

STATEMENT FROM ARCHBISHOP JOHN SHERRINGTON

ON AMMENDMENTS TO CRIME AND POLICING BILL

The Lead Bishop for Life Issues for the Bishops' Conference, Archbishop John Sherrington, is asking Catholics to [contact their MPs](#) to encourage them to oppose two amendments on abortion in the Crime and Policing Bill:

"We are deeply alarmed by two amendments that have been submitted to the Crime and Policing Bill. These would further reduce the protection of unborn children and their mothers. Out of compassion for pregnant women and their babies, the Catholic Church believes that the law should offer protection to the unborn and that society should offer support for parents who need it. The proposed amendments would take our law further in the wrong direction.

"Under **New Clause 1**, the criminal law would no longer apply in relation to women acting to end their pregnancy, at any time, including up to and during birth. This is likely to result in an increased illegal use of abortion pills and an escalation in late-term at-home abortions, putting the lives and health of many pregnant women and their babies in grave danger. It would undermine the necessary judicial mechanisms to protect women from being coerced or pressurized into an abortion.

"**New Clause 20** would decriminalise abortion completely up to and during birth. This would leave women with little protection against forced or coerced abortions by families and third parties. Abortion would become available on demand and up to birth. There is little support amongst the general public for such an extreme law which entirely overturns the existing framework and totally disregards the humanity of the unborn baby.

"Keeping abortion within the criminal law provides some level of protection for women and unborn children. Of course, where cases do arise under the current law, the authorities should act with both justice and mercy.

"Pregnant women and their unborn babies both have inherent dignity, and as such, mothers need to be supported in welcoming new life. Several Catholic organisations work tirelessly to provide support for parents and children. This is the truly safe, compassionate, and caring response to parents who are expecting a baby. I thank them for their work.

"I encourage all faithful Catholics, and those who care for the lives of children and mothers, to contact their MPs and encourage them to oppose these amendments."

Archbishop John Sherrington

Lead Bishop for Life Issues and Archbishop of Liverpool