

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Fully Supportive

## 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**

It would depend how easy it is to get a card, how many places were participating and what kind of requirements were placed on the card, as well as the discretion of suppliers when dealing with card holders and if there is a system in place for lost cards that would not delay access to sanitary products.

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.**

There are many instances where an individual's financial circumstances may prevent them from buying needed sanitary products but they do not fulfil income criteria. Also, linking to benefits raises the possibility that use of the card could be affected by benefit sanctions, and access to sanitary products should not be prohibited by any perceived or real breaking of benefit-related rules (your period will still come regardless!)

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)?

All those listed (GP surgeries, pharmacies, community centres, health centres) would be suitable, as would food banks and similar places that provide products to those in need - a single stop can save money for those relying on public transport etc. Schools/colleges/universities would also be a good place to enable young people to access the products.

It would be most important to make sure there are a large number of accessible places to access the products so it is not a high cost to travel to access them.

## 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**

This would make it very easy for students to access needed products, however sufficient funding would need to be provided to these institutions in that they are able to facilitate this without detriment to educational services.

## 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

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

I would not expect to claim free products

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I am currently in a stable job of a good income, so I am able to easily access sanitary products without issue. If my financial circumstances change however, I may need to access this service.

## 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)?

I am uncertain, however I think it is important to ensure that the products provided are of good quality as with low quality sanitary products you generally just end up needing more which would cost more overall.

## 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?

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Slightly positive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

Providing access to sanitary products will allow those requiring them to not have this as an additional stress and financial factor that those who don't require these products don't have to worry about. It is important to ensure that those who do not identify/present as cis-female but do require sanitary products will be able to access them without additional difficulty, intrusive questions etc in order for this to have a positive impact on equality overall. It is also important to ensure that places providing products are accessible to those with disabilities, and that those who are unable to attend a provider in person are able to receive these products somehow.

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

Per my response to the previous question I think it is important to ensure access to products is equally available for those with disabilities and those who do not identify/present as cis-female.

This could be done by having many providers and ensuring that they are accessible to those with disabilities; creating a system where those not able to attend in person are able to receive products delivered; and providing training to on providing products to non-cis people including not judging based on appearance/voice, not asking intrusive questions, emphasising products are available to all who need them. This latter point presumes products are available on a self-declaration basis, in which case staff have no need to query someone's gender before providing. If a different system is used to provide the card/products not based on self-declaration then it is necessary to find a way to ensure those who have not legally changed gender/name/etc but do not present as cis-female are not denied access to sanitary products they require.

## 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?

I've mentioned in several responses, but would like to emphasise here the necessity of considering both disabled and non-cis people who require these products.

If the buildings of suppliers are not accessible to those with disabilities then this will severely limit access for those who require it. Likewise many people may not be able to attend a supplier in person but still require sanitary products and should not be prevented from accessing them.

The majority of the consultation documents uses the term 'females' when discussing those who need access to sanitary products however trans men and non-binary people also require these products and are more likely to experience discrimination when attempting to access them due to not presenting as a 'female'. If this bill is to provide equal sanitary access, it should so for all who require products not just all 'females'. In

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particular the section regarding plan sanitary dispensers and bins in female toilets in schools etc would have a detrimental impact on young trans people, who may then have to choose between the bathroom they identify with and the bathroom with sanitary products, and also may face bullying as a result.