

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Mairi Campbell-Jack

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**

Monthly bleeding is a completely natural bodily process for half the population of Scotland. However due to societal taboos around talking about menstruation many women suffer in silence, for a large part of their lives. When women are poor or low waged life is stressful. Their stress should not be added to because they cannot afford sanitary products. Being unable to afford sanitary products could have negative implications for a woman's health and wellbeing, and therefore her ability to provide for herself or her family. I am disgusted that some young women are not attending school because they cannot access sanitary products. Everyone in Scotland should have the right to access education, and the fact that something as simple as a tampon, or sanitary towel, is a barrier is terrible.

## 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 agree that this would be an effective means of providing sanitary products, as long as the scheme was well advertised, and there was a high level of knowledge about it among organisations and staff who can point women in the right direction to access it.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view in relation to a card-based system?

The card should be available only to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products

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

I do not believe that the number of products per month should be restricted. Women can have vastly different period flows, with some being very light and others very heavy. Over the course of a life period flow can change, due to health and other factors. Giving only a set amount of products to women risks meaning some women will have too much, with others having too little. Women know their own bodies best, so allowing them to estimate how much product they need will mean they are more likely to have adequate coverage. Telling women how much product they need risks the scheme echoing the limiting, sexist, patriarchal attitudes that allows period poverty to exist in the first place. You cannot stop injustice by echoing 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)?

I would say anywhere that women are.

Schools, colleges, universities, GP surgeries, hospitals, pharmacies, foodbanks, council run gyms and swimming pools (It's embarrassing to be caught out on a treadmill!).

It would also be worth considering that having a child in nappies can be extremely expensive, so women who before pregnancy could afford sanitary products, may struggle in the years after birth, when your periods can be more unpredictable due to hormonal fluctuations. I would suggest that midwives, play centres, nurseries, mother and baby clinics etc. should also have a stock.

## 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**

Not all homes young women grow up in are open in talking about periods or the female body. We can't expect all young women to have the same level of knowledge or confidence in their body as it grows and changes. Therefore having a specific obligation of educational insittutaion, also provides a great opportunity to make sure that no young women has to start puberty with fear and worry - through giving out factual and unbiased information on the changes they are experiencing.

## 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?

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I am low waged. However due to using the hormonal coil I currently do not need to use sanitary products. However if I was not on this contraception I would be looking at my options and if free sanitary products were something I needed.

## 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			X			

Q8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

<b>universities</b>						
<b>(c) Businesses (including suppliers/retailers of sanitary products)</b>			X			
<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)?

I would be interested to see a breakdown of costs for different products i.e. sanitary cups versus tampons, or using more ethical sources to buy pads [http://www.earthwisegirls.co.uk/reusable-sanitary-towels-c-1.html?gclid=CjwKCAjw2s\\_MBRA5EiwAmWlac-y5bftTUz3lKa11hcXg8tWpBnyE2Pi0qqwwBwwtTDX7h1OCYAunlxC1R4QAvD\\_BwE](http://www.earthwisegirls.co.uk/reusable-sanitary-towels-c-1.html?gclid=CjwKCAjw2s_MBRA5EiwAmWlac-y5bftTUz3lKa11hcXg8tWpBnyE2Pi0qqwwBwwtTDX7h1OCYAunlxC1R4QAvD_BwE)

## 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?

I do not believe this bill has any negative impact on equality.

## 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 there are a lot of environmentally friendly options. It is possible to sew reusable sanitary pads and tampons. I would love to see a women's collective being employed to sew reusable pads for this scheme, therefore also employing women who are low waged or having trouble in the job market. <https://fuzbaby.com/a/make-cloth-menstrual-pads/>

## Page 19: General

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

I can remember as a young girl being teased by the boys at my school for the fact that I would have periods.

I feel that having sanitary provision in schools could also be a useful educational opportunity, to further end the stigma and shame young women are made to feel because of a natural bodily function. It could help change our society, to one which is more open and accepting of the natural state of women's bodies, rather than the one we currently have where women's bodies are expected to maintain a level of perfection (bloodless, hairless, fatless etc.) which is expensive, time consuming, and mainly for the benefit of male sexual pleasure.