

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

I don't believe that we can consider ourselves to be a civilised, progressive society when so many women and girls are struggling to afford something so basic as sanitary products. I have read that a lack of access to sanitary products is preventing girls from attending school, and it concerns me greatly that their educations and futures will be adversely affected by an issue that is within our collective power to resolve.

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 that this would be the most straightforward way to ensure access to sanitary products without the process becoming weighed down by excessive bureaucracy.

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.

Though ideally this scheme would only be used by people on low incomes and in receipt of benefits, I worry that the methods used to assess people's needs may mean that some women and girls who are in need may slip through the net. Additionally, the bureaucracy associated with a needs-based approach may not be a very cost-effective or efficient means of delivering this service. Speaking for myself, I would continue to pay for my own sanitary products as long as I could afford to, to ensure that the scheme prioritised those in need of support.

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)?

I'm not sure who would be best placed for dispensing free sanitary products- perhaps more than one type of location would be best. Some people may not have access to a community centre nearby, for instance, and would find it easier to access a GP surgery.

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

I do agree; however, I would be concerned about the potential financial impact of this upon already financially-

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)?

stretched institutions such as schools. Would the sanitary products be available for free to the schools to then distribute, or will the products only be available for free to individuals? Perhaps this could be made clearer in any further communications concerning this bill.

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.

I have endometriosis, which can cause me to have long-lasting and heavy periods. When I was in my early twenties and earning a very low wage, I sometimes could not afford the amount of sanitary products I required, and would have to borrow money from friends or family to purchase them.

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

I am currently relatively financially comfortable and would therefore not plan to claim free products, as I would prefer that they be used by people in genuine need. However, should my circumstances ever change, I would be very grateful to know that this option was available.

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

Perhaps there are long-term initiatives that might help the Bill to eventually achieve its aim in a slightly more cost-efficient manner, but I think that the current proposal will provide a swift and direct resolution to the issue at hand.

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?

I expect there may be a little bit of (unfounded) "what about the men?" backlash, in which case, the Government may wish to consider publicising the C-card scheme in conjunction with the sanitary products initiative.

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 positive social impact of the Bill will far outweigh the associated economic costs.

Page 19: General

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

I think it is a fantastic proposal, and I am thrilled to see that the Scottish government is taking such decisive action on an issue that has quietly affected the lives of women and girls for far too long.

