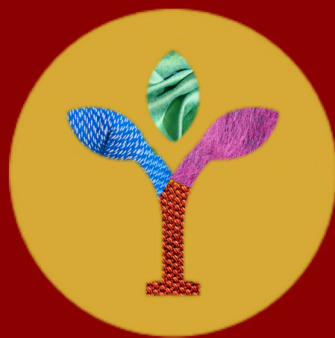


The Red Report 2025

**EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS
MENSTRUATION IN THE UK**



**Irise
International**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

It's here – our first ever Red Report.

This annual report, published around Menstrual Health Day each year, will track the UK's attitudes, understanding, and action on menstruation. It's designed to be a national barometer for menstrual justice – a tool to measure whether the country is moving forwards, standing still, or sliding backwards.

The findings from this first edition are sobering.

Despite years of tireless advocacy and growing public awareness, menstrual injustice remains deeply rooted in the UK. Silence, shame, and systemic neglect continue to shape the experiences of far too many, and alarmingly, young people and those experiencing overlapping systems of oppression face the most challenges.

The Red Report is a milestone and an opportunity. It gives us evidence to challenge the status quo, to show where progress is happening, and to expose the gaps that must urgently be addressed. It is a mirror and a megaphone: revealing the realities of people's lives while amplifying the voices that are too often ignored or erased.

This is what Irise exists to do. Menstruation is a public health issue, a human rights issue, and a matter of social justice. At Irise, it is our work to ignite progress toward building societies that embrace menstruation in all its complexity, rather than pushing menstruating bodies into the shadows.

Chrissy Cattle,
CEO - Irise International

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH BOARD

Research like this has been a long time coming. For years, we've known that menstruation is surrounded by stigma, shame, and silence – but now we have the data to prove not only how widespread these issues are, but how they're getting worse for younger generations.

As a youth activist, it's powerful to see research that breaks it down clearly and puts our experiences front and centre. This report doesn't just confirm what we've been saying – it gives us the evidence we need to push for real accountability.

I'll be using The Red Report to demand better from changemakers.

Molly Fenton - Young Activist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first edition of The Red Report paints a stark picture of the state of menstrual justice in the UK today.

A nationally representative survey of 2,000 UK adults – including 386 people who menstruate – reveals that stigma, inequity, and discomfort around menstruation remain deeply embedded in our society.

Nearly 1 in 4 people who menstruate struggle to afford period products, **rising to almost 1 in 3 Gen Z, Disbaled and BAME menstruators.**

Almost 1 in 5 menstruators have experienced discrimination due to menstruation in the past year – **increasing to nearly 1 in 4 for Gen Z and BAME menstruators.**

More than a quarter of menstruators reported feeling embarrassed about menstruation in the past 12 months. **This rises to 1 in 3 among Gen Z.**

Most UK adults are still uncomfortable talking about menstruation in day-to-day situations. Menstrual knowledge remains critically low, but the data suggests that greater knowledge leads to greater comfort – highlighting the transformative power of menstrual education.

Social media, news media, advertising, and activism are all seen as having a role to play in breaking the silence and destigmatising menstruation.

The majority of UK adults support menstrual leave policies, signalling public readiness for meaningful policy change.

Taken together, these findings highlight both the urgent need for action and the enormous opportunity for progress. The Red Report will be published annually to track this evolving landscape – exposing challenges, spotlighting change, and galvanising action toward a more just, informed, and shame-free future for all.

PERIOD POVERTY

PERIOD POVERTY IS WIDESPREAD AND WORSENING

**ALMOST 1 IN 4 PEOPLE WHO
MENSTRUATE STRUGGLE TO
AFFORD PERIOD PRODUCTS**

23% OF MENSTRUATORS

**MARGINALISED GROUPS ARE MOST DEEPLY
IMPACTED**

**THIS RISES TO ALMOST 1 IN 3
GEN Z WHO MENSTRUATE**

30% IN GEN Z POPULATION

**DISABLED MENSTRUATORS ARE LESS
LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD
PERIOD PRODUCTS.**

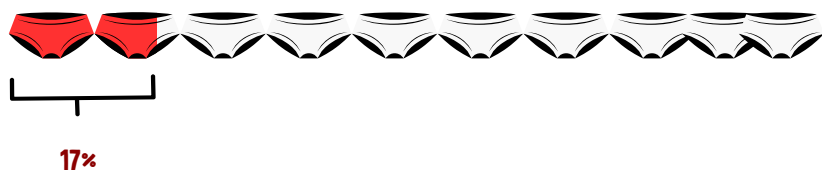
DISABLED (33%) COMPARED TO THE OVERALL FIGURE OF
23%.

**BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY
ETHNIC (BAME) MENSTRUATORS
ARE MORE LIKELY TO
STRUGGLE TO AFFORD PERIOD
PRODUCTS**

1 IN 5 WHITE MENSTRUATORS, BUT AROUND 1 IN
3 BAME MENSTRUATORS

DISCRIMINATION

**ALMOST 1 IN 5 MENSTRUATORS HAVE
EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION
BECAUSE OF MENSTRUATION IN THE
LAST 12 MONTHS**



**MENSTRUATION REMAINS
A SOURCE OF SHAME AND
STIGMA.**

**AND ONCE AGAIN, ITS
YOUNG PEOPLE AND
MARGINALISED GROUPS
WHO ARE MORE LIKELY TO
SUFFER.**

**THIS RISES TO ALMOST 1 IN 4
GEN Z MENSTRUATORS**

17% OF MENSTRUATING UK ADULTS AND 23% IN GEN Z
POPULATION

**AND 1 IN 4 FOR BAME
MENSTRUATORS**

MENSTRUATION FUELS DISCRIMINATION - A REFLECTION OF HOW DEEPLY STIGMA CONTINUES TO SHAPE PEOPLE'S LIVES.

ALMOST 1 IN 5 UK ADULTS WHO MENSTRUATE (17%) REPORT EXPERIENCING DISCRIMINATION LINKED TO THEIR PERIOD IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS. AMONG GEN Z MENSTRUATORS AND BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) MENSTRUATORS ITS NEARLY 1 IN 4 - A SIGNAL THAT DISCRIMINATION IS NOT EVENLY FELT. ONCE AGAIN, IT IS YOUNG PEOPLE AND THOSE FROM MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES WHO ARE MOST LIKELY TO SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR COLLECTIVE DISCOMFORT AND INACTION.

THESE FINDINGS ARE A STARK REMINDER THAT MENSTRUAL INJUSTICE IS NOT ONLY ABOUT ACCESS TO PRODUCTS OR INFORMATION - IT IS ABOUT POWER, VISIBILITY, AND WHOSE EXPERIENCES ARE CONSIDERED VALID. WE CANNOT MEANINGFULLY ADDRESS PERIOD POVERTY OR EDUCATION WITHOUT ALSO TACKLING THE DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY THAT UNDERPIN THEM.

SHAME & STIGMA

DISABLED MENSTRUATORS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE EXPERIENCED EMBARRASSMENT RELATED TO THEIR PERIOD.

DISABLED 36% VS OVERALL FIGURE OF 27%

MORE THAN A QUARTER OF MENSTRUATORS HAVE FELT EMBARRASSED BECAUSE OF MENSTRUATION IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



THIS RISES TO 1 IN 3 GEN Z MENSTRUATORS

27% OF MENSTRUATING UK ADULTS AND 32% IN GEN Z POPULATION

STIGMA AROUND MENSTRUATION CONTINUES TO SHAPE HOW PEOPLE FEEL, ACT, AND ACCESS SUPPORT. MORE THAN A QUARTER OF MENSTRUATORS (27%) HAVE FELT EMBARRASSED ABOUT THEIR PERIOD IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS - A FIGURE THAT RISES TO NEARLY ONE IN THREE (32%) AMONG GEN Z.

