

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

John Reilly

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?

In an era of ideologically induced austerity, which is leading to an increase in poverty and inequality, it is shocking to think that some girls and women may miss school or work because they cannot afford sanitary products. As a society we should not be making it more difficult for girls and women to attend school or go to work. While there are undoubtedly many challenges to resolving the wider issue of gender inequality within society we should be doing what small things we can when they are easy and relatively cheap to do and I therefore fully support the proposals.

## 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 would have thought a combination of free dispensers within appropriate locations (e.g. educational establishments and public buildings such as sports centres, government offices etc.) and possibly a system modelled on the C-card for dispensing at pharmacists or clinics. I don't have enough knowledge of the C-card system to feel suitably qualified to comment on the precise benefits or disadvantages of it though it seems reasonable to consider it. I would also note that while menstruation clearly isn't an "ailment" the minor ailments scheme also provides a mechanism for providing certain medicines free of charge from pharmacists.

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.**

If the estimated take up rate is correct it seems reasonable to make the system universal and unlimited to all. However, even if resources need to be targeted provision should definitely be universal and unlimited for young people and those on low incomes or benefits.

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)?

Free dispensers in educational establishments, community centres, pharmacies and clinics. GPs surgeries aren't traditionally dispensers so I would make them such for this purpose. GPs could still provide them in the course of normal appointments though and they could be provided in public toilets.  
I don't actually see why menstrual sanitary products can't be made available, especially in public sector buildings, in the same way that toilet paper is.

## 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)?

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Yes

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

These are publicly funded organisations who deal with young people who often are entirely dependent on carers or are on low incomes.

**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**

The scheme is not cost free to the public sector but is not excessive. Consumers would obviously have a cost reduction as they would benefit from free provision should they choose to take advantage of it. The cost reduction could be significant for those on low incomes but probably much more modest for others, the majority

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

of whom my not participate anyway.

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

Bulk buying from suppliers through a properly sourced contract should yield discounts.

## 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 would remove at least one poverty related barrier to education and work that girls, women or trans people may experience.

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

I don't foresee any negative impacts on equality.

## 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?

I think the bill is an excellent idea that tackles an overlooked and unnecessarily taboo issue.