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## Ten Minute Rule Motion: Demonstrations (Abortion Clinics) Bill

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Wednesday 24 June 2020

### About the BMA

The BMA (British Medical Association) is a professional association and trade union representing and negotiating on behalf of all doctors and medical students in the UK. It is a leading voice advocating for outstanding health care and a healthy population. It is an association providing members with excellent individual services and support throughout their lives.

**The BMA believes exclusion zones need to be introduced outside confidential abortion services to prevent the unacceptable harassment and intimidation of patients and staff.**

### The intimidation and harassment of staff and patients outside abortion services

The BMA appreciates that there is a wide range of views about abortion, and that there must be opportunities for these diverse and strongly held views to be heard. However, intimidating staff who are providing a lawful and necessary health service, and approaching women accessing these services who may already feel vulnerable, are unacceptable ways to promote anti-abortion views.

Staff, women, and those accompanying women should not have to encounter harassing and intimidating behaviour when they are entering premises which provide confidential health services. Yet we are aware of anti-abortion picketers harassing women in a variety of different ways, including filming individuals approaching clinics which provide abortion services, and providing grossly erroneous information about clinical risks, such as linking abortion with breast cancer.

It has been suggested that there are already adequate powers to stop this activity. We have serious concerns that, for a variety of reasons, including the significant resources required to exercise these powers, in some cases existing powers may not be being used, or are not adequate to deal with this situation. For example, current powers only apply to finite periods of time.

**The BMA calls on the UK Government to address this issue, at a national level, to ensure harassment and intimidation outside abortion services can be stopped swiftly and straightforwardly for the protection of staff and patients.**

June 2020

