

Q&A Summary

**Scope of the task**

**1. How many institutions is this covering?**

Approx. 22,000 institutions are eligible for the scheme.

*Actual take up of the offer may be lower than this, however we will encourage all institutions to provide products for their pupils/ students.*

**2. How many pupils and students will this cover?**

Approx. 1.7m pupils and students will have access to this scheme.

*Take-up is not yet known. Product costings are indicative and based on assumed 35% take-up by female students within the institutions, mirroring the approach taken by the Scottish Government. Actual demand is unclear/untested and we will therefore be looking for bids that are banded based on varying levels of demand. Actual product costs could range between £2.9m to £18m per full financial year.*

**3. Can institutions order for staff too?**

No. DfE guidance will state that this is for pupils/ students only.

**4. Which products are included?**

‘Period/sanitary products’ include items such as tampons, sanitary pads and menstrual cups.

*The exact products would depend on availability and cost and would be discussed as part of the contract development. We (the DfE) will be looking for organisations to propose a suitable range of products within their tender submissions.*

*Sanitary bins, bags and other sanitary disposal items are not in scope.*

**5. Which brands/ quality of product are you looking for?**

This is open at this stage and would depend on cost and products available.

**6. What will be the product volume and split?**

We (the DfE) do not currently hold this kind of data. We do however wish to stress the importance of creating a suitable range of choice and flexibility regarding quantities based on need. We believe that the institutions know their pupils/students best and want to ensure they have the freedom to decide which product types they order. A core list of product types that must be included in any proposal will be included within the ITT pack.

**7. Will you be specifying the provision of eco-friendly, sustainable and/or reusable products?**

We are open to exploring a range of products depending on cost and suitability.

**8. How many times are you expecting each institution to place an order per year?**

There is no historical/comparable data to form a basis for such expectations. We estimate on average once a term in secondary schools and colleges and once a year in primary schools – but this is based on very limited information. We are working with institutions to better understand their needs and will provide further information in the ITT pack

**9. Can institutions order at any time or just for certain windows each year?**

Allowing institutions to order at any time would be the ideal, however we appreciate this would create both financial and logistical issues. We will invite suitable proposals that balance the delivery needs of institutions whilst also achieving the best possible value for money and considers the environment.

**10. Will we need to provide vending machines or similar within institutions?**

No. Institutions are best place to decide how to distribute the products within their institution/college and will have autonomy to decide how to do this. The successful bidder will just need to deliver the products to the institution.

**11. Is the scheme going to cover outside of learning hours i.e. Night Products?**

The funding provided is solely to provide help within learning hours. Guidance published will reflect this.

**Logistics**

**12. I'm only a distributor – are you going to provide the product?**

We are looking for a supplier or consortia to provide the entire solution  
*(including the provision and storage of products, the interface with institutions and distribution of orders)*

**13. What are you doing to prevent institutions ordering more than they need?**

We are considering placing an upper-spend limit on institutions.

**14. Will there be a minimum order amount per institution?**

We would not envisage setting a minimum order amount for institutions  
*The expectation is for the supplier to manage its stock to ensure it can meet the likely peaks and troughs of demand, therefore reducing any need for unnecessary storage.*

**15. How would you like institutions to be able to order product?**

We are open to any innovative approaches, provided that minimising the administrative burden on institution staff remains a priority.

**16. Are you going to create and maintain the online platforms/ phone ordering systems?**

We will not be developing or maintaining the systems.  
*We expect organisations to utilise their existing digital infrastructure where possible. We will not pay website hosting costs. Any websites will need to be compliant with Government Digital Standards.*

**17. Do you have an expectation about how soon after ordering, products are delivered?**

Again we are open to proposals balancing the needs of institutions whilst also achieving the best possible value for money for the Department. This would need to cater for a range of order sizes and frequencies.

## **Potential issues**

### **18. Can institutions return products if they order wrongly? Who will pay for this process?**

We are currently reviewing our position with regards to a returns procedure. This information will be available in the ITT pack

## **Contract**

### **19. Can institutions access the products/funding through other frameworks or is it just through this scheme?**

Funded products will only be made available to institutions through this scheme. Published guidance will state they should order from the contracted organisation and would make it clear that this would be of no cost to them. We will have a communications campaign ensuring that institutions are aware of the scheme and this has already been widely reported in the press.

### **20. How will this scheme be communicated to institutions and how will they sign up for it?**

We will look to implement a full communications strategy. Institutions would contact the supplier with their requirements via one or more established and suitable interfaces.

### **21. What is the budget for everything except the product? (creating the online system, storage facilities, delivery, staff, overheads, transport etc)**

We will be looking to you to develop a costed proposal for delivering the scheme. Value for money will be one of the criteria we consider when evaluating bids. Evaluation criteria will be published in the ITT.

### **22. Are institutions billed for the services or will the DfE be billed directly? What are the payment terms?**

This scheme will be funded centrally and as such the anticipated payment arrangements would be that the DfE is billed directly. Information regarding the payment schedule will be made available in the ITT pack. Payment terms will be in line with Governments Prompt Payment Policy. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prompt-payment-policy>

### **23. How long is the contract?**

This information is still to be finalised but we are currently considering a 31 month contract.

### **24. Does this have to start in January?**

Delivery to institutions should begin in January. As part of the contract development we can discuss barriers to this and how the department may be able to help alleviate some of these.