

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

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

Fully Supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

This issue is not new. Forty or fifty years ago there were issues with the affordability and accessibility of sanitary products, particularly for very young women with little or no income and for people in rural areas and those in schools/colleges where the facilities and regime of the day make it difficult to access or afford sanitary products. It is hard to imagine bleeding from any other part of the body being treated with such secrecy and lack of facility. The idea that schoolgirls are still having to use toilet paper or stay off school in 2017 because of periods - which every woman is subject to - is quite appalling. The supply to people using food banks is a good move, but food banks are only one indicator of the kind of poverty inflicted on people at the moment. It's a hygiene issue and as such should be treated as a necessity in terms of products and their disposal. I want to live in a country which cares and I believe Scotland already shows more compassion in other areas. This one should be a no-brainer and it should be universal.

## 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**

If the system works for condoms, it will work for sanitary products. Who will know whether you are handing over a C-card or a payment debit card? As long as it does not discriminate against those women who need more than the average amount of products (ie those with very heavy periods), it seems like a good way to allow access to the free products on a regular basis. In schools, colleges, public toilets, there should still be a way of accessing without a card.

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

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)?

Anywhere and everywhere. Not everyone is at a doctor's surgery or health clinic regularly. Community centres, pharmacies, sports centres, public facilities could all be used. The more normal you make distribution, the easier it would be for the neediest to access.

## 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)?

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**

Women and girls at schools, colleges and universities are regulated by timetables. These are the least likely situations where you can pop to the shop if you need to and no woman or girl should have to go to the school office or nurse to ask for help for a basic hygiene issue, easily solved.

## 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

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 am now past menopause, but a scheme like this would have made a huge difference in my youth and sometimes as an adult. From younger members of my family and friends, I have realised that we still need something in place to help all women and girls, no matter what their circumstances. I do not think this proposed system would be abused.

## 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	
---	--	--	--	--	--	---	--

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?

I think this is a great proposal, but I would like to sound one small note of caution, which is that some girls and women do suffer lengthy, heavy, debilitating periods and there might still be absences after the provision of free sanitary products. I would not like to see those so afflicted censured because they STILL have absences, particularly from school, without some attempt at understanding the problem still further and offering practical solutions - such as allowing them longer breaks between class sessions (so they can go to the toilet more frequently) and looking at the rigidity of demands of PE classes, or the practicality of classes where people have to stand for long periods of time (home economics/ technical etc).

