



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the Northern Ireland Abortion Regulations 2021.

Abortion is a devolved issue and I have always believed that it should be for the people of Northern Ireland to decide. However, as the Northern Ireland Executive was not restored by the 21st October 2019, it remained the UK Government's legal obligation under section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 to bring forward the framework to provide lawful access to abortion services in Northern Ireland by the 31st March 2020.

The regulations that have been brought forward by the Northern Ireland Secretary do not reopen the debate about abortion but instead ensure compliance with the legal duties that Parliament imposed when it passed the Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020.

The action is necessary because women and girls are still unable to access high-quality abortion and post-abortion care in Northern Ireland, in all the circumstances that they are entitled to under the law made by Parliament in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive.

I very much welcome the Assembly's consideration of the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill. Indeed, as abortion is devolved, the Assembly can legislate on any aspect of this issue.

I am, however, supportive of the Northern Ireland Secretary's action as I firmly believe that existing law must be acted on and delivered.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY