

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Pam Currie

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 have long believed that period poverty was a very real issue for girls and women in Scotland. I work in further education and I had raised this around 10 years ago at Stow College - our sanitary machines were old, expensive and often broken or out of stock. We didn't win free provision but new cheaper machines were installed.

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

No. Women often need these products immediately - particularly in an educational setting, and this system would be impractical and potentially stigmatising.

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.

This would avoid concerns over misuse of the system while still providing free products. I am not convinced that a card system is needed or effective but it could be used to complement other schemes.

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)?

Yes - all of the above but particularly schools, colleges and universities. In schools and colleges in particular girls and women are missing out on education because they cannot access products or are worried about being caught out.

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

Yes. Sending girls to the school office is humiliating, stigmatising and ineffective (they have to ask to get out of class, then queue at the office, then make their way to the toilet - all the time terrified that they have 'leaked'). Periods are a normal part of life - we need to normalise sanitary products. In colleges and universities we have

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students from low income backgrounds, this is just yet another hurdle to their attainment.

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 can afford products (I work full time) but I have experienced irregular and heavy periods in the past and have had difficulty accessing products in college. I work across a number of sites and many of the people I work with are men or post menopausal women - asking others for products is embarrassing, and I am rarely near a chemist during the working day.

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

I would expect to claim free products occasionally

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

I think the costs of free products are negligible for providers in the context of cleaning/toilet roll etc budgets. It

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

might have some impact on producers but again I think this would be negligible. For most people, free products would be a 'stop gap' for emergency use - they would not necessarily be top end products.

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

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

Periods affect a specific section of the population!

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

N/a

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

Page 19: General

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

No Response