

ANNEX B

Copies of Information Requested

Population Health Directorate
Health Protection Division



T: [redacted - personal data]

E: [redacted - personal data]

[redacted - personal data]

Our ref: 2016/0027018
7 September 2016

Dear [redacted - personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 13 August 2016 to Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister for Scotland. I am replying as the Policy officer with responsibility for this issue.

Thank you for sharing your concerns on this emotive issue. However, under the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is legal during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met. The Scottish Government has no plans to change the law on abortion in Scotland.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted - personal data]
Policy Officer
Scottish Government

Nicola Sturgeon,
First Minister,
Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh.

20th October 2016.

Dear Nicola,

The subject of this letter is to discuss abortion that could be made illegal by the Scottish Parliament, if there is a will to save the lives of unborn children.

I feel that Scotland should lead the nations and outlaw abortion as a matter of priority.

We must realise that all babies in the womb are alive since conception and should be treated the same as and given the same rights as new born children.

I hope that this subject is dear to all of our hearts, and if the First Minister could look into this subject, it would be of a tremendous value to Scotland.

God bless you in all your work for Scotland.

Yours Sincerely,

T: [redacted – personal data]

E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2016/0035832

21 November 2016

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2016 to Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister for Scotland, expressing your views on abortion. I am replying as the policy official with responsibility for this issue.

I appreciate that abortion is a highly emotive issue, however, the Scottish Government position on abortion law remains unchanged and we have no plans to change, or repeal abortion legislation.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted – personal data]

Policy Officer
Scottish Government

Monday 14th November 2016

Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Ms Sturgeon,

Devolution of Abortion Law to Scotland & the Culture of Life v the Culture of Death

As one who supports Independence for Scotland and have been an SNP supporter for most of my life, I feel compelled in conscience to write to you about the culture of death, namely, Abortion!!

Recently I attended a Pro-Life Torchlight Procession from George Square to Saint Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow. I participate in this procession on an annual basis. The Cathedral was full to capacity.

I'm sure you must be aware that, since the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act (49 years ago) there have been over 8.5 million (legal) abortions in Britain alone, with the number worldwide exceeding 50 million victims each year. When you consider the abhorrent dismemberment of these tiny bodies and, the sucking out from within the wombs of their mothers, I cannot understand why legislators are allowing this to happen.

This truly is the number one human rights issue of our day and it must be stopped!!

I object to Abortion on Moral grounds but consider also the Economic argument. For example, individuals being Aborted - future Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Plumbers, Carpenters and so on, could quite easily fill the future needs of this beloved country of ours, thus eliminating the need for and dependence on immigration. Immigration, by the way, actually robs developing countries of their natural resource. As you will know, Europe is suffering from a demographic time bomb; therefore, the need for a change in legislation is absolutely necessary.

I quote from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, - "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, **before** as well as after birth". (*my emphasis*)

The terrible injustice of Abortion is such that, Donald Trump, the incoming President of the USA has already indicated that he takes a Pro-Life / Culture of Life stance whereas; Hillary Clinton was advocating Abortion up to birth including her support of Roe v Wade. I thank Almighty God that Trump won the Presidential Election.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta said, “Any country that accepts Abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use violence to get what they want. That is why the greatest destroyer of love & peace is Abortion”. (*my emphasis*)

The World, I believe, is utterly fed up with the culture of death and, hopefully will, at last, embrace the culture of life.

More recently, I would like to quote from a letter that appeared in the “Scottish Catholic Observer” dated Friday 11th November 2016, from Councillor Brian McGinley, Ayr, “The important point for me is not to pretend that the political party that we belong to is a purely benign force. I would expect that all truly Christian politicians would be prepared to stand up for what they believe in, regardless of the consequences, since faithfulness is more important than power”.

With all of the above in mind, why doesn't Scotland adopt the “Moral High Ground” and at the stroke of a pen eliminate the scourge of Abortion and follow the lead of e.g. Malta, Poland and Ireland and revert to a pre 1967 view on the current injustice of Abortion?

T: [redacted – personal data]
E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2017/0001249

7 February 2017

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 6 January 2017 to Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister for Scotland. As the policy officer with responsibility for abortion issues I am responding on behalf of the First Minister.

I appreciate that this is an issue you feel strongly about, however, under the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is legal during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met. The Scottish Government has no plans to change the law on abortion in Scotland.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted – personal data]
Policy Officer
Scottish Government

Dear First Minister for Scotland

You appear to be of the opinion that The Present Laws Regarding Abortion in Scotland, which you, as FIRST MINISTER FOR SCOTLAND, have no intention of changing, at present, is a law which only I hold dear to my Heart. This is not the case. The Many Men whom I have asked both young and old, the question; "Do you agree or disagree that the Father of any given unborn child should, by Law, have their signature on the pre-abortion document, so long as there is no evidence of any crime having been committed? The Majority agreed that their signature should be on any pre-abortion document, as they felt that their partners should not have to bear the loss of their child alone, if this is agreed by both parents. The other obvious question that I asked the same age group of young and older men was; "Do you feel that your basic human rights

affected, ignored/
Breached, if you as the father have
no right to sign any document, as get
unavailable, to stop your partner from going
ahead with an abortion, on the grounds that
you as the unborn child's other parent, can
and will care for the baby immediately
after birth, through their early years and
on into adulthood? The unanimous answer
was an outright Yes.

Currently I use per 1 paper as
my preferred medium, but have realised
very quickly that in order to put some weight
behind these new arguments, I simply must
use the internet. I hope you will quickly
see the need for this half a century old
see the need for our
law must be seen... and for you and the
elected government. Sincerely

T: [redacted – personal data]

E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2017/0001974

13 February 2017

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 5 January 2017 to Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister for Scotland. As the policy officer with responsibility for abortion issues I am responding on behalf of the First Minister.

I am aware that you have written to the First Minister on a number of occasions on the issue of changing the law to require consent from the woman's partner be included in the abortion process.

I appreciate that this is an issue you feel strongly about however, as per all earlier correspondence, I can only reiterate that the Scottish Government has no plans to change the law on abortion.

