

Disability and abortion

Abortion Rights believes that all women have the right to make their own reproductive choices. All women have the right to choose abortion for whatever reason.

No woman should be forced to either terminate or carry to term a pregnancy, no matter her situation and whether or not the foetus shows signs of impairment. The decision of any woman to have an abortion for reasons of impairment is hers alone to make and should be respected.

Abortion Rights' position is in line with current law as stipulated in the Abortion Act 1967. The Act states that two doctors must approve, 'in good faith', that continuing a pregnancy would pose a threat to the pregnant woman's health.

At no point does the Act refer specifically to disability of the pregnant woman. In regards to the foetus, the Act states that abortion is legal on grounds of 'substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped'.

Responsibility for interpreting this is given to doctors and the woman.

Abortion Rights fully supports the rights of disabled people and supports the work of the disability rights movement to change society for the fullest recognition of rights and participation of all people.

Abortion Rights recognises that we live in a society that discriminates against disabled people, and that disabled women are denied real choice.

Abortion Rights accepts the social model of disability advocated by the disability rights movement. This distinguishes between impairments and the disabling impact of these impairments, which is dependent on how society is organised and the barriers that exist to disabled people.