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James Dornan MSP, Convener, Local
Government and Communities Committee

cc Monica Lennon MSP

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Dear Convener

PERIOD PRODUCTS (FREE PROVISION) (SCOTLAND) BILL

I am writing to update you on the Scottish Government approach to the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill, which takes into account both the findings and recommendations within your Stage 1 report and views expressed by members during the Stage 1 debate on 25th February 2020.

As you know Parliament voted to support the General Principles of the Bill and I committed to work in a collaborative way to try and resolve some of the key concerns that both I and your committee expressed during Stage 1.

I am pleased to say that, following constructive engagement with Monica Lennon MSP over recent months, she and I are in broad agreement on the way forward to ensure this Bill can be enacted in the current term. Scottish Ministers have therefore lodged the motion for the Financial Resolution today. This of course means that if it is approved by Parliament the Bill can formally move to Stage 2 consideration.

I thought it would be helpful to provide a summary of changes I intend to bring forward through amendments to the Bill:

- That Part 1 is replaced with a legal duty on Local Authorities to make free period products available for all those who need them in community and public sector settings;
- That Part 2 places a duty on schools, colleges, universities, independent and grant-aided schools to make period products available for students and pupils (removing the stipulation that this must be in toilets) and retains measures to allow Scottish Ministers to specify additional public service bodies to supply period products through regulations if required in the future;

- That Part 3 includes provisions setting out
 - a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish Statutory Guidance on how the duties on local authorities, colleges and universities should be met
 - a duty on responsible bodies to consult on what local delivery looks like
 - a duty on responsible bodies to publish local plans setting out their delivery plans;
- and extending the period for commencement of the substantial duties to allow sufficient time for the above to take place.

I believe that this approach addresses many of the concerns raised both by the Committee and the wider Parliament during Stage 1. I have instructed that Stage 2 amendments be drafted so that we will be ready to lodge them by the deadline that Parliament sets.

I remain ambitious about Scotland continuing to lead the way internationally on making free period products widely available for all who need them. I look forward to working with the Committee and Ms Lennon throughout Stage 2.

AILEEN CAMPBELL