

# 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".)

Member of the public

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Christine Gray

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**

Sanitary products should be made available to all who need them. Menstruation is NOT a choice thing. funding sanitary products, when you are on benefits, or in a low wage bracket, can be difficult.

## 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?

No

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

The uptake of condoms, using the card system is low, as you have to present yourself at a (usually) public place, like a community clinic. Everyone knows what you are there for, especially when the bag is handed over. I think the proposed method would cause embarrassment to some females.

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

Other (please specify)

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

I don't think the card system is a good idea. If it is proposed to go forward, it should be made available to all who would require such 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)?

Pharmacies, if supermarkets were out of the question

## 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**

Everyone gets caught short, once in a while, and you may not always have cash, to put into the vending machine, so a free dispenser would be great. I realise that this system could be open to abuse, so perhaps issuing people with a keycode or similar would allow the powers that be to monitor the usage, so people can remain accountable for what they use, and if deemed excessive, a charge could be levied

## 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.**

I have very heavy periods and have to wear 2 towels at a time, and adult nappies at night. This costs over £40 per month. This means I can not change my sanitary products as often as I would like, as I can't afford to replace them. This is socially embarrassing. I have had to prioritise my benefits to ensure my children's needs are met and that often means there is no money left for sanitary products. It takes lots of blue sky thinking to overcome this issue when you have limited finances.

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

I would expect to claim free products regularly

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I am in receipt of benefits, so it is difficult to find the cash to pay for such items

## 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**

Obviously if sanitary products are to be provided free, there would be a significant cost associated to provide such items. I believe women should never have had to pay for such items. I myself have been purchasing them for 40 years, and must have spent thousands of pounds in that time. I truly believe if it were men who had to endure menstruation, cramps etc, products would be free of charge and there would be effective pain relief

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

available

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

I suppose the contract to provide such items could be put out to tender, much like incontinence products are. This would give a competitive quote

## 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**

If you are poor, marginalized, disadvantaged, domineered, etc then your access to such products is limited. Many women live in a household where the male does not provide financial support for sanitary products, or actively withholds them. I have found this practice prevalent in the Asian communities. This tactic is used to dominate, humiliate and isolate. As already mentioned, if you have to choose between sanitary products and food for your child, food wins every time

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

Unsure

## 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

## Page 19: General

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

No