



# Breaking the Cycle

Period equality research in the UK



[#CreatePeriodEquality](#) [#phsPeriodEquality](#)

## **phs** Period Equality – what’s changed?

Executive summary	3
Methodology	5
Introduction: Girls go missing	6
Periods and school absence: A never-ending cycle	10
Lack of access to period products	18
Getting serious about period inequality	23

## **The impact on diverse community groups**

A cause for concern	29
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## **Talking points**

Down to basics	32
Period shame	34
Pain and no gain	36
The cost of living	39

## **The future**

<b>phs</b> Period Equality – what we’re doing	44
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# Contents

# phs Period Equality: what we're doing

## Executive Summary

This report by the **phs** Group examines period equality in the UK in 2023; how periods affect the daily lives of millions of women and girls or girls who have periods at school or college, and how awareness, knowledge and access to essential period products are crucial to their academic progress.

It builds on previous research by the **phs** Group carried out in 2019 and 2021, including prior to most period equality schemes being in place and in different economic and political context. The research compares figures prior and during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as during the cost-of-living crisis to gain insight into how attitudes have changed and how much of an issue period inequality still is in the UK today.



# This latest **research** looks at

The correlation  
between periods  
and school attendance

The stigma of  
menstruation  
and period shame

Awareness and  
understanding about  
the impact of periods  
and period inequality

Affordability of period  
products in challenging  
economic times

Access to free products  
under government  
measures introduced  
to improve period equality

A **phs** Group **PODCAST**

## THE BLOBCAST

**FREE THE PERIOD**



To combat some of the issues raised in this paper, a new podcast, aimed at educating everyone about periods no matter who you are has been created, you can find out more about the podcast at [www.phs.co.uk/TheBlobcast](http://www.phs.co.uk/TheBlobcast) or search 'The Blobcast: Free The Period' where you get your podcasts.

References to 'girls and women' also includes a reference to pupils and students who menstruate (or may later start menstruating) who may not identify as female but, instead, identify as transgender or non-binary.

### Methodology

The research paper period equality: Breaking the Cycle research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of 1262 13-18 year old girls, women or pupils or students who have periods at school or college in the UK and ROI. The data was collected between 18.05.23 - 26.05.23.

Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct which is based on the ESOMAR principles. The other two research papers mentioned used the same methodology and can be found and referenced here:

2019 whitepaper

2021 whitepaper



# Girls go missing

## Introduction

The mission to achieve period equality in the UK has gained pace, and in comparison to when **phs** Group began collecting data, great strides have been made to improve the experience of menstruating girls. All girls<sup>1</sup> across the UK can now access free period products at school.

Schemes are either run by local authorities with unique area by area approaches, or there are central strategies to roll out the provision of products. The schemes have undoubtedly been welcomed by girls and educators and take up has been high – in England, 99%<sup>2</sup> of secondary schools had taken part in the scheme since it was launched.

Despite this, every single day, in classrooms spanning the length and breadth of the UK, girls go missing when they have their periods.

While classmates are busy learning, they remain in their bedrooms. Some are too embarrassed to leave home. Others are suffering pain and discomfort. Many fear the prospect of attending school or college without access to essential products. Others fear getting their period and not being allowed to leave the class to use the bathroom.

<sup>1</sup> References to 'girls and women' also includes a reference to pupils and students who menstruate (or may later start menstruating) who may not identify as female but, instead, identify as transgender or non-binary.

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650d697a2f404b000dc3d784/Period\\_Product\\_Scheme\\_2022-23\\_management\\_information.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650d697a2f404b000dc3d784/Period_Product_Scheme_2022-23_management_information.pdf)



Periods and the issues surrounding them continue **to be the biggest cause of school absence** — and threat to academic achievement — for girls and young people who menstruate in the UK in 2023.

### Our first period equality study in 2019

uncovered for the first time that female students were unable to access basic period products and that it was having a detrimental effect on school attendance.

### In 2021,

we went back to 13 to 18-year-old girls and young people across the UK, and wider afield in the Republic of Ireland, to find out how periods were still affecting daily lives and education, to gauge opinions on whether period inequality was a real issue, and to ask them what the barriers were to overcome — and what would break them down.

### Now in 2023,

we return once more with the survey results from 1,262 female students across the UK and ROI revealing what has changed over the last four years and what action still needs to be taken.

The findings offer key insight into the experiences of teenage girls over the last year, how perceptions have changed since our previous surveys, and reveal the additional toll of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis on access to period products and period inequality.

New barriers that have come to light include how the cost of living is forcing teens to seek out products they would not normally use, while sustainable, recyclable period items **have become unaffordable and out of reach for many.**

We discover in greater detail how:

- Education in schools about periods and wider understanding of period inequality is lacking
- Some students are only being given access to free products if they are on school free meals
- Many are too embarrassed to ask for them or are being prevented from leaving the classroom to go to the bathroom to use them







Also newly highlighted is how girls from diverse community groups are disproportionately more likely to be absent from school than their peers due to their periods.

Unfortunately, due to the way that we have gathered data for this report, we haven't been able to report back on specific groups that we would like to get further insights from. These include trans and non-binary girls who menstruate.

We know anecdotally, periods for this group are a regular struggle; from the fear of being identified while buying products or accessing products in bathrooms which could compromise their safety, to feeling like products and marketing is too gendered.

The discourse surrounding this area moves apace, and where we can we hope to contribute our own expertise around this area in the future by commissioning some standalone research with a specialist partner.

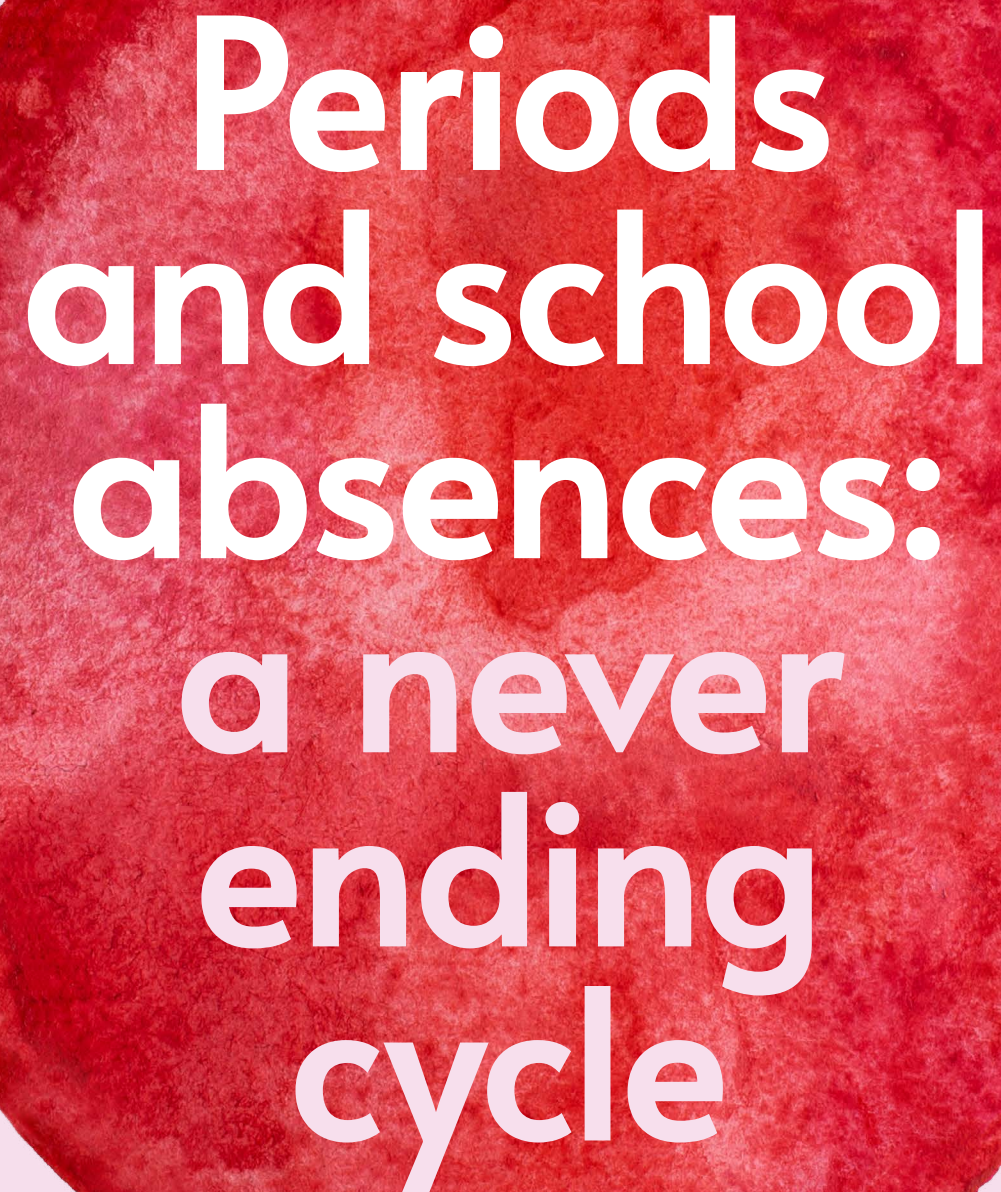
While this report demonstrates that there remain old barriers to be broken down as well as new ones to overcome, it also recognises and celebrates some notable progress in the mission to create period equality; in raising awareness, in tackling the stigma of talking about periods, and in providing free period products in schools and colleges.

