

Dear Diana Johnson MP,

You have tabled an amendment (NC55)<sup>1</sup> to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to make radical changes to abortion legislation in England and Wales.

The amendment would go far beyond just 'decriminalising' women, and would introduce abortion on demand, for any reason (including sex-selective abortion), up until birth. It would make the Abortion Act redundant by removing all current legal safeguards (many of which protect women) around abortion provided by the Act.<sup>2</sup>

This would leave England and Wales with one of the most extreme abortion laws in the world. It would also position England and Wales drastically away from Europe where the median gestational time limit for abortion is 12 weeks.<sup>3</sup>

As health professionals, where required, we are responsible for the care of both women and their babies throughout pregnancy and childbirth. It would be very difficult for us to work in a health service where the lives of these babies could be ended for any reason up to birth and where current legal safeguards around abortion, many of which are there to protect women, have been removed.

Polls have consistently shown that a larger proportion of women want more, not fewer restrictions on abortion. A Savanta ComRes<sup>4</sup> poll found that only 1% of women wanted to see the time limit for abortion extended above 24 weeks and only 1% of women wanted to see the time limit for abortion extended through to birth. The same poll found that 70% of women wanted to see the abortion time limit reduced to 20 weeks or below. The poll also found that 91% of women favour a total and explicit ban on sex-selective abortion.

Your proposal to allow abortion up to birth in this country would be to attack the heart of the medical profession: our core duty to protect life whenever and wherever possible.

The British public prides itself on being a reasonable, humane and tolerant society. Such an extreme and radical abortion law has no place in the UK. Your proposal is out of keeping with what we take to be the central ethic of our profession, as well as the consistently expressed wishes of British women with regards to the legality and regulation of abortion.

As medical professionals, we, the undersigned, call on you to urgently withdraw your extreme abortion amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> See: [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, As Amended - Amendment Paper \(Wednesday 30 June\)](#), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> As the Abortion Act was passed to create exemptions to sections 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Persons Act (OAPA) and the Infant Life Preservation Act (ILPA), a repeal of sections 58 and 59 of the OAPA and offences committed under the ILPA would make the Abortion Act redundant.

<sup>3</sup> See: [What are the abortion time limits in EU countries?](#)

<sup>4</sup> See: [Savanta ComRes: Abortion Polling for Where Do They Stand?](#)