

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Brian Finlay, Activist, Scottish Green Party

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

I believe that poverty alleviation policies, such as this one, should be seriously considered to become

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

legislation. As a man I obviously don't require the use of sanitary products but the inequality that women/trans people can face due to period poverty is something I feel passionate about. Being a volunteer at a Foodbank I find that toiletries and sanitary products are less donated by the public as they don't consider this to be relevant and that is something that needs to be overcome too. My local Foodbank can often run out of sanitary products meaning that this sometimes cannot be given out to people who need them. I believe that sanitary products should be available to anyone that needs them. This scheme should stretch further than just places where people are educated but perhaps across all public buildings toilets and where possible shopping centres or restaurants. This is a good place to start but I feel that toilets in hospitals, doctor surgeries and other community hubs would also be appropriate to be involved in the scheme from day one. I also believe that VAT should be removed from sanitary products which people can buy from supermarkets to reduce the price.

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

These products should be accessible for all and this type of system seems to meet the needs of the consumer.

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.

Again this should be available to everyone and if the consumer is facing irregular periods so capping the amount of products available to people maybe counterproductive. I also believe that having a system when something like this is means tested is unnecessarily complex and could run the risk of people (say just above the threshold) could be missing out. The costs associated with having things means tested can make them more costly.

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)?

All of the above and I have mentioned some of these in my previous answers

Any public buildings should be the first place to start but perhaps linking up with companies such as shopping centres/restaurants should be considered further down the line.

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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Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response

Alongside other public buildings. I also believe that schools should adopt a position of trying to break down the stigma attached to menstruation as this is perfectly natural and putting undue stress on people for it is unacceptable.

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)

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

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

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		
(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)				X		

Please explain the reasons for your response

I feel that we shouldn't be considering too much the impact on businesses who sell sanitary products. These types of products have been exploiting people for decades with huge costs for these products which are a

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

necessity for women and some trans people. I do also think there will always be a market for sanitary products as some consumers will prefer to purchase 'higher quality' products and not wish to use this scheme. I do believe there will be a cost to Government but I cannot see this being a 'bank breaking' policy. I mean we never question huge cost when it comes to nuclear weapons we can't use do they? The costs to schools and colleges would be more or less cost neutral in my opinion.

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

I think I have covered all my points on cost saving ect in my previous answers.

I do think that trying to deliver this as cost saving as possible to try and convince some members of parliament who have more conservative views on these types of policies. I think this is an excellent policy and look forward to this hopefully passing through Holyrood to set an example to the rUK and other countries to tackle this inequality faced by women/trans people.

I am happy to be contacted or be involved in a committee during the development of the policy.

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

This removes the financial disadvantage faced by people who have to use sanitary products thus making it a more equal society.

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

I don't feel that there will be much negative impact on equality from this proposed bill.

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 do see the environmental implications of using disposable sanitary products and perhaps involving more reusable products (such as a moon cup) would be more beneficial to the environment. This should be widely discussed and costed as making reusable sanitary products could reduce the cost to the government whilst

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?

being sympathetic to climate change and damage to the environment

Page 19: General

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

I would like to reiterate my interest in being involved in the committee for this bill and feel I could contribute positively to the shaping of the policy. I do feel that the route to go down is to promote and encourage reusable sanitary products over disposable ones.