

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

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Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

I support a statutory duty to provide free sanitary products on campuses etc. Although I agree that menstruation is a health issue and that accessing sanitary products is a human right, I do not think that legislation is required to ensure free universal sanitary products. I think it would be better to target those in need, such as homeless people, those on no or a low income (who may or may not be in receipt of social security, or perhaps defined as in poverty as well as those who are destitute), those who rely on food shelters and other services for basics, young people (who would be covered by free provision in educational establishments), and asylum seekers. I am female and am happy to pay for sanitary products as I can afford them. Food and shelter are human rights but I do not expect to get those for free as I can afford to pay for them myself. The same principle should apply here. Taxpayers in Scotland are already concerned that everything is 'free' but at the expense of other taxpayer services. I appreciate that universalism is often cheaper and easier to implement than means-tested, however if this provision was broadened to go beyond schools to provide sanitary products alongside social security payments (or vouchers/card to pay for them in shops like asylum seekers getting food or school pupils getting free meals in school) then that would target the budget. They could also be provided in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and care homes (that have clients of menstruation age). I have concerns with free products for all in terms of what products are offered/promoted. Everyone should be encouraged to use reusable mooncups (or pads where they do not wish to insert something inside them) instead of disposable products. Disposable products are damaging to the environment and health. Please do some research on this before trying to legislate. For example, tampons are covered in chemicals which we then wear inside the delicate vagina for up to 8 hours. They pose a risk of TSS as well as long-term chemical exposure that is unknown, alongside the imbalance they can cause to our skin. Products for post-natal women should all be free and are a different products. Bleeding after having a baby is much heavier and can often not be managed by standard sanitary products. Hospitals should provide maternity pads for women leaving hospital and there should be a way of getting them topped up once the hospital supply has ran out (i.e. from health visiting team, baby wellbeing clinic etc). Heavy post-natal bleedings can last for weeks, but this is even more of a health issue than monthly menstruation so should be covered by NHS or additional provision made in this Bill.

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 only to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I am female and am happy to pay for sanitary products as I can afford them. Food and shelter are human rights but I do not expect to get those for free as I can afford to pay for them myself. The same principle should apply here. I have concerns with free products for all in terms of what products are offered/promoted. Everyone should be encouraged to use reusable mooncups (or pads where they do not wish to insert something inside them) instead of disposable products. Disposable products are damaging to the environment and health. Please do some research on this before trying to legislate.

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)?

It will depend on where it is as local needs vary. Take the services to the people so for some areas that will be GP surgeries and health clinics, in other areas it might be shop (if using a voucher or card) or even job centres. Think outside the box and take a person-centred human rights approach!

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 as children and young people cannot afford to pay for them and may not be able to ask parents for money. They are the most vulnerable and most impacted by not having them. Means less likely to miss school if getting them there. May help address the stigma at a younger age too.

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)

No

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 only expect to get them for free when I am in financial need or if I am staying in hospital.

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			x			

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

public sector (e.g. local authorities, the NHS)						
(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

Although there will be cost to public bodies it will hopefully become cost neutral as this may address other health issues that cost money. The biggest cost will be on educational establishments having to provide them, but as it is providing a public service and addressing a human rights issue this could be publically funded so that they do not need to bear the cost. Funding could be increased slightly to cover the cost. There will be impact on businesses (shops) if they are selling less products directly to individuals.

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

Only provide to those who need or restrict the amount if everyone can access them (i.e. via the card system proposed). Unlimited universal supply is not needed.

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

Positive in terms of gender (proportionately women will benefit), pregnancy and maternity (especially if maternity pads will be included), disability (proportionately more disabled people live in poverty and so would benefit more from free sanitary products).

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

Think about how those in need will access them so no barriers to accessing. The most vulnerable have the most barriers, whether financial, cultural, physical etc.

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:

Environmental impacts could be mitigated by providing environmentally friendly products only (reusable pads and mooncups). I have concerns with free products for all in terms of what products are offered/promoted/provided. Everyone should be encouraged to use reusable mooncups (or pads where they do not wish to insert something inside them) instead of disposable products. Disposable products are damaging to the environment and health. Please do some research on this before trying to legislate. However products for post-natal women should all be free and are a different products. Bleeding after having a baby is much heavier and can often not be managed by standard sanitary products. Hospitals should provide maternity pads for women leaving hospital and there should be a way of getting them topped up once the hospital supply has ran out (i.e. from health visiting team, baby wellbeing clinic etc).

Page 19: General

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

This could be an opportunity to ensure that disposable/flushable products become a thing of the past in Scotland by providing only reusable products, which would be cheaper for the taxpayer, and better for health and the environment. Please do research on the benefits of reusable products, including mooncups (or other brands of the same thing).