

[AS INTRODUCED]

A

# B I L L

TO

Make provision for a Foetal Sentience Committee to review current understanding of the sentience of the human foetus and to inform policy-making; and for connected purposes.

**B**E IT ENACTED by the King’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

## *Foetal Sentience Committee*

### **1 Foetal Sentience Committee**

- (1) The Secretary of State must, within twelve months of the passing of this Act, establish and thereafter maintain a committee called the Foetal Sentience Committee (“the Committee”). 5
- (2) The members of the Committee are to be appointed by the Secretary of State.
- (3) The appointment of a person to the Committee is to be on such terms as the Secretary of State may determine when making the appointment.
- (4) The purpose of the Committee is to be a source of evidence-based, scientific expertise on the sentience of the human foetus in the light of developments in scientific and medical knowledge, and to advise the government on the formulation of relevant policy and legislation. 10

### **2 Reports of the Committee**

- (1) The Committee may publish reports in accordance with the purpose outlined in section 1(4) in such manner as it thinks appropriate. 15
- (2) The Committee must publish a report including details of its activities and expenditures at least once a year.
- (3) References in this Act to government policy are to policy of the government of the United Kingdom, but do not include any policy if, or to the extent that, the policy relates to legislative provision falling within devolved competence. 20
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (3) legislative provision falls within devolved competence if and to the extent that—

- (a) the provision would be within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament if contained in an Act of that Parliament,
- (b) the provision would be within the legislative competence of Senedd Cymru if contained in Act of the Senedd (including any provision that could only be made with the consent of a Minister of the Crown), and 5
- (c) the provision would be within the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly if it were contained in an Act of that Assembly, and would not, if it were contained in a Bill in the Northern Ireland Assembly, result in the Bill requiring the consent of the Secretary of State under section 8 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. 10

### 3 Response to reports

- (1) When the Committee publishes a report under section 2(1), the Secretary of State must within the period specified in subsection (2) lay before Parliament a response to any advice the report may contain that pertains to the formulation of relevant policy or legislation. 15
- (2) The period is three months beginning with the day on which the Committee's report is published.
- (3) The following do not count towards the three months referred to in subsection (2) –
  - (a) any day in a period during which Parliament is dissolved or prorogued, and 20
  - (b) any day in a period of four or more days during which both Houses of Parliament are adjourned.

#### *Supplementary and general*

### 4 Information 25

- (1) In Schedule 1 of the Public Records Act 1958 (definition of public records), in Part 1 of the table, in the second column, after the entry relating to health service hospitals, within the meaning of the National Health Service Act 1977 insert –
 

“The Foetal Sentience Committee.” 30
- (2) In Part 6 of Schedule 1 to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (public authorities to which that Act applies) at the appropriate place insert –
 

“The Foetal Sentience Committee.”

### 5 Extent, commencement and short title

- (1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. 35
- (2) This Act comes into force on the day on which it is passed.

- (3) This Act may be cited as the Foetal Sentience Committee Act 2024.

# Foetal Sentience Committee Bill [HL]

---

---

[AS INTRODUCED]

A

## B I L L

TO

Make provision for a Foetal Sentience Committee to review current understanding of the sentience of the human foetus and to inform policy-making; and for connected purposes.

*Lord Moylan*

---

Ordered to be Printed, 27th November 2023.

---

© Parliamentary copyright House of Lords 2023

*This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at [www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright](http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright)*

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS