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- Consultation launched on 'accelerated' no-fault divorce
- Alliance Party promotes drug shooting galleries

Sanctity of life under attack

The past few months have been among the busiest we have seen at the CI in a decade. In addition to major pieces of legislation going through Westminster and Holyrood simultaneously, concerning proposals are also being considered in Northern Ireland.

The sanctity of life has been an area of real concern, with MPs voting in favour of both assisted suicide and further decriminalisation of abortion in England and Wales. We must pray that the House of Lords will do everything in its power to resist these dangerous changes.

Family life is also under attack. The prospect of 'quickie' no-fault divorce ignores the long-term impact on couples, children and society. Plans to ban 'conversion practices' could also affect parental conversations, despite a dearth of evidence that any abuse is taking place and doubts over Stormont's competence to legislate in this area.

And while a 'safe injection' room in Scotland is being branded a "harm maintenance service", the Justice Minister has called for such a facility to be opened in Belfast.

There is much to pray for.

Peers vow to oppose 'poorly drafted' assisted suicide Bill

Peers have pledged to take up the fight against Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill for England and Wales, after MPs voted by 314 to 291 to back the dangerous proposals.

Lord Jackson of Peterborough said it was right for Peers to amend or delay such a "poorly drafted, rushed and barely scrutinised" piece of legislation.

Baroness Monckton, whose daughter has Down's syndrome, said she was "petrified" at the lack of protections in the Bill for those with learning disabilities. Baroness Campbell of Surbiton warned that disabled people's lives would be put "at great risk".

The Christian Institute's Director, Ciarán Kelly, urged churches to keep praying against the Bill: "Christians

will feel grieved that MPs have shown so little regard for the dignity of human life, so little compassion for the concerns of vulnerable groups, and so little respect for the testimony of medical experts.

"But we must not give up. We must continue to pray, particularly for those in the House of Lords, where we can expect this dangerous Bill to receive much better scrutiny."

In Scotland, following a debate that lasted less than five hours, MSPs voted 70 to 56 in favour of Liam McArthur's assisted suicide Bill.



READ: What have we done?

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MPs vote to liberalise abortion law

The House of Commons has voted to allow women in England and Wales to kill their unborn babies at any stage of pregnancy without sanction.

MPs approved Tonia Antoniazzi's amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill by 379 votes to 137, despite pleas to protect unborn children and their mothers.

A number of MPs spoke against the move.

The DUP's Carla Lockhart told the House: "I believe that both lives matter", and the TUV's Jim Allister asked what the



amendment proposed "when it comes to the voiceless child".

In Great Britain, abortion is already permitted for most reasons up to 24 weeks, and up to birth if the unborn child is deemed to have a disability. If the backbencher's amendment becomes law, inducing a miscarriage outside these exemptions will no longer be a crime

for the mother. Doctors could still face criminal charges if they perform an abortion after 24 weeks.

The Institute's Director, Ciarán Kelly, called Parliament's decision "deplorable".

"This is set to be the most seismic change to abortion law since the Abortion Act 1967.

"An unbearably large number of babies — more than ten million

— have been killed in Britain since it passed. Now MPs have put expectant mothers at greater risk too.

"Easy, unrestricted access to abortion pills dramatically increases the likelihood of complications endangering women's health."

In Northern Ireland, abortion is available on demand up to twelve weeks' pregnancy.

Young adults fuel growing demand for Bibles

Bible sales are booming, seemingly thanks to increased interest among Gen Z.

Christian publisher SPCK reported an increase of 87 per cent between 2019 and 2024, and identified it as a generational culture shift.

The Bible Society said sales of its youth edition of the Good News Bible have almost doubled since 2021.



Drug shooting gallery policy promoted by Alliance Party

Justice Minister Naomi Long has called for facilities where addicts can inject illegal drugs without fear of arrest to be 'given a try' in Northern Ireland.

During a visit to a Belfast charity working with homeless people, the Alliance MLA said she would like to explore the possibility of piloting shooting galleries with the Home Office.

Micky Murray, Belfast's Lord Mayor, has also called for a more 'liberal' approach to drugs,

including the introduction of 'safer' injection spaces.

However, a recently opened Glasgow shooting gallery has already been branded a "harm maintenance service" for failing to help users access treatment and support programmes.

Between January and March, 'The Thistle' was used 1,435 times, but only 1.8 per cent of visits are reported to have led to any kind of referral.



Naomi Long

New film honours Scot as heroine of the Holocaust

The life of Scottish missionary Jane Mathison Haining is to be honoured in a film for high school students.

