Department for Education

Period Products Scheme

Ad-hoc statistics: 2022 Management Information

October 2022

Contents

Summary

This ad-hoc notice provides information on the Department for Education's scheme to provide free period products to schools and colleges in England. It presents data from January 2022 to July 2022 but also includes some statistics covering the whole scheme since its introduction on 20 January 2020.

Overview of period products take-up, 2020-2022

15,060 organisations had made at least one order since the scheme began in January 2020. This represents 74% of the organisations that were eligible in 2022.

97% of secondary schools and 92% of post 16 organisations had ordered since the scheme began. The equivalent figure for primary schools was lower (68%), probably because they have few girls who are menstruating.

Take-up of the scheme, 2022

7,473 organisations made an order between January 2022 and July 2022 (when the first contract ended). This represents 37% of all eligible organisations. 15,534 orders were placed during 2022.

The total value of orders placed between January and July 2022 was £2,862,000 which was 87% of the available budget for those organisations that ordered and 72% of the total budget for all organisations in the scheme.

Variation by characteristics of organisation, 2022

In 2022, post 16 organisations and secondary schools were most likely to have ordered (78% and 80% respectively). Primary schools were least likely to have ordered (26%). Larger organisations and those with higher levels of disadvantage were more likely to have ordered. These patterns are similar to those seen in previous years.

Percentage of spend cap spent, 2022

Organisations who ordered in 2022 spent an average of 87% of their spend cap. The majority (82%) of organisations who ordered in 2022 had spent over 90% of their spend cap. There was little difference in the proportion of the spend cap spent by organisation type, spend cap or levels of disadvantage.

Types of products ordered, 2022

Between January and July 2022, almost all organisations who had ordered bought pads and almost half bought tampons. Pads accounted for 63% of all packets ordered and tampons accounted for 23%. Period underwear was introduced in May 2022 and accounted for 13% of all packets ordered in 2022.

44% of organisations ordered environmentally friendly or reusable products and 94% also bought standard products. Just under half (49%) of all packets ordered in 2022 were environmentally friendly or reusable products.

1. Introduction

The Period Products scheme launched on 20 January 2020 to ensure that no girls or women[1] miss out on education due to their period. It enables schools and colleges[2] in England to provide free period products for learners in their place of study.

The scheme covers all state-funded schools and 16 to 19 education organisations in England who have female learners in year 5 (aged 9 or 10 years) or above. In the first year of the scheme, each eligible organisation was allocated a maximum amount of spend (a ‘spend cap’) between January 2020 and December 2020. They received a separate spend cap for January 2021 to December 2021 and another for January 2022 to July 2022, when the first contract ended.[3]. Each spend cap was based on 35% of the number of learners in the organisation[4] whose recorded gender was female and who, based on age, were likely to have started their periods. 35% is an assumed take-up rate, reflecting the fact that not all learners will need products all the time. We multiplied this figure by an estimate of the number of products each would use throughout the year and then by the average cost of a single product in the scheme. A minimum spend cap of £16 was set[5] to allow all organisations to order a reasonable range of products. An average secondary school had a spend cap of £845 to cover the period from January to July 2022, whilst an average primary school had a spend cap of £16.

Personal Hygiene Services Limited (phs) supply period products for the scheme. Organisations order online from a range of 21[6] products and the products are delivered directly to the organisation free of charge. Organisations can order at any point in the year, with a recommendation to wait until stocks are running low before re-ordering. The smallest organisations are expected to make a single order within the year whereas larger organisations may place orders more frequently.

Schools are able to select from a wide range of period products, varying in type, size and brand. They do not need to order the same products throughout the year. Products available include:

- period pads, including environmentally friendly period pads
- reusable period pads
- applicator tampons
- non-applicator tampons
- menstrual cups
- reusable period underwear

