

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".)

Politician (MSP/MP/peer/MEP/Councillor)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Anas Sarwar MSP

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

The proposed Bill sets out plans to end period poverty and the harmful stigma surrounding periods. To do so, the Bill would: - Place a duty on Scottish Ministers to create a universal system of access to free sanitary products. - Place a duty on schools, colleges and universities to provide sanitary products for free; In order for people who menstruate to access these products with dignity, I believe that products should be available in toilets in all educational institutions across Scotland. This is already being implemented in a number of local authorities and educational institutions across Scotland – including North Ayrshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire College. It'll allow those in education to access sanitary protection at their own convenience without having to ask a teacher or staff member. There is a mixture of anecdotal and empirical evidence showing that young people are missing out on education because of their monthly period and access to free sanitary products may go some way to solving this.

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

Universal access is vital, it will ensure the products get to all those who need them and will not miss out those on low incomes and perhaps not in receipt of benefits. Those who menstruate should have access to period products as and when they require them with no cost attached. Periods are a natural bodily function, and not the choice of the menstruating person. Most of the people experiencing menstruation identify as women and girls. Lack of access to sanitary products is considered to be rooted in gender inequality.

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

The card should be available to anyone; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The free condom scheme is well established, however, it has a relatively low take-up rate – with those who can afford it choosing to purchase items. The reasons for supporting a universal system of free sanitary products follows the same logic – these products should be available for free for anyone who needs them, but this does not mean that every individual will choose to take up the free scheme. However, keeping a system of universality will help to prevent stigma and ensure all will have access to sanitary protection should they need it.

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)?

There are a number of locations that would be suitable.

I believe that all public buildings should have easy access to free sanitary products.

These include;

Buildings owned by the local authority. This would also include Council HQ.

GP surgeries

Health community centre

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)?

Health clinics
Local pharmacies

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. Young people in Scotland should not be taking days off school because they don't have adequate period products. Access to products via dispensers in school toilets would be a good way to ensure the dignity of young people is a priority.

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 regularly

Please explain the reasons for your response

I believe that people who menstruate should have access to period products and should not worry about financial cost. Periods are a natural bodily function, and not the choice of the menstruating person and therefore it is an inequality that these products are not affordable to some in our society

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:

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

The Bill will have financial implications for Government and the public sector, whilst having a reduction in cost for individuals. South Lanarkshire College are already delivering free sanitary products via dispensers and have been able to do so from their existing budget. North Ayrshire Council provides free sanitary products in all of its secondary schools from its existing budget. Financial implications of the Bill will also be offset by improved health and wellbeing for those who previously will have struggled to access the products they need – leading to potentially fewer days lost at work or school.

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

The financial implications of this will be low compared to the positive effect it will bring to society

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

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

No Response

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:

Yes. The Bill will have financial implications for Government and the public sector, whilst having a reduction in cost for individuals. This will have a positive economic, social and environmental impact in local communities. Councils, NHS boards and educational institutions already have to pay for items like toilet paper, handwash and paper towels out of their existing budgets – so whilst the addition of sanitary products to this list will have a financial impact on Government and the public sector, it is right that this cost should be met collectively so that these products are made freely available to those who need them thus providing positive social benefits.

Page 19: General

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

No Response