

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Craig Finlay

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?

The Bill gives Scotland the opportunity to lead the way in ending this huge inequality in society; an inequality which companies profit from, whilst many on low incomes suffer. Nobody should have to be out of pocket for reasons they cannot control; reasons which reoccur on a monthly basis, decade after decade. We all need food to survive and we accept this as a necessary personal expense, but it is not a gender discriminant expense. Having a period is. I fully support this Bill to help girls, women and their families keep more money in their pocket.

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

I would not necessarily support any dispensary system where the recipient has to, in effect, go "cap-in-hand" for sanitary products. I have always felt this adds to the stigma of being hard-up, and must make life very unenjoyable. I can imagine a person's pride must be dented each time they make their way to a food bank or similar service, hoping not to be spotted. I would argue that there must be a better system of dispensing items, and I would suggest that the range of "free" goods be stocked on all retailers shelves next to the sanitary products which are for sale. The recipient would then be able to shop normally, and at the check-out the product would be scanned as normal but with a zero charge appearing. Retailers could order these free sanitary products in advance - paid up front by the Government; or the Government invoiced by the retailers afterwards - and this would benefit retailers, whilst also helping solve the issue raised in the Bill which refers to dispensary centres having to be staffed. In short, this Bill should aim to remove stigma altogether.

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.

See section 2 response

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 examples of venue should carry the products, but they should also be available, stocked alongside other sanitary products, on retailers shelves. When purchased, a zero charge would appear on the checkout.

This more discreet method would benefit the footfall of all retailers (ie women and girls using their store), and would end the stigma of recipients accepting "hand-outs".

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

As stated in the Bill, attendance at school and college would no longer be affected, as those who stay at home during their period because they are unable to afford sanitary products would be able to engage in their education more easily.

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)

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

Please explain or give an example of your experience if you feel able to do so.

Male respondent.

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

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

Please explain the reasons for your response

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			

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

(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)					X	
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Please explain the reasons for your response

(c) Cost neutral to businesses, including suppliers/retailers because they would benefit from extra footfall from recipients of free sanitary products who may not have used their store before (if the products were supplied alongside the "to-buy" sanitary products. I have no sympathy for the financial effect on manufacturer's as they are profiting from one of life's major inequalities

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

Not sure.

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

Under sex equality, it would have a huge positive impact as females are no longer paying for a product they use to control a bodily function they have no control over, one which is not encountered by males. Age equality would benefit hugely as young girls/women are more likely to be living on a lower income.

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

As outlined in previous sections of my response, I have described how the stigma of being the recipient of free sanitary products needs to be eliminated.

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:

The Government should seek all possible avenues of raising money to fund the sanitary products required by

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?

this Bill. If funded sustainably, I can see no negative impact from this Bill, when enacted.

Page 19: General

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

I look forward to following the progress of this Bill, particularly as the father of a young daughter, and as the uncle of three young nieces!