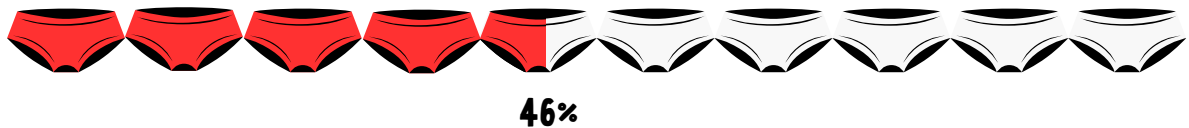
THIS SENSE OF SHAME HAS REAL CONSEQUENCES. FEWER THAN HALF OF WORKING MENSTRUATORS (39%) FEEL COMFORTABLE REQUESTING TIME OFF FOR PERIOD-RELATED ISSUES. MOST MENSTRUATORS DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE ASKING STRANGERS FOR PERIOD PRODUCTS (ONLY 39% SAY THEY'D FEEL COMFORTABLE), AND - WORRYINGLY - 1 IN 4 (24%) DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE SPEAKING TO A DOCTOR ABOUT MENSTRUAL HEALTH CONCERNS.

THESE FINDINGS REVEAL A CULTURE WHERE SILENCE AND DISCOMFORT STILL DOMINATE — HOLDING PEOPLE BACK FROM GETTING THE SUPPORT THEY NEED AND REINFORCING HARMFUL CYCLES OF EXCLUSION.

COMFORT

I WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION...

...WITH MY FAMILY



...WITH COLLEAGUES



...WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE



...AT A SOCIAL GATHERING (MIXED GENDER)

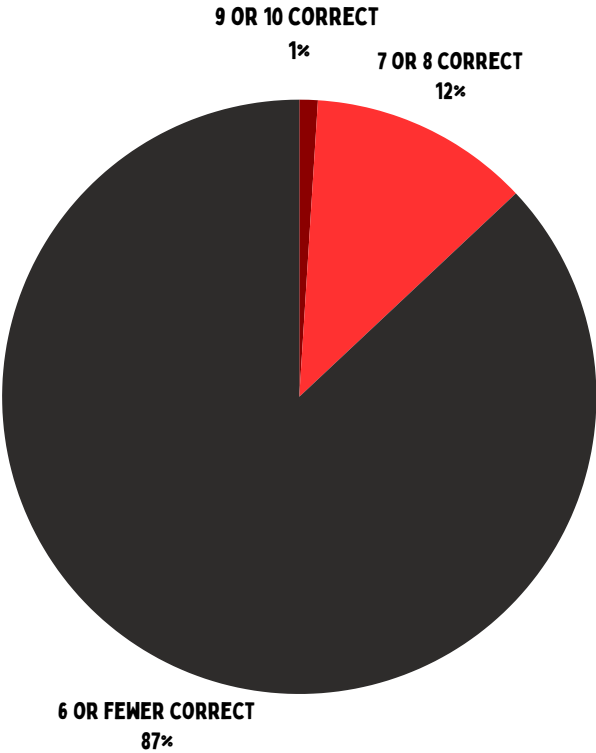


MOST UK ADULTS ARE NOT COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION IN DAY TO DAY SITUATIONS.

DESPITE GROWING AWARENESS, MENSTRUATION REMAINS A TABOO IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATION - KEPT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AND SURROUNDED BY DISCOMFORT.

WHEN ASKED WHETHER THEY WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION IN VARIOUS DAY-TO-DAY SITUATIONS, LESS THAN HALF OF UK ADULTS SAID YES. THESE FIGURES EXPOSE A CULTURE OF SILENCE THAT CONTINUES TO PUSH MENSTRUATION TO THE MARGINS. IF ADULTS FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE EVEN MENTIONING PERIODS, IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT STIGMA PERSISTS AND THAT YOUNG PEOPLE GROW UP WITHOUT THE LANGUAGE OR CONFIDENCE TO TALK ABOUT THEIR OWN BODIES.

KNOWLEDGE



2000 UK ADULTS WERE ASKED 10 TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS AROUND MENSTRUATION

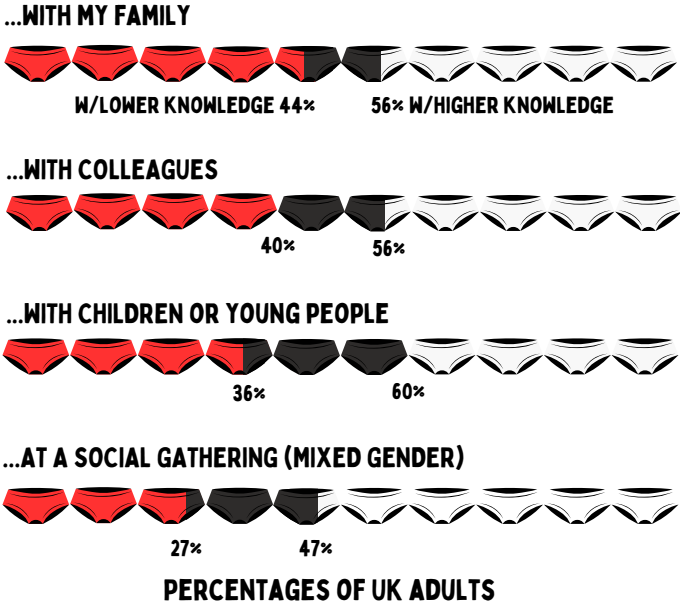
**KNOWLEDGE AROUND
MENSTRUATION
REMAINS CRITICALLY
LOW.**

**WE ASKED 2000
ADULTS 10 TRUE OR
FALSE QUESTIONS
AND LESS THAN 1%
GOT 9 OR 10/10
CORRECT.**

BUT KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

**OUR DATA SHOWS THAT THOSE WHO
UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT
MENSTRUATION ARE MORE
COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING IT,
HIGHLIGHTING THE TRANSFORMATIVE
POTENTIAL OF MENSTRUAL
EDUCATION.**

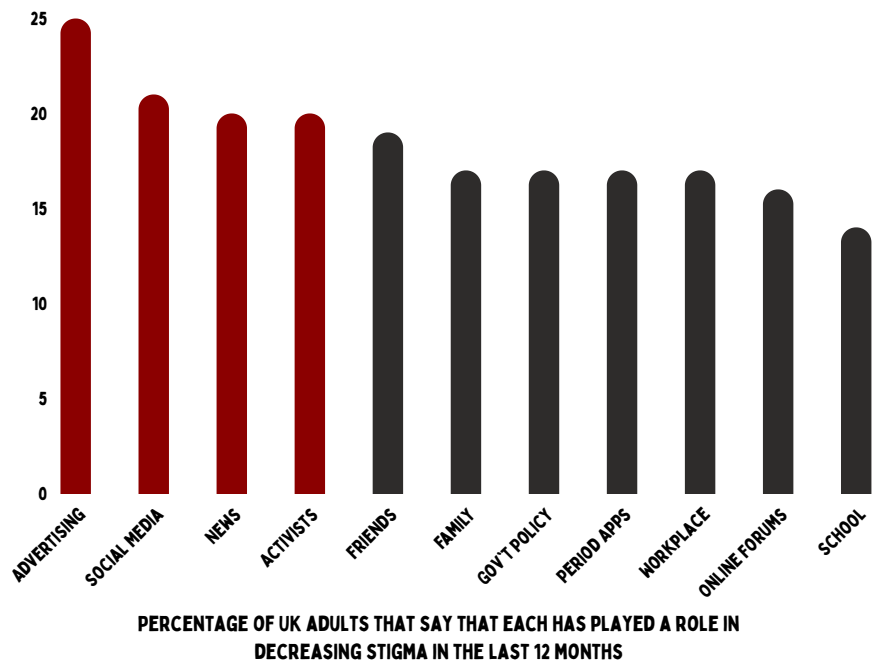
I WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION...



WHAT IS WORKING TO SHIFT MENSTRUAL JUSTICE?

SOCIAL NORMS ARE SHAPED BY THE MESSAGES WE CONSUME.

SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS MEDIA, ADVERTISING AND ACTIVISM PLAY THE STRONGEST ROLE IN DESTIGMATISING MENSTRUATION.



