

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".)

Politician (MSP/MP/peer/MEP/Councillor)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Lewis Macdonald MSP

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 support this proposal because I believe women should have access to period products as and when they require them with no cost attached. Periods are not a woman's choice and it is therefore an inequality that these products are not affordable to some 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

Universal access is important, as it will ensure sanitary products get to all who need them including those on low incomes who are perhaps not in receipt of benefits.

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.

The free condom scheme is well established but has a relatively low take-up rate – with those who can afford it choosing to purchase items. The reasons for supporting a universal system of free sanitary products follows the same logic – these products should be available for free for anyone who needs them, but this does not mean that every individual will choose to take up the free scheme. However, keeping a system of universality will help to prevent stigma and ensure all will have access to sanitary protection should they need it.

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)?

Pharmacies are more accessible than some GP surgeries and health clinics, though some stigma may still remain for younger women who have to ask staff for free sanitary products.

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

Young women in Scotland should not be taking days off school because they don't have adequate period products. Access to products via dispensers in school toilets would be a good way to ensure easy access to sanitary products, without creating an embarrassing situation for young women whereby they have to ask staff

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)?

for assistance.

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)

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

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

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary 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	

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

The financial implications of this will be low compared to the positive effect it will bring.

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?

N/A

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?

Women and girls should be able to access period products as and when they are required and with no cost attached. There should not be any stress or anxiety associated with obtaining sanitary products, nor should they be forced to make a choice between food and managing their monthly period. Women and girls in school, college or university should not have to miss out on their education because they can't get access to sanitary products, and household budgets should not be put under strain because sanitary products have to be purchased for several women in the family home.