

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".)

Student (at school, college or university)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Katie Dubarry

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

It's about time this was discussed in Parliament! Excited that Scotland could become forerunners in this area, the world would look to us. As we live in a deeply unequal country, this Bill would help women believe that they are all considered as equal citizens in our society.

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

Although I think there are more radical ways, such as having automatic provision of menstrual cups to all young girls, I understand the need to use this sort of system, if only to abate distracting commentators who will talk about those who abuse the system. Having a card still places a barrier, but this would depend on how it is publicised and operated. For example, advertising it in this manner 'register then get your free products' could be off putting. Advertising 'free sanitary products here' then having the personal simply give you the card for next time would diminish the idea that you have to apply or register first. The c-card system has these same problems. None the less I support it as I think it is the most realistic model in the current climate.

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.

It is very important that it is open to all and unlimited. For the first point, if it is means tested then there are other ways that could be more effective eg automatic registration/delivery when you receive the appropriate benefit, in the form of products given directly by advisors eg jobcentre advisors, or maybe through a voucher scheme like milk vouchers. BUT I firmly think it should be universal, much like health care. You should never have to prove your income, you don't have to in order to access condoms or birth control after all. Secondly, it should always be unlimited as no one can tell a woman how many menstrual products she needs, she knows better herself!! The variability in flow is huge between different women and even from month to month or day to day! Limiting provision will lead to the same issues that have launched this campaign.

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 pharmacies would be great, as they are generally very accessible. I do think it goes without saying that they should also be available anywhere where health services are delivered. I think the most important thing is proximity rather than type of location. So if a community doesn't have a pharmacy or GP surgery, maybe the local library could stock them instead.

Other ideas I have are: midwives / Health visitors visiting new mums, community centres, council offices, why not some shops even. What about automatic distributors, large ones like vending machines rather than the individual types in toilets, you could have a code on your card that you type into the machine and receive the packet that you want. This could work well in shopping centres for example or places with large toilet facilities.

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

For the same reasons outlined in the document, I think this is an essential provision.

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 expect to claim free products occasionally

Please explain the reasons for your response

I would use free products if I was in need at university. I would also use card type provision if menstrual cups or other reusable products were available. But I would only use this occasionally as these are not things that need to be renewed often.

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			

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

(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)				X		
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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 providing reusable products is the way to go, although these have a higher initial cost there would be savings over the lifetime of the product. This would also be more environmentally friendly.

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

I think it sends a clear message that women and girls are valued citizens and that their wellbeing is as important as others. I also think it's very important that the mention of trans people who menstruate remains, particularly in the current climate.

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

By ensuring there is correct provision to allow trans people to access the sanitary protection they need in a discreet manner, so they do not need to go and ask someone that may not know that they are trans for example. It is also important that people without a postcode can still access products eg homeless people.

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:

This could be delivered sustainably by providing reusable products eg menstrual cups or cloth pads. This is the most ecological form of sanitary protection.

Page 19: General

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

No Response