

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Colin Johnstone

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 a wife and a 25 year old daughter. Put simply, I wish to support them - and every other woman and girl - in their right for improved and equitable health care, social and economical parity with men, and an end to the indignity of 'period poverty'.

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?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response

The card-based system is not only undignified but could lead to inevitable misuse: as a bargaining tool or method of controlled power by a spouse/partner/father over a woman or girl. The embarrassment of presenting the card like a sort of 'voucher' for free sanitary products (up to a value of?) could potentially put many women and young girls off. There is enough stigma attached - by way of some uninformed and ignorant men - to having your period, that 'time of the month thing' that men either mock or fail to recognise as a genuine health issue. A card-carrying system is not the way to improve understanding between women and men for the need and human right to dignity in today's society.

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

There is no need for a card scheme

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Refer to previous answer.

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 would be suitable, particularly for those who are experiencing their first period. Provided those asking are respected and can be assured of decency, the dispensing of sanitary products could become an everyday occurrence that we no longer see as furtive or embarrassing.

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

My wife is a secondary school teacher and sees young girls struggling with period pain, some missing classes

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)?

and occasionally (still) being teased about their 'time of the month'. If we are to improve the relationship between genders to a point where no girl is mocked in school/college/university and a woman is no longer seen to be a liability at work while having her period, then facilities must be put in place anywhere that allows the free movement and full participation of girls and women in society.

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	

Please explain the reasons for your response

There would be an inevitable and significant increase in costs by the introduction of free sanitary products across the board. However, it should be balanced with the fact that we show a willingness to be inclusive, to allow young girls to be at school or in further education at all possible times, or to have women in full/part time employment where they feel valued at all possible times. By doing this, girls and women become more valued,

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

productive and positive in their participation in society.

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

See previous answer.

Costs will be high initially, there can be no doubt of that. But a well educated, healthy and productive female force will be enabled through this Bill. Their full (and supported) participation in a contemporary and forward thinking society will be nothing but beneficial.

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's about time men in Scottish society spotted the difference! Why any man thinks that period pain is merely an inconvenience or that the cost of sanitary products is a small price to pay for being female, needs their head examined and their (in) equalities rebooted. The quicker and better we respect women in this country then the quicker and better we men will become. 2017 and we still laugh or cringe at adverts for women's periods. It's daft! We're daft!

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

If by negative one means financially constrained, then that is a small price to pay. Initially. We can all gain from this proposed Bill. Embrace it!

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

Please explain the reasons for your response:

This is an issue which will inevitably cause the most headache and heartache. Once companies who manufacture sanitary products get their heads around the fact that Scotland is looking to 'amend' their monopoly and power over women, then they will sit up and take notice. If they have any sense or decency they will mitigate some, if not all, of the problems that arise from this proposed Bill.

Page 19: General

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

We all have to work hard to support this Bill. Girls and women deserve it. We all deserve it. We all deserve to live in a society that enables and respects one another, allows for differences but truly believes that we are equal. This Bill should, must, go through or we do a disservice to mothers, daughters, sisters and wives who will wonder at our backwardness, our peculiarities as a nation, a people that allows its girls and women to continue to pay for a 'luxuary' that is anything but. Support the Bill.