

Northern Ireland: Amnesty welcomes legal action against government to ensure abortion services



PUBLISHED JAN 11, 2021
BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
UK

Amnesty International has welcomed the start of legal action by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) against the Secretary of State, NI Executive and Department of Health for Northern Ireland for failing to commission and fund abortion services in Northern Ireland. The Commission has lodged judicial review proceedings in the High Court.

Last week, Northern Ireland's South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust stopped referrals to their early medical abortion service, due to the failure of Department of Health to commission and resource services. In October, the Northern Health Trust suspended its early medical abortion service before restoring it in January 2021.

"It is appalling that, yet again, litigation is needed to uphold the right to abortion healthcare in Northern Ireland. Amnesty strongly supports this action by the Human Rights Commission, and we will do all we can to support its success.

"Over a year since abortion was decriminalised in Northern Ireland and the government's failure to commission and fund services have left women in a vulnerable and dangerous position.

"There is now a postcode lottery for abortion services, where women in one trust area after another are unable to access early medical abortion healthcare and instead have to buy pills online or put themselves in danger by travelling during a pandemic. This is shameful - and even more so that it has been left to local health trusts and charities to provide

abortion services on an ad hoc and non-funded basis.

“The Health Minister, Robin Swann, the wider Northern Ireland Executive and the UK government, have failed those in need of the abortion healthcare services to which they very clearly have legal right.”

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has a statutory requirement under the NI (Executive Formation) Act 2019 to ensure that the recommendations of the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women committee are implemented, namely that women have access to free and safe abortions in Northern Ireland.

Amnesty International believes that the failure of the NI Executive and Department to agree to fund and commission these services breaches the European Convention on Human Rights.

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of Amnesty International UK, on Jan 11, 2021. For more information subscribe and [follow us](#).

Press Contacts

1. Press Office

press@amnesty.org

+44 (0) 20 7413 5566

Media Assets

Embedded Media

Visit the [online press release](#) to interact with the embedded media.

<https://mediapigeon.io/newsroom/amnesty-international->

uk/releases/en/northern-ireland-amnesty-welcomes-legal-action-against-government-to-ensure-abortion-services-3221

Amnesty International UK

Newsroom: <https://mediapigeon.io/newsroom/amnesty-international-uk>

Website: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/>

Primary Email: press@amnesty.org

Social Media

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/amnesty>

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/amnesty>

Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/user/AmnestyInternational>

Instagram - <https://instagram.com/amnesty>