What is clear now is that we must continue to build on those achievements and ensure that millions of girls who are still suffering in silence no longer do so. Far too many girls continue to go missing from school. Far too many opportunities continue to be lost. We need to break the cycle.

This report presents the UK findings, but its purpose is to seek to understand how we can improve things for those with periods together as educators, governments, activists, businesses and individuals.

We know the scheme is necessary, we know that the products are in schools – but what do we need to do next? Hopefully this report will provide the insights to inspire us all to take action to end period inequality.





**Periods  
and school  
absences:  
a never  
ending  
cycle**

# Periods and school absence: A never ending cycle

Our latest research for the UK reveals that:



On average, girls continue to miss **3** school days each term

due to menstruation more than for any other reason, including cold and flu (2.6 days), holidays (2.2 days), mental health (1.9 days) and truancy (1.2 days).

The average number of days lost to periods was 2.9 in 2019 and 3.3 days in 2021.

This means that periods are the reason each learner is absent for a staggering 54 days over the course of their teen school and college years (between the ages of 13 and 18) – the equivalent of 11 academic weeks.

More than half of girls (54%) are still taking time off school due to their monthly cycle.

Roughly the same number (52%) as in 2019 before most period equality schemes were in force.

With a third of those (36%) saying they have missed lessons more than once, 8% higher than previous levels.

As many as



**1 in 5** girls

(20%) is unable to do their school work because of their period (in 2021, the figure was 27%), with a similar number unable to leave home.

The vast majority (82%) blame period cramps for missing school.

One in 12 (8%) stayed away from lessons because no period products were available to them – 3% higher than in 2019 – while 5% could not afford them, also an increase of 3% on pre-pandemic levels.

This statistic feels surprising, considering the high levels of schools partaking in period equality schemes across the UK, in particular – as previously mentioned with 99% of English secondary schools taking part in the scheme.

Furthermore, the number of girls who say they are likely to miss school or college over the next year due to their period has soared to more than half (52%) – more than double the number (25%) revealed in our first poll in 2019 and a 12% increase on 2021.

Almost 1 in 5 (19%) of those polled stayed away from lessons because they were embarrassed about being on their period – a similar figure to 2021.

While 2 in 5 (40%) were willing to give their school or college the real reason for their absence, many chose to blame something else such as illness (35%), a headache (23%) or a family member being unwell (14%).

As well as academic lessons, girls also missed out on sports and PE with period pain the leading cause of abstinence (46%) along with feeling self-conscious or concerned about bleeding through clothing (41%).





12

\*All percentages rounded to the nearest decimal

## Key figures

Which of the following has ever applied to you?

40%

I have had to miss out on day-to-day activities because of my period.

36%

I have had to take time off school/college more than once because of my period.

18%

I have had to take time off school/college once because of my period.

20%

I have been unable to leave the house because of my period.

20%

I have been unable to do my school/college work because of my period.

18%

None of the above.

2%

Prefer not to say.

2%

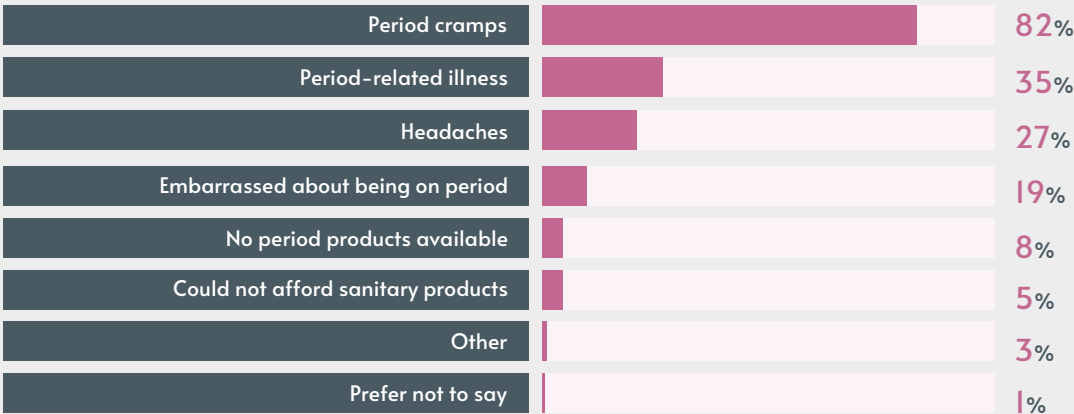
I haven't started my period.

# Key figures

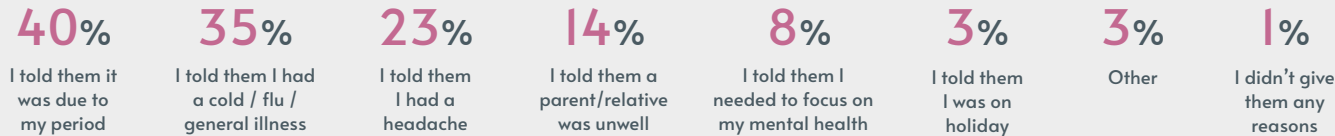
Average number of school or learning days lost each term for the following reasons:



Reasons for missing school/college because of a period:



If you have had to take time off school/college due to your period, what reason(s) did you give if any?



# Key figures

How likely or unlikely are you to miss school/college over the next year due to your period?

Very likely	Somewhat likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely
16%	36%	20%	9%	18%

Which of the following, if any, have meant you haven't participated in sport at all?





# The bigger picture: Key changes



## 1 in 3 girls

who have missed lessons due to their period have done so more than once (36%) – 8% UP on 2019

## 11 academic weeks

are LOST to periods over the course of a teen's school/college life (age 13–18 years)

## Double

the number of girls now think they are likely to miss lessons over the next year due to menstruation – up from 25% in 2019 to 52% today

How many girls have had to take time off school/college more than once because of their periods

25%

East of England

32%

Greater London

29%

East Midlands

38%

West Midlands

31%

North East

38%

North West

52%

Northern Ireland

46%

Scotland

36%

South East

36%

South West

44%

Wales

42%

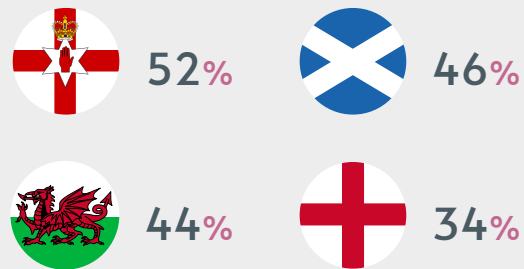
Yorkshire & the Humber



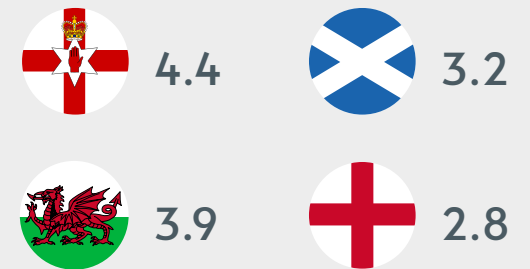
**Northern Ireland** is the UK's top spot where the impact of periods on education is greatest.

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#### Off more than once due to periods

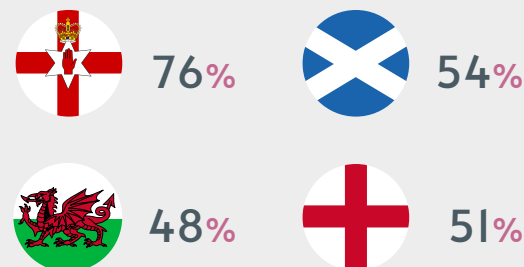


#### Average days lost to periods

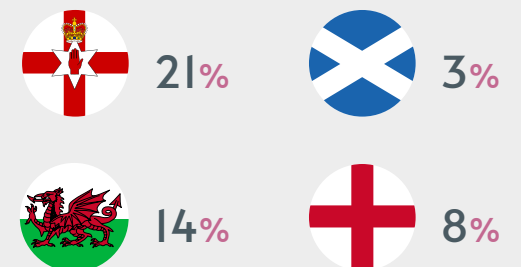


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#### Likely to miss school over next year due to periods



#### Did not have access to period products



# Summary

Girls missing lessons due to periods remains the single biggest cause of school and college absence across the UK. Nothing has improved in this respect since our first study into the problem in 2019.

Periods — the debilitating symptoms they cause, the embarrassment and shame that still surrounds the issue, and a lack of access to period products — continue to cause massive disruption to girls' daily lives and prevent them from learning.

It is known that missing school a few days a year can damage pupils' chances of achieving good exam results. For the last four years, the average number of days lost each academic year to periods has hovered at 9 days, confirming that further action is necessary to break the cycle.

While period cramps and related illness are undoubtedly affecting girls' ability to attend school, too many are still embarrassed about being on their period or feel they have to lie about why they are taking time off, suggesting the shame and stigma associated with the issue still exists.

Some cite period products being unavailable or that they cannot afford them. It appears that government funding of free towels and tampons in schools and colleges, while being taken up by schools and improving availability hugely, is still not reaching every single learner.

It is extremely concerning that more than half of girls — double the number in 2019 — now think it is likely they will miss school over the next year purely due to their monthly cycle.

This is bound to lead to an even higher number of learning days lost. Can we really afford to take that chance? Clearly, more still needs to be done.



# Lack of access to period products

18



When asked the reason for missing school,

**1 in 12 girls (8%)**

said they did not have access to any period products, lower than the 14% in 2021 during the pandemic but still slightly higher than in 2019 (5%).

**A quarter (26%)**

have been asked to lend period products in the last 12 months, with a similar number (24%) asking to borrow them from a friend.

**Almost 1 in 5 (19%)**

knows someone who has been unable to afford period pads or tampons.

Even though it is a health and hygiene risk,

**17%**

of those who have periods have worn period products longer than they should do – with 5% feeling unwell as a result – while 1 in 10 has used an alternative for their period.

**Nearly a tenth (9%)**

say a parent or family member has gone without in order to buy them period products, or they themselves have used their food money to cover the cost – with 7% unable to afford lunch as a result.

**Meanwhile, 3%**

have resorted to stealing period products – this is three times the pre-pandemic level in 2019.

While period products are made available for all girls at school or college in the UK free of charge through government funding, over half surveyed (52%) did not find them freely available in washrooms

A further 1 in 7 (14%) did not know if they were available.

Only a third (31%) have accessed them through the funded scheme, with most (69%) doing so because they forgot to bring their own.

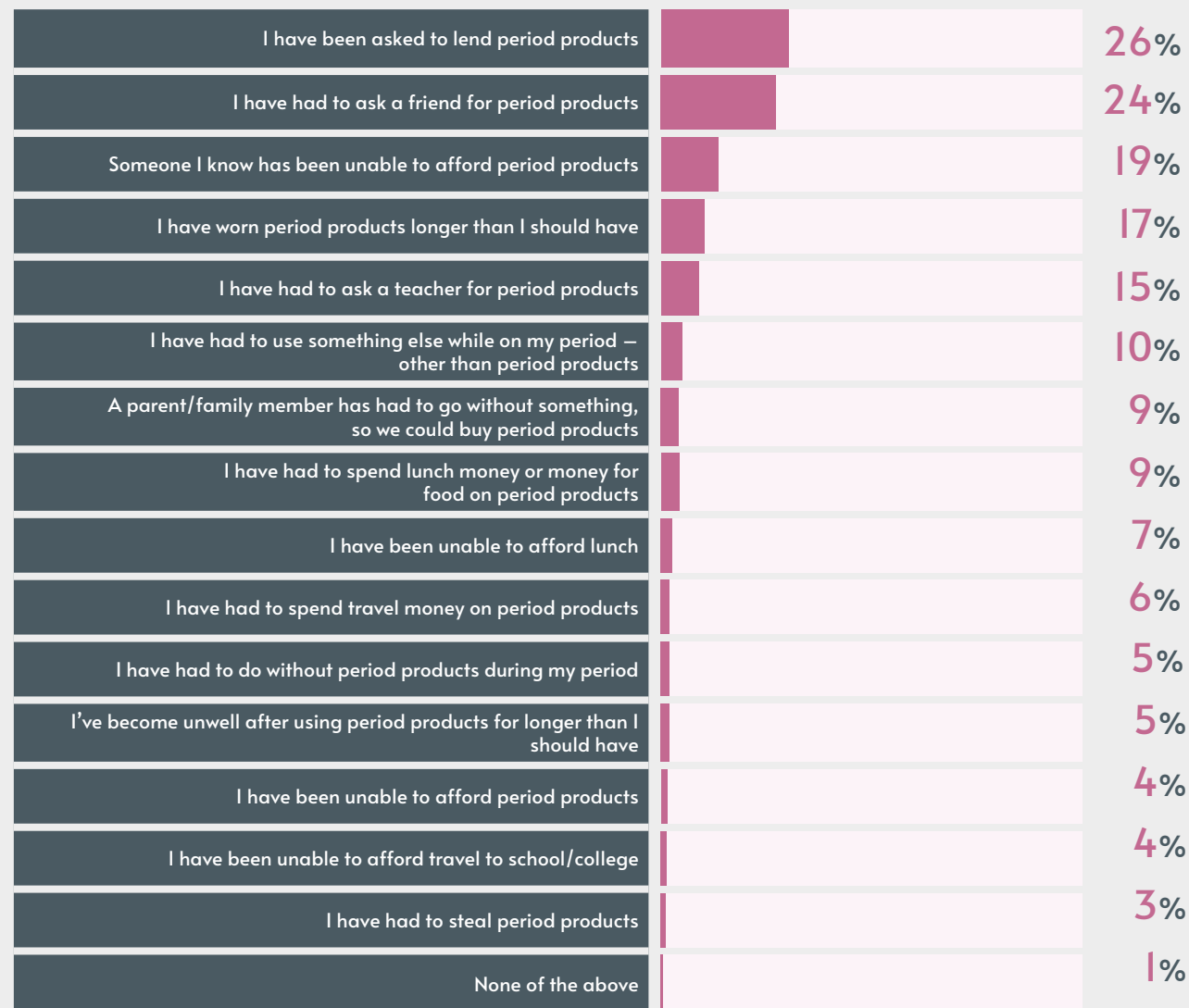
One in 7 (14%) did so because they were unable to afford their own, while others took them home for family members to use (19%).

Nearly two thirds (63%) have not accessed period products at school or college through the period equality scheme.

Moreover, 8 in 10 (80%) say they are not being provided with free period products to take home during the school holidays.

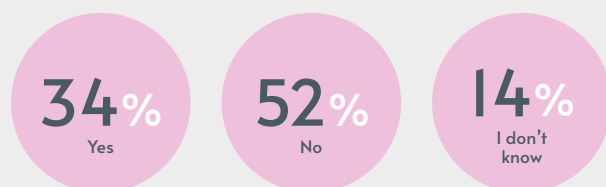
# Key figures

Which of the following, if any, applied to you within the last 12 months?

