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New Statistics from Ireland Show Great Success in Provision in Early Medical Abortion

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In Ireland we are now 18 months since the historic introduction of legislation to allow abortion access that is unrestricted up to 12 weeks gestation and after 12 weeks for reasons of serious risk to life and health and for reasons of fatal foetal anomaly.

On June 30, the first year of abortion provision statistics were published. Something many of us abortion campaigners never thought we would see over our many years of activism. In the first year of provision in 2019 (population 5 million), 6666 women and persons accessed an abortion in the Irish health service. A service that was now legal, safe, and integrated into routine healthcare provision.

Looking more closely at the results shows a story of great success in provision in early medical abortion and yet many challenges remaining for access to abortion after 12 weeks. Approximately 6,542 were under 12 weeks at the time of abortion, and 100 had abortions for fatal anomaly. Both of these were categories that did not exist before the change to the constitution and introduction of legislation. However, there were just 24 abortions for risk to life and health – this figure is almost identical to the numbers each year before the change. Previously you could only get an abortion if your life were at very substantive risk, and as we know women died due to its very limited application. It appears this draconian application has not substantively changed, and as such women must still be at risk, and we know are continuing to travel outside of the state. (England & Wales abortion statistics confirm 375 gave Irish residence in 2019).

Early medical abortion is provided in the community up to 10 weeks by family physicians in Ireland and this has been a big success with more than one in ten general practitioners being a provider. Gestations of 10-12 weeks are provided in the hospital services with follow-up in the community. This part of the service has worked very well. [Doctors for Choice Ireland](#) supported by [Global Doctors for Choice](#) must continue to advocate for safe, legal, local abortion for ALL women in Ireland, not just those under 12 weeks gestation.