

# Proposed Sanitary Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill

## Page 2: About you

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

an individual

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".)

Student (at school, college or university)

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

*No Response*

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 would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

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

## 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

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)

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 the above (GP surgeries, pharmacies, community centres, health clinics) as well as public bathrooms and toilets in academic settings (schools, universities, etc.)

## 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**

Definitely schools and colleges, more importantly than universities (but all should be obligated)

## 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, occasionally

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

No matter how well you may plan for a period or your financial situation, there will be times in every girl and woman's life where mother nature makes an unexpected visit - perhaps in terms of timing (too early or too late) or flow (heavier than expected) or for other reasons. Having access to sanitary products is essential for full participation in life. Periods already physically disadvantage women enough, there is no need for the stigma

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and shame associated with an unwelcome, unavoidable part of female life.

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

I would expect to claim free products occasionally

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I would use the scheme on a needs-must basis. As I recognise that there are individuals whose need is greater than mine in this matter, I would use it in times of emergency.

## 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	

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

*No Response*

## 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?

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Positive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

By making sanitary products available for everyone with no questions asked, this would make it more inclusive. Regardless of any of the aforementioned protected characteristics, individuals should be able to receive free provision for sanitary products, without question or judgment. One restriction might be if sanitary products are only available in female bathrooms, individuals outside of the gender binary may be disadvantaged. Perhaps also having them available in receptions or nurses offices in schools (for example) this would make it more inclusive, while also providing them in bathrooms. Moreover, the products should be available in the individual stalls (not just the main bathroom) for discretionary purposes.

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

See answer to previous question ( how to make it more inclusive for those who do not conform to the gender binary)

## 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:**

The most commonly used sanitary products are single-use tampons and sanitary pads. These products are non-recyclable and have serious adverse environmental implications. By promoting use of menstrual cups, the Bill would not only become more sustainable environmentally, but also financially. One could do so by giving out "welcome packages" for female students starting secondary school that include gifting students a new menstrual cup. Not only are these better for the environment and cheaper in the long run, but they are also better for students' health and wellbeing. Schools should incorporate menstrual education into sex education schemes, in order to promote awareness and reduce period-stigma. In these classes, schools should be required to teach students about menstrual cup usage etc. as well as sex education. By starting this from when students begin secondary school, and including both female AND male students in the classes, this should help reduce stigma and promote wellbeing for all students. Moreover, having one's period should be recognised as a valid reason for absence (from work, school, etc.).

## Page 19: General

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

In summary:

- Give each female student a menstrual cup upon starting secondary school
- Menstrual education for all students (promote awareness, reduce stigma)
- Recognition of periods as a valid reason for sick leave
- Make sanitary products as accessible and available for all without being exclusionary (e.g. in bathroom)

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

stalls, in pharmacies, doctors' offices, receptions, etc.)

- Promote use of more environmentally friendly sanitary products (also make these more available in store)
- Allow anyone/everyone to receive free sanitary products (do not discriminate based on age, ethnicity, gender, etc.)