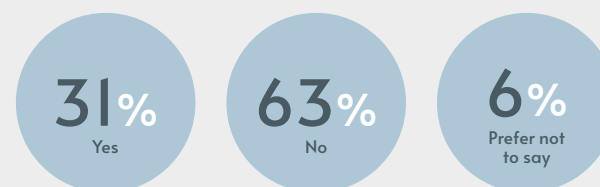


# Key figures

Period products are available for all girls in the UK at school/college, free of charge. Are these products freely available to you in the washroom?



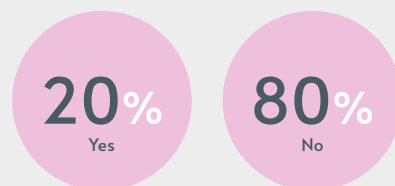
Have you had to access period products at school/college through the period equality scheme?



Why did you have to use the school/college free period products?



Has your school or college provided you with free period products to take home during the holidays?







# The UK at a glance

**Scotland** is the top spot in the UK where respondents said products were made freely available in washrooms.



29%



56%



35%



33%

# Summary

More than half of girls who have periods say that period products are not being made freely available to them in school and college washrooms, with others not sure.

Free period products can be accessed by schools and colleges across the UK through a government-funded scheme, but there appears to be a discrepancy between potential provision, perceived availability, and actual take-up.

Instead, many are lending their products or borrowing them from friends, continuing to take the risk of wearing them longer than recommended and sometimes making themselves ill in the process.

During school holidays, the vast majority of girls are not being provided with free products to use. The cycles continue, but the support for periods appears to end abruptly the moment school's out.

In economically challenging times, families are sacrificing spending money on other things to pay for their child's period products, while some teens are going without a meal to pay for them.

However, we must recognise that huge advances have been made in giving teen girls access to free period products in schools across the UK. What we must do now is close the gap between provision and delivery, to raise awareness with the aim of ensuring that every single learner knows where to find products when she needs to – and is encouraged to do so.

# Getting serious about period inequality

## As many as 8 in 10 learners (83%) in the UK

believe that period inequality is a real issue, a slight fall from the figure of 91% in 2021.

However, the same number feel that the issue is not taken seriously enough by the Government and that it does not fully understand the problem (79%).

This represents a massive increase — of 26% and 38% respectively — in girls' lack of confidence in the way the Government treats period inequality from our last survey.

Most (80%) believe that girls have been let down and that more needs to be done to tackle period inequality (85%).

There has been a startling rise in the perception that the problem is not being treated seriously enough or fully understood in school or college.

Many girls say that the problem is not taken seriously enough by teachers (67%) — more than double the level of 30% four years ago — or fully understood (66%), compared with a quarter (24%) in 2019.

## Male teachers fare particularly badly

with 7 in 10 (73%) saying they don't understand the problem, along with 85% of boys (compared to 36% and 51%, respectively, four years ago).

## Six in 10 girls (63%)

think free period products should be provided in school, college or a work-place to tackle period inequality (slightly down from 71% in 2021).

While over half (57%) would like them made available to everybody — a 12% increase on 2021 — or in public places (56%).

