

Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West

6th August 2019

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about abortion in Northern Ireland.

I am pleased that the Government recognises the sensitivity of this issue and the range of views expressed by people on all sides of the debate. It is a highly sensitive issue, regardless of where one's view lies and one where it is important that the matter is considered with due care and sensitivity. The strength of feeling from MPs was clearly demonstrated during the votes on the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill.

I very much believe however, that there must be careful consideration of both the policy detail and also the implementation. While the votes do not automatically change the law, they compel government to make the changes if devolution at Stormont is not restored by 21 October. Abortion has always been a devolved matter for the Northern Ireland Executive and it has been the Government's consistent position that it should be decided by locally accountable politicians there.

Restoring the Executive remains the Secretary of State's key priority and it is very positive news that a new phase of talks began in May.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP

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