

# Over three quarters of secondary schools order free period products

More than three quarters of state secondary schools and colleges in England have accessed period products from the free Government scheme, [according to new data](#) released today (Thursday 21 January).

Since the programme launched in January 2020, 9,702 schools and colleges have ordered period products, making them free and available to all their pupils and helping to reduce stigma around menstruation.

The Government is encouraging all schools and colleges to access period products through this scheme, as it is the quickest and simplest way of making sure they are available to everyone who needs them.

Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford said:

No pupil should ever have to miss school because of their period. I am pleased to see over three quarters of secondary schools and colleges have accessed free period products, but I want everyone to know this support is available.

If you are a school or college leader, I urge you to please get in touch and order these products for your pupils so that together we can help end period inequality for good.

[New data](#) published by the Department for Education shows:

- 68% of secondary schools ordered eco-friendly or reusable products as part of their orders, rising to 80% for colleges.
- Pads accounted for two-thirds (66%) of all products ordered, while tampons accounted for most of the rest (32%). The total value of orders by the end of December 2020 was £2,791,000 – amounting to 48% of the total spend cap for all organisations.
- The number of orders increased steadily between January and March then remained constant during April and May, when schools were closed to most pupils due to the pandemic. Orders increased again in June as schools and colleges began to fully reopen. The scheme was – and continues to be – open throughout the pandemic.
- In November, for example, schools and colleges placed over 3,000 orders for period products through the scheme.

Warren Edmondson, managing director of supplier phs Direct said:

The high number of secondary schools and colleges participating in the scheme means that a significant proportion of menstruating-age pupils now have access to free period products. It is encouraging that so many have also ordered eco-friendly or reusable products to provide a more sustainable, long-term solution which is better for the environment.

The last year has been unprecedented with widespread closures across the education sector. Despite this, many have clearly recognised how important it is to order free period products and the phs order portal has been open throughout.

As the scheme has now been extended, we invite all schools and colleges to order free products now – whether it's their first or a repeat order. Deliveries are contactless and can be redirected to neighbouring schools in the event of closures. We'd urge anyone that needs support ordering to contact phs directly.

The free period product scheme for all young people in English state schools and colleges has been extended and will continue at least throughout 2021.

The scheme provides period products to all those who need them, including students who cannot afford products, have forgotten them, or come on their period unexpectedly.

The programme, delivered by phs Direct, part of [phs Group](#), is designed so that schools can order what they need and are given the option to order environmentally friendly or reusable products. Schools are not charged for the products or for delivery.

Schools and colleges should ensure they are making the products available and communicating with their students about the products and how to access the scheme.

This is part of the Government's drive to end period poverty, tackle inequality and support disadvantaged children in the additional challenges they face. At the start of the year the tampon tax was abolished, meaning from the 1st January VAT no longer applied to period products.

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## **37th Universal Periodic Review: UK**

## statement on Nepal



The United Kingdom welcomes Nepal's progress since its last review. In particular, during my visit last year I witnessed first hand the good progress made on the political representation of women.

However, we remain concerned that fourteen years after the conclusion of the civil war, there is little accountability for conflict-era human rights violations and abuses. This feeds into a culture of impunity, which may further diminish confidence in institutions to deal with human rights violations.

We recommend that Nepal:

1. Harmonise the Foreign Employment, and Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act to ensure consistency with the Palermo Protocol.
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.
3. Amend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, addressing the demands of victim groups, to ensure victims of conflict-era violations and abuses are meaningfully engaged in the transitional justice process.

Thank you.

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## KTN and UK Space Agency Launch UK Space Sector Landscape Map

Developed in collaboration with the UK Space Agency and with support from key stakeholders, the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) has outlined the universities, companies, funding bodies and networks that form the UK space sector.

The map is [now available publicly through a free, interactive, web-based tool](#), allowing users to search and visualise the sector as never before. It will deliver high-quality insights and showcase our excellent space sector across the world.

Iain Hughes, Market Intelligence Manager, UK Space Agency said:

This tool will bring genuine value to stakeholders across the space sector and beyond. By providing access to new data, visualisations and search functions, it will generate insights that will help companies identify opportunities, improve their strategies for growth, and increase collaboration.

Andy Bennett, Knowledge Transfer Manager for Space at KTN said:

KTN supports innovative organisations by creating diverse connections to drive positive change. We have built landscape maps in many sectors in order to give a representation of current UK capabilities and activities which help identify and drive opportunities in innovation. This UK Space Sector Landscape Map showcases our knowledge and aims to support those both inside and outside the sector to build new collaborations. We hope that it supports our ambitious UK space sector to continue to grow and succeed.

The UK space sector is a huge economic success story, growing by over 60% since 2010. In addition, the sector supports wider UK economic activities worth an estimated £300 billion through the use of satellite services. This market is expected to grow further as government support unlocks commercial

opportunities.

## **What does the map include?**

The map includes:

- over 340 space manufacturing businesses, from launch vehicle providers and satellite manufactures to component and materials suppliers
- over 300 satellite applications companies who deliver satellite communications services, process satellite data or develop applications dependent on GNSS or Earth observation data
- 44 space operation companies including launch services, launch brokerage services, proprietary satellite operation and ground segment operators
- 170 organisations offering ancillary services including consultants, IT and software services providers, insurers and legal services
- 67 research groups and universities across the UK with their research interests
- incubation centres, networks, funding opportunities, key sector organisations and developing spaceports

This tool will continue to improve and evolve over time, capturing the UK space sector as it grows. Companies and organisations belonging to the space sector not currently listed are invited to notify KTN for inclusion.

The interactive map allows users to search and filter by a range of data points including market segment, company details, technologies, expertise and capabilities. The satellite applications companies can be searched by the key markets they serve.

