly Bristol app, which features an interactive map of the city, showing a network of locations where people can access free period products as well as donate them.

City Academy Bristol has been focusing on addressing period poverty in the school. Last June, Sharp Shutz (a local youth development project) helped a group of pupils produce *Red Talks* – a campaign film about the problems pupils encounter at school on their period. The film talks about period poverty, and explores how toilet policies can make menstruation difficult for pupils. Since then this group of students has been working with The Real Period Project on menstrual cycle awareness and making the school more period-friendly. They were recently featured on BBC *Points West* talking about how period stigma is being tackled at the school.

## STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL

The school was the pilot site for Stirling Council and since May 2018 it has been working closely with students to distribute period products. Students decided where the pads and tampons should be available, and how to raise awareness of the scheme. The group was initially dubbed the Period Posse but later adopted Pedro the Panda as their mascot and became the Panda Posse. (Pedro is gender-neutral to raise awareness of the fact that not everyone who has a period identifies as female). Since its launch, the steering group has grown to include new members – including many male students.

The project was launched in assemblies, and accompanied by a high-profile poster campaign using the panda logo. The Panda Posse also ran stalls during lunchbreaks in the run up to the summer break reminding students to collect supplies for the "holiday period".

A whole-school approach was taken, with a focus on education, destigmatising periods and making access fun. Surveys distributed before and after the pilot found that 84 per cent of students felt more comfortable talking about periods.



## ST PAUL'S RC HIGH SCHOOL, GLASGOW

St Paul's was one of four schools to pilot free period product provision in Glasgow from May 2018. A pupil steering group was created to deliver the project, deciding to place loose pads in each toilet cubicle (students didn't want others to see them collecting products), as well as in PE changing rooms and at Pupil Support. The steering group established a rota to monitor stock levels, announced the provision in assemblies, and in May received training from Hey Girls to deliver period education. A successful peer-led learning programme was established, with older pupils teaching the younger ones.

Last June, St Paul's students hosted the first Glasgow Schools conference about period poverty – sharing their learning with pupil representatives from all secondary schools in Glasgow. Addressing a packed assembly hall, they explained how the project has created leadership opportunities for them, before delivering a carousel of period education activities for the 150 delegates. Pupil and staff teams from visiting schools left full of ideas about how to distribute products and how to integrate period education. Schools realised they could be doing more than just one assembly for girls. Boys needed to be educated too, and more dedicated curriculum time would help break down existing taboos.

*"At first I did not feel so comfortable talking about this issue, but now I am proud being a part of a group who are dedicated to making a difference"*

PUPIL AT ST PAUL'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

## What's happening near you

**Scotland:** The Scottish Government policy to provide free products in all schools, including primaries, started in August 2018 and is now well established. Scotland has also been championing sustainable period products.

**Wales:** The Welsh Government announced funding for free period products in all schools in March 2019. The project is still young but growing strongly.

**Northern Ireland:** Free products have been available in some areas (for example, Derry and Strabane) since September 2018.

**England:** The project to provide free period products in English schools was launched in January. Schools must opt in to this provision.

## Education, education, education!

Most schools have always kept back-up period products for emergencies, but ending period poverty requires more than this. Pupils need easy access to free products. This means not having to ask staff.

Our top tips:

- Allow pupils to lead the project
- Integrate education to reduce stigma
- Involve all pupils (not just girls)
- Take a whole-school approach

For more tips, check out our how-to guide at [heygirls.co.uk](http://heygirls.co.uk).

## BROUGHTON HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH

Broughton High School began by placing period products in the school reception and in selected classrooms for pupils to collect. Members of staff were keen to introduce reusable products and set up collection events before the holidays, introducing pupils to menstrual cups and reusable pads. Last summer, the Menstruation Association was formed – a pupil steering group to increase access to products.

When the new school year started in August, the Menstruation Association gave assemblies for all pupils and announced the launch of 'everyone' toilets – gender-neutral, accessible to all, and stocked with all types of period products.

Broughton High School has championed reusable products and in September, pupils from the school joined Hey Girls to distribute menstrual cups at Hibernian Football Club just before the game. Possibly a world first!



