

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Jasmeen Kanwal

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?

Basic healthcare is provided to all for free on the NHS; proper menstrual hygiene (through the use of sanitary products) is necessary basic preventative care for 50% of the population, and therefore there is no reason why women should have to pay for it, when all other basic healthcare is provided free. It adds to the already gaping economic inequalities between women and men in Scotland. This bill would begin to redress this imbalance and help make Scotland a more fair and equal country.

## 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**

I'm not sure people should need a card to get free sanitary products -- I fear this would limit access for the most vulnerable members of the population, who need the free products the most. They should simply be freely available to anyone who wishes to come collect them.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view in relation to a card-based system?

There is no need for a card scheme

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, and also in schools. Basically the sanitary products should be easy and convenient for anyone who needs them to access them, so as many different dispensing locations as possible would be best.

## 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 people without a full-time income---so students at schools and universities---are especially hit by the high cost of sanitary products.

## 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.**

I am fortunate to not suffer from financial barriers in purchasing the products I need, but access to emergency sanitary products in, e.g. university or the workplace, would be helpful to every woman whose period catches her unawares, and not in the vicinity of a shop or with the scheduling freedom to run out and buy pads or tampons in the middle of the work day. Wouldn't it be nice to live in a society that acknowledged the realities of female menstruation, and was structured in order to minimise the inconvenience it might cause to busy, working women!

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**

As someone who currently has a decent, steady income, I would be comfortable purchasing my own sanitary products until the scheme is expanded to be able to cover every woman. If it starts off with low or temporary funding, then I would want the products to go to the people that need them most and are most affected by period poverty. If there were emergency products available in my workplace (a university), then I would use those in the rare cases where I am caught unawares and in need of an emergency pad or tampon.

## 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)?

I think you should consider providing menstrual cups (as well as the newest entry to the market---'Thinx period panties') in addition to pads and tampons. Whilst these are more costly items individually, they are a one-off cost. These are products which can be reused by a woman for up to 10 years, eliminating the need for her to buy thousands of pads or tampons. They are also much better for the environment, which should be a serious consideration to factor in, given the current threat of climate change to the planet. As a suggestion, women could get a menstrual cup for free from their GP if they so choose, similar to the free provision of many birth control methods. Menstrual cups could also be stocked by clinics, community centres, and university health centres alongside pads and tampons, to allow women the choice of a more sustainable sanitary product. In the long term, if more women used sustainable, reusable products like these, it would ultimately reduce the overall cost to the government providing the products, and to the planet.

## 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 don't see how this bill could have any negative impact on equality, unless the funding is taken at the expense of other social programs, which I hope it is not. Perhaps more than enough funding could be secured if the government cracked down on the tax avoidance schemes of corporations and the super-rich.

## 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:**

As I mentioned in response to an earlier question, sustainable sanitary products like menstrual cups and 'period panties' should be seriously looked at. In the long-term, these would likely be more sustainable both environmentally AND economically.

## Page 19: General

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

I think this proposal is an excellent first step in addressing period poverty and gender inequality in Scotland in general. I hope it is passed, and implemented in a sustainable and well-informed manner.

