

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Inclusion Scotland

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?

Fully Supportive

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

Disabled people, particularly disabled women and children and the children of disabled parents are more likely to be living in poverty and therefore subject to period poverty. When entitlement to disability benefits (which are paid to meet the additional costs associated with disability) are discounted fully 48% of all those living in poverty in the UK are disabled people and their families. Therefore disabled women and children and the children of disabled parents are more likely to benefit from measures to address period poverty.

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?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response

We have experience of seeing the C-card system for free condoms in operation and it works well. We do not believe that the costs of universal provision are great and such provision would remove the stigma associated with the alternative of means testing.

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

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)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We firmly believe in universal access as a means of reducing the stigma associated with means testing but support some limits on usage to make the scheme sustainable and affordable.

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)?

All of those listed seem like suitable places - in addition agencies such as homeless shelters, youth groups, Women's Aid Refuges, birth control agencies (such as Brook Advisory Centres) and other locations might also be suitable. Rather than being proscriptive about suitable locations we would suggest that any third or public sector agency should be able to apply to be a location as a sanitary product dispensary if they can demonstrate that they regularly serve the relevant clientele .

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

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Please explain the reasons for your response

Without such obligations we fear that some schools and colleges will not make sanitary products available thereby discriminating against girls and young women from poorer backgrounds.

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)

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

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

Even though I as a male have not experienced problems affording sanitary products personally we as an organisation are very aware that this problem affects disabled girls and women. We have been told by women that their local foodbank has been unable to assist them because no, or few, donations of sanitary products have been received. This has at times trapped them at home as they have been frightened of further embarrassment after experiencing leakage through home made replacements such as rags or toilet paper in the past.

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

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			

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

(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)					X	
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Please explain the reasons for your response

We are basing our answers on the information supplied in the consultation document. The increased costs for Government, schools and colleges seem minimal and affordable and the social (e.g. reduction in poverty and stigma), educational (e.g. reduction in lost school days) and health benefits (e.g. reduced stress) flowing from universal provision seem to significantly outweigh these.

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 our doubts that a means tested system of provision would be either desirable or cost effective. Means testing tends to significantly reduce the proportion of those entitled who actually claim the benefit it also imposes costs in verifying who does or does not qualify - i.e. civil servants or local government workers would need to be employed to assess whether individual girls and women met the qualifying criteria. The costs of this would probably outweigh any financial savings achieved in moving away from universal provision.

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?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response

As stated earlier disabled women, disabled children and the children of disabled parents are all more likely to be living in poverty as are women in general and women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. therefore addressing period poverty is likely to have a disproportionately favourable impact on several equalities groups.

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

we cannot envisage a negative impact on any equality group.

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?

Yes

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?

Please explain the reasons for your response:

It seems affordable in both the short and longer term and its beneficial impacts outweigh the financial costs involved.

Page 19: General

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

Inclusion Scotland wish you success in framing a Member's Bill and look forward to supporting it through the Parliamentary process.