

Period products in community sport clubs

EVALUATION OF A NATIONWIDE
RESEARCH PROJECT
2024



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

About the project

Overview

In 2024, Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa (Sport NZ) launched a one-year research project placing free period products in 48 community sport clubs nationwide. Funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment as part of the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023 Leverage and Legacy programme, the project aimed to understand the impact of free period products on inclusivity for female players. Sport NZ commissioned Malatest International (now Tiria) to evaluate the initiative.

Evaluation objectives

The independent evaluation sought to understand:

- how free period products were introduced to clubs
- experiences of players, coaches, and club administrators
- positive outcomes for clubs from the initiative
- key success factors.

Information sources

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach, including:

- Online club member survey (n = 88)
- Case studies with 4 participating sport clubs.
- Supplier administrative data on product distribution.

Participating clubs

79%

in the North Island



56%

in large cities
Auckland,
Wellington,
Christchurch



65%

football clubs



21%

rugby clubs



15%

cricket clubs

Demographics of survey respondents

► **Gender:**

96%
self-identified women



► **Ethnicity:**

89%
Pākeha/New Zealand European

17%
Māori, small percentages of Pacific, other European, and African.

► **Age:**

28%
41-50 years

25%
31-40 years

19%
21-30 years

9%
under 20

► **Sport:**



91%
from football clubs, (due to the funding coming from the FIFA Leverage and Legacy Programme), while the rest were from rugby and cricket clubs.

Project reach

48 clubs received free period products for **5,895** female players.

45,000 pads and **44,200** tampons distributed.

Promotion and access

Clubs used coaches, posters, email announcements, and social media to inform players.



94%



of players collected products from dispensers in female toilets.



Products were placed in female and gender-neutral toilets and changing rooms. If clubs didn't have facilities, coaches kept these for players in gear bags.

Summary of findings

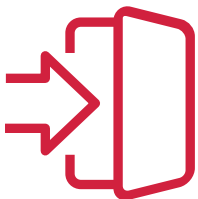
Overall experiences

40% of survey respondents used the free period products



High satisfaction with collection methods, comfort, availability, and variety of products

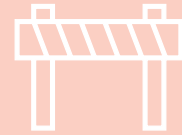
- 83%** satisfied with collection methods
- 93%** comfortable using the products
- 85%** satisfied with the availability of products
- 70%** satisfied with the variety of products.



Easy and private access was crucial for players

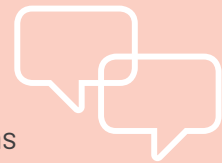
Key themes

Reduced barriers to participation



Increased training and game attendance

Encouraged conversations about periods



More open discussions about menstrual cycles

Reduced period stigma

Normalised periods and reduced embarrassment

Created an inclusive club environment



Positive impact on club atmosphere and player confidence

Reduced financial barriers

Helped players in lower socio-economic areas



Extended benefits

Benefitted visitors, spectators, and competing teams

“ [Players] turn up on game day, go to toilet, and realise they’ve got their period. Before they [would make an excuse like] ‘I’ve started feeling unwell, I have to go home’. Whereas I think it’s changed now. ”

Club staff member

Success factors

Effective communication

Privacy

Supportive club environments

Ease of access



Challenges

Lack of product variety

Finding suitable locations for dispensers and appropriate disposal systems

Addressing period stigma



Opportunities



Players and club staff identified opportunities for clubs to consider in the future:

- Use signage to promote the products
- Increase the variety of products and number of dispensers
- Provide education on female health and products available
- Provide wet bags to carry the products while travelling
- Explore funding and partnership opportunities.

“ [Having access to period products] definitely provided an openness and a bit more of a safer space ... it’s pretty awesome to see our high school girls being able to grow up a bit and be more comfortable and not being ashamed [about their periods]. ”

Player

“ A couple of times last year I had to run to the supermarket for the ladies for unexpected periods and haven’t had to do that this year. This [initiative] creates privacy, inclusiveness and support. ”

Club staff member

“ [The initiative] is very valuable and makes us women feel included, seen and supported. ”

Player

Case studies

ABOUT

PROMOTION

ACCESS

IMPACT

Cambridge Football Club

Community-based with over 1,000 players, including 3 women's teams and 1 girls' team



I think [the initiative] is amazing, especially for the younger girls ... they might not want to talk about [periods] at home."

Player

Promoted through Facebook group chats and a 'squad chat' for women

Products in female toilet dispensers. Players encouraged to take products in gear bags

- Female players felt valued
- Increased demand for products
- Reduced costs for players, especially from lower socio-economic areas

Pakuranga United Rugby Club

Family-oriented with a focus on junior rugby. Significant increase in female members



[The products] are free to [players] and easy to access, and it takes the shame away from not being able to afford things ... I think that's fantastic."

Player

Promoted through coaches at team meetings and private messages

Products in a gender-neutral bathroom. Some privacy concerns

- Positive reception
- Increased player attendance
- Created a more female-friendly environment

Selwyn Wahine Cricket Club

All-female club with teams from Year 4 to Year 12. Diverse player base



The switch to blue dress from white trousers has changed a lot, and knowing that products are available has also helped me [to feel more comfortable to play with periods]."

Player

Promoted through team managers

Products in gear bags due to limited club room use

- Easy access
- Reduced anxiety about periods
- Supported participation and comfort

Te Awamutu Association Football Club

Diverse demographic with strong representation from Māori, Pacific, and Indian communities



[The initiative] just shows that we care about our female players ... it's part of supporting their growth [within] the club."

Club Staff

Promoted through coaches, email, and social media

Products in gender-neutral and female toilets at two venues

- Addressed player needs
- Encouraged conversations about menstruation
- Supported growth of female teams



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