

PRESS RELEASE

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INFORMING CHOICES NI WITHDRAW CENTRAL ACCESS POINT INTO EARLY MEDICAL ABORTION SERVICES

From 5pm today (Friday 1 October) Informing Choices NI (ICNI) will withdraw their central access point into early medical abortion services.

The service has operated outside of a commissioned framework for 18 months. As a small charity with limited resources this placed considerable pressures on the organisation.

ICNI [previously warned](#) the service could not continue unless interim funding was secured whilst the commissioning of services was underway. Regretfully, additional funding has not been provided by the Department of Health. Therefore, it is with deep reluctance that we have had no option but to take this action.

ICNI are extremely proud of the role we played to ensure that early medical abortion services were accessible in Northern Ireland and will continue to advocate for the urgent commissioning of locally available services. We will also continue to support women through difficult times with our pregnancy counselling service.

Early medical abortion services remain suspended within the Western Trust. Services are available in all other Trust areas. From Monday 4 October anyone wishing to access these services should contact the British Pregnancy Advisory Service on 03457 30 40 30.

ENDS

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The central access point was launched in April 2020 and enabled people from across Northern Ireland to contact a single telephone number where they could access non-directive information, pregnancy choices counselling if requested, and referral into an early medical abortion service within their local health trust.

In June 2021 ICNI published a report focusing on the central access point and early medical abortion services in Northern Ireland. The report, *'Beyond Decriminalisation: pregnancy choices and abortion care in Northern Ireland'* can be viewed [here](#)