

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Nobody should ever have to worry about being unable to afford proper sanitary protection. I should also like to see a similar reform introduced on behalf of women who have to cope with incontinence and have to buy pads .The cost of these pads are a serious problem for many women in particular, when having children can cause bladder / retention problems in later life. (Recent comments re. surgical / mesh insertions etc should focus upon the problems / concerns in this area ?) The Government should insist upon the sale of such protections should be based upon as nearly to a non - profit making basis as is possible, or be available as part of the health care services .(Nobody should ever be in a position where they cannot afford such vital needs!)

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

In principle yes . However who would decide who needed / qualified for such a card system?

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)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The limit / number needed to be subject to appeal / open to extension with medical recommendation.

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)?

Whichever location / all of the above that is most convenient to the individual who has need of of the free sanitary products...A registered system, such as operates with prescription medicine / aids etc. would guarantee efficient distribution ?

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

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Please explain the reasons for your response

Provided such a system is adequately controlled to prevent abuse.

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, frequently

Please explain or give an example of your experience if you feel able to do so.

At times - there was a choice between meeting bills or family basic needs - food , energy etc. Sanitary products were in the 'luxury' category ...Absolutely horrible situation, particularly hideous (and seriously depressing) when daughters' needs were concerned too...! The entire attitude to periods in this (so-called) civilized country is simply appalling and must be altered! Menstruation is a normal function...not a 'curse' , nor anything to be made to feel ashamed and ' dirty' over! Similarly , the attitude to incontinence, only slightly less 'unmentionable' by virtue of recent TV advertising (of expensive , often inefficient pads, or very expensive and still disposable pants x!)

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

I prefer not to say

Please explain the reasons for your response

It would depend on the level of need and my overall financial situation.

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 |

Please explain the reasons for your response

It would depend upon how the costs were 'spread', and the extent of Government subsidy to various services (education / social services / health, etc) Where businesses are concerned, provision should be a requirement of employees' working contract to be offset against profit margin ...The requirement to provide toilet facilities should also require free sanitary protection. (As with lavatory paper , handwashing facilities etc.) Public facilities which charge a nominal entrance should also be required to do this. There must be at least one opportunity / provision, with all such facilities, whereby anyone in desperate need can have access to a lavatory free ! This should be incumbent (legally) upon all profit - making establishments and tax - collecting local / national authorities. NB . All condom provision should be equally available in both men or women appointed toilets . There seems to be little discussion of such topics? The Government could do much to solve all such unacceptable practices by adjusting business tax rates , relative to profit margins, across the board .

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

I am not sufficiently informed of Government ' status quo' , nor of its current cost - effective strategies to enable me to comment on how these might be improved. Education in such matters is surely a requirement for each and every member of an ' in situ' - or aspiring- governing body?
The recent ostensibly ' plebiscite' / referenda have indicated, all too well , that recommendations from the public make possible hugely significant changes , despite adequate information (and therefore fair consultation) having been provided by the Government. Total shambles , directed by the few ..with potentially disastrous consequences, based on the (much flaunted) false premise of 'you-said-we- asked' - an inglorious and thoroughly disgraceful excuse - to embark upon a course of ill- informed political action , exacerbating problems beyond measure.
I am concerned that this consultation may be just one other such exercise and shall follow the outcome with interest.
It is the Government' s business to balance the fiscal / civil equation and manage strategies and anyone who is not capable of managing to do this should not be in Government .

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

Absolutely positive ! Anything which shakes up the attitude of people to all of the above, questions and seeks to challenge the neglect and indefensible abuses of the less powerful, the more vulnerable is positive. I am only concerned that the Government shows a distinct tendency to set in motion, at best without recognising (or , at worst , perhaps knowing full well) just what the predictable antagonistic outcome will be.If anything, the mindset of the day would seem to be , largely , little less negative than the

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'dark ages'. Discrimination and prejudice still appear endemic, only just below the surface. Mental health issues are perceived as increasing. The current consultation on retirement age 'equality' et al throws up so many aspects of the unresolved issues of inequality, gender, which are still the root and core of our society. There is still no true understanding, far less acceptance that we are all simply human, sentient beings - first and foremost, last and always. Is all! 'Save the life of one and you save the life of all..' - to misquote ...Harm - sentiment the same...! Parity of retirement age for men & women? Absolutely Yes to equality. But FIRST and when responsibilities, wages, opportunity - superannuation etc and all that implies has been successfully established to the point where legislation for retirement can be rationally proposed for agreement - OR first compensate to redress the imbalance and set the current game afoot on a level playing field. Governments seem happy to ignore the lessons of the past..as well as ignoring the obvious, predictable

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

Please see previous answers.

Encouragement and cultivation of a kinder, more positive attitude in the country would help. The attitude of the Government (housed in Holyrood or Westminster) is, invariably all too competitive. (even amongst themselves), the attitude is antagonistic, confrontational, arrogant and dismissive.)

