

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Partially opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response

I strongly object to the proposal that there should be a duty on Scottish Ministers to introduce a universal system of free provision of sanitary products. We are creating an expensive dependency culture in a time when public sector cuts in particular have resulted in wage freezes and a severe lack of promotional opportunities which means that many people cannot afford to buy a house. To extend the right to free sanitary products to everyone regardless of income flies in the face of reason. If people are forced to choose between food and sanitary products, it is the benefits system that needs reviewed, not 'period

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

poverty' in particular. If someone is on benefits, can they not be given a card which allows them to access free products at the chemists etc.? If the Scottish government has the money to pay for the entire population's sanitary products, would it not be more ethical and responsible to invest this money into our education, social work and NHS services which are in crisis at the moment? I am sympathetic to the proposal that there should be a duty on all schools to provide free sanitary products in school toilets. Children of school age are not legally entitled to a full time wage and their family circumstances may or may not be supportive of their sanitary needs. However, thought would need to be given as to access to these facilities to stop unnecessary use (e.g. are people taking more than they require to be able to give them to those who are not of school age?) Unfortunately the system may be open to abuse. I strongly object to a duty on all colleges and universities to provide free sanitary products in campus toilets. People of university age are able to take on enough part time employment to afford sanitary products. I worry about the proposal for measures to allow Scottish Ministers to extend these duties to other bodies in future, following a period of review, if deemed appropriate or necessary. Does this review include another public consultation? I worry about our money being wasted further without having a say.

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

As long as the card system is limited to those who actually need them, e.g. they are on some kind of benefits. Also, will the cost of setting up such a system be too expensive and counterproductive? If it's too simple a system, cards can easily be faked.

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; its use should be restricted (e.g. by limiting the number of products that may be claimed each month)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

To delimit the amount of products that can be claimed, a doctor's note could be used for those of us who have prolonged and heavy periods and the limit increased accordingly.

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)?

Pharmacies - GP surgeries, community centres and health clinics have enough to cope with. Pharmacies are in easy reach of everyone and it would spread out the numbers.

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

Only schools as school pupils may not have employment.

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

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

It would be immoral for me to spend taxpayers' money on such a thing.

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	

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

The more you give out thing for free, the more it becomes socially acceptable to take things for free. I would expect the cost to rise with this change in culture. I think the system would be open to abuse. The cost for colleges, universities and businesses is less clear to me, as I am not sure if they would get government funding.

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

Yes - by only giving free products to those adults who are in need and by limiting free access to schools.

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?

Negative

Please explain the reasons for your response

Providing free sanitary products is not in my opinion reasonable and proportionate to the problem.

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

By providing products only to those in dire need.

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?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response:

My response is based on both initial and long term cost factors. We are creating a dependency culture where we all think we are entitled to free products whether we can afford them ourselves or not. This is not ethical or sustainable.

Page 19: General

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

Please can we take a step back and make considered and ethical decisions about what are necessary, reasonable and proportionate responses to today's issues? Please can we take a moment when we think about siphoning off money to a seemingly worthy cause? If one service or section of society is receiving more money, then another service or section of society is losing money. Let's rethink what our priorities are and stop creating a dependency culture where it is unnecessary.