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Rt Hon Anna Soubry MP
House of Commons
London
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Your Ref: AP/0717

Dear Anna,

Thank you for your letter of 7 July raising concerns in relation to abortion law in Northern Ireland.

I appreciate this is a very sensitive issue. The issue of abortion law, including the provision of medication, has always been a devolved matter. It is for the people of Northern Ireland and their elected representatives in Stormont to address the need for any change.

The longstanding position in Northern Ireland has always been that abortion is only permissible in very limited circumstances. As you may know however, a recent Government announcement stated that funding for services to allow women from Northern Ireland to access abortion services in England will be made available through the Government Equalities Office. This will allow the Department of Health to commission abortion services in England for those from Northern Ireland.

None of this changes the fundamental position that this is a devolved issue in Northern Ireland. It remains for the Northern Ireland Executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly to decide on their policy now and in the future.

Yours Sincerely,

LORD BOURNE OF ABERSTWYTH
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND