

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

## 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

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)

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)?

Pharmacies and related such as Superdrug. Is it possible to use in supermarkets, service stations etc, where most people currently buy these anyway?

## 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**

Free access in public buildings as described would remove a layer of stress most women and girls have had to get used to. To have peace of mind will improve focus on school/college (and work) tasks.

## 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 have yet to meet the woman who has never experienced inconvenience or hassle and embarrassment as a consequence of period. We all get caught out at some point - even those of us most organised and prepared.

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

I would expect to claim free products regularly

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

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I would have these free to all. I appreciate the costs and administration involved though. At the least I would like to see them free for all girls in school and universities. A system of entitlement for those on low incomes would be attractive too, but via some system that does not stigmatise women and their daughters as 'poor'. For myself, I am content to continue to pay, though greater access to (the ability to purchase or free) sanitary products throughout the workplace and in public buildings would be enormously helpful.

**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**

a) I would expect the provision of free sanitary products to have some cost to the state b) I expect free sanitary provision would have some cost to colleges, schools etc - in conjunction with the state c) I expect manufacturers and suppliers of sanitary products will benefit. And this is where I am most sceptical. Currently sanitary products are price competitive and supermarket's own brands, for example, are very good value. My concern is that if they are purchased by tax money, or by colleges etc, the manufacturers and suppliers will raise their prices to whatever the larger purchaser will pay. I would be keen to see some engagement with this issue to attempt to ensure this profiteering does not happen. However, I expect that it will and what we will see is basic and not-very-efficient products provided at inflated costs to the state or colleges and then distributed by them as free, and premium, efficient products available to purchase, I expect also at an inflated cost. The suppliers of sanitary products will say they have raised prices to recoup costs, but I suspect they will benefit across the range - free to premium - and will in fact be beneficiaries of this. However, I am accepting of this if it affords removal of stress and humiliation and greater participation in school and work amongst women. So I think it should be cost-neutral for businesses, but I expect they will exploit the change and in fact benefit. d) As noted above, I expect sanitary providers will raise prices for those still paying and claim they have to. I do not believe this is true, but ultimately I believe women who are not entitled to free sanitary products will pay for those who are. They will pay through both tax and through supplement to prices. I am frustrated by the cynicism and exploitation implied, but I remain fully supportive anyway, as I am supportive of the affordance of dignity and participation amongst women even if it ends up costing me.

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

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*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**

Research has demonstrated that period stress comprises a barrier to social, education and work participation amongst women, and women on low incomes in particular. By removing this barrier, there should be no period-based reason for lack of participation, and for all women, the removal of stress about access to sanitary products and 'accidents' will improve the quality of that participation. This is simply a removal of a barrier to full participation in social and economic life and as such will have an equalising effect.

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

there are 2 potential areas of concern in my opinion.

1. Stigmatisation of women as 'poor'. This is a sensitive issue and needs carefully thought out, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, such as girls in schools.
2. While I have no objection to manufacturers of sanitary products to do well, I would hate to see poor quality products sold at inflated prices to public and educational organisations.

## 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?

Unsure

## Page 19: General

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

*No Response*