

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

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Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I am fully supportive of all aspects of the proposed Bill except the provision in universities. Students that gain entry to university should be able to access their own funds (via part-time employment or student loans), have an understanding of menstruation and have sufficient organisational skills to manage their own menstrual needs. At times of limited resources, it is important to provide to those at most need. Removing the university aspect of the Bill would release more funds for the C card type scheme for those individuals on low incomes.

## 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**

The c-card scheme could be provided to those at most need. It would be discreet. There would be less wastage than an unlimited supply via public toilets.

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

The card should be available only to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits; its use should be restricted (e.g. by limiting the number of products that may be claimed each month)

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

Limiting the number of products that may be claimed each month would prevent misuse (i.e. fraud). If the agreed limited quantities are not sufficient for heavy bleeders then the individual should be encouraged to seek medical help. Referral in this manner may identify a previously undiagnosed health need, therefore potentially preventing suffering and serious complications. Perhaps there may be the possibly a second card for double supplies if their heavy bleeding is ongoing and not a health concern. I do not support the availability of the card for anyone because at the estimated monthly costs of sanitary products, period poverty should only be an issue for those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.

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 prefer collection at community pharmacies as these are well distributed across Scotland, often open long hours (7 days per week) and have systems for supply. Community pharmacists are an accessible and trusted health professional, available without an appointment and can discuss any health issues with the individual in their private consultation rooms. GP surgeries, community centres and health clinics are not open such long hours and would be less private.

## 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

## 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.**

Due to underlying health condition (PCOS) I have experienced infrequent periods and have bled when not expected. There has been no supplies at work and had to wait until lunch break before trying to find a shop in a half hour lunch break. Due to the work premises being in an industrial estate and no shops nearby it was quiet daunting and now always make sure I have provisions in my drawer at work, a spare pad in my bag in case this happens again.

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**

Even though on a relatively low income and a relatively heavy bleeder, I do not expect the Government to supply me products. I think affordable products are available to the majority in a first world country. Now with the availability and increase use of reusable menstrual cups being introduced this should lessen the need for tampons and towels for some individuals.

## 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)				X		

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

<b>sanitary products)</b>						
<b>(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)</b>				X		

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

Not supplying to universities. Targeting those on low income and schools.

## 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?

Preventing fraud and ensuring those most in need are identified. Not providing big brand products as this would be a waste of resource and be open to criticism. This positive bill would end up an unfair system penalising those who currently are happy to pay for their own products.

## 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:**

Definitely. Pharmacists and the introduction of the C-card type system could potentially identify health problems, prevent health inequalities and also have a positive impact on attendance at schools/ colleges giving all individuals the same opportunities.

## Page 19: General

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

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Proper media coverage.