## A significant number would like more efforts to:

44%

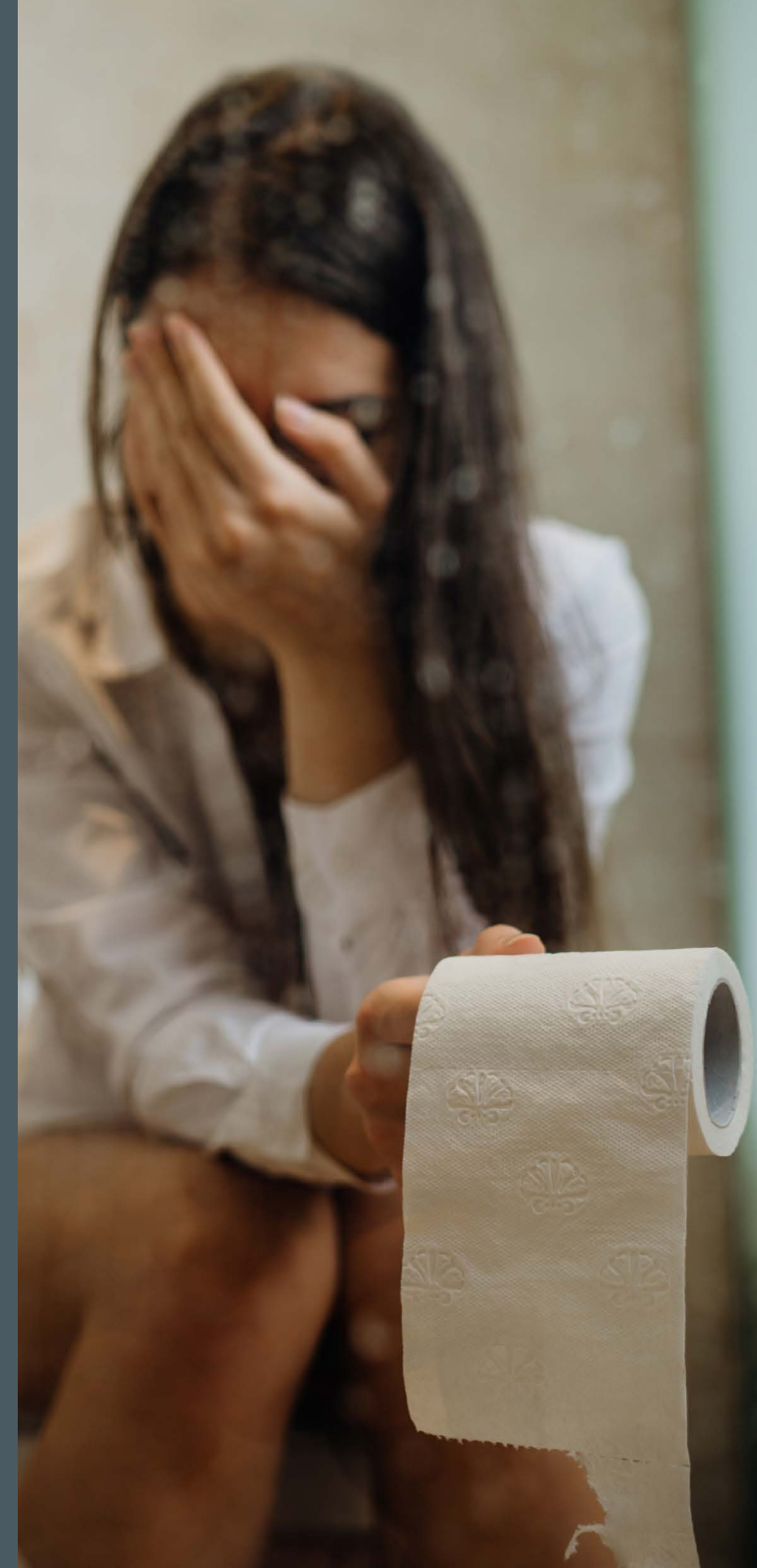
remove the stigma

45%

raise awareness

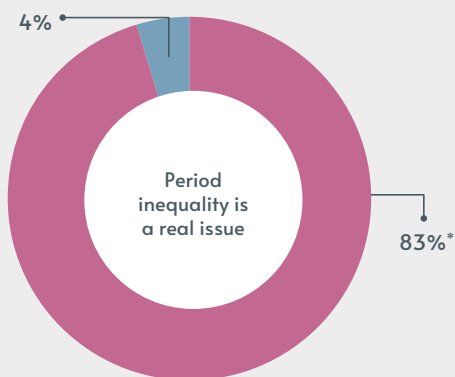
20%

Improve education on the matter

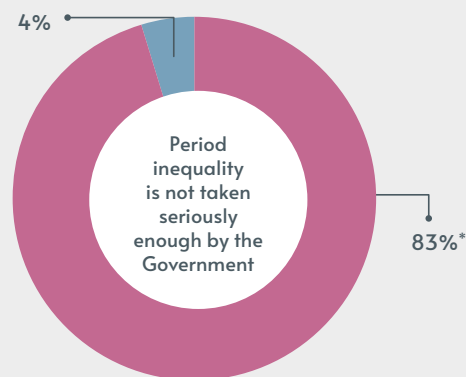




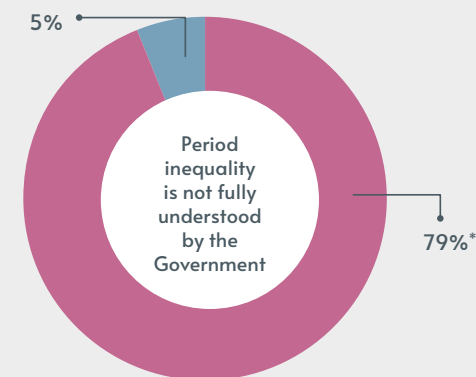
# Key figures



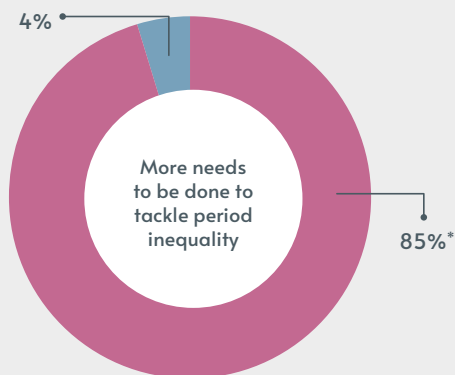
England:\* 83%    Scotland: 84%  
Wales: 77%    Northern Ireland: 81%



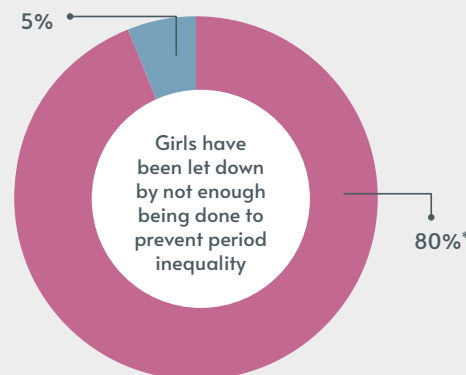
England:\* 83%    Scotland: 82%  
Wales: 77%    Northern Ireland: 76%



England:\* 80%    Scotland: 75%  
Wales: 71%    Northern Ireland: 76%



England:\* 86%    Scotland: 84%  
Wales: 75%    Northern Ireland: 81%

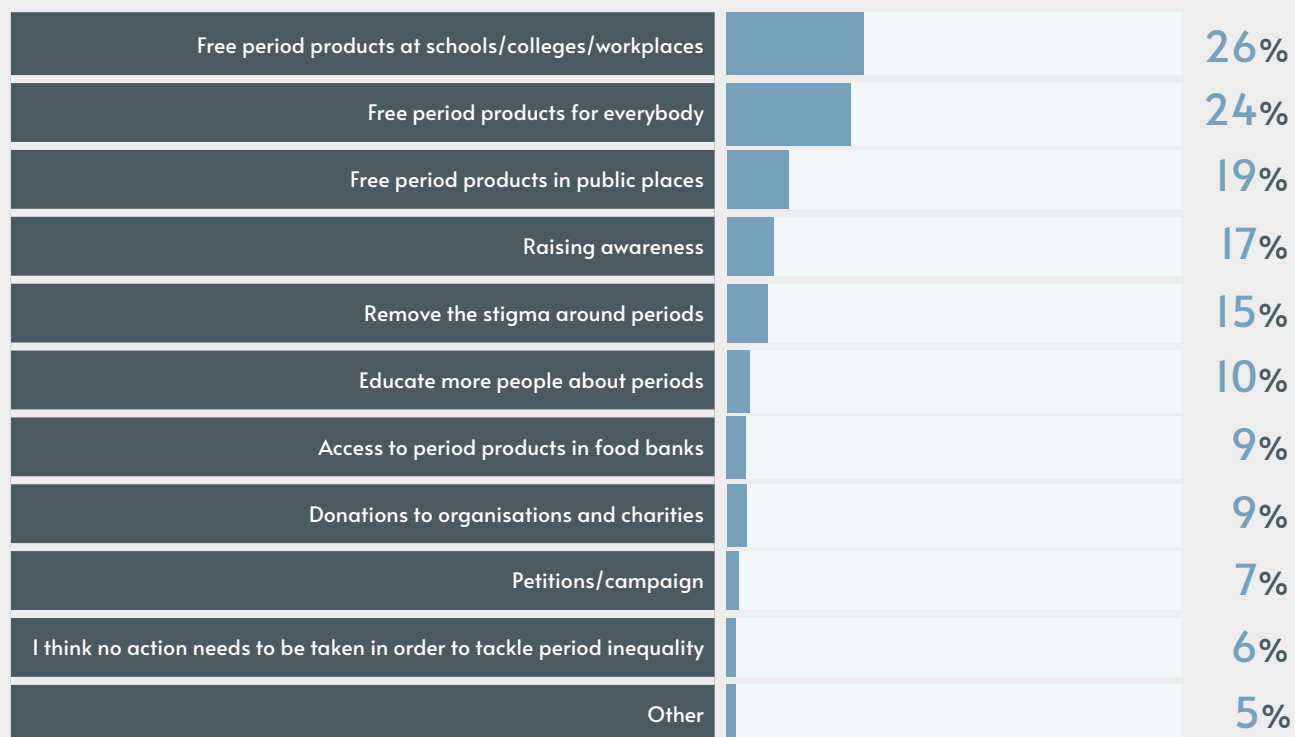


England:\* 80%    Scotland: 79%  
Wales: 77%    Northern Ireland: 71%

Agree    Disagree

# Key figures

What action, if any, do you think needs to be taken in order to tackle period inequality?



# Key figures

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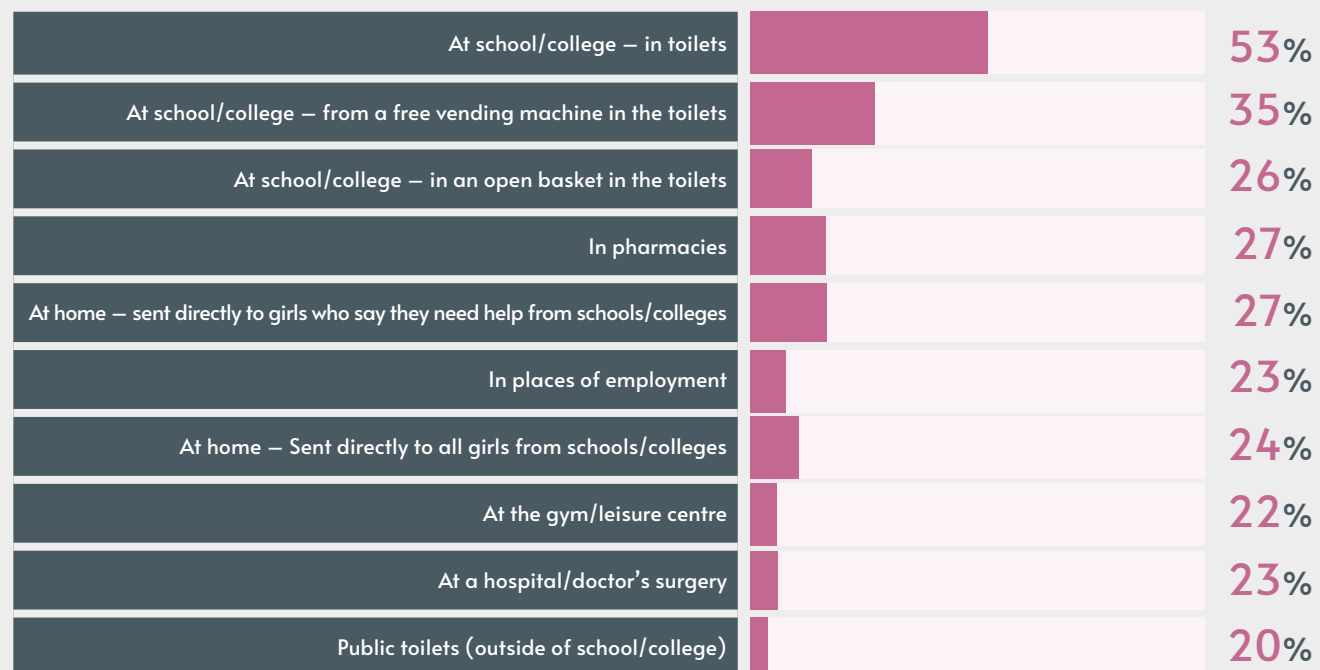
Top 10 places where people should have access to free period products

At school/college – in toilets	At school/college – from a free vending machine in the toilets
53%	35%
In pharmacies	At home – sent directly to girls who say they need help from schools/colleges
27%	27%
In places of employment	At a hospital/ doctor's surgery
23%	23%
At the gym/ leisure centre	Public toilets (outside of school/college)
22%	20%



# Key figures

Top 10 places where people should have access to free period products





# Summary

While the perception that period inequality is a real issue has slightly diminished, the number of girls who believe the Government is not taking the problem seriously enough and that it does not fully understand has soared.

