

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".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Lindsay Brown

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?

Partially supportive

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

I am supportive of the free access to sanitary products for specific groups, but not all. Free access should be extended to schools, colleges, food banks, homeless shelters, and various 'access points' (for example doctors surgeries, hospitals, community spaces and toilets etc). However I believe the access to free products should be, to some extent, means tested. Those with higher incomes and those not considered part of a vulnerable group would not need to be offered free access. By providing free products to everyone, including those who can afford them, the financial burden would be too much. Instead targeted groups and areas should be the focus. The VAT added to sanitary products however should be reduced to ensure that everyone purchasing these products will benefit and in turn ensure they are more easily accessible. I believe there are additional, more cost effective, measures that can be put into place to improve access and reduce costs of sanitary products. By making 'cups' and reusable items freely available in schools and 'access points', the ongoing monthly costs are significantly reduced. Females in schools should be given reusable items and more information/advice on the different options available.

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

Those who need access to free products should only need to 'ask' for them and shouldn't need to register for them. Those who feel they can afford to pay for products, simply don't request free ones.

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

There is no need for a card scheme

Please explain the reasons for your response.

As before. Individuals should be able to request free products whenever needed. A limit on the number of products offered at any one time could be imposed in order to ensure there is a decreased chance of 'running out'. A proposed limit could be two reusable items (eg cups or reusable pads) and 20 disposable items (eg tampons or pads) per person in the household. Note: this would not be limited to per month etc, simply per visit. This service would be discretionary.

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)?

Most suitable: pharmacies, GP surgeries and health clinics

Community centres, public toilets and community spaces should also supply free products, however these could be introduced in a second 'round' of the plan.

Schools and colleges should also supply free products, as mentioned previously.

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)?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

There should be specific obligations on schools, colleges and universities to make sanitary products available for free but not specifically through dispensers. Schools should be legally obligated to provide free reusable products to all girls and free disposable products upon request. Dispensers should be provided at a small fee, with no profit to be made by the organisation.

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.

Usually unexpected circumstances, for example an early cycle and no change for the public dispenser.

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

At this point I feel able to afford sanitary products and would therefore encourage free products to be given to those who are unable to afford them.

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		X				

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

suppliers/retailers of sanitary products)						
(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)				X		

Please explain the reasons for your response

Based on the answers I have provided to the previous questions, I believe these answers are self-explanatory.

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

Free items should include reusable items and basic cost items. Branded and more expensive products should only be offered for free when possible.

The general public should be encouraged to donate products for agencies to distribute (for example for patients to leave items in an area in their GP surgeries for the health professionals to distribute). This way there is less financial burden on organisations and local authorities to purchase all the 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

Please explain the reasons for your response

The bill acknowledges all individuals, rather than only those who are a particular age or gender. This is a positive message and will increase awareness of acceptance across Scotland.

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

Unsure

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:

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?

If delivered in line with a strong and long-term financial plan, yes.

Page 19: General

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

Mentioned previously.