

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Linda Walker Health improvement Tutor NHS Education for Scotland

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 devastating impact of not having sanitary wear for your period is huge and affects women. Women do not choose to menstruate, it happens, for some there are other conditions that make a monthly period even worse, such as endometriosis, fibroids, etc. This bill will prevent periods being an inequality issue and prevent periods being a taboo subject.

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 am not sure how this will work with regard to the data protection update due for implementation in May 2018, in principle it is a good idea.

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 am not sure, what I would be concerned about is the stigma potentially attached to a card system identifying someone as on a low income etc. I personally am not on a low income but I am recently separated from my husband and just about managing, to afford sanitary protection as well, especially if I had daughters as opposed to sons, would be a financial challenge for me yet I am not eligible for qualification under low income.

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)?

Primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities, health centres, GP surgeries, pharmacies, NHS departments/buildings, community centres

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

I think these could run and be linked to the smart cards that students use in secondary schools, they swipe the card and products are dispensed. This enables a form of monitoring and evaluation for the correct purposes and a free at the point of use system. If it does end up being means tested then those that receive free school

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lunches can have a code or something added to their cards that enables them to access free sanitary wear.

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.

At times the cost was significant as I had endometriosis and used a lot of products during the month. There have been times when I have not had access to protection and have struggled to find some, even if I did have money, machines would be empty, the products unsuitable or too expensive to buy.

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 think if I could afford it I would choose a brand I like to use, but if I found I couldn't afford it I would claim free products at that time.

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		

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

products)						
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Please explain the reasons for your response

I think the reduction in cost for individuals will be some as not everyone will opt to use the free products. For businesses, schools, government etc, there is a legal responsibility through health and safety to provide toilet paper and hand washing facilities, the same could be said for sanitary products as periods do have an impact on health.

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

I think the cost saving primarily is linked to the impact on health that period poverty brings - missed school days for girls due to having a period and no products, missed work days for the same reason, poor health due to trying to be innovative about sanitary protection, impact on mental health in increased mental health issues (anxiety, exclusion, shame). The savings to be made via such a provision as free sanitary ware are to be found in lifelong health not in immediate return.

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

It removes barriers of access, stigma, labelling and enables everyone to be treated equally.

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

Not sure

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

I think there will always be a disproportionate impact due to each individual/organisational interpretation of any act, in order to reduce this as much as possible it needs to be enshrined in health and safety law.

Page 19: General

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

I cannot believe in the 21st century we are even having to have such a discussion, animals are treated better than humans at times, periods are awful and given the choice many women would opt out of having them but we can't.

How can we live in a society where shaving products are deemed a necessity and sanitary wear a luxury, someone somewhere got this wrong.

If someone was bleeding, attention would be paid and a dressing applied, be it in a school, hospital or otherwise, and the individual wouldn't have to pay for that dressing, first aid would kick in and there has to be trained first aiders in most establishments, however, is it ok for a girl to be attending school who has blood running down her leg and possibly onto the floor and not having the provisions to deal with it, why is this so different just because of where the blood is coming from?