

News story: Interested parties invited to provide information on protests outside abortion clinics

It is the latest step in the review, announced by Home Secretary Amber Rudd in November 2017, following reports that women have experienced intimidation from protesters when visiting family planning clinics to seek information, advice and services from medical professionals.

To understand the scale and nature of these protests, the Home Office is seeking evidence from policing partners, healthcare providers and local authorities as well as inviting contributions from groups protesting outside abortion clinics and people who have sought medical assistance or advice.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

An abortion is an incredibly personal decision for anyone to take, and so it is completely unacceptable for women to face harassment or intimidation for exercising their legal right to healthcare advice and treatment.

While everyone has a right to peaceful protest, this review is about ensuring the police, healthcare providers and local authorities have the right powers to protect women making these tough decisions.

The review is assessing if more needs to be done to protect those seeking medical assistance and covers:

- the scale, frequency and nature of protests and the powers police have to manage them
- the laws to protect people from harassment and intimidation
- the public's right to peaceful protest and exercise of freedom of speech, within the law
- international comparisons given that similar protests have taken place in Australia, France, Canada and the United States

Work has already progressed to evaluate measures in place in other countries, such as buffer zones around clinics, with policing and healthcare partners providing further evidence for consideration.

The review is considering protests only, and will not consider any aspects of the Abortion Act 1967 which makes abortion legal in the United Kingdom.

All members of the public or organisations, who have experience of protest activity outside abortion clinics, are invited to contribute evidence to the review. You can complete the questionnaire [online](#), or alternatively evidence

can be provided directly to ACPReview@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

All contributions must be received by 19 February 2018.