



**PROSTATE
CANCER UK**

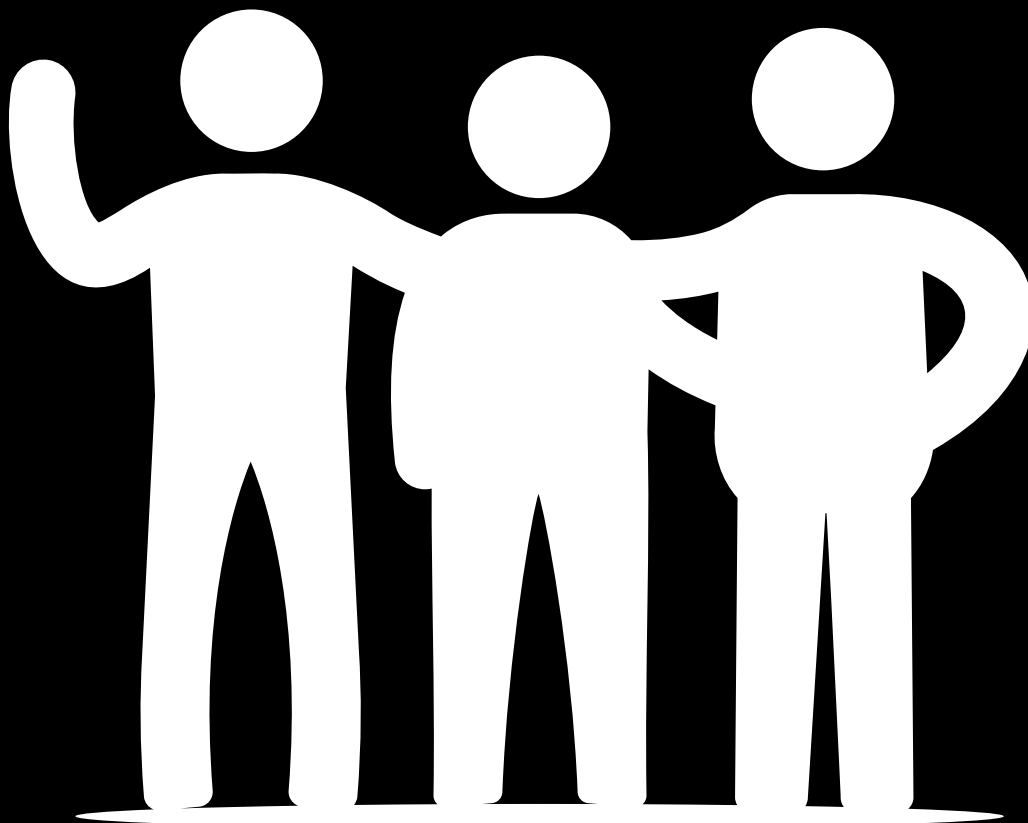
LIFTING THE LID ON MALE INCONTINENCE

Understanding male incontinence and current challenges when disposing of sanitary waste.



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Foreword

Embarrassed, stressed and isolated.

Three words used by one man with incontinence caused by his treatment for prostate cancer to describe how he feels every single day. This candid and startling insight is why Prostate Cancer UK is leading the Boys need Bins campaign. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed, rising to 1 in 4 for Black men. As many as 60% of those treated with surgery may experience urinary incontinence as a result.¹

We know that:

- **1 in 25 men aged over 40 will experience some form of urinary leakage every year.¹**
- **1 in 20 men aged 60 and over will experience bowel incontinence in the UK.¹**

For these men, the safe and hygienic disposal of incontinence products is important. Men who need to dispose of their sanitary waste (including incontinence pads, pouches, stoma, catheter, colostomy, ileostomy waste by-products) often have no direct access to a sanitary bin in male toilets. In this report, we'll share the issues that men face every day, and the impact this has on their lives.

We've taken the time to examine the issue of men needing access to their own sanitary bins in male toilets. Our findings show that there's an urgent need for:

1. New legislation:

Legislation to be created for the specific provision of at least one male sanitary bin in male toilets.

2. A national conversation:

A national conversation about incontinence, pads, pouches, stomas, catheters, colostomy or ileostomy bags and how they impact men.

3. More support for men:

A recognition by medical/health care professionals of the mental health and emotional support needs for men as well as practical advice about managing incontinence.

The change needed is simple. The conversation needed to break the taboo is necessary.

We call on you to join us in acknowledging that Boys need Bins.



Chiara De Biase
Director of Support and Influence, Prostate Cancer UK

Our Boys need Bins stakeholders

Prostate Cancer UK have led on the Boys need Bins campaign since a BBC news article in June 2022² highlighted the issue of incontinence waste among men with prostate cancer. We brought together the below stakeholders to strengthen the campaign and amplify our reach. We have also worked with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Bladder and Bowel Continence Care.



Bladder Health UK

One of the biggest challenges that men face is the indignity and embarrassment of incontinence. Staying at home becomes the 'norm' because of the lack of facilities available at football matches, restaurants and theatres. The Boys need Bins campaign is designed to change this.

Suzanne Evans | Business Director



Men's Health Forum

More and more men face the hassle of dealing with incontinence and failure to support that in public toilets just makes the problem worse. The solution is cheap and easy – and we'd like to see all providers of publicly accessible toilets just get on and do it. Boys need Bins is a great campaign and we are delighted to support it.

Martin Tod | Chief Executive



British Toilet Association

We joined the campaign to help support a significant proportion of the male population experiencing bowel and urinary problems, to be able to visit a public toilet and properly dispose of soiled sanitary pads/pants, with ease and dignity.

Raymond Boyd Martin | Managing Director



Tackle Prostate Cancer

We often hear harrowing stories of the struggles men face due to incontinence and what they do to dispose of their products. We are committed to reducing these and are proud to campaign alongside our partners to ensure everyone has equitable access.

Sarah Gray | National Support & Development Manager



Independent Longevity Centre (ILC)

Baroness Sally Greengross, founder of the ILC, was committed to promoting awareness and breaking the stigma around incontinence. We continue this support, especially in encouraging retailers to ensure adequate sanitary bin provision and dignity for all genders.

Ailsa Forbes | Retail Impact Fellow



Truckers Toilets UK

After our last campaign, the natural progression for us was to help raise awareness and campaign for facilities that cater for all, in particular sanitary provision and disposal for men.

Gillian Kemp | Founder



Urostomy Association

We are proudly supporting Boys need Bins, busting the taboo around both stomas and male incontinence. It will go a long way towards alleviating the anxiety and embarrassment so many men currently face.

Brian Fretwell | Chair of Trustees



World Federation of Incontinence and Pelvic Problems (WFIPP)

It is already a huge burden on the individual to have to deal with incontinence issues, so let's take away the embarrassment, stigma and taboo by providing bins. A simple but key solution. WFIPP is also wanting to broaden this great campaign and bring it to European Union member states.

Mary Lynne van Poelgeest-Pomfret | President



Introduction

It's important we recognise that men experience incontinence and have needs that aren't being addressed. Prevalence rates are high in the UK, with **1 in 25 men aged over 40 experiencing some form of urinary leakage every year¹ and 1 in 20 men over 60 experiencing bowel incontinence¹.**

Men with incontinence have told us they feel worried, stressed and anxious about the challenges they face when they're out in public and need to dispose of their sanitary waste. They've shared with us the mental and physical impact this has – resulting in them leaving their homes less often.

It shouldn't be this way.

We wanted to learn more about how men experience incontinence and why they face a challenge when they dispose of their sanitary waste. We carried out research collating the experiences of 84 men, and understanding what provisions exist for incontinent men in 62 organisations, to produce this report.

We want men across the UK to have access to male sanitary bins in male toilets, wherever they go. This will allow them to dispose of their incontinence pad, pouch, stoma/catheter/colostomy/ileostomy waste by-products as well as other hygiene waste items easily, safely and with dignity.

Methodology

We developed two surveys to gain insights from men who are incontinent and from workplaces across the UK. These were developed in partnership with men affected by this issue, the British Toilet Association, the Independent Longevity Centre, Bladder Health UK, and Tackle Prostate Cancer.

A total of 84 men and 62 workplaces completed their surveys between March and May 2023.

Patient survey findings

We were able to gather first hand insight into four key areas:

- 1 Men's attitudes towards existing accessibility issues**
- 2 The impact of the lack of male sanitary bins on men's quality of life**
- 3 The public health impact**
- 4 What men want to see happen to solve this issue**



1 Men's attitudes towards current access

We asked men a range of questions to gauge their attitudes towards existing accessibility issues and how this impacts them.

It's clear that men are facing significant challenges because they're not able to dispose of used products.

A staggering 95% of men indicated feeling stressed and anxious, with this leading to worry about smelling and leaking. The mental health impact for men who are incontinent should not be underestimated.

Significant public health concerns were also raised, with nearly 1 in 3 men saying that they typically resort to carrying a bag for their sanitary waste. Men will then either dispose of their waste in a public bin or take it home.

I have to plan visits to shops etc where I know there will be toilets to change if necessary, but I have to take old pads away with me to dispose of in a public [waste] bin. This is not only embarrassing but really gets me down.

– Survey respondent

1.a Use of disabled toilets

Due to the lack of national provision of sanitary bins in men's toilets, men are often forced to use disabled toilets to dispose of their sanitary waste in the provided sanitary bin.

24% of men stated that they aren't disabled and find it "embarrassing" to use this toilet to access a sanitary bin. 42% said they feel embarrassed, stressed, and anxious about using a disabled toilet.

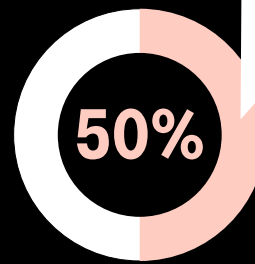
When I was at a football ground, I had to ask a (male) steward if I could have access to an accessible toilet...he commented 'You don't look very disabled'. This experience... felt inappropriate, degrading, humiliating and embarrassing.

– Survey respondent

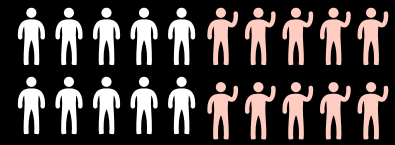
2 Quality of life impact

Our findings show that men's quality of life is drastically impacted due to the poor provision of male sanitary bins and that this is impacting their physical health:

- 87% reported having to wear a pad for longer than they'd like to as they weren't able to dispose of it when they needed to.
- 50% of men had worn a pad for two or more hours.



of men stated that they had worn their pads for more than 2 hours.



I constantly feel worried as I do not have readily available access to toilet facilities. This means I have to wear protection for much longer than I would like, being unable to change privately and discreetly, when I really need to. Leakage and offensive odour are a real worry for me.

– Survey respondent

It is clearly a public health concern when 64% of respondent's physical health is impacted in some way due to overwearing a product. This included experiencing rashes, thrush/fungal infections, urinary tract infections, pressure point sores and ulcers. 17% of impacted men required GP and pharmacy appointments. Although we weren't able to directly confirm this, we can assume this may have resulted in possible lost time at work, paying for the cost of a prescription, as well as managing the daily pain and discomfort.

The embarrassment men feel about being incontinent has a detrimental impact on their health seeking behaviours. 10% of men said they knew they had to make an appointment with their GP but felt too embarrassed to do so. According to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Bladder and Bowel Continence Care, there's anecdotal evidence that half of people with bladder and bowel conditions will wait five years or more before seeking medical advice³. This feeling of embarrassment can sadly lead to isolation, with as many as 44% of men stating that they now reduce the amount of time they're away from home due to their incontinence. 25% of men will only go to places where they have the bin facilities they need.

We can assume this has an impact on their social and work experiences as well as other elements of their lives. This presents a strong economic argument for sectors like leisure and hospitality to provide male sanitary bins, so that local economies can be boosted by increased spending from men with incontinence.

We also found that men wanted better access to incontinence products and for there to be better availability in supermarkets, pharmacies and toilets. We call on manufacturers of incontinence products to recognise and address this need.

3 Public health impact

Men disposing of products in public waste bins raises serious public health concerns. Incorrectly disposed of sanitary waste can put the public at harm. This waste could contaminate other items, cause health and safety concerns for the person emptying bins, and potential smells coming from bins could have a negative environmental impact for businesses and the public.

Further public health concerns arise when men have to carry sanitary waste home with them, due to a lack of facilities. This waste could leak, smell, be opened by a security guard, or be lost or stolen.

Men currently have no alternative choice but to do this because of the difficulty they face when trying to find a quick and easy way to dispose of their sanitary waste products.

4 What men want

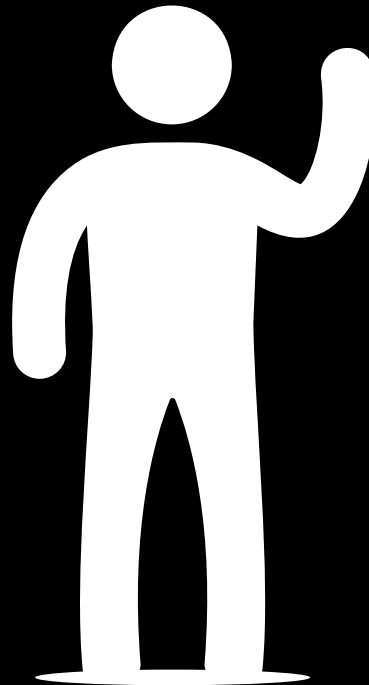
The solution is simple. 98% of respondents agreed that male sanitary bins should be made available in men's public washrooms.

Men are sending us a strong message. It's fair to say that their experience of anxiety, stress, embarrassment, isolation and how they manage their incontinence will significantly improve if they have better access to sanitary bins in male toilets nationally.

It's time to think about how we give men the dignity they deserve.

98% OF MEN AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT:

I feel that there is a need for male sanitary bins to be made available in all men's public washrooms.



DISCUSSION

The findings of this survey demonstrate the impact that incontinence has on a man, including feelings of isolation, stress, anxiety and embarrassment. Men are having to spend an unacceptable level of time planning when they want to leave their homes. We found that men are wearing their incontinence pads for multiple hours as they can't find a way to dispose of their waste. The health consequences from this resulting in rashes, sores, urinary tract infections, fungal infections – all of which are public health concerns and could be avoided.

No-one should be forced to carry sanitary waste. No-one should experience the indignity of leaking as they've worn a pad for too long. No-one should experience the stress and anxiety of smelling because they can't dispose of their products. We urgently need to reduce the number of men who end up having physical conditions because they've worn their product for too long.

These findings emphasise the need for men to have proper access to essential facilities that'll enable them to experience a better quality of life.



Workplace survey findings

Our workplace survey revealed an overwhelming lack of awareness of the prevalence of male incontinence. There was little recognition that men experience incontinence, meaning men's needs weren't accommodated for.

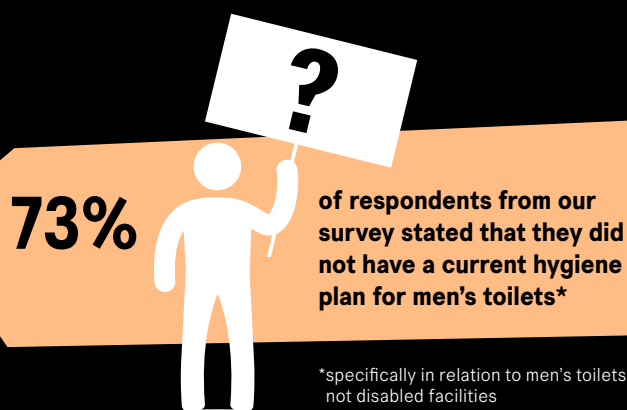
This survey highlighted three key themes:

- 1 The existing access to sanitary bins and any hygiene disposal plans amongst organisations**
- 2 The barriers organisations face in providing male sanitary bins**
- 3 Understanding the financial cost incurred by organisations**

Each of these themes reinforced the overall lack of awareness and understanding of the issue.

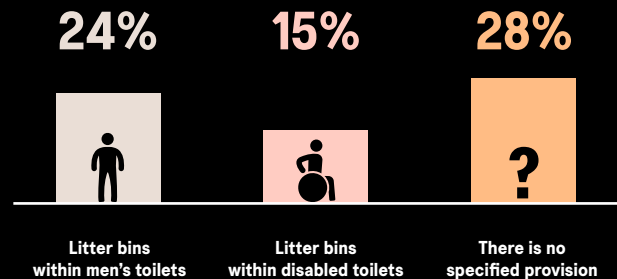
1 Understanding current access and hygiene plans

We surveyed the private, public, charity and small business sectors to understand if they had a hygiene disposal plan for men's toilets, excluding disabled toilet provision. We found a staggering 73% of respondents from a range of workplaces didn't have any plan in place, showing the needs of men had not been considered.



We also asked what provision was currently in place for men and found that litter bins were being provided for men to use either in disabled toilets (15%) or in men's toilets (24%). The provision of litter bins is undoubtedly unhygienic, unsanitary, and a public health concern. It removes any level of dignity for a man, causing embarrassment about having to dispose of used products in a public manner.

What facilities does your organisation currently provide for the disposal of male incontinence/stoma bag by-products?



Responsibility for providing bins was placed by many workplaces on the individual experiencing incontinence. Workplaces said they've "not had any requests", "not been asked", or "not experienced a demand", highlighting a reactive stance to addressing the needs of men. The results from our patient survey suggest this is an undignified and embarrassing approach for anyone experiencing incontinence.

"I know that if a colleague requires a bin, one is provided by the department, but the colleague needs to go through the process of discussing their need for it to be looked at."
— Survey respondent

We'd advocate a proactive approach that will not only promote inclusivity and equality but also recognise the diverse needs of the workplace.

2 Barriers to provision of male sanitary bins

We discovered most respondents weren't considering a hygiene disposal plan for their male toilets. Those that did have a plan in place failed to include the needs of incontinent men and men wearing bags. This is extremely disappointing.

We wanted to understand what potential barriers exist, preventing workplaces from introducing sanitary bins into male toilets. Our findings showed that although cost and space were a concern to some respondents, the most common barriers were:

- **Lack of awareness on the issue of male incontinence and the need for male incontinence bins (39%)**
- **Lack of legislation mandating the provision of male incontinence bins (32%)**

The lack of awareness about male incontinence and men's needs is clear and workplaces were open and transparent about this. One respondent stated:

I think this is something companies need to consider as until I had (completed) this (survey) I had not thought of this at all. Thank you for bringing this to (my) attention.

– Survey respondent

Interestingly, workplaces agreed that a barrier to compliance was a lack of legislation in place. We'd recommend the responsibility should be placed on the Government to implement change and to make sure there's a national standardisation of provision.

We would absolutely increase access to male incontinence bins if required [by law].

– Survey respondent

3 Is cost a barrier?

We've heard anecdotally that cost is a barrier with introducing male sanitary bins. We wanted to explore if there were any financial implications for not providing male sanitary bins. We found that organisations are spending money unblocking men's toilets, which we can assume may be partially due to incorrectly disposed non flushables, like incontinence pads and other sanitary waste.

According to our survey, nearly 1 in 5 workplaces were paying to unblock men's toilets and 1 in 3 estimated that the annual financial cost of maintenance and unblocking of toilets was up to £5,000.

The remaining 67% of responses were unable to estimate the cost of maintenance at the time of completing the survey. We encourage workplaces to undertake an audit to understand this cost.

These findings show that installing male sanitary bins may save workplaces money, as they would be paying less on addressing blockages. This would also reduce the impact on the environment by cutting down on the presence of fatbergs in sewers, where fat and non biodegradable products congeal to create a mass. Thus creating further savings for water companies nationally.



It's time for action

We need a national conversation about male incontinence and how men dispose of their sanitary waste.

Our corporate survey gave us fascinating insights into workplaces. We learnt about their hygiene plans for male toilets, the barriers preventing adequate provision of male sanitary bins and the financial implications of incorrect disposal of products.

We've demonstrated there's a gap in knowledge about male incontinence. The high volume of "Don't know" answers to several questions and 58% of workplaces being unsure about the current demand for male sanitary bins was striking. This shines a light on the lack of awareness and shows that more needs to be done.

There were a number of responses suggesting men should come forward with their specific needs and tell their employer that they require a sanitary bin in male toilets. But we know men are embarrassed about their experience of incontinence and feel isolated and stressed about their condition. We urge workplaces to adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach and avoid putting men into situations they'll find uncomfortable.

Men at work deserve better. They deserve a world where male incontinence is recognised as easily as menstruation, and for the right hygiene facilities to be provided in male toilets.

Despite the lack of understanding about this issue, there's a strong appetite for male sanitary bins to be made available.

This has shone a light that needs shining. I accept (that) my ignorance on this subject is part of the problem and will resolve to make provisions available very quickly.

– Survey respondent

I will put something in place having never really considered this previously.

– Survey respondent

DISCUSSION

The responses we received from the workplace survey have been honest, open and transparent. Those responsible in workplaces admit there's a lack of awareness about the needs of men who are incontinent and the need to dispose of sanitary waste specifically in male toilets.

We'd argue that further research is needed to investigate the impact this issue has on the wider economy. This would allow issues such as absenteeism to be explored, to see if men are avoiding going into work due to a lack of provision. We could build a clearer picture around the number of sick days men are taking due to the embarrassment they may feel from potentially leaking or smelling. Whilst also exploring if men are retiring earlier to alleviate the stress, anxiety and embarrassment that they feel, having a potential negative implication for workforces.

