



**SNP Group**

**Notice of Motion**

**Buffer zones**

"Midlothian Council notes with concern demonstrations at NHS facilities, especially activity targeted at women and staff attending sexual and reproductive health services and NHS hospitals accessed by Midlothian residents.

Council further notes the distribution and display of misleading information and distressing images, which can intimidate women and jeopardise access to legal healthcare services.

Council believes in upholding the right to peaceful protest, but also believes that the right to peaceful protest should not interfere with the fundamental right for women to make individual reproductive choices, or NHS professionals to do their job without fear or abuse. Council further notes that campaigns against women exercising their sexual health rights can continue without occupying the space immediately outside clinics and services.

Midlothian Council therefore supports the principle of buffer zones outside NHS Lothian reproductive health clinics and hospitals, to protect individuals from obstruction or harassment when accessing vital reproductive health services and advice.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to liaise with NHS Lothian & neighbouring Local Authorities, Police Scotland, COSLA and the Scottish Government to assess the legal instruments that could be used to implement such buffer zones within the Lothian Health Board boundary.

Council further instructs the Chief Executive to bring forward a report to this Council, detailing potential courses of action."

Proposed By:

Councillor Kelly Parry



Seconded By:

Councillor Debbi McCall



Date: 6 June 2019