



Genetic Alliance UK
Supporting. Campaigning. Uniting.

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Anne Milton MP
Department of Health
Richmond House
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14th September 2011

Dear Anne,

Following your contribution to the debate regarding the provision of counselling for women seeking a termination of pregnancy, I write with regard to the situation for those women seeking a termination because of antenatal detection of a fetal anomaly.

Those who need to end a pregnancy on medical grounds are in a very different situation to those who require a non-medical termination. These are not unwanted pregnancies: women who discover they are carrying a fetus with a significant anomaly are faced with a heartbreaking decision to end a wanted pregnancy.

To reach this stage, they have been through a number of medical encounters already, probably including invasive procedures to ascertain the diagnosis. They are likely to have been counselled by geneticists, by their obstetrician and by their midwife. They do not need further hurdles put in their way before they are able to make an informed decision about discontinuing their pregnancy. Indeed as these conditions are often only discovered around the 18-20 week scan they are already facing the prospect of a late termination with all the anguish this may cause.

If the result of the review of counselling arrangements for those seeking non-medical terminations is that further steps are made necessary, those seeking terminations on medical grounds must not be required to go through this process. Theirs is a special case and they should be supported in the decision they have had to make. It would be inhumane to require them to have to make further justification to others in order to access the service they need.

I would be happy to discuss this issue in greater detail with you or your colleagues if that would be useful.

Yours sincerely,

Alastair Kent OBE
Director