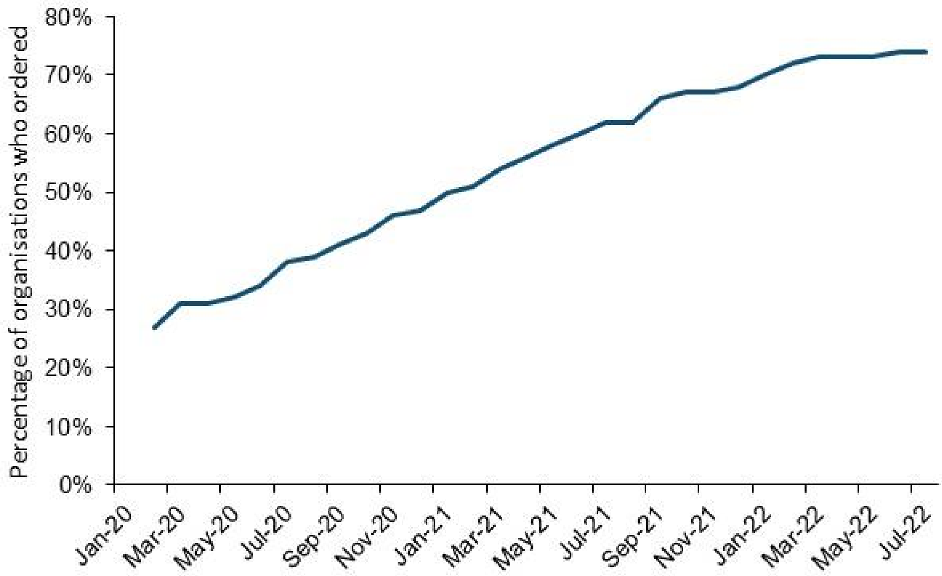
1 References to ‘girls and women’ or to ‘female learners’ also include learners who menstruate (or may later start menstruating) who may not identify as female but, instead, identify as transgender or non-binary.
2 Referred to as ‘organisations’ in the remainder of this document.
3 This scheme ended in July 2022, with a new scheme starting in September 2022. Under the new scheme, each organisation will have a separate spend cap for each academic year.
4 2022 spend caps were based on learner numbers reported in the Autumn 2021 School Census for organisations that completed it and DfE forecasts of 2021-22 learner numbers for those that didn’t. We assume that 5% of 9-year-olds, 10% of 10-year-olds, 20% of 11-year-olds, 50% of 12-year-olds, 75% of 13-year-olds, 95% of 14-year-olds and 100% of those aged 15 or over are menstruating. These estimates are based on information from Age of menarche in contemporary British teenagers: survey of girls born between 1982 and 1986.
5 Any organisation with a calculated spend cap below this level will have their spend cap increased to £16.
6 When the scheme began in January 2020, 17 different products were available. The range of products has expanded throughout 2022 and 21 different products were available by July 2022.

We receive regular management information from phs on the number and value of orders placed and the type of products ordered. We published a [summary](#) of that information covering the 2020 calendar year in January 2021, and the 2021 calendar year in January 2022[7]. This release updates that with information covering January 2022 to July 2022 when the first contract ended.

2. Overview of period products take-up, 2020-2022

Since the scheme began in January 2020, 15,060 organisations have made at least one order, representing 74% of eligible organisations (figure 1).

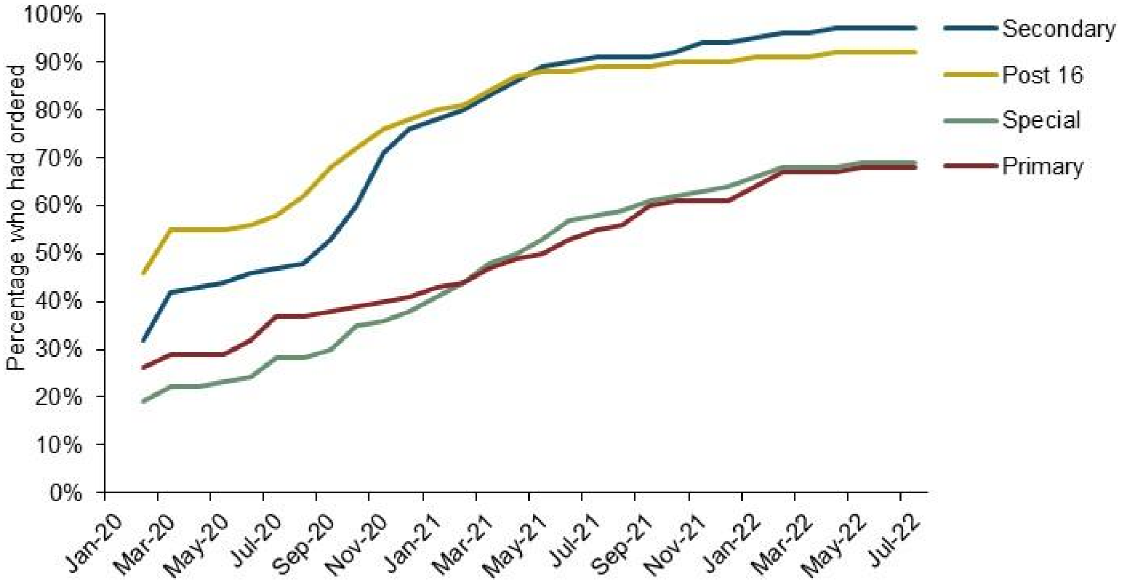
Figure 1: Percentage of organisations who had placed at least one order, January 2020 to July 2022



