

Belfast City Council Reusable Period Product Pilot Scheme

In Belfast each household (on average) produces around 3.4Kg of period related waste every year, with many single use products containing large amounts of plastic.

To help tackle this waste and highlight the benefits of reusable period products the council partnered with 'Hey Girls', a social enterprise producing environmentally-friendly period products.

Belfast residents had the opportunity to apply for either a 'Full Cycle Kit' of reusable pads or 'Cup Combo Kit' consisting of a menstrual cup and a sterilising pot for free. This is the first council scheme in Northern Ireland to offer reusable period products as a means of tackling waste.

The scheme was launched on 30 March with one Facebook post and a Tweet and received unexpected and unprecedented levels of demand with 3,159 orders made in 24 hrs after which the scheme had to be closed.

It was one of Belfast City Council's top performing posts in March across both Facebook and Twitter, with the overall sentiment very positive and over 300,000 people viewing the social media posts.

As a result of the number of orders received, up to 10,700kg of waste could be diverted from landfill per year.

Follow-up market research highlighted the positive impact this project had on waste reduction and uptake of reusable period products. Many participants reported that they had wanted to give reusables a try, but the expense had put them off. After receiving their products many now use reusables 100% of the time, while others have partially switched.

The success of this project shows the high level of interest and demand in the community for reusable, sustainable period products.

We are currently evaluating the pilot scheme and hope to reopen the scheme in 2023.

For more information on the Belfast City Council pilot contact George Lyttle, Environmental Education and Outreach Officer – lyttleg@belfastcity.gov.uk