The vast majority of girls continue to feel let down and believe that those making decisions that can affect the quality of their lives are not giving period inequality the priority it deserves. Scotland supplies period products in public locations already, but what steps are taking place in the rest of the UK?

In Wales, the Welsh Government is continuing to rollout actions from its Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan<sup>3</sup>, across both education and the workplace, with a number of key initiatives set to take place in 2023 and throughout until 2025.

The Northern Ireland Assembly's consultation on the next stage of its Period Products (Free Provision) Act (NI) closed in September 2023, and will set to provide free products in a number of locations by May 2024<sup>4</sup>.

In England, the Department for Education has recently held a number of roundtables with stakeholders and girls to glean information on how they wish the scheme to develop. While the former period equality taskforce is yet to be reformed, new guidance for schools and post-16 education organisations in England on providing free period products for pupils and students has recently been published<sup>5</sup>, which will hopefully go some way to ease some of the issues highlighted in this research.

It includes recommendations that products are easily accessible for girls and should minimise any embarrassment when seeking them. This Autumn it will also be leading a consultation into PHSE education, so there is room for those who feel that period equality isn't given the attention it should in classroom settings, to share their views directly with Government this year.

Many students who look to their teachers for guidance and support also feel like they are not treating it seriously enough, nor that they fully understand it, and that awareness among their male peers is woefully lacking.

Providing free period products in washrooms at schools, colleges, and workplaces remains the most favoured location for tackling the problem. There are many factors at play in the causes of period inequality and addressing it, but one thing remains certain.

We must continue to listen girls and young women in our communities. We must take notice of changes in their experiences of periods and how it affects their daily lives, access to products, and the barriers faced. But, above all, we must value their opinions in how we make period inequality a thing of the past.

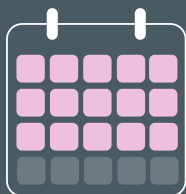
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/period-dignity-strategic-action-plan>

<sup>4</sup> <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/teo/provision-of-free-period-products-consultation>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges>

## Diverse community groups: A cause for concern

Girls from ethnic minority groups took off disproportionately more time from school than their peers due to periods with as many as half staying off.



Those identifying as Asian – Bangladeshi were most absent from lessons losing 4.5 days each term amounting to almost **three weeks** each academic year.

**7 in 10 (70%)**

say they are likely to miss school or college due to their monthly cycle over the next year.

**3 in 4 girls (75%)**

from White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller communities are the most embarrassed by their periods, with nearly as many **(71%)** feeling unable to leave home.

**More than half of girls**

spanning a range of ethnic minority groups missed classes more than once because of their period – way above the average of **36%**.

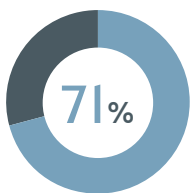
Meanwhile, those with Asian backgrounds revealed their parents and families were the least able to fully understand period inequality, with Chinese girls topping results **(75%)**.



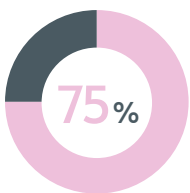
# Key figures

Girls taking time off school/college more than once because of their period

Mixed descent – White and Asian	Mixed descent – White and Black Caribbean	Asian – Chinese	Mixed decent – Any other mixed	Asian – Pakistani	All ethnicities
53%	50%	50%	50%	48%	36%



of girls identifying as White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller say they are unable to leave home during their period



say it makes them feel embarrassed

School days lost to periods

4.5

Asian – Bangladeshi

4.3

Asian – Indian

4

White – Irish

3.8

White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller

3.6

Mixed descent – White and Asian

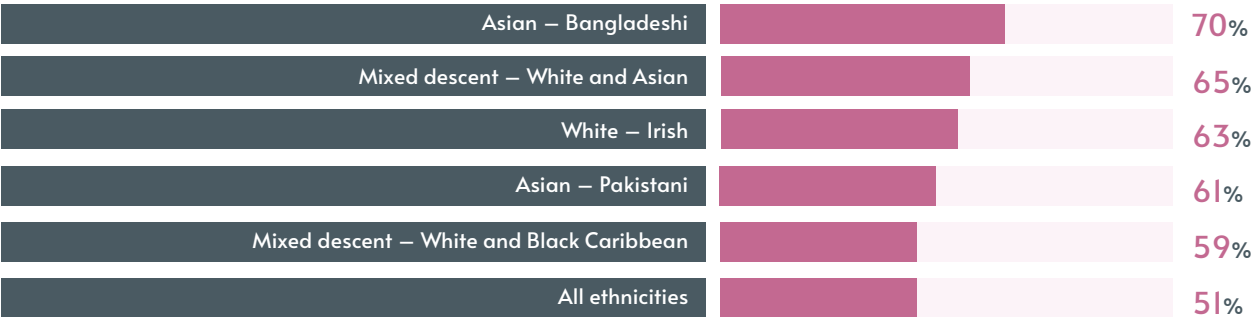
3

All ethnicities



# Key figures

Top 5 groups of girls likely to miss school or college due to their period



Girls who agree period inequality is not fully understood by parents /relatives

Asian – Chinese	Mixed descent – White and Asian	Asian – Bangladeshi	White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	Black – Caribbean	All ethnicities
75%	71%	70%	57%	56%	39%



## Down to basics

As many as  
1 in 5 girls (19%)

do not feel that they have received adequate education at school or college about menstruation with 1 in 7 understanding their monthly cycle and how it works.

Two third of girls  
(65%)

use an alternative nickname for the vagina, suggesting they are not comfortable with the term.

Only a third (32%)

correctly identified the vulva as the term for the female external genitals, with the majority wrongly saying it was the vagina.

Most girls (38%)

say that boys are not involved in menstruation classes at school or college, or that there are no such lessons (22%).

Almost 6 in 10 (58%) revealed that male teachers are not involved in period education.

# Key figures

I feel like I've had adequate education about menstruation at school/college

57%

Agree

19%

Disagree

I feel like I understand the different stages of the menstrual cycle and what happens at each stage

64%

Agree

14%

Disagree

What is the medically correct term for the female external genitals?

Vagina

64%

Vulva

32%

Don't know

4%

65%

of girls choose to call the vagina by an alternative nickname

Girls taking time off school/college more than once because of their period

Yes

40%

No

38%

No menstrual education classes

22%

Male teachers involved in period education school/college?

42%

Yes

58%

No





# Period shame

## 1 in 7 girls

who menstruate hides the fact that they are on their period while learning with their peers and two thirds (67%) say they would be embarrassed if anyone knew.

## While 1 in 3 (30%)

disagrees that their education provider promotes open discussions about a subject affecting 15 million girls and women in the UK of menstruation age, nearly 2 in 5 (39%) think they are doing a good job.

When asked how their teacher would feel about talking about periods, 38% said they would be capable but almost as many (35%) thought they would be embarrassed by the prospect.

Meanwhile, at home, girls are pulled by the natural albeit stereotypical draw of talking openly with their female family members about periods rather than males in the household.

# Key figures



Do you have open conversations about your period with the following members of your family?



How would you say your teachers feel about discussing periods?

Capable	Embarrassed	Confident	Inadequate
38%	35%	25%	16%



36

# Pain and no gain

Almost 3 in 5 girls  
(58%)

say their performance at school or college has been negatively impacted by period pain.

but nearly a third  
(31%)

do not feel that their teachers take their discomfort seriously or are sympathetic (29%).

A similar number  
(27%)

feel uncomfortable bringing up period pain as the reason they have missed classes.

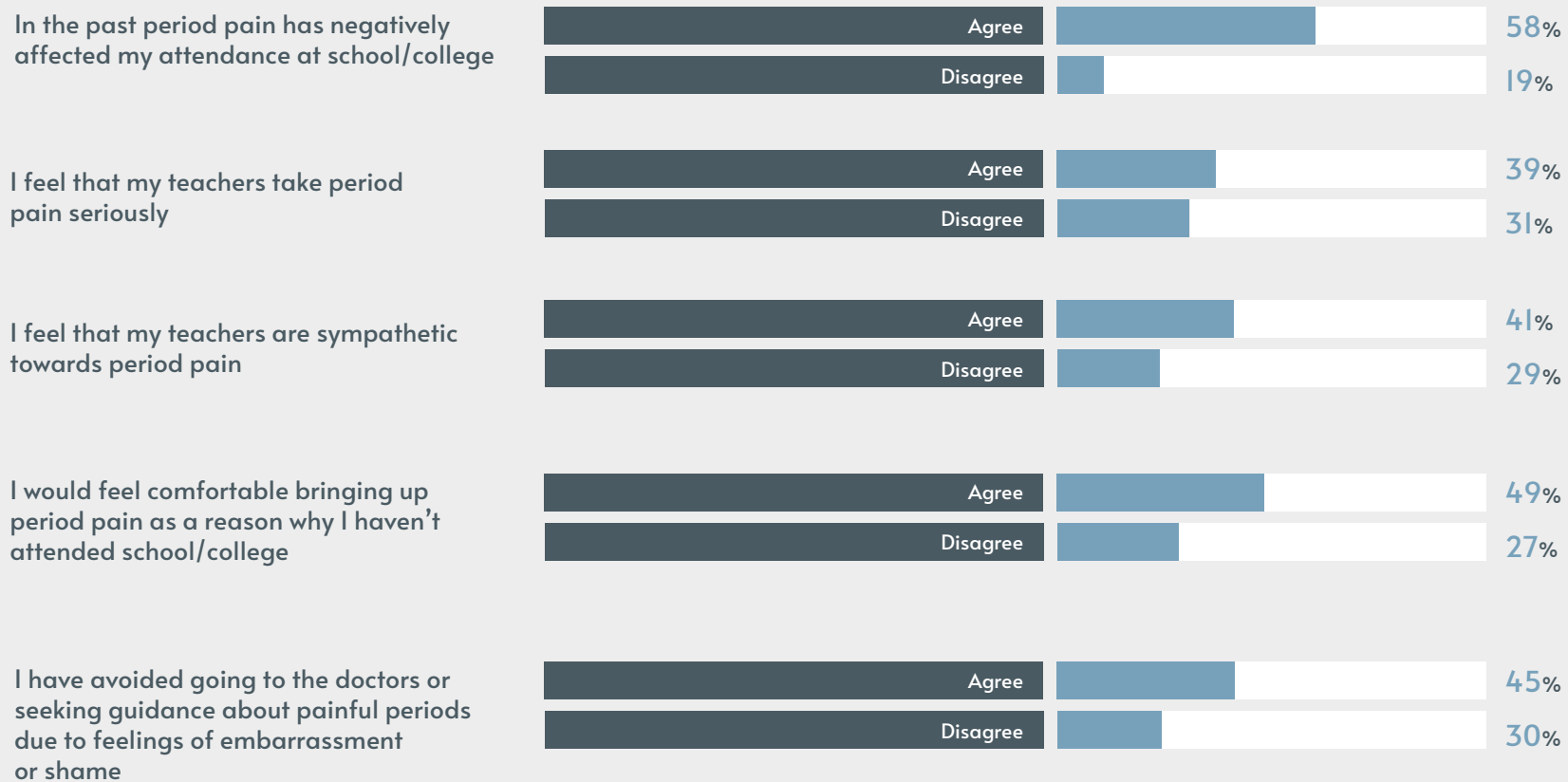
Worryingly, almost  
half (45%)

have avoided going to see their GP about the problem because they feel embarrassed or ashamed.

Many dismiss debilitating symptoms as 'normal' to cope with, including: migraines or headaches (45%), pain that stops day-to-day activities (35%), nausea (31%) and even vomiting (11%) and fainting (12%).

# Key figures

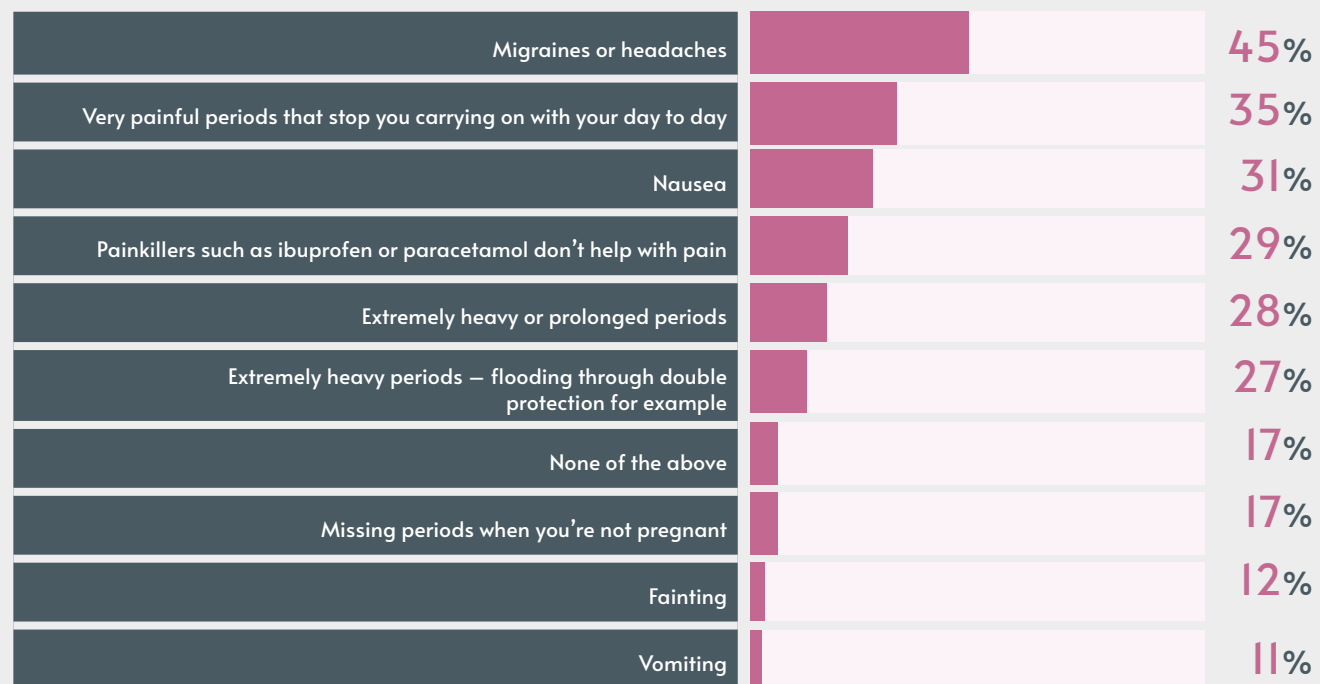
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# Key figures

Top 10 places where people should have access to free period products





# The cost of living

Around a quarter of girls and their families have found it harder to buy period products over the last year, with the higher cost of living forcing **2 in 5 (39%)** to opt for period items that they would not normally choose

Despite the wider focus on sustainability spreading to period products and more than a third (**35%**) learning about using recyclable products at school or college, the associated increased cost of using 'green' menstruation products has been prohibitive for **44%** of those polled.