97% of secondary schools and 92% of post 16 organisations had made at least one order since the scheme began in January 2020. The equivalent figure for primary schools was lower at 68% (figure 2), probably because they have few girls who are menstruating.

7 Previously published figures on spend excluded VAT and also inadvertently excluded the value of some orders which should have been included. Total spend, average spend and percentage of spend cap spent for 2020 and 2021 have been revised in this release.

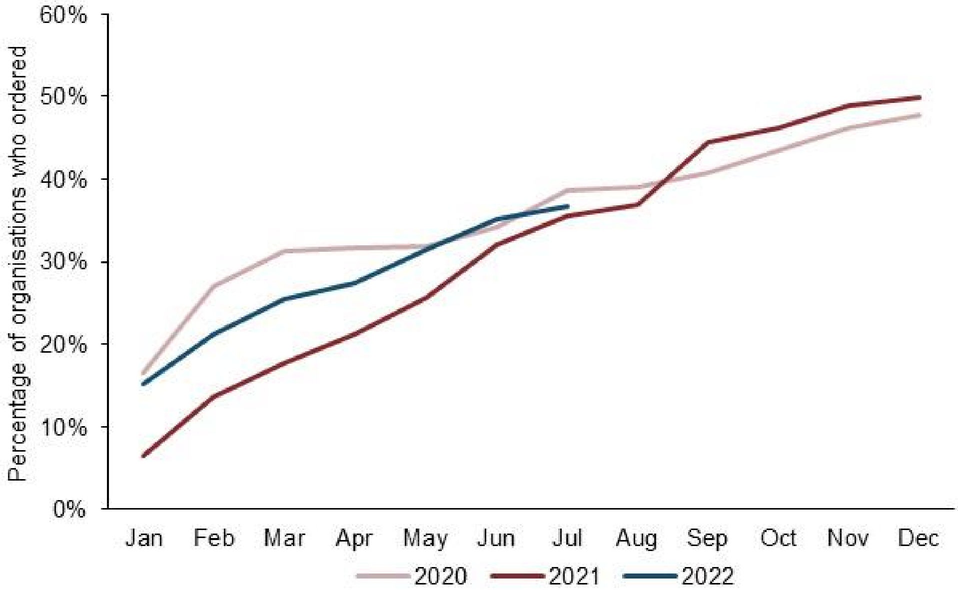
Figure 2: Percentage of organisations who had placed at least one order by organisation type[8], January 2020 to July 2022



3. Take-up of the period products scheme, 2022

7,473 organisations had made an order between January and July 2022, when the first contract ended. This represented 37% of all eligible organisations (figure 3). Across the year, the percentage of organisations making orders increased in a similar pattern to 2021.

Figure 3: Percentage of organisations who had placed at least one order by year, 2020, 2021 and 2022

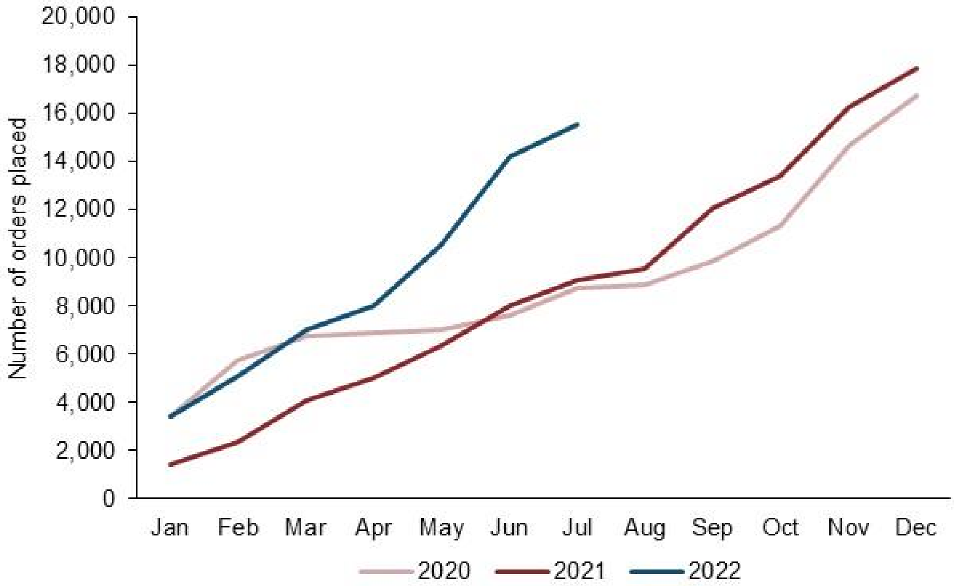


Ordering organisations made a total of 15,534 orders between January and July 2022 (figure 4), which is an average of 2.1 orders per organisation that ordered. The number of orders increased faster in 2022 than over the same period (January to July) in previous years. This is probably due to a combination of factors, including reduced demand in 2020

8 Alternative provision not shown for clarity. Figures are available in the accompanying tables.

and 2021 due school closures for coronavirus (COVID-19), and new products such a period underwear being made available to order during 2022. Potentially, organisations may also have increased orders in the first part of the year in anticipation of the scheme closing in July (compared to December in the previous two years). It is therefore difficult to draw comparisons across years.

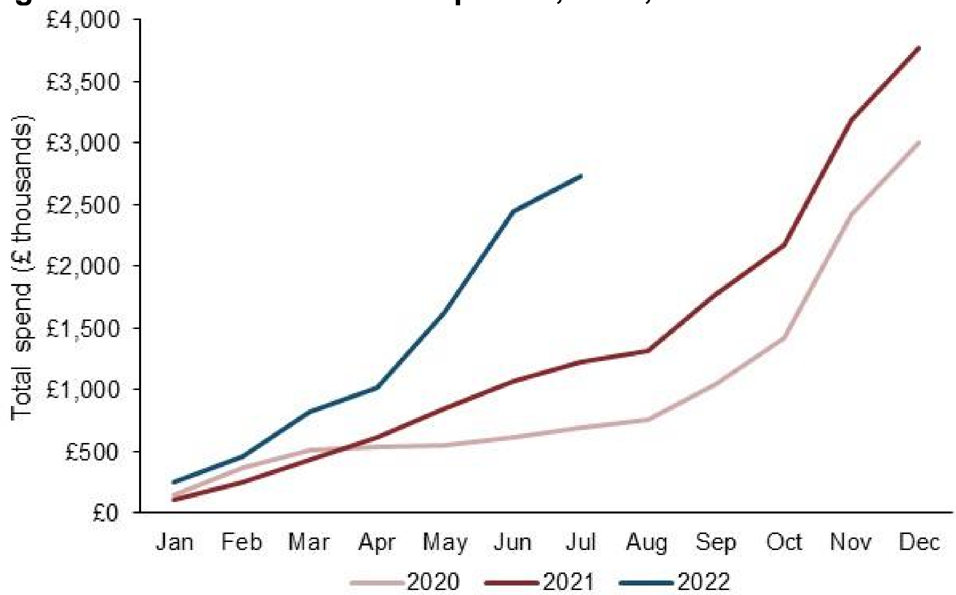
Figure 4: Cumulative number of orders placed, 2020, 2021 and 2022



Most ordering organisations had made a single order by the end of July 2022 (5,170 schools or 69% of those that had ordered). 2,044 organisations had made three or more orders (27% of those that had ordered), with the highest number of orders being 30.

Ordering organisations spent a total of £2,862,000 between January and July 2022 (figure 5). This represented 87% of the total spend cap for those organisations who ordered and 72% of the total spend cap for all organisations. The value of orders increased faster than in previous years, probably explained by the reasons discussed previously.

Figure 5: Total value of orders placed, 2020, 2021 and 2022



4. Variation by characteristics of organisation, 2022

The following data summarises the scheme between January 2022 and July 2022. Data covering use of the scheme in 2020 and 2021 are included in the accompanying tables.

Organisation type

Table 1 shows the breakdown of orders and spend by organisation type. This shows that secondary schools and post 16 organisations were most likely to have made an order between January to July 2022 (80% and 78% respectively). Primary schools were least likely to have ordered (26%), probably because they have fewer girls who have started menstruating.

Table 1: Orders and spend by organisation type, January to July 2022

	All organisations		Ordering organisations		
Organisation Type	**Number of organisations**	**Percentage who ordered**	**Average spend cap**	**Average spend**	**Spend as % of spend cap**
Primary schools	15,189	26%	£16	£15	92%
Secondary schools[9]	3,348	80%	£900	£766	85%
Special schools	1,128	33%	£61	£55	92%
Alternative provision	330	34%	£51	£45	88%
Post 16	409	78%	£2,459	£2,228	91%

Primary schools had the lowest average spend (£15) which reflects the fact that most primary schools have a low spend cap, due to lower numbers of girls assumed to be menstruating. In contrast, post 16 organisations had the highest average spend (£2,228) which reflects the fact that these tend to be larger organisations. There was little difference in the proportion of the spend cap spent by organisation type.

Academy status

Table 2 shows the breakdown of orders and spend by academy status for primary and secondary schools. This shows that there was little difference in the likelihood of ordering for different types of primary schools. Primary free schools appear slightly more likely to have ordered but this is based on a small number of schools. There was also no difference in the proportion of the spend cap spent between primary schools of different types.

There was little difference in the likelihood of ordering for different types of secondary schools – secondary free schools appear less likely to have ordered but again this is based on a small number of schools. Secondary free schools have spent a slightly higher proportion of their spend cap though this may reflect the lower average size of this type of secondary school.

9 Including all-through schools

Table 2: Orders and spend by academy status, January to July 2022

Organisation Type	All organisations Number of organisations	Percentage who ordered	Ordering organisations Average spend cap	Average spend	Spend as % of spend cap
Primary schools					
LA maintained	9,291	27%	£16	£15	92%
Academy converter	4,158	24%	£16	£15	92%
Academy sponsor led	1,577	27%	£16	£15	92%
Free schools	163	31%	£16	£16	95%
Secondary schools[10]					
LA maintained	694	84%	£889	£743	84%
Academy converter	1,600	81%	£1,032	£884	86%
Academy sponsor led	774	81%	£765	£649	85%
Free schools	277	65%	£438	£389	89%

Spend cap

Table 3 shows the differences in likelihood of ordering and spend by spend cap. This shows that the likelihood of having ordered increased with the level of the spend cap – 26% of organisations with a spend cap of £16 had made an order rising to 97% for those with a spend cap of over £2000.

There is no clear pattern in the proportion of the spend cap spent for organisations with different sizes of spend cap.

Table 3: Orders and spend by spend cap, January to July 2022

Spend cap	All organisations Number of organisations	Percentage who ordered	Ordering organisations Average spend cap	Average spend	Spend as % of spend cap
£16	15,348	26%	£16	£15	92%
£17 to £25	492	31%	£20	£19	92%
£26 to £100	852	36%	£58	£52	90%
£101 to £1000	2,413	77%	£628	£526	84%
£1001 to £2000	1,034	89%	£1,329	£1,151	87%
£2001 +	265	97%	£3,257	£2,938	90%

Levels of disadvantage

Table 4 shows the differences in likelihood of ordering and spend, by the percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium[11] in the organisation. Organisations with lower levels of pupil premium were less likely to have ordered period products than those with higher levels of pupil premium. This is probably because the scheme aims to provide products to

10 Three secondary City Technology Colleges (CTC) are not shown.
11 Based on pupil premium allocations for the financial year beginning 1 April 2021. Pupil premium levels are not available for 606 organisations (409 post-16 organisations, 142 special schools, 32 alternative provision organisations and 23 mainstream schools). In most cases, this is because pupil premium is not available in that type of organisation.

learners who need them, including those who cannot afford products as well as those who have forgotten products or come on their period unexpectedly.

There is little difference in the proportion of the spend cap spent between organisations with different pupil premium levels.

Table 4: Orders and spend by percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium, January to July 2022

	All organisations		Ordering organisations		
Pupil premium band[12]	Number of organisations	Percentage who ordered	Average spend cap	Average spend	Spend as % of spend cap
Very Low	3,626	27%	£265	£227	86%
Low	3,747	32%	£408	£351	86%
Medium	4,156	38%	£417	£355	85%
High	4,059	40%	£382	£322	84%
Very High	4,210	40%	£277	£239	86%

5. Geographical variation, 2022

Table 5 shows the breakdown of orders, and spend, by region. Organisations in the North East were slightly less likely than those in other regions to have made an order. Conversely, among the organisations that had placed orders, those in the North East had spent a slightly higher proportion of their spend cap (92%).

Organisations in the South West had the lowest average spend (£339) while those in London had the highest average spend (£447). However, this reflects differences in the average size of schools and colleges (as illustrated by differences in average spend cap) between these areas.

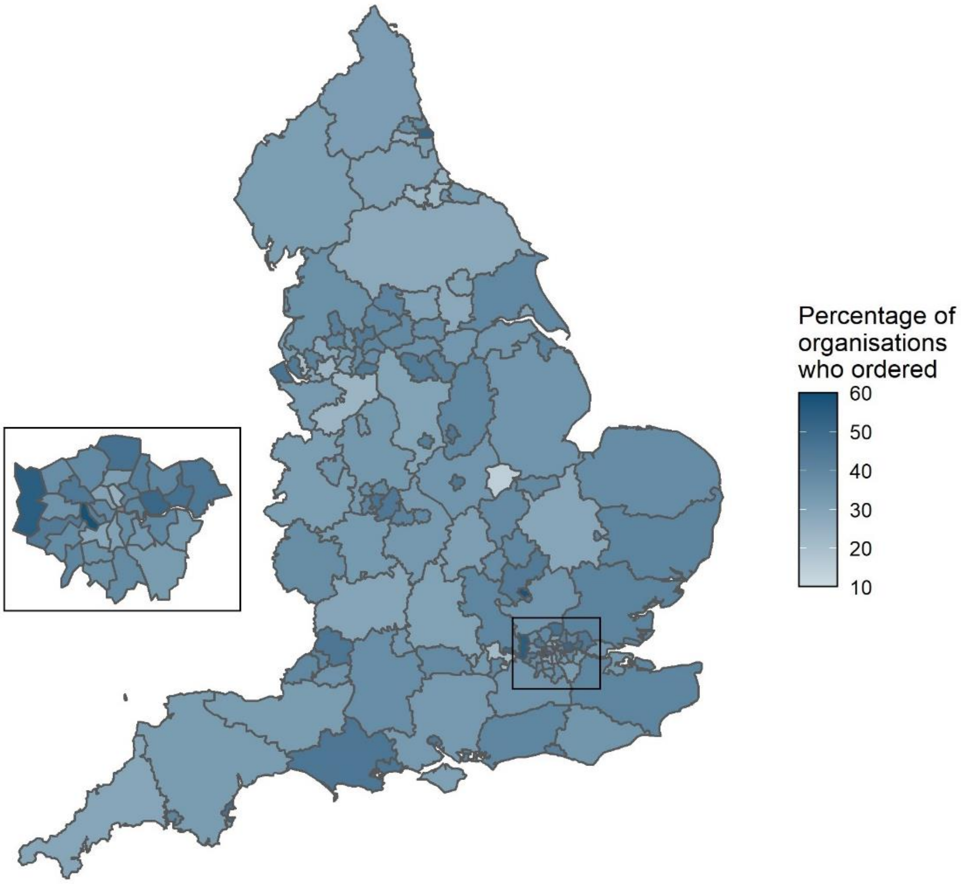
Table 5: Orders and spend by region, January to July 2022

