



Ministry
of Justice

Alex Davies-Jones MP
Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State

Gweinyddiaeth
Cyfiawnder

MoJ ref: SUB139124

Catherine Atkinson MP
Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

19 October 2026

Dear Catherine,

COMMENCEMENT OF SECTION 242, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2026

I am writing to inform you that last week I made the commencement regulations that will commence section 242 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 on 16 November.

Once commenced on this date, this measure will automatically pardon women previously convicted of, or cautioned for, an abortion offence (including sections 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, and section 1 of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929) when acting in relation to their own pregnancies. It will also require relevant data controllers to delete from relevant official records any details of which they are aware of such a conviction or caution, or a related arrest or investigation whether or not the woman was subsequently convicted or cautioned, as far as it is reasonably practicable to make the deletion.

As you will be aware, the Government maintains a neutral stance on changes to the criminal law on abortion in England and Wales. During passage of the Crime and Policing Act 2026, Parliament voted to include section 242 as part of the Act, and I am pleased to commence that measure and ensure the will of Parliament is actioned.

From 16 November, the police and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) will commence deletion of relevant details of abortion offences that they are aware of from police and court records where they relate to a woman acting in respect of her own pregnancy, insofar as is reasonably practicable to make the deletion.

When section 242 comes into force, the department will publish an information page on GOV.UK for women affected by this measure, and a team within the Ministry of Justice is available to respond to their queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Alex Davies Jones .". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

ALEX DAVIES-JONES MP
Minister for Victims, Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls,
and International Justice