All featured organisations are also geographically tagged, allowing users to pan around the UK virtually, explore regions of interest, and to visualise the relationships between local space networks.

## **How can the UK Space Sector Landscape Map help?**

The tool will offer value to all stakeholders interacting with the UK space sector by:

- identifying regional clusters of expertise to support local growth ambitions, signposting space support networks, and informing users' strategies for investing around the UK
- supporting collaboration and innovation by providing a comprehensive and searchable directory of companies and organisations
- identifying UK capabilities, gaps, strengths, and opportunities to inform the development of the National Space Strategy and national space programmes
- informing market intelligence strategies, including the identification of potential collaborators or competitors within market segments, or new supply chains and customers
- signposting of public and private space-focused funding bodies
- provision of a knowledge base to inform analysis among the UK space community and sector researchers

- raising profiles of UK space organisations of all types and sizes, providing a free platform to promote expertise and capabilities and inform a range of stakeholders
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## People urged to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme

With less than 6 months to go before the EU Settlement Scheme's application deadline of 30 June 2021, European citizens are being urged to apply now to secure their rights in UK law.

The latest official statistics published today (21 January 2021) show that up to 31 December 2020 there had been almost 4.9 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.

This includes more than 4.4 million applications from England, 243,600 from Scotland, 80,700 from Wales and 78,500 from Northern Ireland up to 31 December 2020. In December alone there were 402,300 new applications to the scheme as people applied before the end of the transition period.

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration Kevin Foster said:

Reaching almost 4.9 million applications to the hugely successful EU Settlement Scheme is terrific news. There is less than six months before the 30 June 2021 deadline and I would encourage all those eligible to apply now to secure their rights under UK law.

A wide range of support is available online and over the telephone if you need it and we are funding 72 organisations across the UK to ensure no one gets left behind.

The EU Settlement Scheme was launched on 30 March 2019 and at its height Home Office caseworkers were regularly processing up to 20,000 applications a day. The highest number of applications processed in one month was more than 400,000 in October 2019.

The EU Settlement Scheme uses cutting edge technology, including the EU Exit: ID Document Check app which allows people to apply from the comfort of their own home in as little as 15 minutes.

The Home Office also has a dedicated team of more than 1,500 people working on the EU Settlement Scheme, with support available seven days a week by telephone and by email. We have provided up to £17 million to a network of now 72 organisations across the UK who support vulnerable people in applying to the scheme. They include charities, local authorities and local government

associations.

The Home Office has also run three bursts of marketing campaigns, spending £4.6 million. The latest burst ran throughout December 2020 to encourage EU citizens across the UK to apply.

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## New OSCE Secretary General, H.E. Ms. Helga Schmid: UK statement

Welcome Secretary General. And thank you for your address to the Permanent Council today and for setting out so clearly your approach to the role and your priorities. You have the UK's support and confidence to deliver on this agenda.

You are no doubt already aware that the role of OSCE Secretary General is a challenging one and you are assuming this role during extremely challenging times. COVID-19 continues to impact on OSCE business and directly on the work of the Secretariat.

Although the organisation has adapted extremely well to the virtual environment within which we are all currently forced to operate, there will be aspects of OSCE business, and of your role –relationship building, diplomacy, outreach, support for conflict prevention and resolution – that really benefit from in person, face to face interaction, which I hope we can all return to soon. That said, your able team have demonstrated virtual multilateralism can work and a key priority now should be to capture all of that learning and best practice (including around reducing the organisation's environmental impact) so we do not simply return to old behaviours and practices.

Your three priorities – effective and efficient management; strengthening trust and dialogue and promoting and protecting the OSCE's comprehensive security concept across all three dimensions – which you identified during your hearing and again today are from our perspective, exactly right.

I'm pleased that you have prioritised the effective and efficient management of the organisation, working in partnership with the Heads of Institution and Field Missions, and with us, the participating States. Every effective organisation must be underpinned by robust, objective and clear financial, Human Resources, legal and oversight processes which support good governance and decision making, a safe open and inclusive working environment, merit based recruitment and efficient, results based budgeting.

It is the responsibility of all organisations to put in place appropriate, effective internal governance systems and processes to protect staff from bullying and harassment and to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. The

consequences of failing to do so are grave, both for the victims and for the reputation of the organisation. Participating states have a crucial role to play here, including through our secondment of personnel into OSCE structures. The UK remains a strong supporter of clear efforts to promote and advance gender equality, undertake tangible actions on UNSCR 1325 in the OSCE, and create a culture which values diversity within the OSCE's executive structures.

The relationship between the Secretary General and the 57 participating States is key to organisational effectiveness. We are pleased that from the outset you have committed to regular, transparent engagement with delegations here in Vienna. And in return we should all commit to giving you and our new Heads of Institutions the space and flexibility you require to do your jobs effectively and to form your own views on organisational effectiveness, efficiencies and on any areas in need of reform.

We also recognise the importance of a strong, supportive relationship between the Secretary General and the OSCE Chair, particularly in response to emerging risks to security in the OSCE region, early warning or conflict prevention. In response to regional or internal crises, the OSCE has an impressive range of tools, guidance and support to offer but whether those tools can be deployed successfully depends on the level of trust between the participating states and OSCE structures, and the willingness of those States to accept help when it is offered.

You are right also to focus on the promotion of the OSCE's unique comprehensive security concept and the interlinkages between the three Dimensions. In your external engagement with other multilateral organisations, it will continue to be important to increase international awareness of the OSCE's role, its areas of expertise, where it can add real value, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Congratulations once again on your appointment. We look forward to working with you and your team on all of these issues. And thank you to Ambassador Tuula Yrola for her excellent job in acting as Secretary General and Officer in Charge, during the important period at the end of last year.