Your Sincerely

[redacted – personal data]

Policy Officer
Scottish Government

T: [redacted – personal data]

E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2017/0002727

16 February 2017

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your email of 10 January 2017 to Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport . As the policy officer with responsibility for abortion issues I am responding on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary.

The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it, and that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

Under the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is legal during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met. I appreciate that abortion is a highly emotive issue, however, the Scottish Government position on abortion law remains unchanged and we have no plans to change, or repeal abortion legislation.

Yours sincerely

[redacted – personal data]
Policy Officer
Scottish Government

From: Macintosh K (Ken), MSP
Sent: 13 March 2017 12:54:46
To: scottish.ministers@gov.scot
Subject: We Trust Women Campaign
TO: Shona Robinson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport
Our Ref: CD/KM5654

Dear Shona,
Re: We Trust Women Campaign

I have recently been contacted by a number of my constituents regarding the We Trust Women Campaign to decriminalise abortion. I enclose below a copy of the e-mails that have been sent to me.

"I am writing to ask you to support the We Trust Women campaign <http://www.wetrustwomen.org.uk/> to decriminalise abortion and write on my behalf to Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, to request that the government brings forward legislation to remove abortion from the criminal law.

Under common law - created before women could vote - abortion remains a crime in Scotland and women face imprisonment for ending pregnancies without the permission of two doctors. Across the UK, women face the harshest punishment for unlawful abortion imposed by any country in Europe, with the exception of the Republic of Ireland. No other medical procedure in this country is governed by legislation this out-of-step with modern thinking on both women's rights and clinical developments.

Now that abortion has been devolved, we have a real opportunity in Scotland to lead the way in and establish a legal framework fit for the 21st century.

The 1967 Abortion Act did not decriminalise abortion, but stipulated specific circumstances where women and their doctors would not be prosecuted. In 2017, it is time to take abortion out of the criminal law and regulate it like all other healthcare procedures.

Why we need to decriminalise abortion

* It is unacceptable that women across the UK are being prosecuted for ending a pregnancy. While prosecutions are rare, the increasing availability of abortion medication online means more women are at risk of criminal sanction. Furthermore, if we do not believe women should be imprisoned we should not accept a law which stipulates that they should.

* The threat of prosecution puts doctors off training in this field and providing care. Consequently, women can be denied an abortion because they cannot find doctors willing or able to treat them.

* The 1967 Abortion Act is preventing the best medical care. In requiring women obtain the permission of 2 doctors, the current law can delay women who are sure of their decision. It also prohibits nurse or midwife-led services that are now the model in delivering woman-centred maternity care.

* There is no evidence that decriminalisation would lead to an increase in the rate of abortion. Canada and jurisdictions in Australia have removed abortion from the criminal law and have not experienced an increase in the numbers of abortions, or an increase in later term abortions. Indeed, prior to 1990 in Scotland there was no abortion time limit. Despite the legality, there was not a greater proportion of later term abortions performed.

The We Trust Women campaign is supported by a coalition of organisations,

including the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas), Royal College of Midwives, Fawcett Society, Women's Equality Party (WEP), Women's Aid, Family Planning Association (FPA), British Humanist Association (BHA), Rise, Women for Independence, Maternity Action, End Violence Against Women Coalition, Catholics for Choice, British Society of Abortion Care Providers, IPPF European Network, NUS Women's Campaign, Birthrights, Lawyers for Choice, Equality Now, Voice for Choice, Southall Black Sisters, Women's Resource and Development Agency, Alliance for Choice NI, SHE Project, Sister Supporter and Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion.

One in three women will have an abortion in their lifetime. In 2016, it is time that we trust women to make decisions about their own lives and ensure that they are able to access the best possible medical care. I urge you to make representations to the Cabinet Secretary on this issue and support the campaign to overturn our out-dated abortion laws."

I would welcome hearing the Scottish Government's thoughts on this issue so that I may respond to my constituents.

Thank you for any assistance you can offer.

Yours sincerely
Ken

Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP
Presiding Officer
Member of the Scottish Parliament for the West of Scotland

Minister for Public Health and Sport
Aileen Campbell MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Ken Macintosh MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Your ref: CD/KM5654
Our ref: 2017/0009840
13 March 2017

Dear Ken

Thank you for your email of 13 March 2017 to Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, regarding the 'We Trust Women Campaign' to decriminalise abortion. I am replying as Minister for Public Health and Sport with portfolio responsibility for this issue.

The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it, and that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

The Scottish Government position on abortion law remains that we have no plans to change, or repeal abortion legislation.

*Best wishes
Aileen*

AILEEN CAMPBELL

Date: 9 March 2017 at 09:54:13 GMT

To: Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot>

Subject: Please support the We Trust Women campaign to decriminalise abortion

[redacted – personal data]

Dear Nicola Sturgeon,

I am writing to ask you to support the We Trust Women campaign <<http://www.wetrustwomen.org.uk/>> to decriminalise abortion and write on my behalf to Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, to request that the government brings forward legislation to remove abortion from the criminal law.

Under common law ? created before women could vote ? abortion remains a crime in Scotland and women face imprisonment for ending pregnancies without the permission of two doctors. Across the UK, women face the harshest punishment for unlawful abortion imposed by any country in Europe, with the exception of the Republic of Ireland. No other medical procedure in this country is governed by legislation this out-of-step with modern thinking on both women?s rights and clinical developments.

Now that abortion has been devolved, we have a real opportunity in Scotland to lead the way in and establish a legal framework fit for the 21st century.

The 1967 Abortion Act did not decriminalise abortion, but stipulated specific circumstances where women and their doctors would not be prosecuted. In 2017, it is time to take abortion out of the criminal law and regulate it like all other healthcare procedures.

Why we need to decriminalise abortion

? It is unacceptable that women across the UK are being prosecuted for ending a pregnancy. While prosecutions are rare, the increasing availability of abortion medication online means more women are at risk of criminal sanction. Furthermore, if we do not believe women should be imprisoned we should not accept a law which stipulates that they should.

? The threat of prosecution puts doctors off training in this field and providing care. Consequently, women can be denied an abortion because they cannot find doctors willing or able to treat them.

