

Jeremy Hunt, Esq, MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport,
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH

Urgent

24 May 2010

Dear Mr Hunt,

Proposed Marie Stopes International TV advertisement

You will be aware of deep and widespread concern over the proposals to permit a broadcast advertisement for Marie Stopes International, which we believe will be tantamount to advertising abortion.

You have the power to instruct Ofcom to stop the advertisement being aired.

The Communications Act 2003, section 321, states:

- (4) OFCOM—
 - (a) shall, in relation to programme services, have a general responsibility with respect to advertisements and methods of advertising and sponsorship; and
 - (b) in the discharge of that responsibility may include conditions in any licence which is granted by them for any such service that enable OFCOM to impose requirements with respect to any of those matters that go beyond the provisions of OFCOM's standards code.
- (5) OFCOM must, from time to time, consult the Secretary of State about—
 - (a) the descriptions of advertisements that should not be included in programme services; and
 - (b) the forms and methods of advertising and sponsorship that should not be employed in, or in connection with, the provision of such services.
- (6) The Secretary of State may give OFCOM directions as to the matters mentioned in subsection (5); and it shall be the duty of OFCOM to comply with any such direction.

This makes clear that even if Marie Stopes' advertisement were within OFCOM's code (and we believe it is not on a number of grounds), you still have authority to prohibit it.

You have supported a number of moves in Parliament since 2005 aimed at restricting abortion in various modest ways. Please exercise your powers now to help prevent abortion becoming more prevalent.

Please instruct OFCOM to exclude this advertisement immediately and indefinitely.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tully
General Secretary