## How can I help?

It can take a while for policies to be implemented everywhere, so your child's school may not have started providing products just yet. If you're a parent or carer, encourage staff to be bold. Check out our how-to guide online – full of case studies and best practice and download our full set of free curriculum-linked lesson plans to support the project.

[heygirls.co.uk/education/schools](http://heygirls.co.uk/education/schools)

Any questions? Get in touch, [education@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:education@heygirls.co.uk)

# Meet the COMMUNITY GROUPS

Hey Girls donates one pack of period products for every pack sold. Donations are distributed through a network of over 220 community partners across the UK – foodbanks, schools, community centres, youth clubs and women’s groups. We work closely with them to ensure everyone can access free products in a dignified way. In our first year we donated 2.3 million period products. By the end of year two we had donated over **seven million products**. These are just some of our amazing partners!

## YWCA SCOTLAND Glasgow

Our first donation partner, YWCA Scotland, runs empowerment programmes with disadvantaged women in Glasgow. They work with women from all backgrounds – many are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and many are on a low income and unable to pay for period products when they need them. Women can pick up free products in the learning centre toilet or tea room. Talking about periods can be difficult in some cultures, but providing products has sparked a conversation, breaking down barriers, and helped normalise menstruation.  
**@youngwomenscot**



## TEES Redcar and Cleveland

TEES Period Poverty Campaign was set up in December 2018, and now supports more than 600 people a month with free products, working with local groups such as Addaction, welfare, social services, youth groups, foodbanks, and local charities. TEES also delivers period education and in May joined Hey Girls for the #GiveACupAGo campaign.  
**@communitees**

## PROJECT GIVE Wolverhampton

In September 2018, Project GIVE was launched to reduce the effects of period poverty and the stigma associated with menstruating for young people in Wolverhampton. Initially the project distributed donations from the public to schools and youth centres. Since then, Project GIVE has secured funding to educate young people about periods and reduce stigma.  
**@projectgivevv**



## CFINE

### Aberdeen

Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) is based in Aberdeen and works with vulnerable low-income individuals, families and communities in North-East Scotland. In 2017, CFINE delivered the Scottish Government pilot to provide free period products across Aberdeen City. Since then, CFINE has organised the distribution of products to charities across Grampian for the Scottish Government as one of four regional FareShare centres. CFINE provides menstrual health training including how to use reusable products.  
**@CFINEAberdeen**

## FREEDOM4GIRLS

### Leeds

Freedom4Girls works to address period poverty across West Yorkshire. They supply those in need with access to a choice of free menstrual products, including reusable pads and menstrual cups. In 2016, Freedom 4 Girls learned that girls in Leeds were missing school as a result of being unable to afford menstrual products. They quickly started a donation station model across Leeds to supply free products to schools, community hubs and women’s refuges. Freedom4Girls also runs education campaigns to change the narrative around menstruation; tackling stigma and advocating for women’s rights and wellbeing in aspects of life affected by their menstrual health.  
**@freedom\_4\_girls**



## AYLESBURY HOMELESS ACTION GROUP

### Aylesbury

Aylesbury Homeless Action Group is a charity based in Buckinghamshire that supports over-18s who are either homeless, facing homelessness or vulnerably housed. Last year, AHAG worked with over 270 individuals, around 30 per cent of whom were women. AHAG stocks a variety of period products that are easily accessible so that women experiencing a crisis of any sort can collect them. For them, it is all about preserving dignity.  
**@Ahaginfo**

And that's  
not all

Among many other amazing partners, Hey Girls works with:

## PERIOD POVERTY NORTH CUMBRIA Carlisle

Period Poverty North Cumbria is a project run by volunteers to support local people struggling to afford or access appropriate period products. They collect and distribute donated products through community-based services and other agencies.  
**@PeriodNorth**

## EVERY MONTH Manchester

Every Month provides period products to people living in poverty across Greater Manchester. They create packs which include pads, tampons and a chocolate bar and distribute them through foodbanks in the area.  
**@everymonthmcr**

