

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

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

Period poverty is something that should not exist in a developed country in the 21st century. Women should not be held back from achieving their potential and achieving the highest possible standard of living because they cannot afford sanitary products.

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

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.

I think it is, at best, morally dubious, to means test periods. People who are not on benefits (e.g. working part time, working on zero hours contracts, working for low wages, supporting family, etc.) should not have to prove what they can and cannot afford to access sanitary products. Having to prove a certain level of income to qualify for something so vital places unnecessary burdens onto women and is counterintuitive to the ethos of this bill.

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. Also schools, colleges, student unions.

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

Young women may not be able to access other points of collection for free sanitary products e.g. GP surgeries, health centres on a regular basis, but in theory should be at school every day during term time. Additionally, school is likely to be the place where girls find themselves without sanitary products when they need them immediately. Finally, having these dispensers in bathrooms lends a sense of privacy to the issue. Obviously having your period is nothing to be ashamed of, but it can be embarrassing for young girls.

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

Please explain or give an example of your experience if you feel able to do so.

Fortunately, because of my family circumstances, I have never struggled to afford anything that could be classed as essential to my physical and mental wellbeing. However, that does not mean that this is not a huge problem facing countless women across the country and my circumstances should not be indicative of the wider populace.

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

I can afford to pay for sanitary products and would continue to pay for them if they were to be available for free. This bill is not designed to help me, but other women who do need assistance.

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			

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

The UK government could use the tax generated from the sale of tampons to fund initiatives like this UK-wide.

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?

Slightly positive

Please explain the reasons for your response

Removing the obstacles that impede women from living a life to the highest possible standard will undoubtedly go some way to generating more equality.

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

I do not see how this Bill could negatively impact 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:

There should be no disproportionate economic impact in the long term. The social impact of this Bill can only be positive and contribute towards the government commitment to gender equality (see, for example, SDG 5 - gender equality and women's empowerment) The environmental impacts of this Bill are unlikely to be great.

Page 19: General

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

I think this is a really important initiative that could change the lives of countless women and go some way to reducing the stigma that surrounds periods.