Written submission from Denise Hayward (ANI0252)

As a resident of Northern Ireland I would like to take this opportunity to submit my views for the committees consideration as part of this committees inquiry into the abortion law in Norther Ireland.

I would like to address the first question you are looking at:

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?

Northern Ireland's abortion law currently respects the human rights of the most vulnerable people in society - the unborn baby, and it is my firm opinion that this is a right and just position for a civilized society to hold. It is right that we value the human rights of every person and we live in an age and society where this is claimed as a high value, but this is often not extended to the unborn child. It is my opinion that this should not be changed in Northern Ireland and should not be imposed externally from the elected representatives of the Northern Irish Assembly. It is my understanding that they voted not to change the law in 2016.

As a woman myself, I respect the human rights of women but where this is conflict with a baby in the womb, unable to speak up for itself, the protection must be given to that child. Northern Irish abortion law does allow for abortion in the case where the mother's health or life is at significant risk. It is my assertion that both the life of the mother and the life of the unborn child are of equal importance.

December 2018