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**UK Period poverty facts – Jan 2024**

It’s no secret that women & people who menstruate feel shame about menstruation, and the stigma about periods prevents them from talking about this topic.

* Period poverty in the UK has risen from 12% to 21% due to the cost-of-living crisis. That’s an estimate 2.8 million people*– report from action aid March 2023*
* 41% of women affected by period poverty keep sanitary pads or tampons in for longer to save money.
* Of the women affected **37% said they had used tissues or cotton wool**instead of sanitary products in the last 12 months.**13% used socks or other clothing,** and**9% resorted to using paper or newspaper.**
* Of those affected by period poverty said they were prioritising other everyday basics over the period products they need:

60% had to prioritise food.

48% had to prioritise gas/electricity.

24% sacrificed period products for themselves so they could afford period products for their dependant.

* **14% of those affected said they have avoided or missed work during their period.**

**Damaging health affects of using period products for longer.**

Keeping tampons in for longer can cause a rare condition called toxic shock syndrome (TSS). Whilst its rare it can be life threatening and sometimes lead to limb amputation. In the UK there are around 40 cases of TSS per year, in women and girls 2 of which are fatal. TSS peaked in the 1980s due to the use of very absorbent tampons.

UTIs are also a symptom of using period products for longer along with Bacterial vaginosis (BV).

**Reasons to put to the employer** *(having local survey results will be useful – only share the results in %.)*

1. Helps ease stress of women and people who menstruate knowing they have access to these products at work.
2. If women are using company time to go and buy products, the employer would arguably get more out of their staff.
3. Helps women deal with the cost-of-living crisis – Survey results might show women have called in sick because of not having enough money to buy products. This is also an added expense for women and people who menstruate. Estimated around £10-£15 a month is spent on products average of 7k in a lifetime based on menstruation starting age 12 and ending age 51.
4. Makes the workplace more accessible for women.
5. Improves mental wellbeing.
6. Positive health benefits

Toilet paper is free at work – why shouldn’t period products be free!