? The 1967 Abortion Act is preventing the best medical care. In requiring women obtain the permission of 2 doctors, the current law can delay women who are sure of their decision. It also prohibits nurse or midwife-led services that are now the model in delivering woman-centred maternity care.

? There is no evidence that decriminalisation would lead to an increase in the rate of abortion. Canada and jurisdictions in Australia have removed abortion from the criminal law and have not experienced an increase in the numbers of abortions, or an increase in later term abortions. Indeed, prior to 1990 in Scotland there was no abortion time limit. Despite the legality, there was not a greater proportion of later

term abortions performed.

The We Trust Women campaign is supported by a coalition of organisations, including the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas), Royal College of Midwives, Fawcett Society, Women's Equality Party (WEP), Women's Aid, Family Planning Association (FPA), British Humanist Association (BHA), Rise, Women for Independence, Maternity Action, End Violence Against Women Coalition, Catholics for Choice, British Society of Abortion Care Providers, IPPF European Network, NUS Women's Campaign, Birthrights, Lawyers for Choice, Equality Now, Voice for Choice, Southall Black Sisters, Women's Resource and Development Agency, Alliance for Choice NI, SHE Project, Sister Supporter and Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion.

One in three women will have an abortion in their lifetime. In 2016, it is time that we trust women to make decisions about their own lives and ensure that they are able to access the best possible medical care. I urge you to make representations to the Cabinet Secretary on this issue and support the campaign to overturn our out-dated abortion laws.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted – personal data]

T: [redacted – personal data]

E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2017/0011545

13 April 2017

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 9 March 2017 to Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister for Scotland, regarding the ‘We Trust Women Campaign’ to decriminalise abortion. I am replying as the policy officer with policy responsibility for this issue.

The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it, and that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

The Scottish Government position on abortion law remains that we have no plans to change, or repeal abortion legislation.

Yours sincerely

[redacted – personal data]

Policy Officer
Scottish Government

†
The Guild of Spiritual Doctors
of
THE ALMIGHTY TRIUNE GOD

30th June 2017

Ms Nicola Sturgeon
First Minister
The Scottish Parliament
Holyrood
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Dear Ms Sturgeon,

The killing of unborn children – abortion must never be decriminalised.

There are right ways in which dear souls who find themselves with an unwanted and/or problem pregnancy – and their babies can be helped.

Always with our humble deepest heartfelt prayers for us all, the whole of Almighty God's creation, in The Most Loving, The Most Just Almighty Triune God – The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

T: [redacted – personal data]
E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]
The Guild of Spiritual Doctors
[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2017/0023822

18 July 2017

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 30th June 2017 to Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister for Scotland. I have been asked to respond on behalf of the First Minister.

I understand that this is an issue you feel very strongly about and I recognise that there are a range of personal views about abortion. However, the Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, when this is the choice they have made. It is our view that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

Under the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is legal during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met. The Scottish Government has no plans to change the law on abortion in Scotland.

[redacted – personal data]
Scottish Government

Dear First Minister
Ms Sturgeon, MSP

31 August 2017

REPEAL THE ABORTION ACT 1967

You will be aware that this year is the 50th anniversary of the passing of the *Abortion Act 1967*. I am making an urgent and pressing appeal to you as a member of the Scottish Parliament to take this opportunity to consider the case for repealing the *Act* in Scotland. Having gained new powers from Westminster, under the *Scotland Act (2016)*, I understand Holyrood now has the power to legislate on abortion law here in Scotland.

While life, I hope, is precious to you and I, we see that it is not precious to everyone. This dreadful *Act* has ensured that since it was passed, an appalling and heinous crime has been daily perpetrated in hospitals and clinics throughout the length and breadth of our land. And most people do not even blink an eye or give it a second thought. What kind of a people are we when we cannot rescind what was never intended in the first place?

Sir David Steel, who introduced the Bill at the time, made this clearly known in July 1967, when he robustly said: 'It is not the intention of the promoters of the Bill to leave a wide open door for abortion on request...Nobody is advocating abortion on demand in this Committee or anywhere else.' Lord Silkin, who was sponsor of the *Abortion Act 1967* in the House of Lords, also said the same thing: 'It is certainly not a general license to a medical practitioner to carry out an abortion on anybody who desires it.'

Surely I do not need to remind you that, while the Bill was passed primarily to allow legal abortions for women whose health would be seriously put at risk from a pregnancy, abortion in Britain today is, tragically, an accepted fact of life. It is deeply disturbing to consider that since 1967, up to the end of 2016, some 496,000 babies have been aborted in Scotland alone, while over 8 million – over the same period – have been aborted in England and Wales. In Scotland this equals the entire population of Aberdeen, Dundee, Ayr, Perth and Greenock all together being wiped out, while in England it is comparable to the current population of London, with over 8 million people, being murdered. These desperately sad, and chilling, statistics ought to take our very breath away.

Some other facts are breath-taking as well. In many places, girls as young as eleven have had abortions; and fourteen-year-olds have returned for their second operation. Yet they would not be allowed to buy alcohol and usually would require parental consent before having their ears pierced (this consent is not always required in abortion cases). There are government-sponsored campaigns against smoking by pregnant women because the practice could harm the infant. And unborn children involved in car accidents have even secured compensation through the law courts. Yet, quite unbelievably, no action has been taken against the practice of killing the unborn child.

Each abortion snuffs out an innocent human life. It should not be allowed to happen because the Bible reminds us in Psalm 139.13-16 that life, from conception, is sacred and precious: 'Thou hast covered (or knitted together) me in my mother's womb...I praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' All human life is created in God's image and so is intrinsically valuable from conception. It is our duty to defend the sanctity of human life. The deliberate taking of human life is a breach of the sixth commandment: 'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20.13)

Over/

It is a terrible thought to consider that, in Scotland, the mother's womb is the most dangerous place to live in, when it should be the safest. If abortion is rightly regarded as murder, what blood we as a nation have on our hands! In recent years, nations have been held to account for genocide and mass murder. Can we be in any doubt that we are under the judgment of Almighty God?

