

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

28th March 2019

Dear Constituent,

RE: ABORTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of abortion in Northern Ireland, and respecting devolution; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

Abortion remains a highly sensitive issue, regardless of where your view lies and one where it is important that the matter is considered with due care and sensitivity.

I support the Government's belief that any future reform in Northern Ireland must be debated and decided by the people of Northern Ireland and their locally-elected politicians. This has been the position of successive Governments, both Conservative and Labour. I also welcome confirmation that the Government will keep its position under review in light of the UK Government's legal obligations, and in light of any relevant emerging legal judgments, as appropriate.

I recognise that there have been a number of calls to repeal sections 58 and 59 of the *Offences Against the Person Act 1861* in order to legalise abortion in Northern Ireland. I believe that this would not, however, provide a satisfactory way forward, as it would leave a gap in the law, and without any new provisions it offers no safeguards for women. It would also have an impact on England and Wales, as well as in Northern Ireland.

Quite rightly, restoring the Executive remains the Secretary of State's key priority and she has said that she will continue to work closely with Northern Ireland's political parties to restore strong, inclusive devolved government at the earliest opportunity- so that debates on these issues can be had by Northern Irish politicians on behalf of the Northern Irish people.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE