

## QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

### 1. Are you responding as:

- an individual – in which case go to Q2A  
 on behalf of an organisation? – in which case go to Q2B

### 2A. Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose “Member of the public”.)

- Politician (MSP/MP/Peer/MEP/Councillor)  
 Professional with experience in a relevant subject  
 Academic with expertise in a relevant subject  
 Student (at school, college or university)  
 Other member of the public

### 2B. Please select the category which best describes your organisation:

- Public sector body (Scottish/UK Government or agency, local authority, NDPB)  
 School, college or university  
 Commercial organisation (company, business)  
 Representative organisation (trade union, professional association)  
 Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, nonprofit)  
 Other (e.g. clubs, local groups, groups of individuals, etc.)

### 3. Please choose one of the following:

- I am content for this response to be attributed to me or my organisation

**Please provide your name or the name of your organisation as you wish it to be published:**

Name: Renfrewshire Council

- I would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)  
 I would like this response to be confidential (no part of the response to be published)

**4. Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response.** (Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.)

## YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL

### Aim and approach

#### 1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

- Fully supportive  
 Partially supportive  
 Neutral (neither support nor oppose)  
 Partially opposed  
 Fully opposed  
 Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Tackling poverty and inequality has been a priority for Renfrewshire Council for several years. Welfare reform has added to the impact of poverty for many people, particularly for women. The need for tackling period poverty has been well evidenced. Mirroring the rise in use of food banks, sanitary products are another example of an essential item that people living in poverty can no longer afford.

Tackling period poverty is important to enable women and girls to gain an equality of opportunity in participating in education, work, their community and their lives. It is difficult to be fully supportive of the scheme without the full details of implementation.

## Universal provision of sanitary products

**2. Do you think a universal, card-based system (modelled on the C-card system for free condoms) would be an effective means of providing sanitary products for free to those who need them?**

- Yes  
 Unsure  
 No

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

While the C-card seems to be an appealing system for its approach to tackling stigma, it appears to be on a much smaller scale than that required by a universal provision for sanitary protection. For the scheme to be truly universal, it would need to be offered and issued by a wide range of agencies. There would also need to be careful consideration of the selection of sanitary protection to offer.

**3. Which of the following best expresses your view in relation to a cardbased system?**

- The card should be available to anyone; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products  
 The card should be available to anyone; its use should be restricted (e.g. by limiting the number of products that may be claimed each month)  
 The card should be available only to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products  
 The card should be available only to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits; its use should be restricted (e.g. by limiting the number of products that may be claimed each month)  
 There is no need for a card scheme  
 Other (please specify)

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

While limiting the number of products that can be accessed would contribute to keeping the cost under control, it would need to be set at such a level as to reflect the needs of those with the heaviest menstruation. The contribution to tackling period stigma would be undone if it further stigmatised those with heavy menstrual flows by making different arrangements for them. The pitfall for making the card available only for those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits is that it may then fail to tackle stigma. In this way, an ideal approach may be to have unlimited and unrestricted access to sanitary products. The drawback of this approach is that often where provision is open to everyone; it tends to be accessed first by those who need the support least – the inverse care law in action. It may also make the scheme very expensive to run.

**4. Do you have a view on which locations would be most suitable for dispensing free sanitary products (e.g. GP surgeries, pharmacies, community centres, health clinics)?**

The locations should be accessible and within buildings that people have cause to visit. GP surgeries, pharmacies, Council Service Points, Job Centres, drop in centres and the like.

## Schools, colleges and universities

**5. Do you agree that there should be specific obligations on schools, colleges and universities to make sanitary products available for free (via dispensers in toilets)?**

- Yes  
 Unsure  
 No

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Young people who are just starting menstruation may find it to be particularly troubling and normalising it in this way, in addition to the cost aspect, is to be supported. For all institutions,

there will be a cost associated with this provision. Renfrewshire Council agreed in September to provide sanitary products in all primary and secondary schools across Renfrewshire.

Renfrewshire Council have carried out some preliminary work on costing the installation and supply of vending machines with sanitary ware in schools. Each school will have two Dual Vending machines in each secondary school and one per primary school suitably placed in pupil toilet areas (providing both tampons and sanitary towels). Machines will need to be serviced and filled. The cost of this service including the stock is estimated to be £59.00 per week per machine. This would result in an approximate cost of around £160K per annum.

### **Personal experience (questions 6 and 7 are for individual respondents only)**

#### **6. Have you ever struggled to access or afford sanitary products during menstruation? (e.g. financial barriers, unexpected circumstances, health issues)**

- Yes, frequently
- Yes, occasionally
- No
- Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products
- I prefer not to say

**Please explain or give an example of your experience if you feel able to do so.**

#### **7. If sanitary products were available for free, which of the following would apply to you?**

- I would expect to claim free products regularly
- I would expect to claim free products occasionally
- I would not expect to claim free products
- Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products
- I prefer not to say

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

### **Financial implications**

#### **8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:**

##### **(a) Government and the public sector (e.g. local authorities, the NHS)**

- Significant increase in cost
- Some increase in cost
- Broadly cost-neutral
- Some reduction in cost
- Significant reduction in cost
- Unsure

##### **(b) Colleges and universities**

- Significant increase in cost
- Some increase in cost
- Broadly cost-neutral
- Some reduction in cost
- Significant reduction in cost
- Unsure

##### **(c) Businesses (including suppliers/retailers of sanitary products)**

- Significant increase in cost
- Some increase in cost
- Broadly cost-neutral
- Some reduction in cost
- Significant reduction in cost

Unsure

**(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)**

Significant increase in cost

Some increase in cost

Broadly cost-neutral

Some reduction in cost

Significant reduction in cost

Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

The cost of sanitary products is met by someone, whether this is the person menstruating or an organisation providing sanitary products. Where a person is living in poverty, it seems unfair that this cost should fall on them. By the same token, it may be seen as unfair for the cost of a new initiative to impact on the delivery of other local services.

**9. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?**

The obvious way to reduce costs is to limit eligibility or to limit supply. There are other options related to re-usable sanitary products, but these will not necessarily be suitable for everyone. There may also be potential for contract savings, if the procurement process for products, machines, servicing etc can take place at scale.

**Equalities**

**10. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation?**

Positive

Slightly positive

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

Slightly negative

Negative

Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

This should have a positive impact on equality because of the improvement in equality of opportunity for women and girls. There should also be positive impacts for menstruating transgender and non-binary people if implemented appropriately, with engagement with transgender and non-binary led organisations.

**11. In what ways could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?**

**Sustainability**

**12. Do you consider that the proposed bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?**

Yes

No

Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

It is likely that the economic and social impacts will be positive, given the expected impact on attendance at school and work. Most sanitary products have a negative impact on the environment, but as re-usable options are not suitable for everyone, it seems that there is little chance of negating this, at least in the short to medium term.

## **General**

**13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?**