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Rt Hon George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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29 June 2018

Dear George

Thank you for your email dated 31 May 2018 regarding abortion laws in Northern Ireland. The Government recognises that abortion is an extremely sensitive issue and that there are strongly held views on all sides of the debate in Northern Ireland.

Abortion has always been a devolved matter in Northern Ireland. The Government's priority is therefore restoring devolved government, so that the people of Northern Ireland, and locally elected representatives, can decide what is right for Northern Ireland.

The Government has already put in place arrangements to allow women normally resident in Northern Ireland to have access to safe abortion services in England within the bounds of the law.

We believe this strikes an appropriate balance between the devolved position of abortion in Northern Ireland, and allowing women in Northern Ireland to have access to abortion services in England.

But this decision, and the existing support provided, does not change the fact that as abortion in Northern Ireland is a devolved issue and any reform in Northern Ireland is rightly one for a restored Northern Ireland Assembly and the people of Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

RT HON KAREN BRADLEY MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND