Neath Port Talbot and Swansea

CRIW LLAIS

LLAIS

YOUNG VOICES, BETTER FUTURES: PERIOD DIGNITY FORUM





Giving young people a voice in health and social care.

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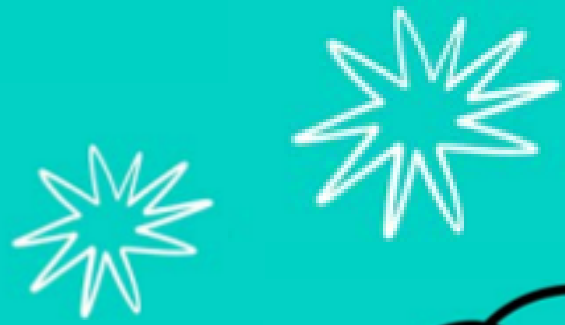

This document is also available in Welsh.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us at:

NPTandSwansea.enquiries@llaiscymru.org

You can download it from our website or ask for a copy by contacting our office.

Our contact information can be found at the end of this report.

CRIW LLAIS

About us

Llais helps make sure people are listened to when they talk about health and care services in Wales.

We listen to what people say, learn about their experiences, and find out what is important to them.

Then we share these views with the people who run services to help make health and care services better for everyone.


No one takes me seriously when I go to the Doctors.

What we did



In September 2026, Llais met with young people from the HOPE Rights Group in Neath Port Talbot to listen to their ideas, opinions and experiences. The HOPE group is for children and young people who have experience of being in care. It gives them a chance to share their ideas, talk about things that matter to them, and help make a difference.

We talked with the young people and the adults who support them about periods and how they can affect everyday life. We spoke about:

* Learning about periods and menstrual health
* Getting help from doctors and other health services
* How periods can affect school, feelings, and daily activities

The young people shared their own experiences and told us what is important to them.

What we did

What they told us was very similar to what other children and young people have told Llais at school visits and community events. Some of the things we heard most often were:

- **Having the right information about periods**
- **Being able to get the help and products they need**
- **Being listened to when accessing services**
- **Being treated with kindness, dignity, and respect**

This report shares what we heard from the HOPE Rights Group.

We will also include these ideas in a bigger report called 'Young Voices, Better Futures', which looks at what children and young people across the region have told us.




“...we haven’t chosen
to have periods...”

What we heard

1. Period products should be easy for everyone to get when they need them.
2. School rules can make periods harder for children and young people.
3. Young people don't always feel listened to by doctors, health workers & teachers.
4. Young people need better information about periods.
5. It can be hard to find the right help for period problems.
6. Young people should get help with period health in the right place, that is suitable for young people.
7. Periods can affect more than just your body.
8. Getting the right support and care when ending a pregnancy and after.
9. Travel can make it harder to get the help you need.
10. Access to the right facilities in hospital for disabled young people.

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1

Period products should be easy for everyone to get when they need them.

Many people said that period products are things that everyone should be able to get when they need them.

Some young people said it was good that free period products were available at school or college, but others felt that they were not always easy to find or available everywhere.

Some people asked why they should have to pay for period products when periods are a normal part of life.

They said that the cost can be a real problem for young people and families who are already finding it hard to afford everyday things.

Young people told us that having access to period products is really important. It helps them stay healthy, feel comfortable and confident, and take part in school and everyday activities without worrying about their period.


WHY SHOULD WE HAVE TO PAY, WHEN WE HAVEN'T CHOSEN TO HAVE PERIODS?
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2

School rules can make periods harder for children and young people.

Some young people said it was hard to go to the toilet at school when they needed to. Some schools have rules about toilet trips, but these rules do not always help young people who have periods or health problems.

They also said it can be difficult to get a toilet pass. Sometimes children feel unwell or need extra toilet breaks, but they may not have seen a doctor yet, so they cannot easily get the support they need.



"SCHOOLS TELL US TO DRINK LOTS OF WATER BUT THEN MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO GO TO THE TOILET."

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3

Young people don't always feel listened to by doctors, health workers & teachers

Many young people told us that they did not always feel listened to when they asked for help with period problems.

Some said that doctors or other health workers told them their symptoms were just a normal part of growing up. Others felt they were given medicine or treatment without anyone fully looking into what might be causing their problems.

Some young people said it took a long time to find out what was wrong. They had to ask for help many times before they got answers and support.

Some young people felt that their pain and worries were not taken seriously, even when their symptoms were making school, hobbies, and everyday life much harder.

Young people want doctors and other health workers to listen to them, take their worries seriously, and help them get the right support as soon as possible.

They want to feel heard, understood, and cared for.

4

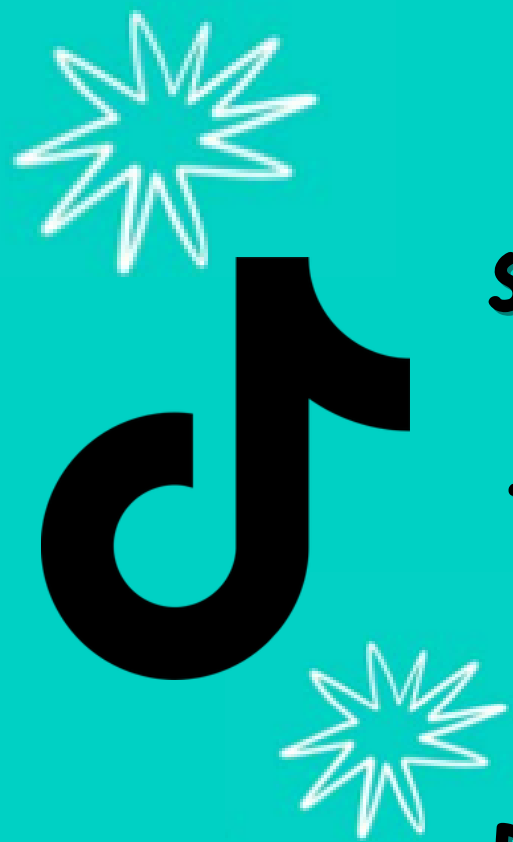
Young people need better information about periods.

Many young people told us that they do not get enough information about periods and period health. Some said they learn more from social media, like TikTok, than they do from doctors, nurses, or school.

They felt that schools and health services could do more to give young people clear, easy-to-understand information they can trust.

Young people said they would like more information about:

- Different period health conditions, such as endometriosis and PCOS
- Signs that mean they should ask a doctor for help
- Different ways period problems can be treated
- The different types of period products available and how to use them



"YOU GET MORE STUFF OFF TIKTOK THAN YOU DO FROM THE DOCTORS."

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One young person told us they had never used tampons because nobody had explained how they work or how to use them safely.

Having clear and trusted information can help young people understand their bodies, know when something might not be right, and feel confident about getting help when they need it.



5

It can be hard to find the right help for period problems.

Some young people told us that it can be hard to find the right help when they have problems with their periods.

They spoke about:

- Waiting a long time for appointments
- Not knowing who to ask for help
- Having to travel a long way to see a specialist
- Not knowing what help and services are available for young people

Some young people said they had to go to lots of appointments and ask for help many times before they found out what was causing their symptoms and got the support they needed.

Young people want it to be easier to find the right help. They would like clear information about where to go for support and services that understand the needs of children and young people.

6

Young people should get help with period health in the right place, that is suitable for young people.

Some young people told us that the place where they received care did not always feel right for them.

One young person shared that they went to the hospital for help with a period health problem. While they were waiting, people thought they were there because they were pregnant and asked them questions about pregnancy. This made them feel embarrassed and uncomfortable because that was not why they were there.

Young people talked about how hospitals and clinics could do more to make sure children and young people feel comfortable, respected, and have enough privacy when they come for appointments.

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"PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH PERIODS CAN AFFECT DAY-TO-DAY LIFE."





"EVERYONE ASSUMED I WAS THERE BECAUSE I WAS PREGNANT."

The place where young people get healthcare can make a big difference to how they feel.

Young people want to feel comfortable, respected, and have their privacy protected when they go to appointments.

They also want services that understand and meet the needs of children and young people.

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7

Periods can affect more than just your body.

Young people told us that periods can affect lots of different parts of their lives, not just their physical health.

Some said that their periods stopped them from:

- Spending time with friends
- Taking part in sports
- Going swimming
- Joining in at school

Some young people also said that they felt worried or stressed about their symptoms. Others talked about the cost of period products and other things they needed to help manage their periods.

Many felt that people do not always understand how much periods can affect everyday life.

Periods can affect how young people feel, what they can do, and how confident they are. Making sure young people get the right support can help them take part in school, activities, and everyday life without missing out.

8

Getting the right support and care when ending a pregnancy and after.



Some young people told us that it is important to have support after ending a pregnancy.

They said young people should be able to get clear information, ask questions, and know where to go for help if they need it.

They also felt it is important to have caring and understanding people to talk to during this time.

After a big health experience, some young people may need extra support and someone to talk to. Having the right information and care can help them feel supported and know where to get help if they need it.

9

Travel can make it harder to get the help you need.

Some young people told us that it can be hard to get to appointments and healthcare services.

They said that sometimes they have to travel a long way to get the help they need because the right service is not available nearby. This can make getting to appointments more difficult for young people and their families.

Getting to appointments should not be a problem for people who need help. Long journeys can cost money, take a lot of time, and make young people and their families feel worried or stressed.

Easier access to local services can help young people get the care they need.

10

Access to the right facilities in hospital for disabled young people.

Some people told us that it can be hard for disabled children and young people to get the support they need with washing and personal care when they are staying in hospital.



They felt that hospitals often have the right facilities for babies and very young children, but that older children and young people may not always have access to facilities that meet their needs.

Disabled children and young people should have places that help them feel comfortable, safe, and respected while they are in hospital.



Having the right facilities can also make it easier for parents, carers, and support workers to help them with their care.



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As well as talking about things that could be improved, young people and support staff also shared examples of support and services that they think work well and make a positive difference.

They spoke about helpful staff, good experiences of care, and support that made them feel listened to, respected, and understood. These positive experiences showed how important good support can be for young people's health and wellbeing.



Good practice



Young people and support staff spoke positively about schemes that support care-experienced young people.

Schemes where basic toiletries and period products for young people moving into a new home or care placement, make a big difference, helping young people feel comfortable and cared for during a time of change.

Having access to things like shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, and period products can also help reduce worry and help young people settle into their new home more easily.

Young people told us that it's helpful to have nurses and health support at school or college. They liked being able to ask questions and get health advice without having to make an appointment with their doctor.

Having support available where they learn makes it easier to get help when they need it.

Our big questions for the people who make decisions*



*get in touch if you'd like a full list of the representations we made to the Health Board and Local Authorities.

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We asked

What will you do, working together, to make sure children and young people:

1. Can get free period products easily, privately and whenever they need them.
2. Can go to the toilet when they need to
3. Feel listened to, believed and supported
4. Can get clear, trusted and easy to understand information
5. Can get the right help when they have problems with their periods
6. Can get help with period health in places that feel welcoming and right for their age
7. Get the support they need when their periods affect school, their feelings, their confidence, their friendships, their activities, or their family's finances.
8. Can get kind, private and age-appropriate support before, during and after ending a pregnancy
9. Can get the right help for period health close to where they live
10. Have the right facilities and support when they are in hospital

What happens next?

If you'd like the full list of what we asked (our representations) Swansea Bay University Health Board and the 2 Local Authorities in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, please get in touch:

LLAIS NEATH PORT TALBOT REGION

01639 683490

NPTANDSWANSEA.ENQUIRIES@LLAISCYMRU.ORG

A special thank you to the HOPE group for sharing their views with us.

So what?

You shared your views with us and told us what matters to you.

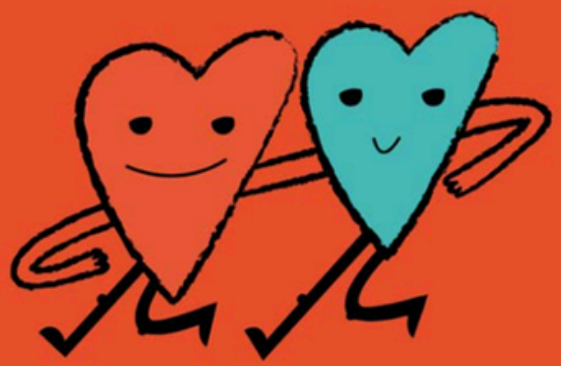
We've sent your views to decision makers and they'll tell us what they will do to make things better.

We will come back and tell you what they said and how you've helped to make services better.

We will keep asking about progress and what has changed as a result of what you told us.

YOUR VOICE HELPS MAKE SERVICES BETTER FOR OTHER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

YOUR VOICE IS HEARD.



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