

Item No. 5.2	Classification: Open	Date: 29 November 2017	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motions: Updated Motion 8	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

Members are asked to note the addition of paragraphs 10 and 11 in the below motion, which were not included in the original text due to an administrative oversight.

8. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID NOAKES (Seconded by Councillor Radha Burgess)

Upholding a woman’s right to a legal abortion

Council assembly notes:

1. That 50 years ago the Abortion Act 1967, was introduced by Liberal MP David Steel as a Private Members Bill, and passed in a free vote, making abortion legal in Great Britain, although not Northern Ireland.
2. That this motion is not about the arguments for or against abortion but rather about a woman’s legal right to go to a clinic without intimidation or harassment.
3. That members will have their own personal views about abortion and that these should be respected.
4. That anti-abortion protesters have been protesting outside Blackfriars Medical Centre in Colombo Street, SE1, which is an NHS GP practice, for at least 3 years where a British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) clinic is based.
5. That the anti-abortion protestors have emotional and distressing images and have body cameras, that they claim to have for their own protection, which can also capture those coming and going from the clinic.
6. The cross party campaign by a number of members of parliament, including Labour MPs Diane Abbott and Rupa Huq, to introduce “buffer zones” and notes a recent YouGov survey that showed that over half the MPs who responded supported a change in the law.
7. The motion passed by Ealing Council which “commits to fully explore every possible option” and “to take all necessary actions within its powers, utilising all necessary resources, to prevent anti-abortion protesters from intimidating and harassing women outside the Marie Stopes Clinic on Mattock Lane”.

Council assembly resolves:

8. That while the right to protest is an important right in a free society, the right to advice and a legal safe abortion without intimidation and harassment for women should not be compromised by these protests.

9. To engage with other interested parties including BPAS, Blackfriars Medical Centre, Southwark Police, Neil Coyle MP, Cathedrals ward councillors, Southwark CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and local residents to consider whether similar action should be pursued outside the Blackfriars Medical Centre/BPAS clinic in Colombo Street and if necessary any other clinics in Southwark.
10. To investigate whether Southwark Council should work with Ealing Council, and other interested local councils such as Lambeth Council in regards to identifying the appropriate legislation to use to install a “buffer zone” outside our clinics and defend any potential legal challenge, recognising that Southwark residents may travel outside the borough to access abortions.
11. To support the campaign for new legislation to be introduced by the Government to legalise “buffer zones” outside abortion clinics.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the cabinet for consideration.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Member Motions	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Andrew Weir 020 7525 7222

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Chidilim Agada, Constitutional Manager
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