

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Fully Supportive

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

No girl should be in a position whereby her work or school life should be compromised due to a biological function such as menstruation. For years I have worked for and supported various charities which provide sanitary products for girls in LEDC communities across the world and believe strongly in every girls' right to an education without the worry of the social stigma of menstruation. The fact that 'period poverty' now exists in the UK is utterly disgusting and yet another example of how the current administration has destroyed the country through unnecessary and persistent austerity rendering the poor poorer and the rich even richer. If the government is capable of providing free condoms and contraception throughout the country then they can also justify the provisions of sanitary products for young women. I am not the first to state this but it is a statement which remains true: menstruation is a lot harder to abstain from than sex.

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

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.

By restricting the availability of the cards to those on low incomes it runs the risk of creating a social stigma similar to that experienced at food banks. Likewise, girls of the age of 11 or 12 who are experiencing menstruation for the first time in their lives already face the daunting task of learning to live with their biological functions, oftentimes without the support of friends, family members or teachers due to embarrassment or other social stigmas. Putting them in a position whereby they are expected to apply for access to free sanitary products is unnecessary.

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)?

In schools and universities. Not every girl has the luxury of knowing when her next period will arrive and getting caught short in the middle of class is a recurring nightmare for any teenaged girl.
If paid machines are readily available in public facilities around the country why can something similar not be provided on a free basis in schools, colleges and universities?
Providing pads and tampons at GP clinics is all well and good but are young women really expected to journey to their local doctors surgery every month to top up their provisions?

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)?

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Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response

See previous response

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 would class myself as a middle class individual who was lucky enough to attend school prior to the financial collapse of 2007. As such I grew up in the days before period poverty hit the UK and count myself very lucky. Nevertheless, I distinctly remember occasions during my youth whereby makeshift sanitary products had to be used as I didn't have money to afford to purchase the grossly inflated sanitary towels available in the girls toilets at school. No girl should be in this position. Ever.

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

I would not expect to claim free products

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 parents)				X		

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

consumers of sanitary products)

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

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

No Response

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