

# 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".)

Student (at school, college or university)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

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Fully Supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I think the Bill is really important as I find the thought of period poverty very distressing. No woman should have to experience it. I think that providing access to feminine hygiene products will also go a long way to reducing the taboos connected to talking about periods and give women greater control over their own bodies. Given that periods are a natural process, access to feminine hygiene products is a necessity and basic right rather than a luxury.

## 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

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I think a card-based system would be convenient and easy to implement. Would such a system also make it easier to monitor women's participation in the scheme? At a time when so many people are in financial hardship, I think period poverty is a little talked about, but significant, indicator of poverty in society.

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.**

The card should be available to anyone, because there is a lot of hidden financial hardship, but promoted as being a service to support women who are struggling to / or cannot afford to buy feminine hygiene products in order to ensure that those who really need the service benefit from it.

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)?

No opinion – but the products should be dispensed somewhere that the woman requesting them feels comfortable. I imagine that some women would feel distressed and vulnerable when using the service, so a supportive environment is essential. They need to feel that there is no shame in asking for help in a situation like this.

## 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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Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

Given the fact that every girl and woman of reproductive age requires access to products like this, I can imagine that dispensers could be expensive to keep stocked up (I remember how buying sanitary products could be embarrassing when I was much younger, so a free dispenser could prove very appealing to adolescents who feel awkward about managing their periods). But access to free products in educational institutions is really important – whether via a school nurse or a Uni health centre, etc. I think it's important that girls and women have the chance to talk to someone about their periods, struggle to access / buy such products themselves as a way of gaining both emotional support and breaking the stigma around talking about periods.

**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)

No

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**

I'm financially secure. And I use a moon cup, which is so freeing financially!

**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:

<b>(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)</b>			X			
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Q9. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

I wonder if offering / promoting the use of moon cups, could be encouraged? The cost to provide them would be higher initially but one woman would only need one product, as they last around a decade. Their use also gives women greater control by breaking their dependence on disposable products, some of which are, relatively speaking, stupidly expensive.

## 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**

If a woman cannot manage her period as a result of financial hardship or poverty, then she cannot function effectively as an individual. Providing women with access to sanitary products ensures that they can participate in society and life on the same level as those who do not have periods. I think the Bill would be great for equality.

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

**Please explain the reasons for your response:**

I think that considering the environmental impact of providing disposal sanitary items should be addressed as part of the consultations about implementing the Bill. Promoting reusable alternatives is something that will need to be done sooner or later (for all women), given how polluted the world is.

## Page 19: General

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

*No Response*