

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Alison Piper

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?

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

Please explain the reasons for your response

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

Articles that declare Scotland the 'first country in the world' to offer free sanitary products to women on low incomes are misinformed and unhelpful, African countries such as Kenya and Botswana already provide access to free sanitary products as a matter of legislation, the UK is lagging behind and it's time our governments recognised that for many women, not having access to affordable sanitary products is a huge problem and affects the health and education of an unchartered number of women.

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

I think a c-card system is one great way to provide access to sanitary products, but there will be many others. Innovative design and provision of infrastructure are tantamount to any successful delivery of a product to a user. In the case of access to free sanitary products our government should be issuing a brief to a designer to investigate at the most effective ways of providing access to sanitary products. Perhaps we should be looking at ways condoms are provided to communities with a high-risk of contracting AIDS? The global charity AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) has developed a bold new initiative to find a way around the social stigma and lack of privacy in chemist shops by offering to deliver condoms to your doorstep absolutely free of cost. I think we should be looking at a range of ways to provide access to free sanitary products, including a c-card system.

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.

In my opinion, the card should be available to anyone, for two reasons. Firstly, the reason that universal access will reduce the stigma attached to the need for free sanitary care. Secondly, If access is restricted, women will have to go through an application process in order to qualify. An added layer of bureaucracy could act as a barrier to homeless women and women at the sharp end of poverty and who have the greatest need for access to free sanitary 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)?

I think sanitary products should certainly be dispensed in GP surgeries, pharmacies, community centres, health clinics, but I think the delivery of products will be most effective and user friendly in pub toilets and cafe toilets in conjunction with community toilet schemes.

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)?

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)?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

I agree that there should be specific obligations on schools, colleges and universities to make sanitary products available for free, however, I would suggest that free dispensers in school bathrooms should be carefully designed. Young people are prone to impulsive behaviour and free dispensing machines are therefore at risk of impulsive misuse, It could be suggested that dispensers should require a token rather than money, and that tokens could be readily available at discreet access points in other areas of the school. This 'soft barrier' enables free access but removes the temptation to empty a machine and waste products or block toilets.

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 not expect to claim free 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	

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

This is not my area of expertise, I'm unsure about how best to cost access to free sanitary care.

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?

Unsure

Page 19: General

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

No Response