Enough is enough: the slaughter of the innocent unborn baby must no longer be allowed to continue in Scotland. Abortion must be aborted. If lawmakers and politicians, in Edinburgh, have any heart and know anything about pity, kindness and compassion, then let them show it by repealing the *Abortion Act 1967*, one of the worst ever laws enacted in this country.

I trust you will appreciate that I am making this deep heart-cry on behalf of those who, sadly, cannot speak for themselves. The evidence is in the enclosed booklet which I sincerely hope you will read and then act on. I look forward to sympathetically hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

T: [redacted – personal data]
E: [redacted – personal data]

[redacted – personal data]

Our ref: 2017/0031007

25 September 2017

Dear [redacted – personal data],

Thank you for your letter of 31st August to Scottish Ministers. I have been asked to respond on behalf of the Scottish Ministers.

Under the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is legal during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met.

The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it, and that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

I appreciate that abortion is a highly emotive issue, however, the Scottish Government position on abortion law remains unchanged and we have no plans to change, or repeal abortion legislation.

[redacted – personal data]
Scottish Government

Sent: 28 November 2017 10:26:48
To: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: Your communication with Colin Beattie MSP

This is a re-send. I apologise that the e-mail address was incorrectly
Typed

Dear Minister

Thank you very much for your response received by my MSP, Mr Colin Beattie, to whom, as you may already know, representation had already been made by three of us at the end of October on behalf of the *Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child [SPUC].* Speaking personally, the content of the response is in some respects disquieting and in others unclear. What is clear that you sincerely believe that 'legal and safe abortion' is what the *current legislation* ensures. We only go as far as saying that it limits the period when termination is permissible but that is not to be read as our approval of it at any time.

We are campaigning against decriminalisation because we believe that abortion is not a procedure that can be justified* in any circumstances *merely on clinical grounds.

It appears that the 'limits' you are referring to are *not devolved* or, if they are, then relevant Scottish legislation, if any, that supports or even extends the provisions of the 1967 Act has not been publicly referenced anywhere

It would appear that a sort of arbitrary 'de facto' statutory instrument has been employed by the FM in this particular instance but I actually find no record of it except in unverified/unverifiable media leaks. I am given to understand that a warm Scottish welcome is now accorded women who, having been denied such a 'facility' in Northern Ireland, can now avail themselves of such a 'facility' courtesy of the Scottish NHS

.I don't see abortion listed as a topic tabled for Parliamentary debate or discussion in Holyrood but, of course, I'm always open to be corrected on such matters.

Your mission is, seemingly, to move towards a situation where the justice department ceases to have any say in a sensitive matter of 'faith and morals' and you also want to try to ensure that * 'abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma*'. ,

We join with SPUC in robustly opposing a growing consensus within the caring professions to assign the determination to proceed with foetal termination exclusively to the medical profession. There may come a day, hopefully, when those who, at this moment, see no, hear no evil and speak no evil against foetal termination (abortion) will come to understand the heinousness of the action.. It is an action that, in our view, offends natural justice. It is highly disingenuous and dangerously misleading for the likes of BPAS to imply that termination is simply a matter of a women exercising her inalienable rights over the natural biological functions of her own body. In the unwarranted killing of even a single

innocent we are all deeply implicated We believe,that the Abortion Act (or any Scottish version of the same) must, for all its manifest defects not be jettisoned for the foreseeable future. We argue our case, however strongly opposed, because we genuinely care about the mental and physical health of women *not because we don't ! * Given sufficient time we can happily demonstrate again and again and beyond reasonable doubt that there are infinitely better ways to support women than to wilfully deprive them of the truly beautiful reality that is uniquely theirs, namely, the creation of new life within the womb.

I* would advise you of a meeting organised by SPUC in Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge at 19.00 hrs on 12th December 2017. It is part of a Scotland-wide campaign to raise awareness of the issue of decriminalisation under the banner "The Right Side Tour" *

All are welcome.

Sincerely

Our ref: 2017/0043636

20 December 2017

Dear [*redacted – personal data*],

Thank you for your email of 28 November 2017 to Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health following her communication with your MSP Colin Beattie. As Policy Officer with responsibility for abortion I am providing a response on behalf of the Minister.

I appreciate that this is an issue you feel strongly about and that there are a range of views across Scotland with regards to abortion.

Under the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is legal during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met and the Scottish Government has no plans to change the law on abortion.

Yours Sincerely

[*redacted – personal data*]

Policy Officer
Scottish Government

Extract from briefing for Ministers of 26/06/2017

SUMMARY:

[text redacted – out of scope]

- On 27 June 2017, the BMA voted to support the decriminalisation of abortion at their annual conference. However, the organisation continues to support current gestational limits.

MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING: AILEEN CAMPBELL

Copied to: Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
Cabinet Secretary for Justice

<i>Engagement Title</i>	Meeting with Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) Women's Committee
<i>Timing</i>	Normal
<i>Organisation/Venue and full address including postcode</i>	TG.22, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh
<i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>	Date(s): 27 March 2018 Time(s): 1:15 pm
<i>Background/Purpose</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MACCS Diary Request Letter date: 27/09/2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MACCS Letter reference: 2017/0036256 Purpose/Invitation History: Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) Women's Committee wrote to request a meeting to discuss the provision of late term abortion and equity of access and provision of service across Scotland. It is likely they will also raise the issue of decriminalisation.
<i>Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non SE Building)</i>	There is a pre-meet with officials immediately before this meeting.
<i>Special Dress Requirements</i>	No special requirements
<i>Summary Page and Lines to take</i>	Annex: A Summary Page Annex: B Lines to take

<p><i>Guest List or Meeting Attendees</i></p>	<p>Attendees are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [redacted – personal data], PCS, Chair, STUC Women’s Committee • [redacted – personal data], CWU, Co-Vice Chair STUC Women’s Committee • [redacted – personal data], GMB Scotland, STUC Women’s Committee • [redacted – personal data], RMT STUC Women’s Committee
<p><i>Background</i></p>	<p>Annex: C Background</p>
<p><i>Official Support</i></p>	<p>Names: [redacted – personal data]</p>

ANNEX A

SUMMARY PAGE

[text redacted – out of scope]

Key issues likely to be raised by STUC

[text redacted – out of scope]

- Abortion:
 - Recent Progress
 - Decriminalisation of abortion

ANNEX B

[text redacted – out of scope]

- **As set out in the 2016 Programme for Government, we have no plans to change the law on abortion, however we continue to support work to improve services.**

Background

[text redacted – out of scope]

Decriminalisation:

1. We have some sympathy with the principle of decriminalising abortion up to 24 weeks gestation, however, we feel it is important to continue to prioritise work to improve abortion services for women and make a difference in practice to improving women's experience of abortion. No women in Scotland have been prosecuted for having an illegal abortion since the 1967 Act came into force.

