

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

I don't think it's unreasonable to offer sanitary products for free. The NHS offer protection at no cost, even

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

though that person has a choice of whether they have sex or not. Women don't have a choice whether they menstruate, and there are many people who would benefit from having access to free sanitary products - particularly in schools when puberty is a huge issue for young people who might feel embarrassed about going into a shop and buying what they need (they may not have a female adult/friend they can speak to about it or ask if they can buy some). With the cuts from the government this bill could be a lifeline to a lot of women. Sanitary products would still be available to buy, but having them available for free as an option for those in need shouldn't be up for debate in the first place. If the government rely on the tampon tax, they can transfer that to sexual protection products which - at the end of the day - are optional. People can choose to refrain from having unprotected sex, but a woman can't stop having a period every month for years. The reason I chose partially supportive is that I think in addition to offering these products in schools, as part of a health class (when they're teaching young people about puberty etc) to give out a re-usable option to girls or at least make them aware of them - rather than simply relying on pads or tampons. When I was at school, around 10-11, we had such a class and we were given handouts and condoms. No pads or tampons, but condoms! Why hand out something that might encourage something illegal (having sex underage) and yet not offer something which young girls will actually need. There are menstrual cups, and washable underwear-type products that would be both good for the environment and save money long-term (both to women, and the NHS - if they were to offer sanitary products free) Another thing - the products supplied could be more environmentally friendly than most you find in-store (which are expensive!), products that reduce waste and promote being environmentally friendly (such as reusable menstrual cups or that have recyclable packaging) - which might save costs.

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 haven't used the c-card system so I don't feel I can comment, however I don't see why a card should be necessary. If someone wants to request free sanitary products - regardless of whether they appear to be female or not - then they should be able to do so without having to prove their eligibility.

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.

Same as my answer to question 2

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)?

They should be available anywhere that someone might be able to access them - which will be dependant on each area. For example, in rural areas where there isn't a GP surgery or clinic nearby, a community centre/village hall or school might be the best option

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

Local authorities are always looking for ways to cut costs - making it an obligation will mean that the products will be available and people will know it's something they can rely upon if and when they might need to access them

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.

There have been times when I was on jobseekers and payments were stopped for no reason - it would take a few weeks to sort the problem out and backdate the payments, so money was tight. Living in a rural community meant that sanitary products were more expensive in the few shops there are in my local town, and not being able to afford something like a bus fare to get them elsewhere for less meant I was often out of pocket or had to make do with changing once a day if I could manage - which is both humiliating and frustrating to deal with.

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 don't go to school/college, and I'm not receiving benefits (and not eligible even if I were out of work) so I wouldn't expect to be able to claim free products - though knowing the option is there if I genuinely needed it would be great

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						Y

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

public sector (e.g. local authorities, the NHS)						
(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

I don't have any further explanation

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

Yes - taking the menstrual cup as an example. These cost more initially but long-term lead to increasing savings. They're more environmentally friendly (how much waste is produced from sanitary products/bins alone?), and by encouraging women to try other products that will likely benefit them eventually the cost of producing the more expensive product will reduce. Plus a lot of women are unable to use tampons/pads - increasing awareness of other options will mean less women will need to go to their GP about this problem and save money for the NHS

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?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

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

Not requiring people to sign forms to apply for free sanitary products, or restricting the products to those who fit criteria

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

Page 19: General

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

No Response