Power and money are the core values, human rights and 'good' government mere afterthoughts. People are encouraged towards a 'game blame', to identify and target any group - the young, the elderly as being the problem. The Government has known for (more than) a decade just how many youngsters / school places / teachers were needed (at every level) in/ by 2017 say. They have known how many houses were needed, every single predictable statistic was in place. They have known for even longer that people were and would be living longer etc. What have they done to prepare? What indeed have Governments done, where invested all the

revenue raised by National Insurance, pension / superannuation schemes of the last half century? People who did without, pioneered and helped to establish the NHS and a second to none educational system, embraced postwar refugees, endured the childhood poverty and poor health of pre/during/ post war era, the social discrimination, the prejudices, the worry, fear, violence and hatred of the Vietnam spectre, the Malaysian & Korean wars, the Suez heart stopping days. Only to be identified by the Government as living longer (i.e. too damned long); the cause of unbearable strain on, and possible collapse of the NHS ...the reason for the 'Yes Brexit', 'No' Independent results (conflicting with the young vote!)

It goes on and on ...Ignore the fact that one referendum seemed to contradict the other here in Scotland...Ignore the fact that the voting (voted) public, whatever their age, gender, ethnic origin, religious or none, ancestry none ...group - were in possession of zero knowledge of what either is or was the true situation with regard to the aetiology of factors adhering, were fed a stream of downright statistics lies and had no idea of the ramifications of breaking up what, although flawed, was cohesive and certainly not broken and had no urgent need of fixing but every opportunity of effectively continuing to improve and flourish.

History is being ignored - living history. Those who have allocated to themselves the mandate for drastic change have

Child poverty to food banks? Unable to afford sanitary protection? People have been there before ..and with the health and education pressures. And those who lived through it before should not have to go through it again nor should they have to witness their children and grandchildren go through such traumas. Neither should they be scapegoated for the ills of society. Government apparent lack of true concern and hitherto subversive propaganda must cease.

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:

Yes , but only if the Government face up and own up to the situation of crises(several) for which its ' show off ' implementation of changes / schemes which they must have, certainly should have, known, they had made no calculation of funding, or resourcing , made no provision for. The destructive effect of 'free' University tuition fees (basically merely a shift on paper of where the payments go) , 'free' being a wonderfully emotive word but totally deceiving. The 'free' care for the elderly , in the same category, And so it goes ... The consequences are becoming abundantly clear ... Why is so much of sacrifice, decades of hard work.. now being reduced to chaos? Angry feelings of (misplaced) prejudice and negativity being stirred up , repeatedly, by political ambition and arrogance which appears dedicated to resurrecting, old festering factions and divisions , still lodged in the Middle Ages, breathing new life into them , with the oxygen (rather CO2?) of (falsely) recovered memory - to promote millennial delusions of self and collective agrandissement . This bill could be used as a means to resurrect gender issues of ' Adam & Eve ' historic nature ? From the guys would be 'women' who are demanding equal rights , equal pay and- all- that but free sanitary towels ...! As if their PMS excuses weren't enough to have to put with ...etc. (Joke? Or is it?). Yes ..this Bill is necessary ..and it' s successful negotiation of funding , proper costing, must be managed , emphasis on care , concern and the absolute human right and essential security of those in need. What is the alternative ? The need for change of attitude to menstruation has been heralded now for quite some time via the various Arts, most spectacularly by the theatre...The reactions are documented in the mediaThe problem is still, in many areas , the problem. But as some sage (Jack of the Pirates ?) put it ..' The problem is not the problem..It' s your attitude to the problem that is the problem ... If the Government is to achieve positive social change in this or any other equality issue concern, it must lead by example and use ensure some careful planning / orchestration , be frank and open about just how much of a problem the matter is for some who are in need , who (are made to) suffer a sense of embarrassment , even shame , and certainly worry , to have to afford or seek help with buying protection . The Government needs to change its collective attitude , generally to provide a kinder and more reasonable presentation in all matters , one which seeks to promote and enhance a unity of spirit and, above all else demonstrate a willingness to share concern for the vulnerable ...So far the attitude is very far from such.. The failure to ensure and provide adequate support , having ' passed' the (required) legislation , has resulted in blame and alienation which only serves to increase further alienation , at every level..Mischief ?

Page 19: General

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

I believe I have exhausted my thoughts for one evening...
It grieves me to say that my mood is one of anxiety for what these latter couple of years has revealed about our society . The government , whether of Westminster or Holyrood seem to deliberately ignore the terrible problems, present and potential of the world at large , even though the reality cannot be denied. Such unity as had been achieved, hard won in Europe , since 1945 is disintegrating as happened before. The positive history of these islands , a minute part of a very small continent , has only been preserved through hard work, benign purpose, and commitment to respecting , preserving and fighting only to uphold the rights of those, for whatever reason, less fortunate ..Or so it has seemed. Who, or what, and why on earth has this been damaged?
It is truly distressing .