[text redacted – out of scope]

Mon 19/06/2017 11:19

Dear [redacted – personal data]

I hope this email finds you both well and that you are enjoying the fine weather.

I thought it may be helpful to share with you the results of the above poll if you don't already have them. It is a ComRes poll from May and it relates to public opinion on abortion.

The full set of results can be accessed via this link:

<http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/where-do-they-stand-abortion-survey/>

I have included, below, a summary of some of the headline findings which might be useful.

Kindest regards

[redacted – personal data]

20 December 2017 11:19

This is a helpful short article which sets out why decriminalisation of abortion in Scotland would require a new Abortion Act. Was just reminding myself prior to the meeting with FSRH in January.

[redacted – personal data]

[information subject to third party copyright removed]

23 April 2018 16:56

Dear [redacted – personal data]

Please see attached a copy of my slides for Friday – apologies I know the title of the Programme says Abortion Act Devolution, but there isn't much to mention about that given that Ministers have committed to not amending the Abortion Act in the current Parliament so I've focused instead on improving abortion services. I hope that's OK.

Regards

[redacted – personal data]
Scottish Government

[text redacted – out of scope]

Looking Ahead

- Key focus on continuing to improve abortion services across Scotland; no plans to change primary legislation this Parliament.

[text redacted – out of scope]

Extract from briefing for Ministers – February 2018

- As set out in the Programme for Government we have no plans to change the law on abortion, however we continue to support work to improve services.

In scope extract from briefing – 27 August 2019

Improve access to abortion and contraception services for adolescents and young women

- We want to promote greater equity of timely access to abortion services for women across Scotland, including young women. In particular it will be important to minimise travel wherever possible for patients.
- We also want to reduce numbers of unintended pregnancies by ensuring women and young people are encouraged to access sexual health and contraception services and by reducing waiting times.
- The Scottish Government is working in partnership with three NHS Boards to conduct research into young people's attitudes towards condoms and contraception. This research is intended to inform the development of sexual health services that meet the needs of young people in Scotland and also help us to understand how we can best provide the information and resources that young people require.

In scope extract from briefing – 28 August 2019

Improve access to abortion and contraception services for adolescents and young women

- [redacted]
- Teenage pregnancy rates have fallen dramatically but we can still improve on repeat abortion rates and provision of effective and timely contraception (and other health services for young women). The 'every contact counts' principle can be effective here as often contraceptive services can be the only point of contact with any health service and opportunity to influence lifestyle, healthy weight etc choices and flag child/domestic abuse and reproductive planning using digital media and other age appropriate communication

Extract from briefing – 31 May 2018

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S5W-16699

1. This is one of six PQs from Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP. This question is closely linked to questions 16700 and 16701 on decriminalisation of abortion.
2. As you know the SNP manifesto in 2016 and the 2016 Programme for Government made clear that there were no plans to change abortion law. Given this clear policy position, whilst some stakeholders have raised potential changes to abortion law with you in passing as part of wider meetings on abortion or sexual health [text redacted]

19 June 2017 14:57

[redacted – personal data]

Hi folks.

Ms Campbell has asked me to flag the article on page 5 of the attached cuts – she'd be grateful for further information around this and some advice on the potential implications.

Thanks, [redacted – personal data].

Thu 22/06/2017 17:45

[redacted – personal data]

Minister for Public Health

1. This press article describes how the BMA will have a debate during their conference at the end of June about the decriminalisation of abortion. The BMA does not currently have a position on the decriminalisation of abortion, [redacted].
2. 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act being passed, and there have been a number of initiatives raising the profile of decriminalisation recently. In particular;
 - In February 2016, the We Trust Women campaign was initiated by BPAS, supported by the Family Planning Association, Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and others, calling for the decriminalisation of abortion. This included a controversial call for women to be able to access abortions beyond the current 24-week limit, and instead up to term.
 - In May 2016 the RCM published a position statement on abortion, reflecting their view that abortion should be decriminalised.
 - Subsequent to this, a group of midwives formed the “Not In Our Name” campaign to protest against the RCM position and its support of the We Trust Women campaign.
 - There has also recently been a petition launched by Amnesty International UK on this issue, and a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons.
3. In the context of these campaigns, it is important to note that the 1967 Abortion Act did not decriminalise abortion, but rather made it legal in a pregnancy of up to 24 weeks' gestation where two doctors are of the opinion that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family.
4. A number of different models of decriminalisation have been proposed in recent debate, however a common intention from these campaigns is to see significant changes to the law so that women seeking abortions, and those assisting them, are not at risk of criminal prosecution. There is an ideological component to this, but there are also some more practical concerns, which have arisen out of prosecutions in England and Northern Ireland (we are not aware of any recent prosecutions in Scotland).
5. In particular, there has been debate around whether women who knowingly self-administer a medical abortion should be subject to criminal sanctions, and related to this, what the consequences should be for women who acquire abortifacients online, and the suppliers of these abortifacients. We expect these issues to be considered by the BMA.
6. Officials will monitor the issues raised and the outcome of the BMA debate.

