

# Portland College praises access to period products

Portland College, based in Mansfield, is a specialist college providing a lifetime of opportunity for people with disabilities. Staff at the college firmly believe the period equality scheme has had an impact on the lives of its learners and the college's ability to provide for them.

**Rebecca Harley, Information, Advice, Guidance and Transitions manager at Portland College said:**

"All our learners have some form of disability, and 30% of all people with disabilities live in poverty, so it was really important for us to engage with this scheme and support our community.

Portland College ensures their learners have access to period products whenever they need them.

**Amy Smith, Assistant Speech and Language Therapist at the college said:**

"We make sure our learners have access to the information they need, not only so they know how to access products but also how to use them, as they need that little bit of extra support. We've created accessible resources using symbols and photos of the products available and how you use each product differently."

Given the wide range of needs that the college caters for, a similarly varied approach in terms of accessing the products was needed. Learners can access products by speaking to members of staff, asking reception for products or at a number of points across the campus. The team at Portland have developed a paper slip that learners can hand over if they're non-verbal, or if they prefer to be more discreet.

Ms Smith continued: "Self-care is a big part of what we try to communicate to our students, and period pants will hugely increase our learners' independence and as a by-product, their dignity during their period, so we'd like to see more of these products and additional guidance in this area be a focus going forward."



Portland College's main focus is to ease the burden on their learners, and to ensure they are able to access education every day of the month. As the scheme develops the college hopes that it can be a catalyst to encourage more conversations throughout the school about periods.

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