

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

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Fully Supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

Through my work experience i have seen first hand how women and girls are unable to afford sanitary protection, and are therefore disadvantaged. I often take sanitary products to service users who would otherwise be unable to afford the products, however this is limited to having products available, and having service users who are comfortable to request such products. In the part our organisation received donations of products from Women for Independence Scotland and although we were grateful the majority of products were night-time/heavy flow pads. The majority of women comfortable to request products from me were likely to be given these pads as it was what was available. I am aware that this must only be the tip of the ice berg, there are likely to be many more women who do not have access to free products who would otherwise go without so i would wholeheartedly support free products for women. I am also aware of the stigma related to periods and have witnessed this through our group work programme. We let group members know that we have free sanitary products, however they only tend to access this in private (when left in toilets) and would not admit to needing products or ask in advance for these.

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 would work well for some women, however i feel this system would have limitations. Women using a c-card style system would perhaps have to plan ahead more, e.g. to access drop-in sessions/ doctor surgeries during opening hours rather than item all hour supermarkets. I have also spoken to some women who are embarrassed to use a c-card (variety of reasons; face to face contact, knowing people who work at clinics, lack of privacy, acknowledgement of low funds). I'm not sure if this would also extend to a system for period 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 would be worried that a system for people on low benefits would exclude women with no recourse to public funds. There are also families who may not be entitled to benefits but who are struggling with debts and not have enough available. Women who may be subject to domestic abuse but unable to provide proof of benefits may also be disadvantaged.

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)?

As previous answer I would be wary of restricted hours, however feel that it would be beneficial for as many venues as possible to provide products. Can include voluntary agencies.

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

Should go hand in hand with education and staff training to support women.

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.

Previous issues with debt meant that i was limited to the cheapest available products, not always suitable for my needs. As a teenager my family did not always have much available cash so i would use my pocket money, meaning that other items would be sacrificed.

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			

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

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

Not sure.

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

Men are not really affected by this so feel women are disadvantaged.

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

If available to all women i don't think this would be a problem.

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?

Unsure

Page 19: General

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

No Response