[redacted – personal data]

Extract from briefing for Ministers

<i>Engagement Title</i>	Meeting with Faculty for Sexual and Reproductive Health (FSRH)
<i>Timing</i>	Normal
<i>Organisation/Venue and full address including postcode</i>	T3.04, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh
<i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>	Date(s): 9 January 2018 Time(s): 10.30 am
<i>Background/Purpose</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MCS Diary Request Letter date: 20/09/2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MCS Letter reference: 2017/0034814 Purpose/Invitation History: The Faculty for Sexual and Reproductive Health wrote to request a meeting to discuss [redacted – out of scope] issues in women's reproductive health.
<i>Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non SE Building)</i>	There is a pre-meet with officials immediately before this meeting.
<i>Special Dress Requirements</i>	No special requirements
<i>Summary Page and Lines to take</i>	Annex: A Summary Page B Annotated Agenda with lines to take
<i>Guest List or Meeting Attendees</i>	Annex: B Attendees are: • [redacted – personal data]
<i>Background</i>	Annex: C – F C – Background on Sexual Assault issues D - Forensic Facilities by Health Board E - Taskforce - High Level Workplan and CMO Narrative F – Background on sexual health and abortion
<i>Official Support</i>	Names: [redacted – personal data]

[text redacted – out of scope]

Abortion services (including decriminalisation)

- We understand that the FSRH supports decriminalisation of abortion and wants to see further improvements to abortion services in Scotland.
- Scottish Government believes all women should have access to abortion services as part of routine health care and available free from stigma.

- The Scottish Government has no plans to make changes to the 1967 abortion act. Our focus is on improving services within the constraints of current abortion law.
- The Scottish Government is continuing to work with NHS Boards to look at how further improvements can be made to abortion services in Scotland.

Sent: 13 June 2016 14:16

RE: Royal College of Nursing Abortion Brief

Background

Congress may *[[redacted – personal data]* – I'm not sure from the website if the issue definitely will be debated or not] debate the following motion:

That this meeting of Congress discusses the merits of decriminalising abortion.

The material for this motion suggests that the 1967 Abortion Act is paternalistic, discriminatory and at odds with modern values. It is also suggested that decriminalising abortion could lead to improved care.

Scottish Government Position

Abortion law was devolved to the Scottish Parliament on 23 May 2016. The Scottish Government does not intend to change the law on abortion.

Sent: 02 December 2016 17:42

To: Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

Subject: Scottish women's organisations' collective report on abortion - pre-launch copy

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Following our helpful and positive meeting about abortion healthcare in December 2015, and the transfer of relevant powers to Scotland, Engender and other Scottish women's and human rights organisations have been working on a joint publication on this subject.

Please find attached an advance copy of this report, which will be launched at an event on Monday 12 December, for your information.

If you would like any additional information on this work, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

[[redacted – personal data]

Engender

Link to engender report <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Our-bodies-our-choice---the-case-for-a-Scottish-approach-to-abortion.pdf>

Our ref: 2016/0017171
9 June 2016

[redacted – personal data]

Thank you for your letter of 25 May 2016 to the First Minister about the Abortion Act. I have been asked to reply.

The Scottish Government supported the devolution of abortion law to Scotland as almost all other health matters are already devolved. However, the Scottish Government position on abortion law remains unchanged and has no plans to change, or repeal abortion legislation. The First Minister set out this position in Parliament during First Minister's Questions on 10 September 2015, and I have enclosed a copy of this for information.

Thank you again for writing to the First Minister and I hope this reply has been helpful.

Yours sincerely

[redacted – personal data]

01/11/2018

Right Honourable Nicola Sturgeon MSP
Leader of the SNP
Scottish Parliament Building,
Horse Wynd,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

001037 2018

Dear First Minister

JUSTICE FOR THE MOTHERS OF THE UNBORN

[text redacted – out of scope]

It is important in my view that any legislation that goes through Parliament should provide a compulsory cooling off period, and advise of possible physical and mental health consequences to the mother of an unborn child.

There are many couples who are unable to have children, and should the mother continue full term, there are adoption societies who help with these matters.

It is my belief that the current legislation does not require alterations. That criminalization should be retained as more than mothers are involved in the implementation of the Abortion Act. It is a warning against malpractice.

Our ref: 2018/0039421
11 December 2018

[redacted – personal data]

Thank you for your letter of 1 November 2018 to the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, regarding abortion law in Scotland. Scottish Ministers receive a large volume of correspondence and I hope you will understand that it is not always possible for them to reply personally to each case. As a policy officer in Health Protection Division, on this occasion I have been asked to reply on behalf of the First Minister.

I appreciate that this is an issue you feel strongly about. However, the Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to clinically safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it. It is our view that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

As set out in the Programme for Government we have no plans to change the law on abortion; however we continue to support work to improve services. The Scottish Government is continuing to work with NHS Boards to look at how further improvements can be made to abortion services in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted – personal data]
Scottish Government



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

9 November 2018

Ms Jeane Freeman MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
St. Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG



Our Ref: BC1175

Dear Cabinet Secretary

I am writing to you on behalf of constituents who recently contacted me regarding potential changes to abortion legislation.

My constituents have expressed concerns about potential changes and I would be grateful to know if there are any plans to bring proposed changes in abortion law before the Scottish Parliament.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Bruce Crawford MSP

Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing
Joe FitzPatrick MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Bruce Crawford MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Your ref: BC1175
Our ref: 2018/0039632
23rd November 2018

Dear Bruce

Thank you for your letter dated the 9th of November to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport regarding your constituent's concerns about abortion legislation in Scotland. I am responding as this issue falls within my portfolio.

The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it. It is therefore our view that abortion care should be available free from stigma.

However, while I am aware that some stakeholders and MSPs would be keen to change the law on abortion, the Scottish Government confirmed in its Programme for Government for 2016-2017 that it had no current plans to change the law on abortion. That continues to be our position so we have no plans at the moment for an Abortion Bill. Our priority is to focus efforts on improving abortion services rather than changing the legislation. The Scottish Government is continuing to work with NHS Boards to look at how further improvements can be made to abortion services in Scotland.

I hope this is helpful to your constituents.

Best wishes

Joe FitzPatrick

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot



St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

From: [*redacted – personal data*]

Sent: 15 November 2018 11:42

To: Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing

<MinisterPHSW@gov.scot<mailto:MinisterPHSW@gov.scot>>

Subject: Decriminalisation of Abortion

Dear Joe,

Attached is a letter from Bob regarding a constituent's concerns about the decriminalisation of abortion.

