



# What is the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill and What Can I Do?

Prepared by St Mary's University College  
on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

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The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is a bill going through Parliament at the moment. It is a proposed new law about infertility treatment and about experimentation on human embryos. It raises four key concerns:

**1. Hybrids:** The Bill will allow scientists to create embryos that are half human, half animal. For example, from the egg of a woman and sperm from an animal. To do this would be a radical violation of human dignity.

**2. The Welfare of the Child:** At present, infertility clinics have to consider the 'need of a child for a father'. The Bill will remove the reference to a father. The Bill will also make it easier to use women as 'surrogate mothers'. The law should give recognition to fathers and encourage fathers to take responsibility for their children. The Bill needs to recognise the natural right of the child to a mother and a father.

**3. How Future Decisions are Made:** At present, decisions are made by an unelected and unrepresentative body. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority appears to exclude people who cherish human life from conception. The government should be urged to create a statutory National Bioethics Commission with a broad spectrum of experts including people from faith communities.

**4. Abortion:** The Bill does not mention abortion, but some Members of Parliament have already said that they want to amend the law to make abortion more easily available. Others may propose amendments to limit abortion. Any change in the law should aim to make abortion rarer and to give greater recognition to the unborn child.

## What you can do

The proposed Bill raises deep questions about what it is to be human, about the role of fathers and mothers and the needs of children, and about how ethical decisions are made. The Bill may be used as a vehicle to make abortion more common. The Bill will be passed in the name of all citizens and if you do not speak out about it then your silence will be taken as consent. Please write to your MP and get involved in whatever your parish is doing about the Bill.

Write to: \_\_\_\_\_ MP at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Or email your MP at [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

## What should I write?

Whether you are writing a letter or an email, write something in your own words. Say why you are concerned about this Bill. You do not have to mention every issue. It may be more effective if different people write on different aspects of the Bill. You should write about what concerns you most. Please remember to be polite and courteous. We will make no friends or allies by being rude or aggressive.

**There is more information on the Bill at [www.catholicchurch.org.uk](http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk)**

**The contact person in the parish for action on the Bill is: \_\_\_\_\_**