

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Hannah Mackay Tait, The Monthlies

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?

I think it is a vital proposal to level the playing field amongst people of all gender identities who experience menstruation. Poverty should not be exacerbated for 50% of the population, and the government should be legislating to alleviate its effects.

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 it would be one good way of doing it. There is no stigma attached to accessing condoms for free, because everyone can. For that reason, I think this is one great way of eventually reducing stigma and allowing all people who need sanitary products to access them without difficulty or shame.

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.

Unless the limit was set at a level which would cover everyone's needs (e.g., some people may have much heavier periods than others, and therefore require more products), I would support it being unlimited. There isn't exactly a black market for sanitary products.

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)?

It would be good for them to be available in places where people normally go anyway - GPs, local chemists, libraries, places like that. The most important thing would be to ensure they are widely available and people would have a choice of locations, so they don't have to travel far from home. It should be as convenient as going to the shop.

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

Schoolchildren are less likely to be able to afford their own sanitary products, and if their family already struggles with poverty they may worry about being an extra burden. They should be able to access these things if they need them while at school, without having to go and speak to a teacher or the nurse. Teenagers

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)?

in particular are often embarrassed by their periods, so discretion is vital to make sure everyone is being reached. Schools are also universal environments - (almost) everyone goes to school, so it reaches as many young people as possible.

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

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

There may be times when it is more convenient to access them from a free service, or when I would be unable to afford them. In general I wouldn't struggle to pay, so I probably would buy them.

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 purchased in bulk are not going to represent a huge amount for either the government's

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

budget or those of schools and colleges (although I would expect any mandate that schools/colleges supply them to be covered by funding from the government, rather than found within their existing budget). Many people would continue to buy them, and there are no shops that ONLY sell sanitary products. It seems to me like it wouldn't have a negative effect on other parties, but could have a huge positive effect on those who need these products most.

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

It will have a positive impact on the participation of women and girls in education and the workplace, especially in low-income areas. It also seems like it would have a positive impact on groups who are more likely to experience poverty, for example those with disabilities. I hope any policy would be implemented in a way that would allow people who menstruate but don't identify as female (for example, some trans men or non-binary people), as these groups are also disproportionately likely to experience poverty and homelessness.

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

I don't see how it could have a negative impact on equality unless it were very poorly implemented.

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 cost would likely be very minimal for the government and hopefully it would have a positive social impact. I can't imagine that the environmental impact would change, as the amount of sanitary products being used would be unlikely to rise by very much overall.

Page 19: General

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

I think it's a fantastic proposal, and an opportunity for Scotland to be a world leader in tackling a hugely important issue in the long term.