

# Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- H31

Source Christian Institute

The Government is considering introducing a highly permissive abortion law in Northern Ireland.

This week, it launched a consultation on the proposed framework for the Province. The proposals go far beyond the existing law in the rest of the UK.

Northern Ireland's protections for the unborn were removed on 22 October following a vote by MPs, and new laws will be introduced by March 2020.

## **Time limits**

The Government is proposing to allow unrestricted abortion up to 12 or 14 weeks – no reason would be needed.

Abortions would also be permissible for social reasons up to 22 or 24 weeks.

In Great Britain, abortion is available up to 24 weeks for social reasons if two doctors approve it.

But the Government is proposing not to have the two-doctor requirement for Northern Ireland and may permit “any other registered healthcare professional” to perform an abortion.

## **Disability**

Unborn babies believed to have a disability would be at risk, as the consultation considers whether or not to allow abortion up to birth for children with a ‘severe impairment’. In Great Britain, similar language has seen a cleft palate treated as grounds for abortion.

The proposals also contain no specific prohibition against sex-selective abortion.

The consultation asks where would be an appropriate setting for abortions to take place, raising the possibility that they would not be limited to hospitals and clinics.

## **The proposed law**

- Unrestricted abortion up to 12 or 14 weeks
- Abortion for social reasons up to 22 or 24 weeks
- No requirement for a doctor's approval
- Any registered healthcare professional could perform an abortion
- Abortion for disabilities up to birth
- No prohibition against sex-selective abortion
- Abortions need not take place in a hospital or clinic

## **Conscience**

The Christian Institute's Northern Ireland Officer Callum Webster said: “It is vitally important that citizens across Northern Ireland respond to the public consultation and speak out to protect the unborn children and warn of the dangers of liberalising these laws.

“Adequate protections must also be in place for medical staff who will soon be under pressure to facilitate the abortion of pre-born babies against their consciences.

“This summer the decisions on abortion law and Northern Ireland were taken by politicians on the mainland. Now is the opportunity for the public to have its say.”

### **100,000 lives saved**

Catherine Robinson, spokeswoman for Right to Life, said: “100,000 people in Northern Ireland are alive today because Northern Ireland did not accept the same abortion law that was introduced into Britain in 1967.

“This proposed abortion framework is a blatant attempt by the Government to further undermine the will of the people of Northern Ireland.

“It adds insult to injury after Westminster voted to impose new abortion laws on Northern Ireland and will likely lead to an even larger increase in the number of lives lost to abortion.”

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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