

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Fully Supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

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

I believe that women should have access to sanitary free products. Not all women need to access to free sanitary products, but the service should be available for those that do. I consider myself a lower middle class woman, I earn in the region of about 10,000 per annum, I live with a partner and I have no dependents. I do not foresee myself needing to taking advantage of free sanitary products but I am very aware that there are many who do NEED this service. There is nothing luxurious about period products, these products are essential. There is already enough undue shame and stigma attached to periods without the added insult of having to pay upwards of a couple of pounds per pack of sanitary products. When I think of women and girls staying home from school or wadding loo roll into their underwear because of something as natural and unavoidable as a period I truly despair. It's all too easy to ignore these women and girls who rely on food banks and benefits, circumstance has led them to be vilified and marginalised but they are human beings who deserve access to basic sanitary products. Without these products once a month things like school, work, caring for dependents and maintaining good mental health all suffer. Feeling clean and in control during ones period is something every female deserves. The relatively low expense to the Gov to provide adequate sanitary products to those in need will have an enormous effect on women and girl's general well being across Scotland. Please treat these women and girls with the respect they deserve and provide access to free 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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

This form just crashed after I spent forever carefully answering your questions! Please fix this archaic website - it's rubbish :(I am not familiar with the card scheme but due to the diverse breadth of women and girls who may need to take advantage of this service I'm not sure one system will suit everyone. Girls in P5, P6, P7 and high school should have some form anonymous access to products via school. Perhaps in girls bathrooms due the preexisting shame and stigma that surrounds periods, especially in preteens/teens. I also think food and community centres might be a convenient place for women in need to pick up sanitary products. Lastly I think when visiting the nurse for routine contraceptive consultations, pap smears etc the nurse could privately ask about your need for free sanitary products before issuing something similar to a prescription to be picked up in an anonymous paper bag at a near by chemist. This might also be a good opportunity to learn more about the women taking advantage of the service via short OPTIONAL questionnaires the nurse can carry out. I also think you should be actively pursuing the kind of women who would rely on this service for their opinions as I don't personally have any experience of period poverty.

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

Other (please specify)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I am not very familiar with the card scheme but I think you should take the opinion that women aren't out to take advantage of the system and no women should be asked intrusive questions in order to receive free sanitary products. There are already enough off putting elements of shame and stigma attached to periods and poverty in our society without being subjected to questioning. I think optional questionnaires should be a part of the process to allow you to learn more about the women taking advantage of the services.

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 already covered this in previous section but will copy paste below.

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I also think food and community centres might be a convenient place for women in need to pick up sanitary products.

Lastly I think when visiting the nurse for routine contraceptive consultations, pap smears etc the nurse could privately ask about your need for free sanitary products before issuing something similar to a prescription to be picked up in an anonymous paper bag at a near by chemist. This might also be a good opportunity to learn more about the women taking advantage of the service via short OPTIONAL questionnaires the nurse can carry out.

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 believe schools and colleges in low income areas should provide access to free sanitary products. I think perhaps in universities it should be highly encourage but not an obligation - women of university age are more able to receive products via different avenues such as health centres and doctors offices.

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.

Occasionally I have been close to reaching an overdraft limit and every purchase has been a painful parting with money but I've never been unable to acquire them via friends or hunting down v cheap own brand non-applicator tampons.

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

I do not consider myself in need of financial support and do not foresee claiming free products. I use a

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

mooncup which is a one off purchase of around £20.00 and lasts around a year or more but does not work for all women.

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)?

Surely buying wholesale bulk products would not cost much. For example the raw intrinsic cost of cotton for a tampon must be very little. A huge amount is added on by companies and pays for overheads such as advertising, marketing, staff, fancy packaging and unnecessary and non eco friendly plastic applicators.

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 would be a great equaliser and one less thing women would have to worry about, feel shame about.

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

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I struggle to think of anything but perhaps just being as non invasive as possible and making access easy and not judgemental.

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:

Economically speak I'm sure there will initially be a setup cost that will be higher than the subsequent running cost. I believe acquiring the actual sanitary products will be the least of the expenses. There will no doubt be a few new jobs born out of this, people to figure out the many elements of acquiring the products, dispensing them, training people in how to talk about and issue the products. In my view new jobs are always good for the economy. I also wholeheartedly believe that the overall productivity of women and girls who currently suffer from period poverty will be greatly improved. Environmentally there is always going to be an impact in the production of any item. I think the impact can be reduced by offering non applicator tampons/tampons with card applicators. Pads should also be available - I'm sure there are biodegradable options. Menstrual cups are made of a small amount of medical grade silicone and last a long time. Basically I think that if everyone involved engages their brains and works toward a sustainable and economically sound model the bill can be delivered sustainably.

Page 19: General

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

Women and girls deserve this service.