

Life Northern Ireland

Life Northern Ireland fully support the proposed amendment from Jim Wells MLA to restrict lawful abortions to National Health Service (NHS) premises, except in urgent cases when NHS services are not available and where no fee is paid.

In 2012/13 only 51 abortions were provided under the current NI laws on abortion, which make it permissible to perform an abortion in order to save the life of the mother. There is no evidence to suggest our National Health Service is unable, or has been unable, to provide sufficient care in these difficult pregnancy situations, which suggests there is not any justification for the introduction of private abortion providers in Northern Ireland.

As it stands, Marie Stopes is the only private abortion provider in Northern Ireland and since its opening the clinic has not made it clear if any abortions were provided in that time and equally if abortions have been carried out, it is impossible to determine if they were lawful. This lack of information, coupled with Marie Stopes' international reputation, makes its presence in Northern Ireland concerning.

It is our belief that the NHS provide sufficient services to women whose lives are put at serious risk by their pregnancy and that the Justice Committee should continue to put their trust in a service which is regulated; a service that the people of Northern Ireland can place their trust in.