	All organisations		Ordering organisations		
Region	Number of organisations	Percentage who ordered	Average spend cap	Average spend	Spend as % of spend cap
North East	1,059	32%	£442	£408	92%
North West	3,116	36%	£408	£346	85%
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,160	36%	£434	£386	89%
East Midlands	1,913	36%	£396	£354	89%
West Midlands	2,202	38%	£452	£388	86%
East of England	2,310	38%	£428	£375	88%
London	2,446	39%	£519	£447	86%
South East	2,986	37%	£483	£407	84%
South West	2,212	35%	£393	£339	86%

12 Pupil premium bands are defined as follows: Less than 10% = Very low, 10% to 15% = Low, 16% to 23% = Medium, 24% to 37% = High and 38% + = Very High

There was considerable variation by local authority. Organisations in Hammersmith and Fulham were most likely to have ordered in 2022 (59%) and those in Rutland were least likely to have ordered (14%, figure 6). A full breakdown of the data by local authority is included in the accompanying tables (table A6).

Figure 6: Percentage of organisations who ordered by local authority[13], January to July 2022



Ordering organisations in Windsor and Maidenhead and Reading had spent the highest proportion of their spend cap (100%) while those in Wandsworth had spent the lowest proportion (59%).

A list of all the schools and colleges that have ever ordered is included in table A10.

6. Percentage of spend cap spent, 2022

As seen earlier, the organisations that had ordered in 2022 had spent an average of 87% of their spend cap. The majority (82%) of organisations who ordered had spent 90% or more of their spend cap; 12% had spent between 89% and 50% of their spend cap; and just 6% of organisations had spent less than 50% of their spend cap.

There were considerable differences in the proportion of the spend cap spent by organisation type (table 6). The majority of primary schools (89%) had spent most of their

13 City of London and Isles of Scilly are not shown as they have a very small number of schools.

spend cap with very few having spent less than half of their spend cap. Many secondary schools (73%) had also spent most of their spend cap, but 15% of secondary schools had spent less than half of their spend cap.

Table 6: Percentage of spend cap spent by organisation type, January to July 2022

Organisation Type	Number of organisations who ordered	Spent up to 49% of their spend cap	Spent 50% to 89% of their spend cap	Spent 90% or more of their spend cap
Primary schools	3,975	0%	11%	89%
Secondary schools	2,691	15%	12%	73%
Special schools	374	3%	16%	81%
Alternative Provision	112	9%	7%	84%
Post 16	321	8%	12%	80%

There were some differences in the proportion of the spend cap spent by size of spend cap (table 7), though small numbers in some of the size bands means that the pattern isn't very clear. Among organisations that had placed orders, those with a small spend cap were more likely to have spent most of their spend cap, while those with a larger spend cap were less likely to have spent most of their spend cap.

Table 7: Percentage of spend cap spent by spend cap of those that ordered, January to July 2022

Spend cap	Number of organisations who ordered	Spent up to 49% of their spend cap	Spent 50% to 89% of their spend cap	Spent 90% or more of their spend cap
£16	3,991	0%	11%	89%
£17 to £25	151	2%	28%	70%
£26 to £100	303	6%	12%	82%
£101 to £1000	1,855	15%	12%	73%
£1001 to £2000	916	13%	13%	74%
£2001 +	257	9%	10%	82%

7. Types of products ordered, 2022

Table 8 shows the number of organisations ordering each type of product between January and July 2022. Almost all organisations who ordered bought pads (98%) and half (52%) bought tampons. 9% of organisations who ordered bought menstrual cups. Period underwear was introduced in May 2022 and were ordered by 17% of all ordering organisations.

The proportion of organisations ordering environmentally friendly or reusable products[14] was higher in 2022 than in earlier years - in 2022, 44% of ordering organisations had bought environmentally friendly or reusable products, compared with 35% of organisations

14 Environmentally friendly products include environmentally friendly pads and organic tampons. Reusable products include reusable pads, menstrual cups and period underwear.

in both 2020 and 2021. The majority of ordering organisations also bought standard (not environmentally friendly or reusable) products in 2022 (94%).

