

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Rosely Nichols

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

I think the Bill it is very much needed and long due. The excessive prices of these essential items for women, sanitary towels, can be a source of worry for young girls and older women that have restricted budgets. I would like to see free sanitary products for menstruating women offered in toilets, at schools, colleges and universities, very much like toilette paper is provided for all. I also would like to see VAT for these products abolished or greatly reduced.

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

Because every women at reproductive age menstruate I don't see the need for a card. A card to prove you're a woman? No. A card to prove you're in need? No, because this will only stigmatize those in need. I'm sure we need an universal solution for an universal situation. This measure will require great courage from politicians like yourself and will be much welcomed by members of the public like me.

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 am in favor of totally abolishing (or greatly reducing) VAT on such essential item as sanitary towels for all women. This will be much simpler to apply (no cards, no control) therefore the low cost of application will offset against the loss of revenue for the government. If this measure were successful then machines that sell these products (low cost for all women) could be positioned at schools, colleges and universities (if they are cheap there is no need for totally free products).

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)?

The dispensing of these products at school, colleges and universities will reach young people. For older women surgeries or pharmacies would be advisable.

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

Dispensing these products free of charge on schools, colleges and universities will help young women.

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.

My experience is retrospective because now I don't need sanitary products for menstruation anymore. When very young my budget was short and I had to use sanitary towels economically. Later it happened that I had the need for these products unexpectedly and found myself in trouble at work or at school.

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

I have passed the reproductive age.

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

Reducing or abolishing VAT on these products (my preferred solution) would reduce government revenue only, it will not affect business since prices will cover production and distribution costs. School, colleges and universities will have initial costs of setting up delivery points then lower costs for maintaining provisions (very much like providing toilette paper in public toilette).

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

I believe that a universal solution is at the end more economical on this case. So I am very strongly in favor of abolishing or greatly reducing VAT on these products.

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?

The only way to avoid any negative impact on special groups of people such as transgenders, for example, would be to choose a universal solution to the problem i.e. choose to reduce prices by abolishing VAT on these products. This is the simpler solution, the more dignified solution for women in general, and more economical to all but the Government. However, since our population is aging and women need these products only during the first half of their lives, i believe that this measure (of abolishing VAT) would not break the Government by reducing slightly its revenues.

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?

I approve and welcome the initiative for this Bill. However, I am 100% in favor of abolishing VAT on sanitary products for women to make them affordable to all women of reproductive age without the danger of stigmatizing any group. The distribution of these products (low priced) in places such as schools, colleges, universities and work places would greatly improve the lives of women. Introduction of lower prices by this mean would benefit all women.