

PRESS RELEASE – 21st JULY 2016

FROM: Fiona Bruce MP, Chair of the Pro-Life APPG

DOCTORS' UNDER PRESSURE TO IGNORE THEIR FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE



A group of Parliamentarians led by Fiona Bruce MP today delivered a new report on 'Freedom of Conscience in Abortion Provision' to the new Prime Minister, calling on Government and NHS governing bodies to ensure that the legal right of healthcare professionals to conscientious objection is properly protected.

The Inquiry from the All-Party Parliamentary Pro-Life Group, chaired by Fiona Bruce, found that there is increasing pressure on healthcare professionals with a conscientious objection to abortion to participate in the abortion process. While the Inquiry received some examples of good practice, it also received accounts from nurses, midwives and doctors who had been pressured and discriminated against despite their right to conscientious objection, often seeing their career or training options limited. The British Medical Association confirmed that *'some doctors have complained of being harassed and discriminated against because of their conscientious objection to abortion.'*

The Report makes clear that, whilst there is legal protection for healthcare professionals who have a conscientious objection to participating in abortion, this is not being observed in practise.

It also recommends that the Government conduct a review into the training of medical students, and calls for the principle of 'Reasonable Accommodation' to be introduced into legislation in this country. The report calls specifically on the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists to publish a statement clarifying its position on this issue.

Fiona Bruce MP said *"Freedom of conscience is a key part of living in a diverse and democratic society. It is vital that conscientious health professionals who do not wish to participate in abortion can be confident in their right to opt-out of doing so without fear of censure, discrimination or abuse.*

'It is essential that our hardworking doctors, nurses and midwives are given the protection the law requires if they do not want to participate in abortions.'

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITOR:

The full report can be found at: www.conscienceinquiry.uk
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Left to right: Laurence Robertson MP; Jim Shannon MP; Fiona Bruce MP; Mary Glindon MP; Rob Flello MP; Maria Caulfield MP.