

Proposed Sanitary Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill

Page 2: About you

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

No Response

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

Please choose one of the following; if you choose the first option, please provide your name or the name of your organisation as you wish it to be published.

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

Please insert your name or the name of your organisation. If you choose the first option above, this should be the name as you wish it to be published. If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Celia Hodon. Hey Girls (Buy One Give One Sanitary Pads)

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.

Page 7: Your views on the proposal

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Partially supportive

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Please explain the reasons for your response

Our concerns: The approach set out creates dependency on Public sector funding from those in need. Scottish Schools and local councils have confirmed that they do not have the budget to cover the requirements. This is also the case across the UK. The figures set out in the proposal for Scotland are vastly underestimated. From our own research, we consider the costs for product and distribution to be upwards of £20 million per year.

Page 8: Universal provision of sanitary products

Q2. 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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

Low income is not the only reason for the lack of access to sanitary products. How will the model of distribution be widened to include the working poor?

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view in relation to a card-based system?

The card should be available to anyone; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products

Q4. 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)?

Significant research should be undertaken with the target audience to ensure the locations are within reach of the end user and appropriate to messaging around the initiative. Youth centers, schools, colleges, GPs and Clinics are obvious choices.

Great care must in taken around locations such as Airports, shopping centers, cinemas etc as these are locations, which by default, include costs to those using them thus sending out mixed messages to the public!.

Page 11: Schools, colleges and universities

Q5. 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

Please explain the reasons for your response

Yes, the supply of free high-quality product is a must but this should be matched with educational workshops available to both girls and boys from the age of 8 years, and a method of engaging parents and carers to break down the taboos around menstruation.

Page 12: Personal experience (questions 6 and 7 are for individual respondents only)

Q6. Have you ever struggled to access or afford sanitary products during menstruation? (e.g. financial barriers, unexpected circumstances, health issues)

Yes, frequently

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

Having been a single parent of three children, two of which are girls, I understand the struggle of bringing up a family on benefits. I appreciate the fine balancing act that goes into managing a tight budget and providing for your kids so they don't feel different from their peers. So I know that sometimes buying a prettily branded pack of 10 sanitary towels mean the family is on chips and nuggets that week. I, like many Mums, have had to use anything on hand to manage my own periods to ensure food basics were the priority in my weekly shopping basket. There was no help to cover the costs of sanitary protection when I was bringing up my girls and twenty years on there's no help now - a lot of chatter but no support for girls in the UK when they need it most. So I decided, with my two daughters who are now in their 20s and 30s, to do something about it and we set up a social enterprise - Hey Girls Buy One Give One Sanitary Pads.

Q7. If sanitary products were available for free, which of the following would apply to you?

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

Please explain the reasons for your response

We are a social enterprise that donates products.

Page 14: Financial implications

Q8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

	Significant increase in cost	Some increase in cost	Broadly cost-neutral	Some reduction in cost	Significant reduction in cost	Unsure
(a) Government and the public sector (e.g. local authorities, the NHS)	X					
(b) Colleges and universities	X					
(c) Businesses (including suppliers/retailers of sanitary products)		X				
(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)		X				

Q8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

Please explain the reasons for your response

A deeper understanding of the impact of manufacture and retailers should be considered. Retailers may increase the costs of basic products to account for the loss of income as a result of free products. A number of users who do not require free products will claim them by way of protest to their already high retail costs. Messaging around the Tampon Tax has significantly raised awareness. Users are now outraged by many political positions around the need for free products.

Q9. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

We have offered to advise the Scottish Government on how to develop an enterprise model that will build a sustainable and viable supply chain of free menstrual products, but have not had a response yet.

Page 16: Equalities

Q10. 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?

Negative

Q11. In what ways could any negative impact of the proposed Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

This should not become a political campaign as it will be rejected by many and therefore once approved it should not be lead by government officers. Experts, users, and retailers should be invited to build the campaign and the channel for distribution.

Page 18: Sustainability

Q12. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response:

An understanding needs to be in place to secure the ongoing and cross-party support around the viability of this initiative. Changes in administration and fiscal pressures will put the sustainability of activity under scrutiny and could cause a reduced offer. The local council, schools, and universities are already stating that they are unable to support activity in the longer term. As other "priorities" are raised how will this bill ensure longevity when the political and media spotlight has disappeared?

Page 19: General

Q13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

No Response