

Wales to provide termination of pregnancy services to women from Northern Ireland

Termination of Pregnancy is governed by the Abortion Act 1967. At present, Termination of Pregnancy is available to anyone ordinarily resident in Wales, or those that require emergency treatment while in Wales. It can only be carried out in an NHS hospital or a licensed clinic.

In Northern Ireland (NI), the 1967 Act does not apply and Termination of Pregnancy is only permissible in very limited circumstances, for example if a woman's life is at risk or there is a permanent or serious risk to her physical or mental health. Rape, familial sexual abuse (incest) and fetal abnormality are not circumstances in which termination can be performed legally in Northern Ireland.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Our view has always been a woman from Northern Ireland, in Wales, should be able to access Termination of Pregnancy on the same basis as women in Wales.

“We anticipate the number of women from Northern Ireland accessing these services to be low and health boards have assured us they are able to absorb this provision within existing resources.

“I have asked my officials to conduct a review of the position after six months.”

To ensure the efficient delivery of this provision to Northern Ireland women and to ensure equitable service is provided to women in Wales, guidance on accessing termination of pregnancy provision in Wales will be published on the NHS Direct website.