Table 8: Number of organisations who ordered each type of product, January to July 2022

Type of product	Number of organisations who ordered	Percentage of all ordering organisations
Pads	7,320	98%
Tampons	3,914	52%
Menstrual cup	645	9%
Period underwear	1,274	17%
Standard	7,036	94%
Eco-friendly/reusable	3,279	44%

Table 9 shows a breakdown of the number of packets and the total cost of each type of product ordered in 2022. Pads accounted for 63% of all packets ordered[15] and tampons accounted for 23%. Period underwear was only introduced in May 2022; despite this, they accounted for 13% of all packets ordered in 2022. In 2022, 49% of packets ordered were environmentally friendly or reusable products, compared to 48% in 2021 and 30% in 2020.

In 2022, pads accounted for 60% of total product spend and tampons accounted for 18%. Period underwear accounted for 16% of total product spend despite only being introduced in May 2022. In 2022, over half (52%) of total product spend was on environmentally friendly or reusable products, compared to 50% in 2021 and 30% in 2020.

Table 9: Number of packets and total cost of each type of product ordered, January to July 2022

Type of product	Number of packets ordered	Percentage of all packets ordered	Total cost of products	Percentage of total spend
Pads	370,930	63%	£1,715,000	60%
Tampons	133,394	23%	£521,000	18%
Menstrual cup	12,419	2%	£162,000	6%
Period underwear	74,152	13%	£464,000	16%
Standard	300,899	51%	£1,375,000	48%
Eco-friendly/reusable	289,996	49%	£1,486,000	52%

8. Types of products ordered by characteristics of organisation, 2022

Table 10 shows the types of products ordered by organisation type. This shows that in 2022, as in previous years, most organisations, regardless of type, ordered pads. Most

15 Note that packets vary in the number of products they contain. This does not take account of differences in number of products per packet.

post-16 organisations and a high number of secondary schools and alternative provision organisations also ordered tampons. Primary and special schools were much less likely to order tampons, probably because these schools know or have judged that these products would not meet their pupil's needs. Around half (49%) of post-16 organisations and 17% of secondary schools ordered menstrual cups. Reusable period underwear was introduced in May 2022 and 50% of post-16 organisations and 40% of secondary schools ordered period underwear before the first contract ended in July 2022. Primary schools, special schools and alternative provision were much less likely to order menstrual cups and period underwear.

Post-16 organisations and secondary schools were more likely than other types of organisation to order environmentally friendly or reusable products (87% and 80%, respectively), though most also ordered standard products (93%). A small proportion (17%) of primary schools did order environmentally friendly or reusable products but most only ordered standard products.

Table 10: Types of products ordered by organisation type, January to July 2022

Organisation Type	Pads	Tampons	Menstrual cup	Period underwear	Standard	Eco-friendly/ reusable
Primary schools	99%	34%	1%	1%	95%	17%
Secondary schools	97%	75%	17%	40%	93%	80%
Special schools	98%	44%	3%	6%	94%	40%
Alternative provision	93%	84%	1%	1%	99%	29%
Post 16	98%	86%	49%	50%	93%	87%

Table 11 shows the types of product ordered, by spend cap. This shows that most organisations, regardless of spend cap, ordered pads. The likelihood of ordering other types of product increases with the spend cap. However, this may reflect the relationship between type of organisation and spend cap, rather than reflecting the spend cap itself; organisations with a lower spend cap tend to be primary or special schools, who were less likely to order products other than pads.

Similarly, the likelihood of ordering environmentally friendly and reusable products increased with the spend cap. However, as above, this may reflect the relationship between types of organisation and spend cap rather than spend cap itself.

Table 11: Types of products ordered by spend cap, January to July 2022

Spend cap	Pads	Tampons	Menstrual cup	Period underwear	Standard	Eco-friendly/ reusable
£16	99%	35%	0%	1%	95%	16%
£17 to £25	97%	44%	1%	0%	97%	25%
£26 to £100	98%	53%	4%	5%	95%	42%
£101 to £1000	97%	75%	14%	35%	94%	78%
£1001 to £2000	97%	78%	24%	47%	93%	86%
£2001 +	98%	79%	49%	62%	90%	94%

Department
for Education

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