

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Please explain the reasons for your response

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

Whilst I applaud the sentiment behind this move, I think the proposal is flawed. Tackling poverty on such a piecemeal basis is likely to be both ineffective and open to abuse by people who don't need the assistance.

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

Don't know the detailed costs for both operating the system and dispensing the free items, as well as an allowance for the time/labour of those expected to dispense.

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

Other (please specify)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I think this needs tackling at a different level- tackle poverty not just period poverty.

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)?

How is this going to be resourced in terms of personnel? Public services are massively over-stretched as it is.

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)?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response

In schools, this is just a recipe for having the plumber on speed dial.

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.

At times when money has been tight, I have foregone sanitary protection in order to use funds for other expenses (fuel, housing, food, travel etc). I think the solution lies in tackling poverty, fuel costs, the housing crisis, insecure employment, high public transport costs. Not in providing free sanitary products.

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

At the moment, financially I don't need to.

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

Prices might well drop in shops due to free supply elsewhere. However, the public sector, and in particular the staff expected to administer the scheme, would bear the brunt.

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

Persuade a manufacturer to fund and administer the scheme, including provision of items. This would mean no or minimal cost. I believe that has been part of similar schemes in African countries.

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?

Slightly negative

Please explain the reasons for your response

I think you will need to consult the gender-reassignment community extensively and with sensitivity over this, and also that you will need to select and train staff administering the scheme very, very thoroughly to navigate such a sensitive topic with a variety of vulnerable groups.

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

I think there are ways to do that. They involve extensive consultation and training. And that means I think overall the costs of administering the scheme will outweigh the benefits.

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:

I don't think the real costs of this, in terms of both money and staff time/training needs, have been adequately thought through. And I also think that a piecemeal approach to tackling poverty with not work in the face of systemic inequality. Fundamentals like housing, fuel, employment and transport need to be tackled.

Page 19: General

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

Some lessons need to be learned from the experience of free prescriptions.