

Essex FE College's inclusive period equality programme

Harlow College is a further education college in Harlow, Essex, England. It has 5,900 students as of 2018, of which 2,585 are on 16-19 programmes and 2,000 are on adult educational programmes.

phs Group works directly with its safeguarding team to ensure they get the period products they need.

The safeguarding team at Harlow College noticed that students of all ages were struggling to access period products more regularly. They've also noticed that staff across the organisation were struggling too, including teachers, and they've seen first-hand the benefits of the scheme.

The safeguarding team made a conscious decision to ensure the students and teachers could access the products they need when they needed them. They came up with the idea of putting tote bags on the back of the toilet cubicles on a hook, so they could be accessed easily, and discreetly behind the cubicle door.

The team also put them on the back of all gender-neutral toilets as well as the female toilets. This is to make sure that people can access them as discreetly as they may need, and to make the lives of students who may find the experience of their period more challenging as stress-free as possible.

Harlow College has embraced ordering sustainable products alongside disposable products, commenting that the reusable product work well for those who feel insecure that they will be able to afford new, disposable products the following month.



Gill Atkinson, of Harlow College's Wellbeing and Safeguarding Team, said: "We have welcomed the opportunity to give our students access to free sanitary products in our washrooms to avoid any disruption to their learning caused by periods. It is key to the success of this initiative for girls to be able to access products exactly when and where they need them in a stigma-free way. We have placed all our products in tote bags on the back of toilet doors and have seen a significant take-up as a result."

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