

# Rudd urged to establish buffer zones outside abortion clinics

By Jack Maidment

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

AMBER RUDD has been urged to bring in "buffer zones" outside abortion clinics to stop pregnant women being subjected to "misogynistic" abuse.

A letter signed by 113 MPs from five political parties has been sent to the Home Secretary calling for her to bring forward laws to ban protests outside clinics.

The letter has been sent to Ms Rudd to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the partial legalisation of abortions in the UK, and signatories include Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, and Sir Vince Cable, the leader of the Lib Dems.

In the letter, Rupa Huq, the Labour MP for Ealing Central and Acton, cites the example of a clinic in her own constituency where protesters hold "signs of distressing and graphic" images, call women using the facility "murderers" and film them as they come and go.

Ms Huq said that such protesters are "targeting individual women who have come to a difficult decision and who are seeking to access lawful health care".

She added existing powers are insufficient and that her local authority has started using anti-social behaviour powers as a "last-ditch attempt" to stop women being harassed. But the letter states that such "exhaustive work should not have to be the norm". The Abortion Act, which legalised abortions carried out by registered practitioners, came into effect on Oct 27 1967.

h. 27.10.17