

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Róisín McKelvey

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?

The cost of sanitary products is a gendered cost borne by women and I believe they should be freely available in any case, but this is particularly crucial in light of the Period Poverty that affects so many women and girls in the UK. The fact that so many young women are forced to miss school during menstruation because they cannot access sanitary products is an unacceptable situation and the government must do everything in its power to facilitate free access to sanitary products for all women, but especially with these young women in mind.

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 this could be an effective system but I don't think that it should be the only system, because some women may feel too self-conscious or embarrassed to rely on this process, and it may also not be practical if a woman has unexpectedly started her period and needs more urgent access to sanitary products. In addition to a c-card-like system, schools, colleges and universities - as well as public bodies/services in general - should provide free sanitary products in a more discrete way elsewhere so that women don't have to 'go through' someone in order to access them, and should have them available for free in women's toilets.

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

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 can be difficult to get GP appointments, so if GP surgeries were to be used, this should be possible without an appointment. Pharmacies would be good locations, as would community centres and health clinics. Having free sanitary products available in schools, colleges and universities is very important, because it would help to facilitate access to education and reduce the likelihood of young women missing parts of their education due to being unable to access sanitary products. Free dispensers in women's toilets in all relevant locations listed above - in all public services spaces - would be very helpful.

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

Absolutely! This would help to reduce the number of young women who have to miss parts of their education

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)?

because they can't afford/don't have access to sanitary products, and would furthermore help all women in education.

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.

Not due to financial barriers, but on isolated occasions (especially when I was young) when my period started unexpectedly and I was in a location where sanitary products weren't available, or I was at school, didn't know who to ask or where to get them from, and also felt embarrassed (there is still so much stigma around menstruation - particularly, I imagine, for girls and young women) to do so.

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

I would expect to claim free products regularly

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)?

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

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?

Yes

Page 19: General

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

No Response