## THE HYGIENE BANK UK-wide

Many people on low incomes or in crisis have to make the distressing decision to eat or stay clean, because they can't afford to do both. The Hygiene Bank collects donated hygiene and personal grooming products and distributes them to a network of hundreds of grassroots charities across the UK and Ireland that support vulnerable and struggling people.  
**@thehygienebank**

## SPARKHILL FOODBANK Birmingham

Sparkhill Foodbank supports people with multiple problems. They try to reduce many of life's small worries so people can focus on tackling their bigger issues. As well as food, Sparkhill supplies toiletries, clothing, pet food, nappies, and crockery. They've been giving out period products for several years and have a basketful so women can help themselves. They know that something small, like a box of tampons, can make a big difference to someone's sense of wellbeing and dignity.  
**@sparkhillfood**

**i** If you know a charity near you that needs period product donations, get in touch. [donations@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:donations@heygirls.co.uk)

# INTRODUCING UNSANITARY PADS

The product we don't want anyone to use

**On page two of this magazine you might have spotted an advert for a new range of period products: UNSanitary Pads.**

You may not have heard of them before, but these are pads used by one in 10 young girls and young women in the UK.

But all is not what it seems. UNSanitary Pads are not the latest variety of hip creations to hit the shelves.

A very serious message lies behind this new campaign. UNSanitary Pads are in fact a range of fake products, instore but not on sale.

Hey Girls want to draw attention to the fact that one in 10 girls and young women aged 14 to 21 in the UK are unable to afford period products. Many end up using makeshift items each month – newspaper, socks and loo roll are among the materials used by girls who can't afford period products and are forced to

improvise. Those are the 'pads' inside UNSanitary Pads boxes.

That's one in 10 girls and young women suffering the embarrassment, discomfort – and potentially ill-health – of using makeshift items in place of period products. It is the result of the crippling period poverty experienced by an alarming number of UK girls and young women. Hey Girls believes it is unfair, unacceptable and UNSanitary.

### Why this matters

Not having access to adequate, hygienic period products has a huge effect on the mental health of these girls and young women. Of course, we've all used loo roll in an emergency, but having to rely on it as your main product is inconvenient – causing chafing, leaks and a fear of moving too much or too vigorously.

In extreme cases there can be physical complications including:

- Rashes
- Infections in the skin, vagina and urinary tract that could spread to pelvic inflammatory disease and sepsis
- Abnormal bleeding/discharge
- Infertility

In addition to this, girls and young women are more likely to miss days of school or work, or find it difficult to concentrate, further compounding the effects on their education and finances.

### What can we do to stop it

Last month, the UK government announced that they're investing into providing free period products to girls in English schools, replicating the schemes already in place in Scotland and Wales.

So the issue's fixed? Period poverty is history?

Well, it's a good start. But we need to do much more – especially for girls who aren't in school, those in schools who haven't opted in to the scheme, and those in higher education.

So what's the answer? Hey Girls is a social enterprise that tackles period poverty by giving a girl or young woman one pack of products for every pack bought. To date, they've donated over 7 million products to those who need them.

You can help all UK girls and young women by using Hey Girls products, and by encouraging your employer to provide them for staff. In doing so, Hey Girls will donate like for like to those who need it in your local area.

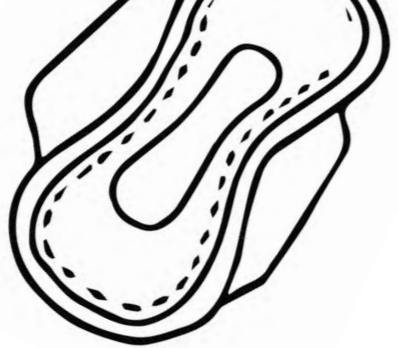
And most importantly, let's keep the conversation going and make period poverty a priority for those in charge.

