



## **Proposed Period Products (Free Provision) Scotland Bill**

### [About the STUC](#)

The STUC is Scotland's trade union centre. Its purpose is to co-ordinate, develop and articulate the views and policies of the trade union movement in Scotland; reflecting the aspirations of trade unionists as workers and citizens.

The STUC represents over 560,000 working people and their families throughout Scotland. It speaks for trade union members in and out of work, in the community and in the workplace. Our affiliated organisations have interests in all sectors of the economy and our representative structures are constructed to take account of the specific views of women members, young members, Black members, LGBT+ members, and members with a disability, as well as retired and unemployed workers

## **Proposed Period Products (Free Provision) Scotland Bill STUC Consultation Response**

The STUC has policy, passed via the STUC women's conference, that trade unions must work to ensure that period poverty is alleviated in Scotland.

The STUC has gathered evidence via the STUC women's committee that finances, domestic abuse, embarrassment and shame are all potential barriers to accessing sanitary products.

The STUC is concerned about increasing reports that women and girls affected by low incomes, benefit sanctions and other austerity measures are unable to afford period products and are experiencing detriment to their health, dignity and wellbeing as a result. The Trussell Trust has reported that thousands of food bank users received feminine hygiene products through its services in the past year and that some women have resorted to using toilet roll, socks or newspaper because they are unable to afford period products. The STUC notes that access to period products is variable across Scotland, with some organisations having a policy of supplying these by requesting them from an office, which might put women off asking for supplies. The STUC believes that not having enough, or suitable, products to manage menstrual bleeding effectively is associated with health risks including toxic shock syndrome, and also with shame, embarrassment and distress.

All public bodies should have access to free period products. It is hoped that this also provides a benchmark for private sector organisations. 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. The card should be available to anyone; card-holders should have unlimited access to free sanitary products. In terms of sustainability of products, other sanitary products which are not tampons or sanitary towels e.g. menstrual cups, could also be provided for free.

The STUC also notes that publicity around the Bill discourages stigma around menstruation and encourages people to talk about issues which were historically hidden as "women's issues." The STUC believes that this is healthy in a broader sense of tackling misogyny and sexism. The STUC supports the passing of this Bill into law.