

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Menstruation is part of normal healthy living, and as such, I believe that all women and people who menstruate should have access to suitable sanitary products as a basic human right. This proposed bill identifies key reasons for why, at present, access to sanitary products is sadly not universal. I believe that the proposed aims of ensuring all educational institutes provide sanitary products in their toilets, as well as introduction of a 'C-card' like scheme for universal access to sanitary products will be a positive step in the right direction of improving access to sanitary products and help change the current culture where menstruation and issues surrounding it are seen as a taboo subject.

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

In my opinion, this would be a good system to start out with. It remains accessible enough for those who need to use it, whilst still having a degree of regulation to prevent abuse of the system. The only issue I can potentially see is whether or not having a card you might need to sign up for would act as a significant barrier for those who need it most.

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 have two reasons for this: - Firstly, menstruation is something almost all women, and many transgender people, will experience, regardless of income. So this scheme should extend to everyone who menstruates no matter what you earn. -Secondly, access should not be limited. Menstrual flow is often variable and unpredictable, thus in some months, women will 'go through' more sanitary products than in other months.

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 pharmacies would be the most suitable, as these are fairly widespread and accessible for most people.

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

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)?

As outlined in my previous responses, access to sanitary products should be a basic human right to all those who menstruate. This is particularly important for schools, colleges and universities, as often the girls and women at these institutes may have financial constraints. And in schools, many young girls will be starting to menstruate for the first time. I think access to free sanitary products will help with learning personal hygiene in this context and help remove some of the embarrassment around the subject.

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)

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

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

Not applicable: I do not need or use sanitary products

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	

Please explain the reasons for your response

Sanitary products can be provided for a small cost. This will be balance by increased productivity and potentially lower rates of health problems associated with poor menstrual hygiene (e.g. staphylococcal toxic shock syndrome). The latter will result in a cost benefit for the NHS. Overall, there will be a significant cost

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

benefit for consumers, especially those on low and middle incomes.

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

Unsure.

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

I think primarily this bill will reduce gender inequality, specifically with regards to addressing the difficulties that women face from menstruating e.g. costs, pain etc. There will also be positive effects in tackling other forms of inequality as the proposed bill will tackle poverty overall.

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

I do not think there will be any negative impacts.

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:

The main question in the sustainability is whether such a scheme is affordable. I think it is, and may actually have a positive impact on the economy.

Page 19: General

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

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No.