

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Nicola Herd

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**

I have researched the subject of period poverty as a human rights issue for my postgraduate dissertation and believe that, although stigma around the topic of menstruation may mean that the issue is less openly discussed than food insecurity, there is a real need for free provision of menstrual sanitary products.

## 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 believe that if the scheme was open to everyone it would remove an element of stress and stigma about having to reveal your personal finance situation, but that only those who genuinely need products would utilise the scheme-therefore the cost would not be too high. I also think this is a good approach as it would include those who may not qualify if the scheme was means tested, who are unable to access funds due to reasons regarding coercive control and domestic abuse. It would also include transgender people who menstruate and may face an additional barrier of stigma in having to prove their need for 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.**

I see no reason for people to 'exploit' the scheme. People's economic situations may be subject to change suddenly for a variety of reasons and this is why having universal access is important. Some people have heavy periods, need products after giving birth, or may have multiple menstruating members in one family. Therefore having unlimited access is important and removes any additional stigma.

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 of the above, as well as educational institutions. I feel many of the machines that dispense menstrual sanitary products in public toilets are far too expensive. For those who are unable to purchase these products in shops it means an additional strain on resources.

## 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

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**Please explain the reasons for your response**

Often these machines are very expensive, especially for the amount of products you get for your money. If a child at school unexpectedly starts their period or someone is caught off-guard and can therefore not make it to a shop to buy products more cheaply in bulk then it can be a huge expense for someone on a low income. Not being able to afford sanitary products can mean that people decide not to go to school/university and their education may suffer as a result.

**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				

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I am aware that Bodyform have assisted organisations who provide sanitary products to those in need via a corporate responsibility programme. Although individuals who are able to contribute via taxes may see an

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

increase in cost I think this would be minimal. I believe the benefits to improving people's health as a consequence of good menstrual hygiene management would definitely be worth the expense. The benefits of providing products in educational institutions would enable all to achieve their full potential and therefore benefit society as a whole.

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

Although I'm aware that reusable menstrual sanitary products are not practical and suitable for everyone they are cheaper and more environmentally friendly in the long-run, so potentially offering these items to those who are willing and able to use them may reduce some cost in the long-run.

## 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 allows those who menstruate to participate more fully in society and to live a full life with dignity.

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

A related issue is the stigma which surrounds menstruation, and more education on the topic is needed in schools. I think the less stigma surrounding menstruation there is the more likely people will see this as a natural phenomenon that need to be addressed with the requisite menstrual hygiene management facilities- menstrual hygiene products and means of disposing these items are essential. If people view these products as the essential items that they are there can be no objection in providing them.

## 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:**

Although the underlying reasons why people need to access menstrual sanitary products, such as poverty, homelessness, and domestic abuse, need to be addressed to tackle the root of the problem, I believe only those who need the products will claim them so the cost will not be excessive.

## Page 19: General

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

*No Response*