

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".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Paul Southworth

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

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

Sanitary products are a basic need for people who menstruate and should therefore be considered a human right. Ultimately I believe the best way to remove barriers to ensure that all are able to enjoy this right is to provide sanitary products widely, free of charge.

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

I presume the reason for having a card-based system would be to be able to adequately evaluate who is accessing the service. However, I would like to be assured that the requirement to have a card does not provide an unnecessary barrier to some. I don't see a good reason why people shouldn't be able to just take the products as and when needed without needing to show a card.

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

There is no need for a card scheme

Please explain the reasons for your response.

If a card scheme is deemed necessary, a universal system would be the easiest to administer and minimise the risk of stigmatisation (i.e. having the card be seen as proof that you are poor enough to get free tampons). I'm not sure what would be achieved by minimising the number of products which could be claimed each month. It may be that some people would prefer to stockpile sanitary products rather than buy them bit by bit - I see no need to restrict this. Having said that, if in the pilot phase it seemed that people were claiming lots of products, e.g. to give to others south of the border, some restriction may be considered. Preferably some arrangement could be made with the UK parliament to encourage a similar scheme in the rest of the UK to prevent such issues.

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)?

As somebody who has never menstruated, I don't feel that it would be appropriate for me to decide. Consultation with people who menstruate should be undertaken on the basis of which locations would be most convenient.

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

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

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

Some businesses which sell sanitary products may lose business, though presumably the suppliers may make money if people with restricted incomes are able to choose not just the cheapest product.

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?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response

In terms of protected characteristics, I would expect this to have a significant impact on gender and age. However, the greatest impact is likely to be on increasing equality across socio-economic status.

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

Specific consultation should be undertaken with minority cultural groups to ensure that any provision of sanitary products takes into account potential cultural preferences, taboos etc. around particularly sanitary products. Also, education activities should be undertaken widely to ensure that all groups are aware of improved availability of sanitary products, how to use different types, and where to access them.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response:

I would expect the cost to be relatively small and the potential impact to be significant.

Page 19: General

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

No Response