

076 – Menstrual Care Products Accessibility

This Union Notes:

1. That both Warwick Retail and M W Phillips Pharmacy currently sell two types of menstrual care products: towels and tampons.
2. That no menstrual care product dispensers are currently available in Warwick Accommodation residences on campus.
3. That the nearest place to purchase menstrual care products for students living on campus is through Rootes Grocery Store, M W Phillips Pharmacy or from retailers on Cannon Park.
4. That Rootes Grocery Store's opening hours are limited to: Monday to Friday 7.30am-12.00am, Saturday 8am-11pm, and Sunday 11am-5pm.¹
5. That M W Phillips Pharmacy's opening hours are limited to: Monday to Friday 9am-6pm.²
6. That the cheapest non-reusable products from Rootes Grocery Store cost as follows: 7.1p per towel, 10p per tampon.
7. That the cheapest non-reusable products from M W Phillips Pharmacy on campus cost as follows: 7.2p per towel, 12.5p per tampon.
8. That students cannot buy singular units from Rootes Grocery Store nor M W Phillips Pharmacy, and so must buy a bulk packet when purchasing.
9. That (as of 12 March 2018) the cheapest bulk packets of non-reusable products on campus are from Rootes Grocery Store and currently cost £1.00 upwards, while no reusable alternatives are available.
10. That (as of 12 March 2018) the cheapest non-reusable products from Rootes Grocery Store are £1.00, while no reusable alternatives are available
11. That the Warwick University Food Co-op currently sells reusable alternatives at the cost price of £13.64 (non-members), which is the only option of its kind on campus. They operate once a week.
12. That all pricings in this motion are accurate as of 12th March 2018.
13. That other students' unions across the country currently give menstrual care products away for free or sell them at a subsidised price, such as UEA SU.³

¹ Warwick Retail: Opening Times <www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/retail/openingtimes/> (Accessed 12 March 2018).

² Warwick Retail: Opening Times <www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/retail/openingtimes/> (Accessed 12 March 2018).

³ "UEA to sell tampons at cost in protest at VAT on sanitary products."

<<http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/uea-to-sell-tampons-at-cost-in-protest-at-vat-on-sanitary-products-9876173.html>> (Accessed 12 March 2018).

14. That Nightline currently gives out menstrual care products for free to all students as well as contraception.⁴
15. That Nightline's operating hours are limited to: 9pm-9am every night in term time.⁵
16. That tampons and towels are currently taxed at a rate of 5% as a 'luxury, non-essential item', and hence subject to Value Added Tax (VAT).
17. That many products are free from VAT as they are viewed as fundamental: food, prescriptions and children's clothes, but not menstrual care products.
18. That some students opt to take the contraceptive pill continuously to avoid a monthly cycle and the costs that come with it. Some research, however, suggest a continuous use could be harmful.⁶
19. That all students should be able to access all facilities relevant to menstruation/obtaining menstrual care products, and should not have to be misgendered in the process and that trans students should not have to use women's toilets whilst they are menstruating.⁷
20. That there are currently not vending machines for sanitary products or sanitary bins in all disabled/accessible toilets and men's toilets.
21. That menstruation can be a particularly difficult time for trans students and there may be barriers to them accessing the appropriate medical care before medical transition.⁸
22. That not all women menstruate, and that people who are not women can also menstruate.⁹

This Union Believes:

1. That the cost of menstrual care products is an unfair burden placed on those that need them.
2. That menstrual care products are by no means luxurious, inessential items.
3. 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.
4. That it is unethical for Warwick Retail and M W Phillips Pharmacy to make a profit on menstrual care products.
5. That menstrual care products are crucial to health and hygiene – using homemade alternatives can put you at risk of infection.

⁴ <www.facebook.com/Warwick.Nightline> (12 March 2018).

⁵ <<http://www.warwicksu.com/organisation/4198/>> (Accessed 12 March 2018).

⁶ 'How can I delay my period?' <www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/830.aspx?CategoryID=60&> (Accessed 19 January 2016).

⁷ 12.2. A trans person should not be required to use disabled toilet facilities, nor facilities of their former assigned gender.

10.2. All members of the University and University staff should refer to the trans person by their preferred name and pronouns.

⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-42774750>

⁹ <https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/women-dont-have-periods-people-have-periods-lbkr/>

6. 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.
7. That we should seek to offer low-cost products on our campus wherever possible.
8. That if the Union is able to provide free contraception, we should also provide free menstrual care products.
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 students are not always able to access campus outlets such as Rootes Grocery Store and M W Phillips Pharmacy, nor services such as Nightline and Warwick Uni Food Co-Op because of their opening times.
12. That, once installed and well-stocked, menstrual care product dispensers provide students living on-campus with emergency menstrual protection when the aforementioned outlets and services are not open.
13. Fundamentally, that students should have emergency menstrual care resources available to them at close distance and at low-cost on campus.
14. That all people who menstruate should be able to access appropriate university toilet facilities and vending machines.
15. That discussions and campaigns around menstruation should be inclusive of all genders.
16. That sanitary bins and menstrual care product vending machines should be accessible to all in the SU.

This Union Resolves:

1. To mandate the Welfare and Campaigns and Democracy and Development Officers to investigate the costs of offering all menstrual care products at cost price through Warwick Retail.
2. To mandate the Welfare and Campaigns and Democracy and Development Officers to investigate the costs of offering all menstrual care products at cost price through M W Phillips Pharmacy.
3. To mandate the Welfare and Campaigns and Democracy and Development Officers to investigate the costs to Warwick Accommodation of purchasing and installing dispensing machines for menstrual care products in every block of on campus accommodation, and then menstrual care products at low-cost in them.
4. To mandate the Sabbatical Officer team to raise the results of this exercise through the relevant structures and to lobby for offering the products at cost price in Warwick Retail, M W Phillips Pharmacy and Warwick Accommodation as soon as practicable.

5. To provide free menstrual care products in the Union paid for through the same type of funding that pays for contraception in the Union.
6. To mandate the Welfare and Campaigns, LGBTUA+ and Trans Students' Officers to lobby the University for the provision of sanitary bins and menstrual care product vending machines in all toilets, so that are accessible to all genders and to lobby for this be include explicitly in university policy.
7. To use gender inclusive language in conversations around periods: "people with periods" or "people who menstruate" instead of "women".
8. To mandate the Democracy and Development Officer to ensure that there is provision of sanitary bins and menstrual care products accessible to all students, including disabled and trans students, in Union buildings.

Policy History		
<i>Action</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Date</i>
Carried	ASM	2015/16, T2W5
Amended and renewed	Student Council	2017/18, T2W5
Policy review	Student Council	2019/20, T2W5