<b>From:</b> SOS Lewis <sos.lewis@nio.gov.uk></sos.lewis@nio.gov.uk>		
To: Oliver Legard <oliver.legard@nio.gov.uk></oliver.legard@nio.gov.uk>	, NR	@nio.gov.uk> NR
NR @nio.gov.uk>	L	
Cc: SpAds PS < spads.ps@nio.gov.uk>, PS SO	S <ps.sos@nio.gov.uk></ps.sos@nio.gov.uk>	>
Subject: Fwd: Urgent: Abortion (Northern Ireland)	Regs and COVID-19	
<b>Date:</b> Wed, 8 Apr 2020 10:22:55 +0100		
•		
Oliver NR NR to be aware, we received the beloaccess to abortion services during Covid-19, which prodiscussion yesterday. I'll test with officials on how/wh wait until we have clarity from Robin Swann's team ab this afternoon before drafting something or offering Na	vides more colour and en they advise we respo out the Belfast Trust or tomi a call on this.	another perspective on the NIE ond - my sense is that we should otion and any NIE discussion
NR, please could you set this up with NR, co	pying <b>NR</b> - I'll flag	g to her it's coming.
Thanks,	<b>1</b>	
NR		
Forwarded message From: <b>Long, Naomi</b> < <u>naomi.long@mla.niassembly.go</u> Date: Tue, 7 Apr 2020 at 19:35 Subject: Urgent: Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regs and To: SOS Lewis < <u>sos.lewis@nio.gov.uk</u> > Cc: DoJ SpAd < <u>DoJ-SpAd@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk</u> >, s < <u>stephen.farry.mp@parliament.uk</u> >	COVID-19	ament.uk
7th April 2020		
FAO: Secretary of State for NI, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis	CBE PC	
Dear Brandon,		

I am writing to you regarding the lack of abortion services in Northern Ireland, particularly during this Covid-19 crisis. Further, I am extremely concerned that, based on what happened at the Executive on 6th April, we also face a significant and longer-term issue in respect of the ability of the Department of Health to commission services.

Addressing the immediate crisis first: the Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations came into effect on 1st April 2020. As an interim measure between decriminalisation, the Regulations being made and services being commissioned by the Department of Health, women were still required to travel in order to access terminations in all but the most extreme cases, eg. where a termination was a result of a medical emergency. However, travel either to GB or Republic of Ireland is all but impossible, with flights between NI and GB reduced to one per day from Derry City Airport, train and bus timetables reduced to a skeleton service, the cost of ferry travel increased and hotel accommodation unavailable for women who can afford to travel.

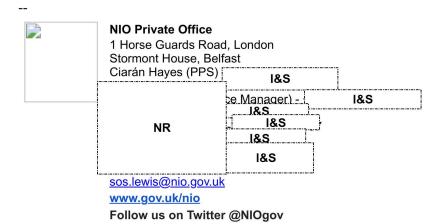
I am extremely concerned that, without access to safe abortion care women will again resort to drastic measures, including physical trauma and ingesting dangerous substances. At least one woman has already tried to take her own life last week due to flights being cancelled. Faced with continued lockdown, increased levels of domestic and sexual violence, the consequent exacerbation of mental health crisis and a health service on its knees, this is one issue with an immediate remedy.

Northern Ireland is the only part of these islands where telemedicine is not available during the COVID-19 crisis. Women in Northern Ireland have been left in an extremely distressing and untenable situation, which would not be tolerated elsewhere.

A proposal to provide for telemedicine in Early Medical Abortion (EMA) was brought to the Executive yesterday by the Health Minister, as he deemed that the matter was controversial and therefore required Executive approval. Ignoring the solutions contained within his own paper, he proposed the establishment of a sub-committee to discuss the matter further, which would only have added to delay with no prospect of consensus being achieved. This proposal was defeated. A further proposal, centring on providing a model of telemedicine EMA, was also defeated with the Health Minister abstaining on this, despite this being an option contained in his own paper. A final proposal was made to refer the matter back to the Health Minister to take forward independently, as a healthcare issue, but this was also defeated. So-called "cross-community" votes were triggered on each occasion, so whilst both of the latter proposals achieved a simple majority, neither met the cross-community test. Furthermore, whilst I voted, my vote was essentially discounted in the result.

	LPP/LAP	
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k forward to your urgent response	<del>2</del> .	
s Sincerely,		
ni		
mi Long MLA   Alliance Party L	eader   Justice Minister.	
mi.long@mla.niassembly.gov.u ninister@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk	<u>k</u> <u>S</u>	



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