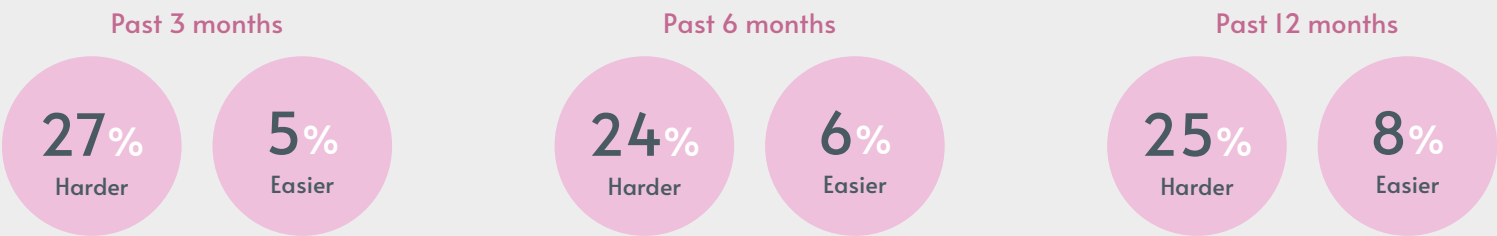
**One in 10 girls** also report teachers not giving out period products because they think they can afford them, while a similar number (**11%**) have not provided them because they are not on free school meals.

This is compounded further by a lack of willingness from teachers to allow students to use washrooms during class (**36%**) – and access free products where they are provided.

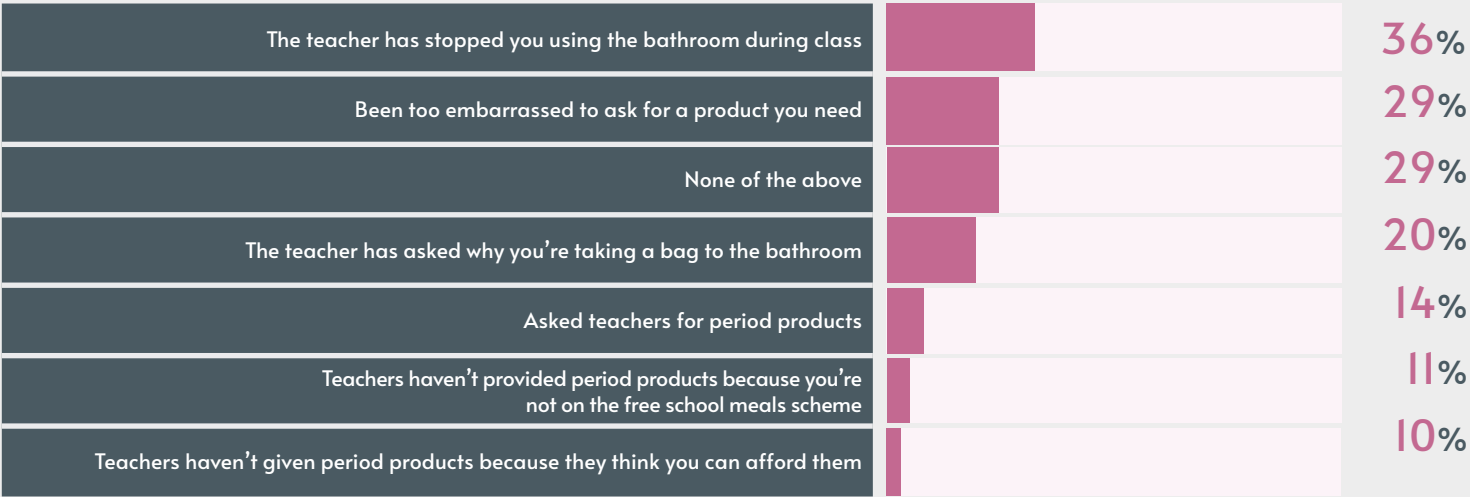
And **1 in 5 (20%)** report being questioned by a teacher why they are taking a bag to the bathroom.

# Key figures

How much harder or easier are you or your family finding it to buy products now compared to the following?



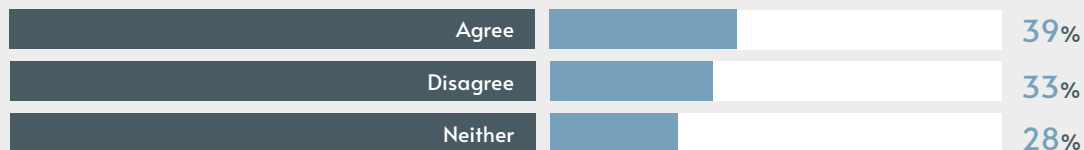
Which of the following, if any, has ever happened to you at school/college?



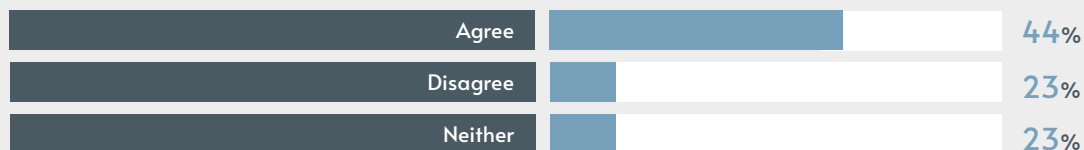
# Key figures

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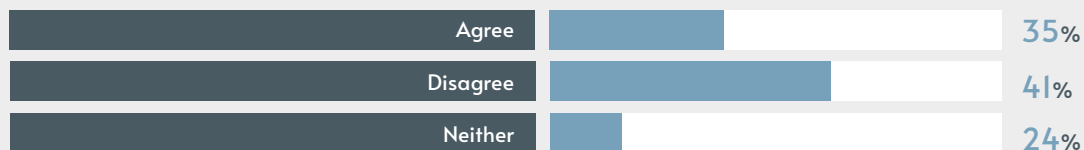
The higher cost of living has forced me to use menstrual products that I wouldn't usually choose



The cost of sustainable period products such as period underwear or a menstrual cup is ruling me out from using them



I have received education at school/college about how to use reusable period products







To raise awareness of the dynamics of period equality in society, a new period equality podcast is being launched alongside the research on **October 2023**.

The aim of the podcast, *The Blobcast: Free the Period*, is to give everyone more knowledge about their periods, and to instigate open and honest conversations around menstruation to tackle the current taboos around periods, including shame, cost and products, basic knowledge, and period pain.

A phs Group Podcast

# THE BLOBCAST

FREE THE PERIOD



# Kasey Robinson

a menstrual well-being, and confidence educator who delivers workshops in schools, colleges, and workplaces and The Blobcast's host said:

"I know too well about the barriers facing so many of us when it comes to our menstrual health. It's simply not enough to blame absenteeism figures on access to products alone.

On the ground, the story is clear: we aren't being educated, supported, and informed enough about periods. Menstruation is still a taboo subject, and our experience is a secret to keep to ourselves and something we feel forced to hide.

In education settings, this is leading to more and more girls staying away from school. Without workshops, learning resources and the support for and from teachers and caregivers this issue will stay the same, or get worse.

It should not be a revolutionary act to teach people about periods, it's a right. We need to break the cycle of shame and encourage open and honest conversations about periods — exactly what The Blobcast is seeking to do."



# phs Period Equality

## What we're doing

As the UK's leading hygiene services company, period equality is a subject very close to our hearts.

**phs** Group has been at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness and improve access to period products for millions of girls and young women across the country.

## We created the **phs** Period Equality programme to:

- Raise awareness of the scale of the issue
- Provide regular and reliable insights to government and schools so we can better cater for girls and girls
- Invoke action to meet the fundamental needs of girls who can't afford or access period products
- Break through the stigma of talking about periods and period inequality
- Create a practical solution to achieving period equality
- Provide a range of period products to our own colleagues who need them, when they need them





We worked with the UK Government to implement a new Period Product Provision scheme to ensure free period products are available to students who need them in state-maintained schools and colleges in England.

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Furthermore, we were appointed to the Government's official period equality taskforce to help create period equality, and sat on the Welsh Government's Period Dignity Taskforce.

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In consultation with schools, local authorities, and our customers, we developed a free-vend period machine for girls' washrooms, providing a discreet and hygienic way to access products.



We've taken many steps on this journey, but many more are to come.

In 2023, we plan to continue the work we are doing by bringing in period equality ambassadors to advise on how best to implement period equality initiatives in schools and what products we need to focus on to make girls as comfortable as possible.

We also want to do as much as we can to help educators feel more confident to tackle these issues at school or college.

At **phs**, we believe that access to period products should be everyone's right. That each morning someone wakes in their bedroom, they should feel reassured, confident, and positive about the day of learning that lies ahead. That no more girls go missing needlessly from classrooms.

[Visit our website](#)

[Listen to the podcast](#)

