

Beyond the basics

Period care is evolving from an optional extra to an essential workplace item

According to Endometriosis UK's survey, *Breaking the Stigma: What HR teams Need to Know about Endometriosis and Menstrual Health*, 68% of large employers now provide free period products for their staff, demonstrating a shift in menstrual care from a 'nice to have' to an expected item in workplace washrooms. For many organisations, this change is not driven by trends but by a growing recognition that these items are a basic necessity – and that making them readily available can support productivity, gender equity and wellbeing objectives.

For dealers, this represents a commercially attractive opportunity: a consumable product category aligned with ESG priorities that can be seamlessly integrated into existing workplace conversations.

WHAT THE OPPORTUNITY LOOKS LIKE

Imagine rushing to the loo only to find every toilet roll dispenser empty. Similarly, being caught short by your period at work can cause entirely avoidable disruption, stress and frustration. Menstruation affects a significant proportion of the workforce, yet workplace provision

has historically been limited or non-existent. According to CIPD's *Menstruation and Support at Work* report, data shows that 75% of menstruating people are caught out by their period at least once a year. Meanwhile, 69% of those who experience symptoms report a negative impact on their working day.

While all organisations already provide core washroom essentials such as toilet paper, soap and hand towels, many still stop short of offering period items. This gap between demand and availability represents a clear opportunity for office supplies and facilities dealers. Even among companies that do provide period products, employees are often left to purchase them separately in shops or online.

Once supplies are in place, replenishment becomes predictable, with usage levels typically consistent and easy to forecast. Over time, it becomes part of normal workplace operations, opening the door to long-term customer relationships rather than one-off orders.

Employers are increasingly focused on wellbeing, inclusion and ESG commitments, with many reviewing what 'good' looks like when it comes to workplace standards. Hybrid working has only heightened expectations – when staff do go into the office, it must meet their basic needs without friction. In this context, period care is increasingly seen as part of the modern workplace standard. For many companies, engagement with this category is a first. As a result, buying decisions tend to gravitate towards solutions that feel credible, low-risk and easy to manage.

APPEALING TO DECISION MAKERS

Buyers tend to prioritise how supply will work day to day, the level of commitment required and whether it can be managed without adding operational complexity. Below are some common period care purchasing questions and how to address them:

- **Where should products be placed?** Best practice is to place products in a visible, easy-to-access location

PERIODS



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within the washroom. Industrial or construction sites may prefer to include a 'PeriodKit' as part of site set-up protocols. To get this right, many organisations start with a single trial location before rolling out more widely.

- **How should they be displayed?** Buyers typically look for solutions that are accessible and easy for facilities teams to maintain. Fixed dispensers or compact display units, such as baskets or tins, help to integrate period supplies into existing washroom routines. Ease of refilling and low maintenance are particularly critical for larger or multisite organisations.
- **What options should be offered?** Choice is important, but must be balanced with simplicity in ordering and restocking. Most workplaces offer a minimum of one pad and one tampon option; however, many decide to make additional provisions for heavy flow by stocking two absorbency levels of each. Adequate disposal facilities are also essential.
- **What brand should be selected?** Employers want reliable products that are unlikely to generate complaints or issues. Increasingly, buyers are also conscious of product composition and potential health impacts, favouring non-toxic and organic options with fewer chemicals than many conventional brands. While often framed as a wellbeing consideration, this approach also helps reduce employer risk.
- **How much will it cost?** Affordability matters; but in practice, many purchasers are surprised by how low the overall cost tends to be – often less than existing spend on tea, coffee or stationery for staff. In most cases, monthly costs come in at under 50p per menstruating person. What matters most is predictable pricing, straightforward replenishment and minimal admin.
- **How does it support ESG goals?** Some period products, particularly those with plastic applicators, contribute to single-use plastic waste and increased Scope 3 emissions. By selecting certified carbon-neutral suppliers or products made without

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petroleum-based plastics, workplaces can make more environmentally responsible choices aligned with sustainability targets.

Beyond environmental considerations, workplace period care can support broader ESG objectives – improving gender equity and demonstrating a tangible commitment to employee wellbeing. For buyers, these credentials often provide valuable reassurance when decisions need to be justified internally.

- **Will it be sustainable in the long term?** Employee expectations tend to shift quickly once period care is introduced, making continuity essential. Businesses need confidence that the supply model is reliable, scalable and capable of supporting ongoing provision without disruption.

Period care in the workplace is steadily becoming business as usual and employees notice its absence far more than its presence, making removal unlikely. Replenishment becomes routine and expectations are set. For purchasing teams, the decision ultimately centres on practicality – selecting a solution that is easy to implement and manage and aligned with broader workplace goals around wellbeing, inclusion and efficiency.

As more organisations embed their approach, period care is increasingly treated as a standard element of workplace supplies rather than a discretionary perk. For dealers, this shift represents a clear opportunity to support customers in formalising a provision that makes sense. As expectations evolve, buyers will look to partners able to offer simple, reliable solutions that integrate seamlessly into existing purchases.

INTRODUCING THE CONVERSATION

While period care is increasingly being normalised within organisations, it may be a new category for many office supplies and facilities dealers.

Use the following prompting questions to support sales efforts:

Do you provide period care in your washrooms?

If yes:

- Where do you currently source these products?
- Are they sustainable and free from single-use plastics?

If no:

Use this guide to pitch away!

