

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".)

Student (at school, college or university)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Fully Supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

If girls and women have uninhibited access (socially and logistically and financially) to sanitary products to deal

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

with menstrual cycles, it could only positively impact their lives and by extension, society on the whole.

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

There should be more than a card-based system option for those who, for whatever reason, cannot utilise the card at any given time.

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

The card should be available to anyone; its use should be restricted (e.g. by limiting the number of products that may be claimed each month)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I think that the number of products that can be claimed should have a cap per individual based on that individual's need.

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)?

The locations given as examples in question 4. are great as standard places to obtain the free sanitary products. However, per community, there could be a point of distribution with a retail outlet or at university/college student union buildings. Sanitary products should not be made to sound or be thought of as so clinical and formal as though it is a disease (one MUST obtain such items from a medical organisation). Making it more informal and more easily accessible in daily/normal places would make the topic of menstruation itself even less taboo for many people.

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

A normal part of the life of many women and girls is dealing with a period as surely as they have to eat food - not eating, not being able to take care of oneself means a greater likelihood of not being able to manage other aspects of life. Schools, colleges, and universities provide outlets to buy food and, for some, obtain free meals, so I think another provision should be to ensure that bodies are taken care of and for this other natural function

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to be addressed and supported adequately as well.

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 are times I have found myself either without the funds to purchase as many products as I need during a cycle, and also times I have been caught off-guard at college or elsewhere and no menstrual products in sight even to be purchased.

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

I would expect to claim free products regularly

Please explain the reasons for your response

I would hope I could claim or have to option to claim free products as needed/regularly, but that does not necessarily mean that I would actually claim at all. It would be helpful on campus.

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 have assumed that it is not economically viable for any country to deal with the numbers of women and girls who have to exclude themselves from work or university or school or any other thing that benefits its society. If women and girls had access to sanitary/menstrual products, including but not limited to pain management aids, then there would be an increase in presence and participation by these incredibly important members of society. The total cost of supplying necessary products would be insignificant compared to the amount, for example, that a university spends to even market to/recruit young women and women each year.

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

The Bill could emphasise educating about the variety of menstrual products there are in the UK. Educating about healthier options is also key e.g. menstrual cups are absolutely more healthy, environmentally friendly, and cost efficient across the board. A push towards products which do not contain harmful chemicals/materials would also be long-term beneficial to individuals and the country, for obvious reasons. If the Bill's purpose is to generate a positive outcome, then the focus should not be on being as cheap as possible. That is already starting on the wrong foot. When something matters, you make adjustments to fit that particular thing. If, for example, menstrual products and management of one's cycle cost £15 per individual (not including those who opt for the more comfortable and healthier alternative of the cup which would be a very low one-time cost of approximately £25 per individual for as long as three - five years), then this will be paid back either way you look at it seeing as that individual is more than likely now equipped to function at a higher level than before... less stress about how to manage, where to find, how much will this cost, to distract that person, and that's on a good day. Imagine women, particularly, part of the workforce who have no choice but to leave the job and go home or not show up at all once their cycle starts. There are women who do not make enough per week to afford irregular periods, and might not work at a job with accessible means of managing said period. So many scenarios, but looking at it from a finance lens is only going to limit the amount of sincere support this Bill could provide.

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

There is a saying that equality only works if everybody is starting off at the same place. What the Bill should aim for is an equitable situation. The mentioned protected characteristics are not all equal either, in terms of focus in society and response in society. The Bill should be shaped around the fact that even within, say, disability, there are those who will require more assistance than others for a myriad of reasons, in order to achieve equality. I believe that the Bill can have a positive overall impact on equality if it genuinely takes everybody into account based on sufficient research such as widely-collected feedback across the different protected characteristics. The Bill cannot have a positive impact if it is developed based on a few (which would be easier and the norm) instead of in consideration of the many.

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

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Please refer to my answer for question 10.

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:

It can, but those persons delivering the Bill should not collectively be only from one/similar background having not incorporated legitimate feedback and current realities from other backgrounds. It really won't have an equitable outcome if the Bill would have been grounded in one perspective and singular view of who should benefit (which might not have been intentional).

Page 19: General

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

Only reiterating that healthier and environmentally-friendly alternatives/reusable menstrual products should also be considered. Short-term and long-term it would help the Bill to go farther with its premise, in my opinion.