

# Tackling Period Poverty and Menstrual Accessibility Policy

Title:	Tackling Period and menstrual accessibility Poverty	Date of Group Chat:	DD/MM/YY
Proposer name:	Amanda Campbell White	Role:	Vice Presidents (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)
Seconder name:	Mera-Ceti Andreassen		

## Union Notes:

List the facts related to the areas your policy is focussed on. For example 'The Union has a responsibility to protect the welfare and security of all of its members.'

It's important at this point you include any research you've conducted, or links to research, that will help make a case for your policy.

- 1) ARU SU has a responsibility to tackle period poverty that may be effecting students studying at aru.
- 2) 200 pledges from students and staff on the A Bloody Mess pledge page [1]
- 3) A Bloody Mess campaign number of responses and the feedback from students highlights the continued need and importance of this policy *"It feels as though **people never understand the ongoing cost of periods**, even when you aren't having a period there is still cramps which require having to buy medicine to be able to get on with the day, some people suffer from severe headaches along with the periods and this requires having to have medication for. Even generally the food cost of wanting to eat a better diet to help combat period pains or heavy periods as some people want to try holistic health before going to the GP. Things like having to get a taxi home when you thought it was ok to walk because you're on heavier than expected, that's also an additional cost which isn't thought about. I feel empowered to be a woman and have my body even if it causes pain sometimes, but I think people need to be more understanding that it is a valid reason and not just an excuse."* (aru student, A Bloody Mess Survey)
- 4) **"it almost feels like a failing to be at university but not being able to afford basic hygiene products sometimes but sometimes that 5-10 pounds could be the difference between a proper meal a day or covering my bills and those have to come first."** (aru student, A Bloody Mess Survey)
- 5) A Bloody mess survey at ARU had 132 responses.
- 6) A Bloody mess survey found that 75% of respondents from ARU feel that they spend too much monthly on their menstrual products.
- 7) A Bloody mess survey found that 52% of respondents feel that they are able to access the products that they need however there is still a significantly large number of 48% of respondents who still struggle access. It can be noted that 34% of respondents have had to borrow money. It can be noted from the graph that 24% of respondents have missed university due to not having products to protect them.
- 8) 76% student responses from A Bloody Mess survey feel that ARU does not support them in being able to afford products 68% find it embarrassing to explain to others the financial costs associated with their periods and when they have difficulties paying for these.
- 9) Period poverty is affecting people all around the UK. Period poverty is commonly defined as having a lack of access to menstruation products due to financial constraints. It also encompasses poor menstrual knowledge. Period poverty can heavily impact a person's lives. Student's health, self-esteem and wellbeing are being affected [2].
- 10) The annual cost of managing menstruation can be anywhere between around £130 and £500. But this economic burden is not taken into consideration in the delegation of student finance, nor the delegation of wages. Even £130 a year doesn't sound like much, that figure is huge for someone on a low income, or in households where there is more than one woman [3]

[1] <https://forms.gle/BgNELuRgQCdLRLYcA>

[2]<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6e87b8ed915d4a32cf063a/period.pdf>

[3] Channel 4 Fact Check on the cost of periods:

<https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/period-poverty-is-real-but-the-average-woman-isnt-spending-500-a-year-on-menstruation>

#### Union Believes:

List what you think the Union should believe as a result of your policy. For example: 'That freedom of speech is an important right and should be respected.'

1. That every student have the same access to their education and students should not be disadvantaged to accessing this due to not being able to have the products they need.
2. That every student should be comfortable to socialise and participate in union activities and events and should not be disadvantaged due to their menstrual cycle.
3. Student should not feel embarrassed or ashamed about their menstrual cycle
4. That the cost of menstrual care products is an unfair burden placed on those that need them.
5. That menstrual care products are by no means luxurious, inessential items.
6. That it is unethical to charge for the upkeep of a natural bodily function, let alone ask people to contribute to making a profit each time.
7. That menstrual care products are crucial to health and hygiene – using homemade alternatives can put you at risk of infection.
8. That no student should have to make a choice between taking the contraceptive pill to stop their period, using unsuitable items or cutting down on other essentials in their budget.
9. That menstruation patterns mean that cycles are not always predictable and you can be caught off guard without any menstrual care protection very easily, whether when visiting campus or living on campus.
10. That students visiting campus and living on campus should have the opportunity to receive or purchase emergency protection when necessary.
11. That all people who menstruate should be able to access appropriate university toilet facilities and vending machines.
12. That discussions and campaigns around menstruation should be inclusive of all genders.

#### Union Resolves:

List the actions the Union should carry out to deliver the policy. For example: 'To create a list of organisations that will be campaigned against and not allowed to take part in Union events.'

- 1) That the union will push the university to work on the recommendations from A bloody Mess report
- 2) To continue to fight for better provisions for students and staff who suffer from period poverty such as more support from the wellbeing service at the university
- 3) That the officers will challenge the University to tackle period poverty across all campuses.
- 4) To use gender inclusive language in conversations around periods: "people with periods" or "people who menstruate" instead of "women".

#### Policy Summary:

We are aiming to provide a safer environment for students and staff at ARU. We are here to support students and staff within the university regardless of their gender, race, sexuality or economic situation.