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Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley MP  
Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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17 September 2024

Dear Karen,

### **Section 9 of the Public Order Act 2023 – Safe Access Zones**

I want to extend my congratulations on your recent election as Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee. Having had the privilege of serving in this role myself, I can attest to both its challenges and its importance in our Parliamentary system. I look forward to working closely with you to ensure that that our decisions as Ministers in the Home Office are thoroughly scrutinised and that we are rightfully held to account. This process is essential to the functioning of good governance.

I am writing to notify you that on 18 September 2024, the Government will be announcing that Section 9 of the Public Order Act 2023 is to be commenced on 31 October 2024. The College of Policing and the Crown Prosecution Service will be publishing their own operational guidance alongside commencement.

As you will recall, section 9 introduces safe access zones outside abortion clinics in England and Wales. The legislation makes it an offence for a person within a safe access zone to intentionally or recklessly influence, obstruct, or cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person in connection with their decision to access, provide, or facilitate the provision of abortion services at an abortion clinic. The affected person must be within the safe access zone for the abortion clinic.

The announcement of the commencement of Safe Access Zones will be published on the GOV.UK website. I will arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP**  
**Minister of State for Police and Crime Prevention**