

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Hazel Curran

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

Rising costs and the effects of austerity mean many women are making difficult choices about what to spend their money on especially women with children or young women in further education. Having access to sanitary products should never be based on income, the dignity of all women should be respected.

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

I am not aware of the card-based system in detail but would support the most accessible and fair system and not means-tested.

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

The card should be available only to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Anyone eligible should have access to a reasonable number of products (resources may mean that these are not 'unlimited'?). Maybe people who do not fit the criteria of low income or on benefits but are in temporary crisis e.g. mental health crisis, domestic abuse, spiralling debt, could also access the scheme?

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 - perhaps pharmacies as the most 'normal' setting as women would be likely to buy their sanitary products there. But women should not be stigmatised if they are seen to be accessing these products, so a 'normal' setting like a busy supermarket might be less suitable. What about food banks?

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 students should have access to sanitary products as needed and without financial hardship.

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?

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)?

I'm not sure, sorry.

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?

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Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response

Access to sanitary products should not be dependent on cost/income, it should be available to all women as needed, creating more equality and fairness.

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

I can't think of any negative impact on equality issues.

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:

There may be some economic impact on agencies which provide free products, but I don't think this will be 'disproportionate'. The social impact is likely to be positive. I don't think there will be a negative environmental impact as similar numbers of products will still be used.

Page 19: General

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

I think this is a topic which until now has been ignored or not talked about - good luck to Monica Lennon and others on getting it noticed.