[heygirls.co.uk](http://heygirls.co.uk)

**To learn more about the UNSanitary Pads campaign, go to [tounsanitarypads.co.uk](http://tounsanitarypads.co.uk) or follow the 'brand' on Instagram @uk\_unsanitary for the latest updates**



#Pads4Dads



# 'Let's not leave dads out of the bloody conversation'



Michael Sheen  
Actor, activist, dad

**"If you were out shopping, you wouldn't think twice about buying your daughter food, or toothpaste or deodorant, right? So why is there embarrassment around buying pads or tampons for her? I get that it can feel embarrassing, and maybe like me, you didn't get taught about this in school – that's OK, you're allowed to be nervous!"**

"The good news is you're not alone!" That's how actor, activist, social enterprise champion and all-round good guy Michael Sheen launched Hey Girls' #Pads4Dads campaign last year. The goal was to help fathers overcome the awkwardness and start a conversation on the subject of periods.

Research by Hey Girls, surveying 1,500 men, found that one in three dads felt unprepared to have conversations about periods with their kids, and 45 per cent were unsure of the signs a girl might be about to start her period. One third admitted they had never purchased period products and 50 per cent had never chatted to their daughters about periods.

Four in 10 fathers never learned about periods in school and this, says Sheen, is part of the reason they find it so difficult to know how to broach the subject: "It's awkward for dads to have this chat because chances are, they didn't learn about periods in school. Believe me, we want to be supportive, but there's almost no information out there aimed at dads. Let's not leave dads out of the bloody conversation!"

As part of the #Pads4Dads campaign Hey Girls created an information booklet written by dads for dads, and distributed in print and online. **A Dad's Guide to Periods** is packed with tips on how to speak to kids about periods, signs their daughter might be starting soon, advice on when to take her to the doctor and practical measures – like simply making sure there is a bin in the bathroom.

The research found that many dads were keen to learn and to be able to talk comfortably with their daughters but just needed to know how. "Dads in general avoid this kind of topic because they defer to mum," says Kieran, whose daughter Dharma is now 19. "When my daughter was about 10 years old some of her friends had started their periods. She asked me about periods one day sitting in the back of the car (I guess so she wouldn't have to look at me)." He explained the mechanics – which she said she'd already learned in school – but when she asked when she would start her periods he had only a vague answer: "I felt like



**'Dads in general avoid this kind of topic because they defer to mum. We need to change that'**

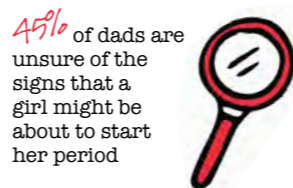
Kieran - dad of Dharma



only **4%** of dads say they feel comfortable talking about periods with their kids, and nearly half haven't chatted to their daughters about them



**one in three** dads say they feel unprepared to have conversations about periods with their kids



**45%** of dads are unsure of the signs that a girl might be about to start her period



**4 in 10** dads never learned about periods at school

I was letting her down a bit, but you just don't know."

When she hadn't started by age 14, he says: "There was still no panic, but she seemed really hung up on it. We talked regularly about how she was feeling, and emphasised that it will happen when it happens. When she did start, she had her little starter kit in her bag, and she talked openly about it with me. Always talk to your children about sex, relationships, emotions and puberty from an early age, then it won't be as awkward when they are older," is Kieran's advice.

The campaign was a huge success, reaching over two million people across the UK, and it spread organically to Canada, India and Greece, helped no doubt by the star-power of Sheen, star of *The Good Fight*, *Good Omens*, *30 Rock* and movies including *Frost/Nixon*, *The Damned United* and *The Queen*.

"The message really resonated with people," says Celia Hodson, Hey Girls founder. "Women are used to having this conversation in hushed voices, but many men have been totally excluded from the period chat. We've found that men – especially dads – want to be

**'Periods are, without a doubt, an awkward subject for most fathers'**

Jonson - dad of Gabrielle



part of this conversation and #Pads4Dads helped them do that. This was something people really needed to talk about."

But it remains a message that needs to be repeated far and wide – and often. As Dan, stepdad of Nicole and Lucy, explains: "To be honest the #Pads4Dads leaflet is the most information I have ever seen about periods. As a young boy at school I was never told about it or was given the opportunity to learn about it. Even as an adult these days there's not much information given out about this topic. Dads need to know more so they can understand what a young girl has to go through and help out."

And Jonson, whose daughter Gabrielle at eight is still a way off puberty, adds that you can never be prepared too early: "It's good to know that this resource is available to dads. Periods are, without a doubt, an awkward subject for most fathers to broach with their daughters, all the more so in Asian cultures. Having this kit really helps to overcome not only the anxiety but especially the ignorance of most men about the subject matter."

