

News story: Central booking system for NI women seeking an abortion in England

The Department of Health and Social Care has established a central booking service that will be run by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS). Women from Northern Ireland can call a single telephone number to make an appointment with the most appropriate provider, based on:

- the woman's requirements
- her medical condition
- provider availability

The number is 0333 234 2184.

In June 2017, the Minister for Women and Equalities announced that women who are residents of Northern Ireland would be able access abortion procedures in England free of any charge. The package of care available includes:

- a consultation with an abortion provider in England, including an assessment of whether the legal grounds for an abortion are met
- an abortion procedure
- HIV or sexually transmitted infection tests
- choice of contraception from the abortion provider
- support with travel costs if women face financial hardship

The new booking system does not include the provision of any services in Northern Ireland and does not change the arrangements announced in 2017.

The central booking system will be funded through a grant from the Department of Health and Social Care, with support from the Government Equalities Office and HM Treasury.

The government has also finalised grant agreements with the 3 main abortion service providers to fund procedures for women from Northern Ireland. These are:

- BPAS
- Marie Stopes International
- NUPAS Ireland

The Department of Health and Social Care will also be reimbursing providers for all procedures they have undertaken on Northern Ireland residents since 29 June 2017.