

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Suzannah Murning

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?

Period poverty is a serious issues, for which a solution must be found. Targeting schools, colleges and universities to provide free sanitary products seems like an effective means by which those most acutely in need can access the products they need, thus helping to eliminate period poverty.

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

Despite the possibility of obtaining condoms based on the c-card system being embarrassing or shameful for some not having deterred so many from doing so, I would worry that this deterrent might be more acute when it comes to women accessing sanitary products. However, in the absence of a system of distributing products which is even more discrete than the c-card system, I think the proposal is good.

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

The card should be available to anyone; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products

Please explain the reasons for your response.

- If it is just to make accessible to women the full amount of products that they may need (which I believe to be true), then any limitations would have to be set at the maximum amount a person could possibly need (for example on a monthly basis). This would make limitations essentially redundant since no one would be expected to exceed the limitations. - Uncapped access would also remove women's worry that they might not be able to access the amount of products that they need. - It seems unlikely to me that the system will be abused.

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)?

Which ever location is deemed to be the most discrete for women (not to perpetuate the idea that periods or poverty is shameful, simply in acknowledgment of how women may feel about receiving free sanitary products (although I believe the passing of this bill may go some way to overcoming the stigma attached to menstruation!)).

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

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)?

Please explain the reasons for your response

- In general, young women in schools, colleges and universities are some of the most vulnerable individuals when it comes to the problems associated with poverty, including period poverty, in the sense that the psychological worry and shame of going without can have a more deep and lasting effect upon their self-esteem, confidence and future prospects. So, I agree that conferring a duty upon the institutions that they are members of to provide free sanitary products and eliminating this possibility is right, since it thereby targets this specific vulnerable group. - They are also the most vulnerable in the sense that their access to expensive sanitary products is often the most limited. - Women and girls should be able to educate themselves without poverty holding them back.

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 grew up in a single parent household on benefits, so money was tight. It was a worry for me as a young girl to have to ask my mother every month to buy expensive products I knew that she would struggle to afford, and I felt guilty every month for doing so. We shouldn't have to worry or feel guilty about our periods.

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

I would expect to claim free products occasionally

Please explain the reasons for your response

My income is precarious.

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				

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

(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?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response

Women who struggle to afford sanitary products are disadvantaged arbitrarily. It is not on the basis of any morally relevant factor that a girl might miss some classes and perform poorer than her counter-parts as a result of being unable to be effectively protected, nor that a women might miss a job interview or social event for the same reason. It is on the basis of their gender (coupled with their class!). Eliminating the hindrance of a lack of access to sanitary products would therefore redress this unjust imbalance in opportunities.

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

Offering and promoting the use of re-usable menstrual cups might be the most environmentally friendly option (and maybe cheaper?!)

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 positive social effects of eliminating period poverty are potentially profound for women, girls and trans people, therefore any costs are justified (i.e. costs are not disproportionate to benefit), especially considering the sums proposed in the bill are not in fact exorbitant. The environmental impact I believe should be given due

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?

consideration.

Page 19: General

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

No Response