

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Jennifer Walker

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?

Sanitary products are essentials for basic healthcare. Girls and women who are impacted by difficult financial circumstances should not have to struggle for basic healthcare. I believe sanitary products should be just as (if not more) accessible than free condoms. People can abstain from sex more easily than girls and women can abstain from menstruation.

## 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**

I think a c-card type system for sanitary towels would be simple, straightforward and a more dignified process for the girls and women in need of them. A c-card system would also prevent those who can afford them taking advantage of the free products that should go to girls and women who need them most.

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.**

I believe that the card should only be available to those on low incomes or in receipt of benefits in order to stop people taking advantage of free sanitary products. Growing up, I knew children who liked to take their mothers' products and examine them for a laugh or use them for practical pranks. This system would prevent them from being wasted. I believe the use should be restricted within reason, taking into account the varying amounts that girls and women bleed per month.

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)?

I think all of the above would be suitable; GP surgeries, pharmacies, community centres, health clinics.

I also think it would be a good idea to put them in schools so that if a girl begins her period and cannot go to one of these places or does not have parents who are willing to accompany her, she can pick up her monthly supply of products from a teacher or nurse at a school.

## 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

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)?

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I explained in my previous response that girls and women may not always have the means for accessing GP surgeries and pharmacies due to varying circumstances. Sanitary products should be readily available at institutions that are designed to nurture students and encourage their wellbeing and development.

**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.**

I have never struggled to access sanitary products, due to my privileged background and financially stable parents. I have, however, felt frustration at how expensive some of the more effective products can be and at the fact that men who do not menstruate do not have to spend copious amounts of money on basic necessities. The need to spend money on basic healthcare each month no doubt contributes to the socio-economic imbalance between the female and male genders.

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 would not expect to claim free products because I am financially stable. If I became financially unstable, I would be able to rely upon supportive friends and family for help with my basic healthcare needs. I understand that many women and girls do not have this privilege.

**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
<b>(a) Government and the public sector (e.g. local authorities, the NHS)</b>		X				
<b>(b) Colleges and universities</b>		X				

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

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

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I expect that initially there would be an increase in cost across all of these sectors, but I believe the overall effects of poor women and girls having access to sanitary products would eventually financially benefit society and economy. When women and girls feel comfortable, clean and safe whilst menstruating, they will have more capacity to achieve their educational, work-related, fitness, emotional and personal goals. When more women and girls are supported emotionally and physically, they have the opportunity to positively impact their area of society, which in turn, will reduce other financial costs.

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

*No Response*

## 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 will have a completely positive effect on equality. In all areas of society, women are still not equal to men. The Bill that will help poor women and girls access basic healthcare needs is another good step in the direction of gender equality.

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

*No Response*

## 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?

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Yes

**Please explain the reasons for your response:**

If the c-card system is structured and straightforward, it need not be taken advantage of. Like I said in my previous responses, the supporting of poor women and girls in the area of basic healthcare can only have positive financial effects on society in the long term.

## Page 19: General

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

No.