

27th April 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about abortion.

I completely understand what an incredibly emotive issue this is, and I appreciate the strength of feelings on both sides. It is for this reason that, as with other matters of conscience, the Government adopts a neutral stance on abortion, allowing Conservative MPs to vote freely according to their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs. This is a convention which I support wholeheartedly.

The approach to abortion in Great Britain is set out in the Abortion Act 1967, which states that two doctors must certify that, in their opinion, a request for an abortion meets at least one and the same ground laid out in the Act. These grounds include “*risk to the life of the pregnant woman*”, and “*substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped*”.

I am encouraged that guidance for doctors on how to comply with the Act has been issued, which stipulates that registered medical practitioners should be able to show how they have considered the particular facts and circumstances of a case when forming their opinion. Full details can be found online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-doctors-on-compliance-with-the-abortion-act.

With regards to the Coronavirus outbreak, abortion care is an essential part of care for women, and safeguarding measures are still in place. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has offered guidance on this issue which can be found here:

www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-abortion/information-for-women/

Guidelines have been issued which enable women to take both Mifepristone and Misoprostol at home for the duration of the outbreak, so that they do not have to visit a medical practice and risk exposure to the virus, and to enable doctors to prescribe medicines from home without consulting a second practitioner, so that abortion care can be provided even in the case of staff shortages. I have been assured this alteration will last only as long as the temporary provisions enacted by the Coronavirus Act 2020 to protect women seeking care. The medicines must still be instigated prior to nine weeks and six days into the pregnancy.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP

Follow Alok on Twitter: @AlokSharma_RDG

**Please reply to: Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
e: alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk w: www.aloksharma.co.uk t: 0118 941 3803**