# Anti-abortion campaigner convicted for breaching buffer zone outside clinic



Livia Tossici-Bolt, a 64-year-old anti-abortion campaigner from Bournemouth, has been convicted of breaching a "buffer zone" outside an abortion clinic, resulting in a two-year conditional discharge. The ruling was issued by District Judge Orla Austin at Poole Magistrates' Court on two charges relating to incidents that occurred in March 2023, where Tossici-Bolt was found holding a sign that read, “Here to talk, if you want”.

The case has drawn significant attention, including from the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labour (DRL), which emphasised the importance of freedom of expression in a statement posted on social media platform X. In this context, the bureau declared it is monitoring the case closely, highlighting that it is critical for the UK to uphold and protect such freedoms.

In addition to the conditional discharge, Tossici-Bolt was ordered to pay £20,000 in court costs and a £26 victim surcharge. Following her conviction, Tossici-Bolt expressed her concerns about free speech in the UK, labelling the day as “dark” for Great Britain. “I remain committed to fighting for free speech, not only for my own sake, but for all my fellow citizens,” she stated. Tossici-Bolt emphasised that her actions were intended to facilitate consensual conversations and contended that the court's decision was a severe infringement on her rights. She also indicated that she may consider legal options moving forward with the support of ADF International.

District Judge Orla Austin noted that while Tossici-Bolt had “deeply-held” beliefs, her actions conflicted with the rights of women attending the clinic and staff members. Specifically, the judge remarked that Tossici-Bolt "lacks insight" into the potential detrimental impact of her presence outside the clinic. Austin affirmed that the legal boundaries established by the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) were necessary to ensure that women could access the clinic safely, without facing harassment or intimidation.

The case has provoked responses from various organisations and individuals, including Downing Street, which conveyed the necessity of allowing women to use abortion services without harassment. A spokesperson from Number 10 stated that while the right to protest is an essential part of democracy, it does not extend to harassment. Furthermore, BCP Council welcomed the conviction, underscoring the significance of the buffer zone established in 2022 to protect patients and staff of the clinic.

Heidi Stewart, Chief Executive of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (Bpas), commented on the case, clarifying that it was primarily about ensuring women can access legal healthcare without harassment, rather than being influenced by global politics. She highlighted the decades of anti-abortion protests that had culminated in over 500 reports of harassment at the abortion clinic prior to the establishment of the buffer zone.

Legal representatives for ADF International articulated a broader concern regarding free speech implications, describing Tossici-Bolt's conviction as a warning sign regarding the compatibility of such buffer zones with free expression in society.

As the discussion surrounding freedom of speech and the rights of individuals in the context of sensitive health services continues, this case remains emblematic of the complex intersection of personal belief, legal regulation, and public safety.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/abortion-clinic-buffer-zone-livia-tossici-bolt-court-b2727356.html> - This article corroborates Livia Tossici-Bolt's conviction for breaching a buffer zone outside an abortion clinic and her subsequent statements about the impact on free speech in the UK.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/woman-64-found-guilty-of-breaching-abortion-clinic-buffer-zone-13341699> - This source provides additional details on the case, including the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labour's stance on freedom of expression and the reactions from various UK organizations.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although not directly available due to restrictions, the source is mentioned in the context of the article, indicating that it might have provided the initial report on Livia Tossici-Bolt's situation.
* <https://www.bpas.org> - The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (Bpas) would provide context on their stance and experience with abortion clinic buffer zones, supporting their views expressed in the article.
* <https://www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk> - This website could offer official statements or information from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council regarding the buffer zone policy and its implementation to protect clinic users.
* <https://adfinternational.org> - ADF International's legal perspective and support for Tossici-Bolt would be detailed on their website, expanding on their views about free speech implications.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/anti-abortion-campaigner-sentenced-for-breaching-clinic-buffer-zone-6ULVWQPEGRLLDFCZTE4RCMJ7FA/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/woman-given-conditional-discharge-for-breaching-abortion-clinic-buffer-zone-725FUZZT4JL7XG5OE4PQFUXHVI/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/woman-guilty-abortion-clinic-buffer-zone-livia-tissici-bolt-b2727390.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gr30z4lnlo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data