

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Fully Supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response

Over the years I have been aware, not just of increasing issues with poverty (here in the North East this is largely due to wages not meeting the cost of living as well as mass redundancies due to the downturn in oil), but also that girls are starting their periods much, much earlier. Sadly, periods are still something which adults and children alike are unlikely to discuss. They are still viewed as something which is 'disgusting' and should not make up part of an open or polite discussion or conversation. A direct result is that girls do not always feel that they can discuss their periods with peers, parents or teachers. There is embarrassment around needing sanitary protection, buying it, talking about it, everything. In primary schools, there is not currently an obvious place to go or person to speak to should they need sanitary items or just someone to talk to about this. And then there are also children who cannot afford sanitary protection or whose parents are unwilling or unable to buy it for them. Much more needs to be done to highlight the plight of girls whose parents are unwilling to purchase or discuss sanitary protection and periods with them. This group does exist and ignoring it serves no one.

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

Where would the card work? How would children or women qualify for or obtain the card? In terms of primary schools, can there not just be a fund for the purchasing of sanitary products for children to access and use as required?

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.

Or, as I stated before, no card but simply free access in places like schools and Well Women Clinics, if the latter still exist which I really hope that they do!

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)?

Schools, GP surgeries, health clinics, community centres. Schools must be included!

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

Schools, yes. Perhaps universities and colleges can just be very cheaply available. If free products are available in clinics etc, then I do not think there would be a need for free products in universities too. Many students are very affluent and this could divert funding away from those who need it most.

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.

This last year, as my wage has moved further away from the cost of living and as I now have childcare costs and numerous outgoings for a crumbling house; I have struggled to afford heating (which is crushingly expensive), food and have tried to wear my sanitary towels for longer to save money.

Q7. If sanitary products were available for free, which of the following would apply to you?

I would expect to claim free products occasionally

Please explain the reasons for your response

At the moment, my financial situation is quite critical but I am hoping that this will not always be the case. I would only claim free products when I needed to.

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				

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

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

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

Almost certainly. But without knowing what the costs are, I am unsure what those could or would be.

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 cannot imagine any potential negative impacts on individuals.

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

Environmental should be uppermost in everyone's minds just now. Ideally, all sanitary products offered would be biodegradable and produced cleanly. Sadly, at the moment, these types of products are still more expensive than non-biodegradable ones. Perhaps a company that makes biodegradable products would be willing to provide their products to the Scottish Government very cheaply, as it would provide them with wide circulation and a lot of positive advertising. I really hope so!

Page 19: General

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

This is an excellent opportunity to support women and girls, remove the ridiculous stigma and prudishness that continues to surround periods, and hopefully also encourage and support the use of environmentally friendly sanitary products. I wish the government well and am proud that our country is trying to do something as positive and inclusive as this. Thank you.