

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Please explain the reasons for your response

I am fully supportive because I firmly believe that access to education and employment for women should not be hindered by a lack of access to adequate sanitary protection. By providing full access, it will lessen the potential for a stigma to exist for those who are reliant on the free sanitary protection but it would remain likely that those who can afford to buy sanitary protection of their own choosing (e.g. those who have a brand preference) would continue to do so. It would also relieve some pressure on food banks to provide these products to those who are in dire need, as monies and donations wouldn't have to provide these.

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

It would be reliant on girls and women registering, so might not be effective for those who don't have internet access at home, or who aren't able to be at a collection point when they are open. Although it would be a good way of demonstrating eligibility.

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

Other (please specify)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I think the card should be available to all girls and women over 8 years of age (to allow for early menstruation). Not sure if it should be unlimited or not - it leaves the system open to possible abuse, but some women with heavier periods or conditions like PCOS or Endometriosis could struggle to manage a period with limited supplies.

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)?

GP surgeries, schools/colleges/universities (for those in education), Job Centres, pharmacies, food banks.

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)?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response

There should be a specific obligation for schools/colleges/universities to provide free sanitary products, but I

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)?

don't think dispensers in toilets would be an effective way of doing so. They should be available (confidentially if required) via school support staff/student services.

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.

As a teenager, I was reliant on my parents providing sanitary products as I was too young to have an income of my own. On more than one occasion I was caught short because my parents had forgotten to buy sanitary towels with the shopping and I had to use my lunch money to buy some from the shop on my way to school - meaning I then couldn't eat that day.

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

I would not expect to claim free products

Please explain the reasons for your response

Personally, I would not claim free products as I mainly use reusable sanitary products to avoid being in a situation where I need to buy any.

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			

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

(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)				X		
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Please explain the reasons for your response

Sanitary products don't have to be expensive, and they wouldn't necessarily require specially trained staff to deal with them. They would be far cheaper to buy in extremely large quantities than they are to buy in individual packs from shops.

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

Offer a limited range of products - e.g. medium and heavy flow towels of one brand, tampons in different absorbencies (for TSS risk) but in one brand. Offer reusable menstrual cups - a higher one off cost, but long term cost saving, as well as improved environmental impact, suitable for those affected by poverty as they don't require high energy use to clean as they can be cold-water sterilised.

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 help remove the stigma surrounding menstruation, and mean that girls from all backgrounds won't have to let their education suffer because of their biology.

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

I'm not sure what the negative impact would be. There may be financial outlay, but this could be minimised by offering a limited range of products, and promoting the use of reusable products.

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:

Through promoting the use of reusable menstrual cups, and also raising awareness of reusable cloth sanitary towels (though cloth towels may not be suitable for those on low incomes who may be impacted by fuel

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?

poverty).

Page 19: General

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

I think it would be a wonderful step towards equality for girls and women in Scotland - particularly those from poor backgrounds. By making the provision universal, it provides a level playing field, where girls and women don't have to prove their worthiness to receive the products, which could put them off from seeking help.