Best wishes,

[*redacted – personal data*]

Office of Bob Doris, MSP for Maryhill and Springburn



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Joe Fitzpatrick MSP
Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG



Ref: BD6359
Date: 15 November 2018

Dear Joe,

Decriminalisation of Abortion

I am writing to you on behalf of one of my constituents. They had asked me to support the decriminalisation of abortion by supporting Diana Johnson MP's Ten Minute Rule Bill on abortion and to co-sign NC2 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Function) Bill. Whilst I am unable to give these matters my consideration (given they are UK Parliament processes) I did want to explore the Scottish Government position further.

As you know, in Scotland as well as England and Wales, abortions are only allowed (in most circumstances) to be carried out until the 24th week of pregnancy as long as there is an approval from two doctors. If there is no approval and the abortion proceeds, it is then classed as a criminal offence. Abortion became a devolved power as of 2016, at which time the prospect of policy divergence between Scotland and England was raised. This has not happened.

I am aware that Engender has published a report (in collaboration with others): 'Our Bodies, Our Choice'. The report claims, "currently abortions are not performed in Scotland beyond around 18 weeks despite the fact that this is within the legal limits of the Abortion Act ..." and that women are 'forced' to travel south. It suggests that some women are unable to take the time off work and that others are not able to financially afford it and in some cases are struggling to find care for their loved ones. It contends either that there is a lack of services in Scotland or that the service is not complying with the abortion law in Scotland.

I would urge you to look into this matter.

Bob Doris MSP
e-mail: bob.doris.msp@parliament.scot
Constituency Office, Maryhill Burgh Halls, 10-24 Gairbraid Avenue, Glasgow G20 8YE
Phone: 0141 946 7700

Engender is also clear that the Government should ensure that a health care approach should be taken to the issue of abortion - which is taken to procedures such as transplants. The report contends that abortion is one of the 'safest and most regularly performed procedure' but they believe this cannot be ensured when women cannot get an abortion after a certain point of the legal time frame stated in the Abortion Act.

For my part, whilst I would not personally seek to increase the timeframe under which abortions can be conducted, I would want to make sure that a public health approach is being taken to the matter more generally. What reassurances can you provide or what more could be done?

I appreciate that this is a sensitive matter and that conflicting views are strongly held by many. For my part, I seek to ensure the concerns raised by my constituents are addressed irrespective of views held. I look forward to your reply on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Davis".

Bob Doris MSP for Maryhill and Springburn (SNP)

Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing
Joe FitzPatrick MSP



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Bob Doris MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Your ref: BD6359
Our ref: 2018/0040238
December 2018

Thank you for your letter of 15 November 2018 regarding abortion legislation in Scotland.

The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to safe abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it.

However, while I am aware that some stakeholders and MSPs would be keen to change the law on abortion, the Scottish Government confirmed in its Programme for Government for 2016-2017 that it had no current plans to change the law on abortion. That continues to be our position. Our priority is to focus efforts on improving abortion services, rather than changing the legislation. The Scottish Government is continuing to work with NHS Boards to look at how further improvements can be made to abortion services in Scotland.

Health Boards in Scotland vary in the gestational limit (the stage of pregnancy) up to which they currently provide abortion services, with most mainland Boards providing abortions up to either 18 weeks or 20 weeks gestation. This is something the Scottish Government is working with Boards on to seek to encourage them to increase their gestation limits, at least up to 20 weeks. However, it is for individual Boards to decide how best to deliver their service locally. As you are probably aware, the Abortion Act 1967 does give staff a right to conscientious objection to participating in the delivery of abortion services. This, along with some other factors, such as the specialist skills and training needed for later gestation abortions, given the increased complexity and levels of risk involved in the procedure at later stages in pregnancy, does affect the ability or willingness of Boards to deliver services up to 24 weeks.

However, Health Boards are required to support women to access abortions up until 24 weeks gestation in line with the law in Scotland. If a later stage abortion is required then the Board will arrange for the patient to travel to England to have an abortion. We are aware that this travel can add to the distress and other difficulties for these women and are continuing to work with Boards to ensure that they are able to minimise the distress as much as possible by helping ensure travel and accommodation bookings are made and paid for upfront by the Board or BPAS (which is the provider of later stage abortions in England) rather than the patient needing to claim the money back later. We are also continuing to explore the feasibility of delivering later stage abortions in Scotland.

Finally, in relation to your points about a health care approach to provision of abortion, the Scottish Government agrees with Engender that patients should be able to access abortion services free from stigma. We have worked with Boards to ensure that there is information widely available about how to access abortion services.

Joe FitzPatrick

Sent: 10 February 2019 21:56
To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>
Subject: Solution

Dear Mrs Nicola Sturgeon.

I am writing to because I wish to propose a solution to an issue that could benefit not just Scotland but the entire human race and save are planet. I propose that if Scotland gains it's independents that abortion law changes from the twenty seven weeks wait to as soon as the embro is formed and given to stem cell research. The result would allow those that wish an abortion the option to do so sooner and give stem cell research enough resources to make massive progress in the field of genetic engineering in organisms, witch in turn could benefit the other sciences. There is multiple other benefits that stem cell research could have on humans, animals and plants. I will not shy away from the negatives and the unknown but I believe that the positive outway them especially since the world is hanging by a string. This video will show both the pros and cons to allow a better understanding of what I'm writing to you about. I would send a link but I am unable to so if you have free time I would urge you to look up "In a nutshell are gmos good or bad."

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your sincerely

12 March 2019

[redacted – personal data]

Thank you for your email of 10 February 2019 to the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, regarding abortion legislation in Scotland. Scottish Ministers receive a large volume of correspondence and I hope you will understand that it is not always possible for them to reply personally to each case. As a policy officer in Health Protection Division, on this occasion I have been asked to reply on behalf of the First Minister.

