As a church we are firmly opposed to any change in the legislation of Northern Ireland’s abortion laws. First and foremost, we oppose liberalising abortion law because abortion is the taking of human life, and as such is a sin against God, as well as the unborn child – Exodus 20:13: “You shall not commit murder”. Scientific evidence has long since established that from conception, a separate and new human life is formed. Human life is God’s creation, and is not ours to destroy – Psalm 139:13: For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...

The democratic will of the people of Northern Ireland was last made clear less than 3 years ago, in February 2016, when the devolved government in Belfast voted against changing our laws on abortion. Such a drastic change in the legislation should not be imposed on Northern Ireland from Westminster.

The law as it stands fully provides for the health of a pregnant woman to be protected, and also rightly recognises the life of her unborn child as deserving full protection, unless it puts the mother’s health at risk.

Great Britain has become an abortion-on-demand country, something which should be a cause for national mourning and shame. 98% of abortions carried out in England, Scotland and Wales are now purely for social reasons.

Abortion fundamentally undermines human rights – the most basic and fundamental right of all, in fact: the right to life. An estimated 100,000 lives have been saved in Northern Ireland because we do not have the widespread, casual attitude to abortion that is promoted in the rest of the UK. This should not change.

We recognise that there may be circumstances where both the life of the mother and the life of the unborn child cannot simultaneously be preserved. However, the lives of their babies should not be endangered under false pretences, and the deliberate killing of an unborn child by abortion can never be justified.

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