Commissioned by Unison, the documentary tells the story of the matron of a girls' home in Hungary, who refused to stop caring for Jewish girls as World War II broke out. Refusing to return home in 1939, she told the Church of Scotland: "If these children need me in days of sunshine, how much more do they need me in days of darkness?"

Shortly after the invasion of Hungary by Hitler's army in 1944, Haining was betrayed, arrested and transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she died three months later, at the age of 47. Haining was declared a British Hero of the Holocaust by the UK Government in 2010.

Unison plans to formally launch the high school resource across Renfrewshire in January 2026. If successful, it will distribute the film more widely.

No issue with 'conversion therapy' in NI, FOIs show

Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Trusts have received almost no complaints about 'conversion practices', suggesting plans for a new law are unnecessary.

In response to freedom of information requests, only Belfast Trust said it had received any complaints "against a medical practitioner, practice, trust or other body, on the grounds of 'conversion therapy'". There were between one and four complaints, with none raising concern over clinical treatment and care. The other five Trusts reported no complaints at all.



But under a Bill from Alliance MLA Eóin Tennyson, parents and church leaders could be jailed for up to seven years for so-called conversion practices – including stopping their children from 'changing gender'.

The Institute's James Kennedy observed that if a new law "is not intended to tackle medical practices, then the public would be right to be very wary of what it really does intend to curtail".

Leading human rights lawyer Aidan O'Neill KC warned that the plans are "beyond the legislative competence" of Stormont because of their "over-breadth, their disproportionate intrusion into private and family life and freedom of religion and freedom of expression, but also because of their fundamental internal incoherence".

MLAs question payments to Stonewall diversity scheme

Northern Ireland's Department of Finance has been criticised for continuing to subscribe to Stonewall's 'Diversity Champions' programme.

The controversial scheme rewards employers for promoting LGBT ideology inside and outside the workplace. Organisations including the BBC and Whitehall departments have left in recent years.



Finance Minister John O'Dowd revealed that the Northern Ireland Civil Service was giving £2,575 to Stonewall each year for 'service and advice', but did not set out what "advice" it had received in exchange for the payments.

In a related debate, the TUV's

Timothy Gaston also pushed back against 'equality and inclusion' spending, including on the Stonewall scheme, stating: "Why is taxpayers' money being wasted on that nonsense, years after the Civil Service and even the BBC recognised the need to withdraw from the scheme?"





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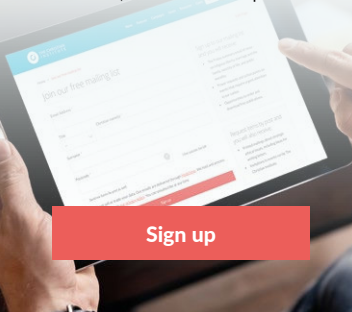
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Online Safety Act cracks down on illegal content



Social media platforms are now required to take “robust action against illegal content and activity”, including child sexual abuse and extreme pornography.

Under the UK-wide Online Safety Act, Ofcom can fine companies in breach of their duties up to £18 million or 10 per cent of their qualifying



worldwide revenue.

Westminster Technology Secretary Peter Kyle said: “In recent years, tech companies have treated safety as an afterthought.

That changes today.”

He added: “where new threats emerge, we will act decisively. The Online Safety Act is not the end of the conversation, it’s the foundation.”

More parents withdraw kids from ‘inappropriate’ sex ed

More than 2,500 children in Scotland have been removed from Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) lessons by their parents over the last five years, freedom of information requests have revealed.

Parents cited the use of images of “real-life” body parts, the promotion of transgender ideology, and the use of inappropriate language among their reasons.

The number of primary school children being removed from RSHP

classes almost quadrupled in two years.

The Scottish Conservatives backed the right of parents to decide whether school materials are age-appropriate for their child.

Alba attributed the rise to the Government’s controversial sex-swap policy for over-16s and its

unpopular school ‘sex survey’.

The Scottish Government’s guidance states that schools must accommodate a parent who wishes to withdraw their child from sexual health education lessons. High school children may also choose to opt out of the sexual health education component of RSHP.



Executive launches consultation on 'accelerated' no-fault divorce

The Department of Finance has launched a consultation on making divorce quicker and easier in Northern Ireland.

Finance Minister John O'Dowd told the Executive that he hopes new legislation will be in place by the end of the mandate in 2027.

The Department said divorce can be "a stressful and sometimes acrimonious process", and that the changes were being considered to make divorce "less challenging" for those involved.

The Christian Institute's Northern Ireland Policy Officer James Kennedy said: "The reality is that divorce cannot be separated from pain, anger



and emotional upheaval, and liberalising divorce law is likely to make things worse."

