1. What are the views of the general public, women and medical and legal professionals in Northern Ireland about the law on abortion and whether it should be reformed? How have those views changed over time?

I don’t speak for everyone, but personally, as a Bible believing Christian, I don’t support abortion. I live in Northern Ireland, where an estimated 100,000 lives have been saved because of the existing law, and this is something to be immensely grateful for. The attitude of the general public, women, men, the medical and legal professions seems to have changed over time – it used to be that it wasn’t really talked about or considered morally correct, but in recent years, especially with the referendum in the Republic of Ireland on abortion, the mood seems to have changed. It now seems to me that most people here are in favour of abortion. As time has gone on this view has been strengthened and promoted a lot. The people that oppose abortion, such as myself, have been represented by an organisation here locally known as ‘Both Lives Matter’. The abortion question has become more prevalent in the media in recent years, especially since the (very sad) referendum result in the Republic of Ireland.

2. What are the experiences of women in Northern Ireland who have been affected by the law on abortion?

I don’t know any women who have been affected by the law on abortion in Northern Ireland, but I know that 100,000 lives (estimated) have been saved by the law being the way it is. I am for the mother and for the child – both have an equal right to life. The mother and the child have equal right to life and abortion undermines this hugely. In the rest of the UK (England, Scotland and Wales) there have been almost 9 million abortions since the 1967 Abortion Act came into force, far more than envisaged when the Act was being introduced. The reasoning behind these abortions was 98% for social reasons, which makes no sense whatsoever. You don’t have to be a Christian to see that abortion is wrong - Abortion fundamentally undermines human rights – above all the right to life of the most vulnerable in our society.

3. What are the responsibilities of the UK Government under its international obligations for taking action to reform abortion law in Northern Ireland? How should these be reconciled to the UK’s devolution settlement?

I understand that the UK government has obligations in regard to what has been said about the abortion law here in Northern Ireland, however this simply can’t be reconciled with the UK’s devolution settlement. Northern Ireland’s law must be respected. Westminster shouldn’t set out to bypass the will of our elected representatives, which was last made clear in February 2016. I don’t say that our law must be respected because I’m against abortion, but because I’m for democracy. If we had a referendum here and the result was for abortion, although I’d be very sad, I’d accept it because that is democracy in action and I respect democracy. The central UK Government needs to get our political parties here talking around the table again before it even considers things like this because we have had no government for almost two years now.

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