An abortion should take place as early as possible – ideally in the first 9 weeks of pregnancy. Over 70% of abortions in Scotland already take place during the first nine weeks. The Abortion Act 1967 makes it legal to have an abortion in Scotland, England and Wales during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. After 24 weeks, an abortion can be carried out only if:

- It is necessary to save the woman's life; or
- It will prevent grave, permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman; or
- There is substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

As set out in the Programme for Government we have no plans to change the law on abortion; however we continue to support work to improve services. I have noted your points about using foetuses for stem cell research. It is worth noting that this is feasible with appropriate patient consent, but researchers do already use human stem cells from a wide range of other sources in research. This research is helping to advance medical science.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted - personal data]

Scottish Government

Our ref: 2019/0017245

2 July 2019

[redacted – personal data]

Thank you for your email dated 6 June to the Minister for Health and Sport Mr FitzPatrick, regarding abortion. As a policy officer in Health Protection Division, on this occasion I have been asked to reply.

I appreciate that this is an issue that you feel strongly about. The Scottish Government believes all women in Scotland should have access to clinically safe and legal abortion services, within the limits that are currently set down in law, should they require it. It is our view that abortion care should be part of standard healthcare provisions, free from stigma.

We recognise that anti-abortion protests can be distressing for women and staff attending hospitals or clinics. Councils in Scotland have powers under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to make bye-laws so these offer local authorities a means of imposing measures suited to local circumstances – and that may include measures to restrict protest.

As set out in the Programme for Government we have no plans to change the law on abortion; however we continue to support work to improve services.

I hope this has been helpful.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted – personal data]

Scottish Government

Sent: 22 August 2019 10:22:26

To: Scottish Ministers

Subject: Re: the imperative to reduce the number of abortions in Scotland to tackle gender-based violence and lower the risk of suicide, and the decriminalising of abortion would be a grave error that could result in more gender-based violence

Attachments: The imperative to reduce the number of abortions in Scotland - August 2019.pdf, Evidence that contraceptives fail at closer to perfect use rather than typical use.pdf

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport - Jeane Freeman MSP

Dear Minister,

Please find attached a letter outlining the imperative to reducing the number of abortions in Scotland to tackle gender-based violence, evidence that contraceptives fail at closer to 'perfect use' than 'typical use', and other important points.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted – personal data]

[text redacted – out of scope]

Decriminalising abortion would be a grave error that could result in more gender-based violence

Decriminalising abortion would be a grave error and mean a return to the days of unsafe abortions that was the reason for the Abortion Act 1967 in Scotland. Criminal sanctions guarantee women receive medical supervision from qualified doctors and clinical staff and protect women and their unborn children from abusive partners. Without this vital healthcare any person, by any means, and in any location could end the life of an unborn baby up to 24 weeks' gestation and a medical doctor after this time without penalty.

It would not be possible to prevent abortifacient pills being taken after the safe 9 weeks' gestation period,⁶ or their maladministration or by force where decriminalisation would make it much harder to prosecute the perpetrator likely to be violent or unscrupulous men. I believe no women have been criminalised due to abortion in Scotland and only two women in England and Wales have been criminalised in over 50 years (both were vulnerable and needed healthcare) indicating the law is not intrinsically used as punishment but deters inappropriate actions. I found that the five European Union countries having the strictest abortion laws and limits – Malta, Poland, Croatia, Portugal, and Slovenia – not the weakest, ranked in the joint five lowest for prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women (Table 2.1).

Even the abortion industry themselves say that abortion must be safe with the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) stating on the 7th July 2017, “if you do not provide safe abortion services [for women].....you are doing them a great disservice.”⁷ Marie Stopes provided a submission (DAB0473) to the UK Parliament draft Domestic Abuse Bill as recently as May 2019 making clear that abortion must be safe.⁸ A UK Government document ‘Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020’ with cross-party input outlines strengthening and not weakening the role of health services in preventing domestic abuse saying “Abused women use health care services more than non-abused women and they identify health care workers as the professionals they would be most likely to speak to about their experience. GPs, midwives, health visitors, mental health, drug and alcohol services, sexual health and Accident and Emergency staff are all well placed to identify abuse. They have the opportunity to intervene early and direct victims to the most appropriate statutory and non-statutory services.”⁹

My evidence indicates it is the act of abortion that is harmful and not the location suggested by higher under-reporting in countries such as the Netherlands in Chart 1 below (where abortion is more accepted) and women can already attend clinics anonymously. All women must be able to attend a clinic or be examined by a medical doctor, and if this is not possible then it is a problem other than abortion.

Official statistics would be degraded such as for disability, ethnicity (black women and their unborn babies disproportionately undergo abortion compared to their population percentage in England),¹⁰ and regional location. Women and couples may choose not to prevent unintended pregnancy but abortion instead which would patently not be good practice (the number of women having repeat abortions has risen in Scotland and is now 33% of the total in 2018), worrying as my evidence suggests more abortions lead to more violence against women. In my view, it will not be possible to fully tackle violence against women and girls should abortion be decriminalised and would undermine the efforts of every anti-violence organisation in Scotland. There is simply no justification for decriminalisation.

My evidence also suggests that a wide number of academics, politicians, and healthcare professionals have failed to understand these social anthropological mechanisms and consequences of abortion and by its promotion have in fact been a cause of gender-based violence. This must stop, including First Minister of Scotland, Ms. Nicola Sturgeon, who recently made comments on this subject (regarding Jeremy Hunt MP and abortion time limits) which suggests to me that she has not been informed of my prior correspondence and so I would be grateful if you would make her aware of it and others within your Government and further afield if applicable. By inference this also applies to those calling for decriminalisation which includes the duplicitous abortion industry.

Conclusion

Abortion can and has destroyed relationships and families and is a lethal act of violence against fellow human beings yet is practically preventable. The evidence suggests failure to reduce the number of abortions in Scotland will put women at greater risk of violence, suicide, and ultimately loss of life. Therefore, you must act immediately to prevent abortion in Scotland.

The decriminalisation of abortion would betray Scottish women removing vital healthcare from them and ultimately make it impossible to fully tackle gender-based violence undermining the good work of anti-violence organisations and campaigners. Since nobody has been criminalised in Scotland in over 50 years there is simply no justification for decriminalising abortion and criminal sanctions must be maintained to protect women and unborn children.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted – personal data]

[text redacted – out of scope]