

# 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".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Grainne Braithwaite / Scottish Circle

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 fully support this, because far too many women and girls cannot afford adequate sanitary products. This is not something women and girls are able to control. Providing these products free of charge, would only benefit our country. Countless women and girls miss classes and work or work opportunities because of period poverty. Equally, women and girls in need (if they have access to tampons), have suffered from Toxic Shock Syndrome, a life threatening illness, as a result of overuse. Important to note that 'being caught short' can be humiliating, on top of creating obstacles to productivity in schools or the workplace. If these products were readily available it would eliminate many of those issues.

## 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**

Perhaps for those who require them on a month to month basis. However I feel they should be readily available in schools, public places and work places anyway.

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.**

My reasoning for this is because even women with jobs are struggling financially. Some women will of course require this every month, however there will also be women who may only require it from time to time. Not every woman will use this service, but it should be available to every woman should she require 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)?

All of the above. Also schools, work places, public restrooms.

## 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**

If a woman requires sanitary products suddenly and is not prepared, it is most likely she will miss her class. We need to ensure our society supports women in every way. No woman can control her period, so we need to

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make sure periods are not an obstacle in the path of success, learning and growth.

## 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.**

I was working on a project with only men, 40 miles from the nearest place that sold sanitary products. It took nearly two hours to get what I required. It was completely unexpected, and was very inconvenient. Had the public restrooms had these products, it would have been fine. That's just one example of a few.

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

I would expect to claim free products occasionally

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I would expect to claim free products occasionally if I were in a situation where I had begun to menstruate when I wasn't expecting it and I had forgotten to top up my supplies when out working or socialising.

## 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

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

products)						
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**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I believe the government will save money in a number of ways. Firstly, illnesses related to period poverty i.e: infections, TSS, mental health issues, will drop. Those are costly for the NHS - tampons and maxi pads are much cheaper. Also the more women are able to work (which they will without period poverty) will increase their earnings, and increase the amount of tax they pay. I'm sure schools will benefit from having a higher attendance of girls and women. It may cost them something but would improve attendance. A worthy investment I feel. Work places would benefit as, again, less sick days. Individuals - I expect women who can afford sanitary products would continue to purchase them as usual. There are many items available for free on the NHS or through clinics - such as pain killers, condoms, acid reducers etc, that millions of people still pay for on a daily basis. I truly believe that only women and girls who genuinely need free products will use the free access.

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

I think by making it universally free and available will limit administrative costs. Not everyone will require the free products, and having to treat each person on a case by case basis will likely be more costly.

## 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**

Because women cannot control their monthly cycle. If condoms and birth control can be provided for free, then so should sanitary products. It will reduce the huge stigma attached to periods if we send the message that they are normal, they don't interfere with a woman's day to day life, and the way to achieving that is by providing free products so they aren't a burden to women who need them and can't afford or access them when required.

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

How could this have negative impact? I can only see the positives here. Perhaps if there is negative impact, continue to send the message of the benefits - largely educational and economic to the people who are hesitant to 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?

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Yes

**Please explain the reasons for your response:**

It will save the NHS money on treatment for TSS, infections and mental health issues. It will also save the NHS money on birth control - many women who cannot afford sanitary products use birth control as a way to limit their cycle.

## Page 19: General

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

No I'm done here, thank you.