He added: "Accelerating divorce would also be a serious mistake. It risks intensifying tensions and rushes couples into binding decisions while emotions are at their most raw.

"The current waiting period allows time for reflection and in some cases reconciliation; a

significant minority ultimately choose to stay together. That opportunity should not be taken away."

Senior family lawyer James Grigg warned that in England and Wales, allowing couples to divorce without a reason has led to an increase in irrelevant financial claims. He found these often fuel, rather than quash, animosity.

Hillary Clinton joins Alliance MLA in push for more liberal lottery laws

Alliance MLA Sian Mulholland has launched a consultation on a Bill to expand lottery provision in Northern Ireland.

Currently, only the National Lottery and small lotteries are exempt from Northern Ireland's restrictions. But Mulholland's proposals would allow large-scale lotteries such as the Postcode Lottery to operate in the Province.

Former US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, now Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast,

said politicians should "seize this amazing opportunity", claiming that the Postcode Lottery is a "terrific model to engage people in charitable work".

But The Christian Institute's Deputy

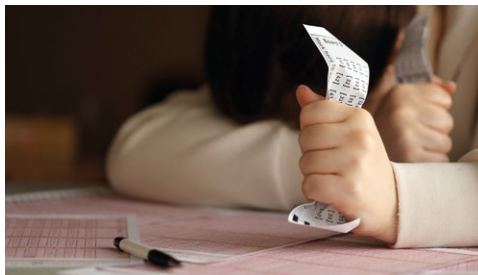
Director, Simon Calvert, warned: "Northern Ireland doesn't need more gambling.

"I don't think squeezing money out of the poor with false promises of 'getting rich quick' is the best

way of raising money for charitable causes."

MPs have urged the UK Government to crack down on gambling in recognition of the 'serious financial, physical and mental harm' it can cause.

The House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee noted that although 80 per cent of the population are exposed to gambling advertising each week, it has still not been banned before the watershed, and problem gamblers feel "there is no escape".



Pastor's 'buffer zone' prosecution raises key constitutional matters

Pastor Clive Johnston has instructed former Attorney General John Larkin KC to lead his defence team in seeking a High Court ruling on whether laws on abortion censorship zones also ban acts of worship.

At Coleraine Magistrates' Court in March, Mr Johnston pleaded not guilty to charges under the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act for holding an open-air Sunday service on the fringes of a zone around the town's Causeway Hospital last year.



Pastor Clive Johnston

The retired pastor, who is being supported by The Christian Institute, was preaching from John 3:16 and did not mention abortion.

His lawyers told the judge that the case involves 'crucially important devolution

and constitutional matters'.

Following legal advice, Police Scotland has confirmed that prosecutions will not be brought under buffer zone legislation for incidents that take place while an

abortion centre is closed.

In England earlier this year, Dr Livia Tossici-Bolt was required to pay £20k in costs for holding a sign offering conversation in a council-imposed zone in Bournemouth.

Landmark ruling: UK Supreme Court upholds ordinary definition of 'woman'

In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court has ruled that the terms 'woman', 'man' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to biological sex.

In response, Carla Lockhart, MP for Upper Bann, called for "no dither or delay" in banning men from competing in women's football in Northern Ireland.

Minister of Communities Gordon Lyons told fellow MLAs it was important for sport in Northern Ireland to act in accordance with the judgment, and warned that non-compliance may have financial implications.

However, health trusts in Northern Ireland have stated that men who identify as women should be allowed to use female staff's facilities.

Documents issued by all five Health and Social Care Trusts said that "it is not acceptable" to bar men who self-identify as women from ladies' single-sex spaces.



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Tel: 0191 281 5664 | Email: info@christian.org.uk | Web: christian.org.uk | Published in July 2025
Registered in England as a charity Charity No. 100 4774 Company No. 263 4440. A charity registered in Scotland Charity No. SC039220

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Callum Webster,
Northern Ireland Officer 



THE CHRISTIAN
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Tear off and keep

Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY With thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on Northern Ireland.

MONDAY

PRAY For strong opposition to proposals to make divorce much easier.

TUESDAY

PRAY That MLAs would resist interference from groups that promote anti-biblical worldviews.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY Thanking God for better protections for people online.

THURSDAY

PRAY That plans to restrict preaching and prayer through a new 'conversion therapy' law would be dropped.

FRIDAY

PRAY For our work supporting the freedom of Clive Johnston and others to publicly preach the Gospel.

SATURDAY

PRAY That the Lord will bless the staff and work of The Christian Institute.