We call on workplaces to recognise the needs of men, and how they can proactively create a better environment where men aren't embarrassed or ashamed to come to work, due to the fear of smelling or leaking as they can't dispose of their waste.

We also call on the Government to recognise this issue. There's an urgent need for more awareness about the needs of men with incontinence and who wear pads, bags or pouches.

WE'RE TELLING THE GOVERNMENT BOYS NEED BINS.

Changing legislation

The Approved Code of Practice and Guidance: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), should be updated to provide equity for men. The regulation notes that:

“In toilets used by women, suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings should also be provided”.

The Department of Work and Pensions is responsible for the HSE, and we're calling on them to support the below amendment:

• **To ask for the removal of gender so that provision is available in all toilets.**

The amendment will allow men access to male sanitary bins in male toilets, allowing them to enjoy their lives without the anxiety and stress when thinking about how they'll dispose of their products.

We hope that the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recognise the public health implications for men, that includes the negative impact upon a man's mental and physical health as well as what the potential is for creating a hugely positive impact for men.

Finally, we call upon the Department of Levelling Up, House and Communities to recognise this as a matter of equality and to level up the experience for men so that they are afforded the same experience as women.

Key recommendations

Our three key recommendations are:

1. New legislation

Legislation to be created for the specific provision of at least one male sanitary bin in male toilets.

2. A national conversation

A national conversation about incontinence, and recognition that men wear pads, pouches, catheters, and stoma/colostomy/ileostomy bags, and the impact this has.

3. More support for men

A recognition by medical/health care professionals of the mental health and emotional support needs for men as well as practical advice about managing incontinence.

We urge those in local and national Government to implement policies that recognise the needs of men with incontinence, who wear pads, pouches, catheters, and stoma/colostomy/ileostomy bags and those who need to dispose of other kinds of sanitary waste. They can create a better world for these men, allowing them to live well and to have incontinence dignity.

It's not acceptable these men continue to carry their sanitary waste with them.

It's not acceptable that men wear pads for longer than they need to, experiencing worry, anxiety, embarrassment and isolation as a result.

It's not acceptable that men are expected to use a disabled toilet when they don't consider themselves to be disabled.

We call on the Government to urgently take action to recognise the voices and unmet needs of men with incontinence and those who need to dispose of their sanitary waste.

It's time for change

**NEW LEGISLATION
A NATIONAL CONVERSATION
MORE SUPPORT FOR MEN**





“When you're coming to work, you want to feel supported, looked after, and that your employer has your best interests at heart. So that's why it's important for us to provide dignity to those who need it, in a discreet way, behind the cubicle door in private. We're really excited this initiative will be rolled out as a service to all of our customers.

Neil Page | Sales Director, Garic

2 February 2023⁴



Moto strive to provide a service that is inclusive of all. We want the very best for all of our customers and want to provide them with the dignity they deserve. We're also incredibly proud of our colleagues and their commitment to providing an outstanding service, with zero tolerance for discrimination, to all of our customers.

Nick Tatum | Chief Customer Officer, Moto

2 February 2023⁴



Debate on incontinence tabled by Jenny Rathbone, Member of Senedd

It really is a very small ask to ensure that we have bins in every men's toilet, as well as in every female's. It's really not that difficult. They're being collected, in any case, from the women's toilets, so it seem to me that we need to press on that – that seems to me an early win.

Jenny Rathbone | Member of Senedd

10 May 2023⁵



Winchester Council became one of the first council's in England to introduce male sanitary bins

Men traditionally do not talk about personal issues which affect them, and when the facilities just aren't there either, this experience is compounded. This is something we want to change in Winchester – we added the bins this spring so that men who may be concerned about incontinence issues can visit our city and district with confidence and with dignity.

I hope other local authorities follow suit and we are proud to support Prostate Cancer UK's Boys need Bins campaign.

Cllr Martin Tod | Leader of the Council, Winchester Council

25 May 2023⁶



Jersey Government installs incontinence bins in all men's public toilets

Incontinence can be caused by prostate cancer treatment, and at these difficult times in life we don't want to be causing further anxiety over how to dispose of used pads when out and about. This is a simple step that will hopefully make a big difference to those affected.

Deputy Tom Binet | Minister for Infrastructure, Jersey

7 August 2023⁷

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22 June 2022

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Volume 735, 29 June 2023

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2 February 2023

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Get in touch

Get in touch If you'd like to find out more about how you can support this campaign, please email campaigns@prostatecanceruk.org





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