**For everything every dad needs to know about periods and how to talk about them, go to [heygirls.co.uk/pads-for-dads](http://heygirls.co.uk/pads-for-dads)**

[www.heygirls.co.uk](http://www.heygirls.co.uk)



## THE BASICS: WHAT EVERY DAD NEEDS TO KNOW...

- Periods are different for everyone – they can be heavy or light, short or long, very painful or fairly easy. Every woman is different
- They last about three to seven days and happen roughly once a month. It can take a couple of years for periods to settle into a pattern, so many young teenagers have very irregular periods
- Most people only lose one or two shot-glasses full of blood, but the total 'flow' can be more like 100ml
- Most women have periods between the ages of about 12 and 50
- Don't wait for the perfect moment to have 'the chat' – there isn't one. As a rough guide, schools cover periods and puberty when kids are in their last year of primary school, aged 10 or 11. For many girls, this will be TOO LATE – 15 per cent of girls don't know what's happening when they start their period – which is scary
- If your daughter is eight, it would be worth starting the conversation
- It's much easier to talk about difficult topics early and often. If periods come up in conversation naturally – maybe you're in the shop picking up tampons for your partner, or watching a movie that makes a reference to PMS – take the chance to chat
- You don't need to cover everything in one go and it will help to repeat the conversation a few times over the years

[www.heygirls.co.uk](http://www.heygirls.co.uk)

Let's start a movement...

# A PERIOD DIGNITY MOVEMENT

## An office wouldn't allow staff to go without pens, paper, or loo roll... So why don't they provide period products?

Allow us to introduce you to the Hey Girls Period Dignity Movement.

Professional women are not necessarily living in poverty – for many, the high price of period products is annoying, but not prohibitive. But that's not what Period Dignity is about. We're asking employers to provide pads and tampons in their toilets – a simple and affordable policy to support staff.

The Period Dignity campaign is part of a wider mission to tackle gender inequality in the workplace. Periods can be a barrier to fully participating in the working day – especially for women struggling with money, with heavy periods, with a menstrual health condition, or experiencing peri-menopause. Fifty per cent of the staff we surveyed said they had been caught short at work more than once, and 68 per cent have left work to get products.

Since getting the ball rolling in 2019, Hey Girls has teamed up with big-name brands to stock products in their staff bathrooms. Now more than 40 UK businesses are championing period dignity at work – Skyscanner, Bulb, Royal London, Babcock, H&M Customer Services, Aesop, Revolution Bars, Morton Fraser LLP, and Visit Scotland – the list goes on. And because Hey Girls has a Buy-One-Give-One model, every product sold to a business is matched with a donation to a local community partner.

Periods are private – but they shouldn't be secret. Acknowledging that a large portion of your workforce is affected by a natural biological process is a good start to ensuring gender equality. A little box of tampons could make the difference between just another day at the office, and the worst day of her career.

97% of staff surveyed think providing free period products at work is a good idea.



## WILLMOTT DIXON INTERIORS

"At Willmott Dixon Interiors our purpose goes beyond profit, creating value for our communities is something we passionately believe in. In the summer of 2018 Willmott Dixon entered the Buy Social Corporate Challenge. Since then we have made it easy for our people and supply chain to use social enterprises wherever possible. Since 2018 we have increased our social enterprise spend by over 4,000 per cent.

"We have placed equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do, our sites especially must be inclusive places to work for everyone. In the summer of 2019, Willmott Dixon Interiors approached Hey Girls to supply period products across all of its projects and offices throughout the UK. We wanted to create safe inclusive places of work while supporting social enterprises. Hey Girls has allowed us to provide environmentally friendly, comfortable period care at the same time as tackling period poverty in the UK.

"By installing Hey Girls products across all of our project sites, we have been able to break down the taboos about periods, educating our people at the same time. Knowing that each pad or tampon we buy is helping someone living in period poverty is the ultimate reward for delivering inclusive places of work for all of our people and supply chain partners."



"It's a natural thing that shouldn't come with a stigma, so it's great we're doing all we can to remove this"

Gemma (pictured left) trainee surveyor, Willmott Dixon



## URBAN SPLASH

Award-winning regeneration company Urban Splash exists to push boundaries and pioneer new ideas; we're always looking for better ways of doing things and collaborating – be that the homes, workspaces and neighbourhoods we create, or the charities we partner with. Over the past 25 years we've created more than 5,000 new homes and two million square feet of workspace in more than 60 regeneration projects. We've got a long history of making special places for people to live and work, undertaking more than 60 regeneration projects as far south as Plymouth and as far north as, well, North Shields.

In December we found a number of new collaborators in social enterprises – organisations that share our values in design, quality and making a lasting difference to the communities we live and work in. We have now started providing Hey Girls tampons in our staff toilets and want to encourage other businesses to do the same, whatever their size. The brilliant B2B team at Hey Girls makes the ordering process incredibly easy and you get to share in the success of Hey Girls' incredibly impressive growth as a social business tackling period poverty.

Period poverty affects thousands of women and girls every month in our home city of Manchester alone. While great efforts are being made to end this injustice, we know we are also doing our bit by buying from Hey Girls. For every pack we buy, a pack is given to someone who needs it. It's that simple.

## What women say



"Even when people can afford sanitary products it's so helpful if they are provided for those times when one is unprepared or mistakenly thought that periods were a thing of the past!"

CLAIRE

"I was in the middle of a board meeting and was just about to get up to nip to the loo, but after pulling out my chair and looking down I noticed a stain. I had leaked all over the chair and had to immediately sit back down and wait until the meeting was over."

CELIA

"I know when we shared bathroom space in our office building, seeing Hey Girls period products for use was such a mood booster and saved me one day when I forgot to bring supplies."

JOSIE

"I really love having products available in my office, it's like having your best friend watching your back if you are caught short and not having to whisper round if anyone has any spares or smuggle a crinkly wrapper to the bathroom."

SARAH

**To get period products stocked in your offices visit [heygirls.co.uk/private-sector](https://heygirls.co.uk/private-sector) for a quick quote or email [b2b@heygirls.co.uk](mailto:b2b@heygirls.co.uk) with any questions**

Here's how we can all...

**STOP THE PLASTIC WAVE**



Ella Daish is an environmental activist and Big Issue Changemaker

Photo: @Ella Daish

**D**avid Attenborough's *Blue Planet II* was arguably the watershed moment in the war on plastic. Since the final episode aired in 2017, 88 per cent of people have changed their purchasing behaviour. As plastic bags are replaced with canvas tote bags, reusable water bottles gain traction and bars ditch plastic straws, people are increasingly turning their attention to other disposable plastics. For many, a surprising source of plastic pollution is disposable period products. It is not commonly known that pads and tampons are made of plastic. Most commercial pads are 90 per cent plastic, with a pack containing similar amounts to five plastic bags. Tampons often have a thin plastic membrane to prevent the rayon they are made of from fraying. They are inserted using plastic applicators, or cardboard sprayed with plastic. Applicators are used for seconds, but plastic takes hundreds of years to biodegrade. With disposable products used for around four to six hours, waste quickly piles up. In the UK, people use an average of 11,000 pads and tampons in the course of their reproductive lifetime. Most of these will still be here in 500 years' time.

**Turning the tide**

Although sewage systems can filter out some products flushed down the toilet, inevitably a large number of these products end up in the ocean. Period products are the fifth most common item found on UK beaches, more common than disposable coffee cups, plastic cutlery or straws, and across the UK campaigners are working to change that. Hey Girls is a key member of the Women's Environmental Network, a coalition of campaigners working towards more sustainable periods. As well as manufacturing biodegradable disposable products, Hey Girls actively promotes reusable alternatives (see page 22). Other campaigners, including partners City to Sea and Ella Daish are calling on retailers to reduce the plastic in their disposable products. In 2017, City to Sea launched their #PlasticFreePeriods campaign to raise awareness of the environmental and health problems of using plastic period products.

Every day Britain flushes...