SOCIAL NORMS DON'T SHIFT IN A VACUUM - THEY ARE SHAPED BY THE MESSAGES WE SEE, HEAR, AND SHARE EVERY DAY. THESE FINDINGS UNDERSCORES THE CRITICAL ROLE OF STORYTELLING, VISIBILITY, AND REPRESENTATION IN DISMANTLING SHAME. ACTIVISTS, CAMPAIGNING ORGANISATIONS, CREATORS, AND BRANDS THAT SPEAK OPENLY AND AUTHENTICALLY ABOUT MENSTRUATION ARE NOT JUST RAISING AWARENESS - THEY'RE SHIFTING SOCIETAL NORMS AND EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION TO DO THE SAME.

MORE THAN HALF OF UK ADULTS SUPPORT POLICIES RELATED TO MENSTRUAL LEAVE AND ONLY 1 IN 7 ARE AGAINST THEM

I WOULD SUPPORT WORKPLACE POLICIES RELATED TO MENSTRUAL LEAVE

AGREE

DISAGREE



GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS MORE LIKELY TO BE IN FAVOUR

51% OF UK ADULTS AND 62% AND 66% OF GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS

AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING CHANGE.

THAT'S WHY WE STAND BEHIND THE YOUTH-LED MENSTRUAL MOVEMENT.

METHODOLOGY

2,000
ADULTS

THIS UK NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY OF 2,000 ADULTS WAS CO-CREATED WITH IRISE'S YOUTH BOARD, THE EMPOWER PERIOD COMMITTEE, AND CONDUCTED INDEPENDENTLY BY MARKET RESEARCH AGENCY OPINIUM ON BEHALF OF IRISE INTERNATIONAL. FIELDWORK TOOK PLACE IN APRIL 2025, AND THE DATA HAS BEEN WEIGHTED BY AGE, GENDER, AND OTHER KEY DEMOGRAPHICS TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UK POPULATION.

PLEASE USE THE REFERENCE: THE RED REPORT, IRISE INTERNATIONAL, 2025.

NOTES

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
I sometimes struggle to afford period products (Menstruators n=386). Percentage selecting 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I sometimes struggle to afford period products (Menstruators n=386; GenZ menstruators n=118; Disabled* menstruators n=80; White menstruators n=285, Asian menstruators n=43, Black menstruators n=30). Percentage selecting 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.
*Disability was self-defined in the survey: people who say they have a condition lasting >12 months and that it affects their ability to conduct day to day activities.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I have experienced discrimination due to menstruation in the last 12 months (n=386; GenZ menstruators n=118), Asian menstruators n=43: 31%, Black menstruators n=30; 28%). Percentage selecting 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I have felt embarrassed about my period in the last 12 months (Menstruators n=386; GenZ menstruators n=118, Disabled menstruators n=80). Percentage selecting 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.
I would feel comfortable requesting time off work for period-related issues (Working people who menstruate, n=319). Percentage selecting 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.
I would feel comfortable asking a stranger for a period product. (Menstruators n=386). Percentage selecting 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.
I would feel comfortable speaking to my doctor about a concern I had around menstruation (Menstruators n=386). Percentage selecting 'strongly disagree', 'somewhat disagree' or 'neither agree nor disagree'.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I would feel comfortable talking about menstruation with my family; I would feel comfortable discussing menstruation with colleagues; I would feel comfortable discussing menstruation with children or young people; I would feel comfortable talking about menstruation at a social gathering (mixed-gender) (n=2,000). Percentage choosing 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I would feel comfortable talking about menstruation with my family; I would feel comfortable discussing menstruation with colleagues; I would feel comfortable discussing menstruation with children or young people; I would feel comfortable talking about menstruation at a social gathering (mixed-gender) (Lower knowledge n=1,738; Higher knowledge n=262). Percentage choosing 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.

In the last 12 months, what role has the following had in increasing or decreasing stigma related to menstruation, if at all? (n=2,000) Percentage choosing 'Significantly decreased stigma around menstruation' and 'Decreased stigma around menstruation a little'.
To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I would support workplace policies related to menstrual leave (n=2,000; Gen Z n=266; Millennials n=419). Percentage choosing 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree'.