I am writing in a personal capacity as a resident in Northern Ireland to respond to your consultation on abortion law in N.I.

For a number of reasons I think the current law should not be changed. It is vital for any society to protect the right to life of everyone including the unborn child.

Northern Ireland has had quite different laws to mainland Great Britain since 1967. This reflects the political and religious differences with the mainland. On the whole island of Ireland abortion has been illegal until the recent referendum in the Republic. At the present none of the five main political parties in N. Ireland is calling for an extension of the 1967 Act to N.I.

For the Government to abandon devolution in this matter would create a democratic deficit, the majority in Westminster clearly don’t represent the majority in N. Ireland as expressed in recent elections and the vote in the N.I. Assembly in 2016.

Since the Government is planning to restart talks in January with the intention of restoring devolution now is not the time to be imposing a solution on this contentious issue from outside.

The cases of rape, incest, and fatal foetal abnormality are rare and very difficult for those involved. The best help should always be given to those affected especially the mother. It cannot be right to take the child’s life for someone else’s crime. In the case of fatal foetal abnormality many doctors admit that it is hard to judge when this occurs and how soon a life may end in these cases.

I urge the committee to consider these matters carefully and to respect the different laws in Northern Ireland.

December 2018