- 2.5 million tampons
- 700,000 panty liners
- 1.4 million pads
- ...down the toilet

In total, period products create 200,000 tonnes of waste per year, with 1.5-2 billion period products flushed down the toilet annually

Based in Bristol, the organisation calls on retailers to Turn the Tide on plastic pollution, asking shoppers to highlight the availability of plastic free products in supermarkets near them using the hashtags #BloodySuccess or #BloodyShame. With funding from the European Regional Development Fund, last November the Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland launched a #TrialPeriod campaign to encourage people to try reusable products. Partnering with Hey Girls, more than 1,000 menstrual cups and 1,000 packs of cloth pads were given away free. Participants in the trial will give feedback on the products, and this research will inform future campaigns by Zero Waste Scotland to increase uptake of reusables. Individually each one of us can also take small steps to make a big difference: education and discussion are a great starting point, and learning about the growing number of alternatives is becoming easier. Now is the time for action!

So what can you do?

Periods needn't harm the planet - there is another way!

**ENTRY LEVEL**

Tell your friends...

- A surprising number of people don't know **pads and tampons contain plastic**. Most commercial pads are 90% plastic with a pack containing similar amounts to five plastic bags.
- Switch to **non-applicator tampons** - they are cheaper and easy to use with a bit of practice.
- Never flush your period products down the toilet - **always put them in a bin**, even if you have to wrap them and carry them with you to find one.



**MEDIUM LEVEL**

Switch to plastic-free pads and tampons...

- Many brands, including Hey Girls, use **alternative materials** to create quality period products. No plastic, no chemicals - better for you and better for the planet.



**COMMITTED**

Switch to reusable period products...

- **Menstrual cups, period pants, and cloth pads** drastically reduce waste, and many people find them more comfortable than commercial equivalents. These alternatives last years and will save you money.



For a guide to reusable period products, check out this handy video: [youtube.com/watch?v=1s9DuWSqjDI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1s9DuWSqjDI) And just how good is your menstruation knowhow? Turn the page to find out with Molly's quiz

# WHAT THE CUP!

You may have noticed a big menstrual cup on the cover of this mini-magazine



Whether you're a regular cup user or you've never seen one before we think you'll LOVE the cup. For many years, the cup has been a well-kept secret, but here at Hey Girls we think everyone should be familiar with this handy tool for managing periods.

Menstrual cups are bell-shaped devices that sit inside the vagina and collect blood. Unlike a tampon, which is discarded after a few hours, a cup is emptied and reinserted again and again. They are folded to insert and then 'pop' open, forming a light suction to hold them in place – this can take some practice! Cups can hold more fluid than other products so don't need to be changed as frequently. They are a cleaner, greener,

cheaper, more comfortable alternative to tampons. And if you look after your cup, it will last you 10 years.

Many people think that menstrual cups are a new invention, but they've actually been around for a long time. The first cups were patented by female inventors in the 1930s, but remained on the fringes of the menstrual market. In the 1980s a rubber menstrual cup – The Keeper – launched in the USA, and was the first cup to be commercially viable. But it was not until we got good at manufacturing silicone that cups started to take off. The Mooncup launched in the UK in 2001, but now there are many different brands of cups in all shapes, sizes and colours.

The Hey Girls #GiveACupAGo campaign has seen over 1,000 menstrual cups donated to vulnerable people around the UK, as well as events in colleges and universities to encourage students to make the switch to reusables. The cup is fast gaining a reputation for its comfort and convenience – it's onwards and cupwards from here!

**i** **What are you waiting for? #GiveACupAGo to save money and waste! For more info and FAQs head to [heygirls.co.uk/give-a-cup-a-go/](http://heygirls.co.uk/give-a-cup-a-go/)**

And if cups aren't your thing, you could try other reusable alternatives including...

## PERIOD PANTS...

...are just like normal pants but can absorb up to three tampons-worth of liquid.



## REUSABLE PADS...

...are made of cloth and worn like normal pads. Once used, you put them in a wetbag and then pop them in the wash. One pack of pads can last you five years.



