

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

In principle I am supportive of the proposed Bill and the reasons behind it for its implementation. I understand

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

that if this proposal is to become an Act then the effectiveness will nonetheless be assessed for its cost-effectiveness for the tax payer and its effectiveness to menstruating girls and women. My first concern is the financial implications of such a scheme. I understand that this will be funded by the Scottish Government. I am concerned that money will be taken from one service to fund this service. Implementation of this scheme should not be in detriment to another which may also be as vitally important. It is up to politicians therefore to ask the right questions, if this is implemented, to ascertain where the money from the Scottish Government would come from. I am also concerned that the uptake of this scheme will be lower than anticipated and will not be effective to those in need. Implementation of this scheme in schools would need to be coupled with education in an attempt to reduce the stigma of access to free sanitary products. Adults can discuss menstruation and sanitary products use but girls in primary and secondary schools are generally embarrassed by such discussion. Therefore, if access in schools to free products is 'taboo' then some may want to do without rather than the 'shame' of getting free sanitary products. This would obviously be counter-productive to the purpose of the scheme. It should not be an issue but it is. A way to overcome this would be to have a selection of sanitary products in each toilet cubicle where each girl can choose what they wish without their peers knowing that they are using them. Accessing from a machine or an individual at the school would be counter-productive I believe. At university and college, as individuals have matured, there is less stigma surrounding menstruation and I can imagine that the uptake would be better at this level than at school level. Another issue is to address menstrual cramps which can be an obstacle to accessing education and the workplace - perhaps more research is required in this area.

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?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response

See previous comments about the best way to implement within schools.

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.

Having sanitary products available to all could be costly. A means-tested approach would ensure that those who needed it would get it. Those who can comfortably afford it would purchase them themselves anyway.

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)?

Schools, universities, colleges, pharmacies and health clinics.

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

Please see previous response about my objection to dispensers in schools.

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?

I would not expect to claim free products

Please explain the reasons for your response

I am able to afford to buy sanitary products and do not think I should get them free.

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)?

No Response

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?

I have stated already.

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?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response:

My only concerns I have stated previously as to where the funding would come from.

Page 19: General

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

No Response