



Home Office

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime,
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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 19 October to the then Home Secretary on behalf of a number of your constituents who have contacted you about buffer zones outside abortion clinics. I am replying as the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire and I am sorry for the delay in replying.

The Public Order Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 2 May. Implementation of the Public Order Act measures is staggered, as is common with legislation. The Government respects the will of Parliament and is working to commence Safe Access Zones as soon as is practicably possible.

The Home Office has considered how we can ensure law enforcement agencies have a clear and consistent understanding around enforcement, and abortion service providers and protesters are clear as to what is expected under the new law. As a result, the Home Office is drafting non-statutory guidance.

Recognising that this is new legislation, on an emotive topic, with strong views on all sides of the debate, the Government has decided to launch a public consultation on the non-statutory guidance for Safe Access Zones. The Home Office will launch the consultation at the earliest possible opportunity.

Following the consultation, the Home Office anticipates commencing Section 9 in Spring 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP