

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Jane King

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

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

Sanitary products are a necessity for girls and women. I actually feel they should be provided to all free of charge so this bill at least means that women and girls on low incomes will at least be given them for free.

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

Whatever means are used to distribute the sanitary products should not involve any kind of stigma or other people being able to tell that the woman or girl is part of some system to get them for free. I think the products should be available for women and girls to help themselves to in places they are needed such as in women's toilets although I realise this could limit the range of products available from which women and girls could choose.

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.

I don't think many women and girls would take advantage of this scheme. There is so much stigma around periods and being poor. If women and girls did help themselves to more than was necessary it would probably be to pass on to other women and girls who are also on a low income. Limitations on what could be gained from the card would not allow for the great variation on the type and quantity individual women and girls need.

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)?

Schools, corner shops, community venues, public toilets, food banks, libraries - you need to think about women and girls in Scotland who live in remote locations such as the Highlands & Islands where it might be difficult to access the above venues close to home. You also need to consider confidentiality in such locations where it can be harder to maintain privacy.

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 you should also consider obligations to women who live on low incomes and on benefits by providing

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)?

dispensers in staff toilets in organisations where the pay is low.

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.

I am now 52. Between the ages of 18 - 25 I was unemployed and there were occasions when I had to shop lift sanitary products.

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

I would expect to claim free products regularly

Please explain the reasons for your response

As we live in such a wealthy country I don't see why I should have to pay for having periods.

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:

Please explain the reasons for your response

When it comes to individuals I don't think the majority of women would claim free sanitary products due to inconvenience of having to obtain them from a venue other than a shop although if there was a scheme where you could get them free from anywhere you can currently buy them that might be a different matter. I don't think universities, colleges etc. should be expected to pay for such a scheme that should be funded via government.

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 not sure about this one.

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 is women's rights issue and any scheme to acknowledge and improve the rights of a disadvantaged group has a wider impact on other disadvantaged group as it marks a commitment to a fairer society.

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

I don't think there is a negative impact although I am sure some people would think women and girls should continue paying for such products or place limitations on such a scheme because of an assumption that women and girls would take advantage. This couldn't be the case if sanitary products were free to all women and girls.

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:

I am sure providing free sanitary products must be a drop in the ocean compared to expenditure on other free provisions such as NHS prescriptions for example. For me it is all about women's rights and hopefully there would be no going backwards.

Page 19: General

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

I think it is a fantastic proposal and about time (although at 52 I might be going through the menopause soon!) Hopefully it will contribute to the decrease and stigma women and girls feel about having periods. It is also an example of how much fairer and right on the Scottish government is compared to the UK government. I wonder if having so many female part leaders has anything to do with this proposed bill!