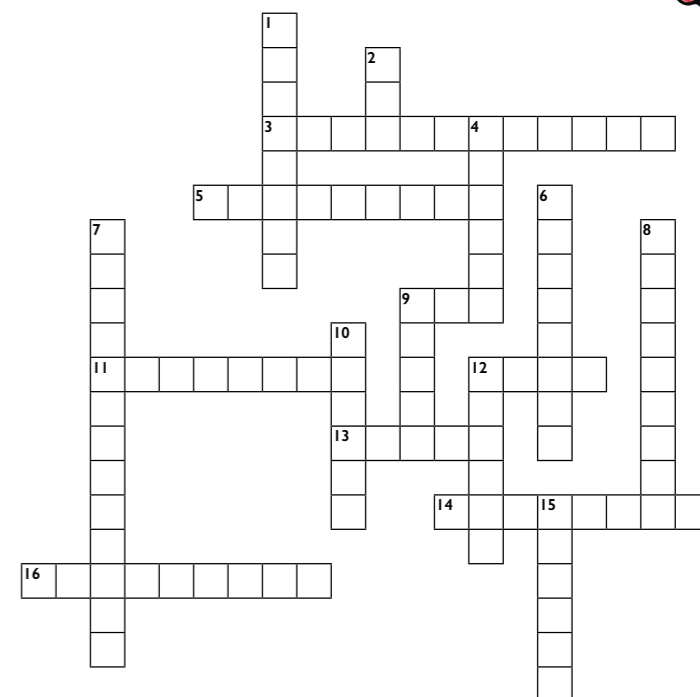
# HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PERIODS?

Take the quiz to find out

1. Pads first became commercially available in...  
a. 1880s    b. 1910s    c. 1920s
2. Most commercial pads are made of plastic, but how much is in them?  
a. 90% plastic    b. 60% plastic    c. 30% plastic
3. How often should you change your tampon?  
a. Every hour    b. Every 4 hours    c. Every 12 hours
4. In 2017, how many used tampons were found per km of UK beach?  
a. 2    b. 12    c. 22
5. When was the menstrual cup invented?  
a. 1930s    b. 1960s    c. 1980s
6. How often should you empty your menstrual cup? \*  
a. Every hour    b. Every 4 hours    c. Every 12 hours
7. Which of these does not mention period products?  
a. The Bible    b. Family Guy    c. Friends
8. Which of these is not a reusable menstrual product?  
a. Menstrual cup    b. Menstrual sponge    c. Menstrual glove

\*Everyone's period is different, so some people may need to change their products more frequently

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

3. Scientific word for periods (12)
5. When periods come to an end (9)
9. Rare infection associated with tampons (3)
11. A girl's first period (8)
12. Common name for an Intrauterine Device (4)
13. External female genitalia (5)
14. Erratic light bleeding (8)
16. Female sex hormone (9)

### DOWN

1. Chemical messengers in the body (8)
2. Cause of mood swings just before a period (3)
4. Where a baby grows (6)
6. Sudden very heavy bleeding (8)
7. Chronic pain condition affecting one in 10 women (13)
8. When an ovary releases an egg (9)
9. Sanitary pad, napkin or \_\_\_ (5)
10. Lower section of the womb (6)
12. Pain in the lower back or stomach during a period (6)
15. Period product inserted into the vagina (6)

**ANSWERS Period Product:** 1 - a, 2 - a, 3 - b, 4 - b, 5 - a, 6 - c, 7 - c, 8 - c  
**Crossword:** [Across: 3. Menstruation, 5. Menopause, 9. TSS, 11. Menarche, 12. Coil, 13. Vulva, 14. Spotting, 16. Oestrogen  
**Down:** 1. Hormones, 2. PMS, 4. Uterus, 6. Flooding, 7. Endometritis, 8. Ovarian, 9. Trench, 10. Cervix, 12. Cramps, 15. Tampon



# MAKE A BLOODY DIFFERENCE

BUY ONE GIVE ONE ON ALL HEY GIRLS PRODUCTS. EVERYTIME. PERIOD.



Girls in the UK miss school because they cannot afford period products – we give a girl or young woman one pack of product for every pack you buy – help Hey Girls help UK girls every month.

Hey Girls products are eco-friendly, sustainable and made with materials that neither harm the environment nor your nether regions.