1) DEVOLUTION
I am somewhat taken aback at the intention to impose an 'English' solution on Northern Ireland in respect of the law on abortion. The UK Government has made it clear recently that they have no intention on introducing direct rule in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive. In fact, the Government has introduced legislation through Westminster to give greater decision-making powers to senior civil servants. If the government is to be consistent, then this important area of devolved policy needs to be decided locally in the future too.
Although opinions vary, previous debates in the NI Assembly have shown that:
1. There is no appetite for the introduction of 'abortion on demand' in Northern Ireland.
2. There is no appetite for an extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
As stated above. Northern Ireland has a distinctive culture that makes it different form the rest of the UK and also from the rest of Ireland. The nature of devolution is that politically this is recognised.
I am also amazed that anyone can logically argue for the rights and protections of disabled people whilst at the same time, promoting a view that says its fine to terminate pregnancies purely on the basis that a diagnostic test has suggested the possibility of a baby being born disabled.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
In any case, these two narrow grounds are already under consideration by political parties in Northern Ireland. It should be for those parties (who after all are the representatives of the people of Northern Ireland) to deal with these issues when an Assembly & Executive is restored to Belfast.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
One could be forgiven (given the stories that are regularly circulated in the media) that the only option available to a couple when a drastic diagnosis is made during pregnancy is to abort that pregnancy.
I personally know a young couple who, several years ago faced this dilemma. They spoke of the pressure they felt under to make a decision quickly & how they felt the only option available to them was to have an abortion quickly. They decided instead to take a few days to reflect & decide with their family how best to proceed. They decided to 'let nature take it's course' and the pregnancy ran to full term. A baby girl was born and died a few hours after birth.
I can still recall the funeral being held & the sadness that surrounded it. What was also evident was that the local community rallied round, the village came to a standstill & it seemed all of the local community was at the funeral.
About a year later I attended a local event where that couple (very bravely) shared their experience. Even though the baby had a condition that meant it would only survive a for short period after birth, they said they had never regretted their decision. It had allowed them to grieve properly; they got to spend some precious time with their daughter and were able to name her [name]. They spoke of how they valued the support their family & the local community. They said they had met other couples that had received the same diagnosis as them (a child with an abnormality which meant it couldn’t survive after birth). They said some other couples who had made the decision to terminate quickly, had voiced regrets as they'd not then had the opportunity to grieve publicly or to receive local support.
When they said was the because of their decision, their journey wasn't a secret. That although they had to carry the pain, they didn't have to carry it alone. That people felt able to speak to them and sympathise with them.

I still regularly see this young mum visit the grave of her child (as I visit my mum's grave).

I share this to show there are other stories apart from the ones that make the news. Some people may make the decision to terminate their pregnancy and I respect that. But those aren't the only views and so-called 'solutions' imposed from the outside are rarely solutions at all.

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