

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

It is a fantastic initiative to provide universal free sanitary products for women. These products are a necessity not a luxury and it is only sad that it has taken us until 2017 to get this policy in motion.

## 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**

Free sanitary products should be made easily available to all who need them and this is a solid practical approach.

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.**

As before, sanitary products should be made freely and universally available to all who need them.

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)?

As many as possible with a wide geographic coverage to make sure they are available to all. Personally I would find pharmacy access the easiest.

## 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

## 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)

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Yes, occasionally

**Please explain or give an example of your experience if you feel able to do so.**

Though I am fortunate to be able to afford the products I need, I think all women have been caught unawares at some point. Free sanitary products would take away this issue and the associated stress away and optimise productivity (e.g. in the past, I have had to leave Uni and work early to buy products).

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**

Whilst I can afford my own regular supply of sanitary products, I may pick up the odd towel if caught short. In general I think there would be the highest take up amongst underprivileged groups, which I strongly support even if not regularly claiming products myself.

## 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**

There would be a cost associated with this policy, but overall for public sector organisations and universities I would expect it to be cost neutral if balanced against e.g. time lost/improved productivity. For businesses there would be similar benefits and the chosen suppliers could benefit from economies of scale, providing products at cost. Individuals using the scheme would benefit significantly. The benefit would be proportionately larger for those in poverty.

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

Commercial partnership with suppliers to supply public sector, this would be a huge contract. Also sponsorship by large companies as part of their corporate social responsibilities. Obviously using existing distribution centres such as foodbanks and health centres.

## 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**

This is an extremely positive policy addressing inequity based on gender. Women should not have to bear the costs for a regular bodily function. A lack of appropriate sanitary products is detrimental to a woman's hygiene, health and dignity. Living in a multi-ethnic area, I also believe that improved ease of access can combat stigma related to women's menstrual cycles amongst some communities.

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

There are no negative impacts. This initiative is positive, needed and long overdue.

## 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:**

I would be particularly interested in the Government developing partnerships with ethically and environmentally responsible producers of sanitary products to provide high quality cotton towels as part of this programme.

## Page 19: General

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

The sooner this policy can be implemented the better. I very strongly support this policy to address gender-based social and economic inequity. I believe this policy will improve women's hygiene, health and dignity.