



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the recent case of a woman who has been jailed for taking at home abortion pills after the legally allowed time limit for abortions.

Abortion is an incredibly emotive issue, and I understand the strength of feeling on all sides. The Crown Prosecution Service has also acknowledged that these exceptionally rare cases are complex and traumatic.

Through the Abortion Act, all women have access to safe abortions on the NHS, up to 24 weeks. Women are also able to take abortion pills at home up to ten weeks of pregnancy. The Government believes this approach provides the right balance, and I understand there are no plans to change this.

By longstanding convention, any changes to the Abortion Act, including time limits, would be determined by Parliament. This would be a matter of conscience and MPs would be given a free vote issue.

Given that I was not in the courtroom to hear all the details of this specific case, I do not feel comfortable taking a view on the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy/Commutation here. However, broadly speaking, I understand there is a longstanding policy to wait until the exhaustion of the legal process before considering this, and I have no doubt that lawyers in Government will be following this case closely.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY