

Amnesty International UK and Informing Choices NI **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY 19 MAY 2022

NORTHERN IRELAND: WESTMINSTER STEPS IN TO DELIVER ABORTION SERVICES

Amnesty International UK and Informing Choices NI have welcomed [news](#) that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has today (19 May) taken further legislative steps to ensure abortion services are commissioned for women and girls in Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State will lay regulations that remove the need for the Department of Health to seek Executive Committee approval to commission and fund abortion services in Northern Ireland. If the Health Minister fails to act, the regulations also give the Secretary of State the same power to put abortion services in place.

Grainne Teggart, Campaigns Manager for Amnesty International UK, said:

“This is a welcome and necessary move. Once again action from Westminster is needed to ensure that abortion rights are realised here. Commissioned services, accessible to all who need them, are long overdue. We need to see a swift end to our postcode lottery for provision.

“The Health Minister has failed at every opportunity to prioritise the delivery of this healthcare. We urge the Secretary of State to not wait and urgently establish and embed abortion services. Until this is done, access will remain in a fragile state.

“Our work will continue to ensure that all barriers to abortion are removed. Finally, we are getting to a place where choice will be respected and protected.”

Ruairi Rowan, Director of Advocacy and Policy for Informing Choices NI, said:

“The announcement today from the Secretary of State follows the welcome news earlier this week that people living in the Western Trust are once again able to access early medical abortion services in Northern Ireland. However, the fact that this service was denied to them over the past year, and is now being facilitated by neighbouring trust areas, highlights how precarious the current interim services are.

“The failure to have commissioned services in place also continues to deny timely access to much needed counselling support as our funding requests remain stuck within the commissioning standoff.”

ENDS