

# Proposed Sanitary Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill

## Page 2: About you

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

*No Response*

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Representative organisation (trade union, professional association)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Fire Brigades Union

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**

The FBU have been supportive of this initiative in other countries such as South Africa where we supported the Dignity Period campaign. Young girls missed school every month due to having no sanitary provision during their period as they could not afford them. Women were being beaten by their partners/husbands as they were being accused of cheating. This was a direct result of vaginal infections from dirty rags and newspapers which were being used as sanitary provision. The partners/husbands thought the infections were STD's from other men.

## 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**

We are unsure of what specific system would work as do not have great detail to accurately comment. We do believe that sanitary provision is a basic human right and all women and girls should be provided it free regardless of their income

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.**

We believe it would be timely and costly to only give low incomes and those on benefits access to free sanitary products. It's also our principle belief that it's a natural human right for all women and girls to be provided with free sanitary products regardless of their income.

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)?

The dispensing of free sanitary products must be easily accessible for all. Periods start when least expected on occasions and the greater amount of outlets with a wide range of opening times would support this accessibility. It also must be recognised that men will sometimes access sanitary products for girls and women.

## 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

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)?

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

It would increase the accessibility when periods suddenly start. It would also support those women and girls to stay on and finish that days education and return having the confidence of knowing they have access to free sanitary provision. We also believe dispensers should be in workplaces such as fire stations. It's difficult for women firefighters to leave their fire station to access sanitary provision and many have had to use toilet paper until their working day is finished which has caused some embarrassing incidents for them.

**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.**

The FBU have many examples of firefighters starting their periods at work and cannot leave to access sanitary provision as they need to stay in the fire station on call. This also occurs at protracted incidents where firefighters are working for many hours without access to sanitary provision. It's important that provision is accessible on fire stations and on Fire appliances.

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

I would expect to claim free products regularly

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

The FBU believes that free products would be claimed 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		X				

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

(including suppliers/retailers of sanitary products)						
(d) Individuals (including consumers of sanitary products)				X		

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

In relation to A B and D answers, we believe the reduction in cost would be based on the positive outcomes such as less time of work or school/university. Better health outcomes and less pressures on NHS. We see the only cost potential cost being on any profit margins from sanitary productions.

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

Can't comment accurately as unaware of any specific details.

## 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 improve equality outcomes and lessen the opportunities for discrimination. Especially for girls in education and women in work. There would be fewer absences in these areas which can only increase opportunities for those individuals.

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

By providing universally free access to sanitary provision and not having it means tested.

## 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:**

It's all about priorities and if we as a society are committed to reducing the barriers of opportunity for women

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?

and girls then this Bill can only support that.

## Page 19: General

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

No