

## New Safe Access Zones September 2024



Dear Resident,

Your area will soon be situated within a designated Safe Access Zone for a local healthcare facility where abortion services are provided. You may not notice any changes, but this letter will explain what it means for you and your neighbours.

Safe Access Zone legislation aims to protect patients and staff accessing and providing abortion care. In recent years, hospitals and clinics providing abortion services have seen an increase in anti-abortion activity, which can be upsetting for patients and staff.

The Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Act 2024 came into force on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. From that date, Safe Access Zones will prevent people acting in certain ways around hospitals and clinics which provide abortion services.

It will be an offence, intentionally or recklessly, to do anything that would:

- influence someone's decision to access, provide or facilitate the provision of abortion services,
- prevent or impede another person from accessing, providing or facilitating the provision of abortion services, or
- cause harassment, alarm or distress to another person relating to their decision to access, provide or facilitate the provision of abortion services, where in each case the other person is in the Safe Access Zone.

In general, the offences apply in public places within the Safe Access Zones. However, activities in a private place (such as a house) within the area between the protected premises and the boundary of a Zone could be an offence if they can be seen or heard within the Zone and are done intentionally or recklessly.

Safe Access Zones are made up of the hospital or clinic where abortion services are provided (referred to in law as the 'protected premises'), the public area of any grounds of the hospital or clinic, and any public areas within 200 metres of the boundary of the grounds (if there are any grounds, or from the premises if not). The extent of the Safe Access Zone which relates to your area is shown on the map on the reverse of this letter.

Zones can be made bigger or smaller if needed. If this happens, the list of current Zones, which can be found on the Scottish Government website [Abortion Safe Access Zones: locations and maps - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot), will be updated to show the new size 14 days before the changes take effect.

Police Scotland will be able to enforce Safe Access Zones. Anyone who is found to have breached the law on Safe Access Zones could be fined. The fine could be up to £10,000 under summary procedure or up to an unlimited amount under solemn procedure.

You can report a group or an individual that you think is breaking the law by contacting Police Scotland at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/c3>.

More information can be found on the Scottish Government website at [www.gov.scot/safe-access-zones](https://www.gov.scot/safe-access-zones).