

# News story: Government confirms plans to approve the home-use of early abortion pills

The government will legalise the home-use of early medical abortion pills in England by the end of the year.

Under the plans, women will be allowed to take the second of 2 early abortion pills in the safe and familiar surroundings of their own home.

With clinical and legal advice clear that the use of abortion pills at home is safe and legal, women will have the choice of whether they wish to take the second pill at home or at a clinic.

The current system requires women to take both pills, mifepristone and misoprostol, 24 to 48 hours apart in a clinic to end an early pregnancy before 10 weeks gestation. Women leave the clinic after taking the second pill and pass the pregnancy at home. The 2 visits can be difficult to organise and often uncomfortable or traumatic, and in some cases women can begin to miscarry before they have reached their home.

4 in 5 terminations are early medical abortions, carried out under 10 weeks gestation. This means the majority of women seeking abortions will now have the option for home-use. However, women will still be able to take the second pill in a clinic if they choose to do so.

The plans will not change the way women are assessed and treated for an abortion. Any woman seeking an early medical abortion will be given the usual checks including the criteria under the Abortion Act.

Safeguards will be introduced to protect women undergoing this treatment at home, and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will work closely with partners in the health system to make the changes quickly and safely.

The next step will be to work with partners, including the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, to develop clinical guidance for all professionals to follow when providing the treatment option to patients.

Professor Lesley Regan, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), said:

Today's announcement that use of misoprostol at home will be allowed in England is hugely welcomed and a major step forward for women's healthcare.

This simple and practical measure will provide women with significantly more choice and is the most compassionate care we can give them.

It will allow women to avoid distress and embarrassment of bleeding and pain during their journey home from an unnecessary second visit to a clinic or hospital. It will also improve access to safe and regulated abortion care and take pressure off NHS services.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies said:

Abortion can be a difficult experience so it is important that women feel safe and as comfortable as possible. This decision will increase choice for women and help ensure they receive safe and dignified care.

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## [Guidance: Plant or machinery capital allowances](#)

The Energy Technology List comprises the technologies that qualify for the UK government's energy-saving Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) scheme and their energy-saving eligibility criteria.

See the [Energy Technology Product List](#) for the eligible products in this category, listed by brand name.

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## [Speech: Reflections on an overnight shift at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital](#)

Last night I did the overnight shift at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and on board with the London Ambulance Service. I'm a bit bleary-eyed but I thought it worth writing about what I saw.

My grandmother spent her career doing regular overnight shifts, so I was proud to don my blue scrubs, though mostly as an observer. I spent the first part of the evening shadowing a consultant in the busy A&E department, seeing GPs collaborating with hospital doctors and nurses to treat some minor problems and a whole series of very serious incidents in Resuscitation and Majors.

I then spent a few hours with the site manager – the most senior nurse on site – visiting each ward, as she allocated bed moves real time, checked on sick patients and managed staffing for the morning. After that, I jumped in the ambulance with the London Ambulance Service guys for 2 hours – watching their work and the A&E departments of St Georges and Charing Cross from the paramedics' point of view – before returning to Chelsea and Westminster for morning handover and a much-needed coffee.

Reflecting on the night, 3 things have struck me.

First, the dedication and camaraderie. We all know the NHS staff work incredibly hard and do amazing things every night of every year, but to see how they work together under pressure with such professionalism and maintaining levels of human empathy was breath-taking. Watching the whole team in action, especially when a blue light arrives, or the emergency bleep sounds, is like watching an orchestra in full flow.

Next the technology. Or lack of it. I was already motivated to improve the IT of the NHS – but boy! Chelsea and Westminster Hospital is one of the better trusts for IT, but even there it was clear we have so far to go. And it was through no fault of their own – but rather the lack of national interoperability standards, which means systems just can't talk to each other, so people are forced to revert to pen and paper. Staff were hindered by IT in a way that we simply wouldn't accept in any other organisation in the 21st century. Tonight has motivated me more than ever to sort this out: interoperable data standards are on their way.

Third, the sheer communication skills of the teams. Being a medic, a paramedic or a nurse is of course about the medicine, but the professional ability of the staff to impart information efficiently and clearly under pressure was mind-blowing. We may think about medicine as a science but the staff's capability to communicate clearly and concisely in these circumstances demonstrated an astonishing level of professionalism and skill. Operating on a 24-hour basis like hospitals do, you can't depend on an individual knowing all – handover is everything. This, if anything, makes the importance of improving tech even stronger.

It was a huge privilege joining the amazing people of the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and the London Ambulance Service on the frontline last night. Meeting the staff whose unstinting dedication, compassion and professionalism was an inspiration to behold, this was an experience that will last with me for some time.

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**[Speech: Michael Ellis speech to the](#)**

# Edinburgh International Culture Summit

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the partners and volunteers involved in organising such a wonderful event, and especially to the Presiding Officer for graciously hosting us in this magnificent chamber.

This summit provides a brilliant opportunity for ministers, artists, practitioners – and for this year's summit notably young practitioners to come from across the globe to discuss, challenge and formulate cultural strategies.

Culture has the power to bring people, places and nations together and enrich the lives of all citizens. So I applaud everyone who has made the effort to come to Edinburgh this year and engage in such lively discussions.

Everyone here today knows that culture make our lives better. And we also know that the opportunity to be an awed audience member or a participant of the arts should be open to everyone.

Listening to the speeches this morning highlighted the positive role that culture can have on our lives.

Whether it's the research that Dr Habibi presented on the power of music on brain development or the work that Professor Bloem showed highlighting the impact of art on Parkinson's whilst amazing us with evidence that the choice to become an artists reduces the likelihood to contract Parkinson's! And what a privilege to see such a wonderful performance from Mr Herman.

I think we can all agree that we as policy makers in this room we must continue to explore the potential use of our cultural assets in bettering the lives of people in our countries and across the globe. And I think we can all agree that we have heard some powerful evidence that we can take back to our own countries and use as we develop future policy.

It's an exciting time for those who advocate for the role of arts in health. My former DCMS colleague, in his new role as Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock recently announced £4.5million for new or existing social prescribing projects in England. There is a great opportunity here for cultural organisations and arts practitioners to further demonstrate how their work can ensure a healthy society.

Social and cultural relationships are key to good health and I think anyone here today who has sung in a choir, volunteered at a museum, or taken part in any other of the number of ways we give our time to the arts can attest that the relationships forged can be truly meaningful and at times, life-changing.

If we can work together to demonstrate to others the true impact of arts and culture, society will become healthier and happier.

So to conclude, I hope everyone here has had the opportunity to engage in positive, and sometimes challenging discussions and can take back thoughts,

ideas and best practices to help formulate future cultural policies.

I know that we have. We, as the UK Government look forward to keeping these conversations going in the future with you all. I hope you all have had the opportunity to enjoy the festivals across Edinburgh during your time here. Thank you.

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## **Press release: Call for tourism industry to do more to cater for disabled people**

Minister for Disabled People, Sarah Newton, and Tourism Minister, Michael Ellis, urge all leisure attractions to “follow their lead” and ensure they are catering for disabled customers’ needs.

Tourism is booming across the UK and is now worth over £66 billion a year to the economy. The sector employs 1.6 million people and creates growth across the country, from beautiful beaches and activity parks, to hundreds of thousands of heritage sites.

If the sector is to continue flourishing, it needs to ensure that facilities are accessible to all its visitors. With one in 5 people in the UK living with a disability or health condition, there is a clear business case for ensuring that disabled people’s needs are catered to. Businesses can take actions including improving training on disability awareness for staff and adapting facilities to ensure they are accessible.

On a visit to Sandcastle Water Park in Blackpool, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton, said:

Enjoying all the experiences the UK has to offer with family and friends should be fun and enjoyable, but for many disabled people this can be a cause for disappointment and frustration.

Many leisure businesses are already doing the right things in making sure their facilities are enjoyed by disabled people, including Sandcastle Water Park in Blackpool. Things like designated opening times, a quiet room, open-ended day tickets and ramps can make all the difference. I’m calling on others in the tourism industry to follow their lead and put visitors’ needs at the heart of their services.

On a visit to Eureka! The National Children’s Museum in Halifax, the Minister

for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Michael Ellis, said:

All over the country, our tourism industry is booming and we are a world-leading holiday destination for visitors from both at home and abroad.

However if we are to maintain this reputation and its economic and social benefits, I urge all tourism venues to follow in the footsteps of these award winners and review whether they are doing enough to cater for disabled people, to ensure they are accessible to everyone.

Examples of tourist venues leading the way in this area, and highlighted by VisitEngland's Inclusive Tourism Award, include:

- the Roman Baths and Pump Room in Bath
- Mylor Sailing and Powerboat School in Cornwall
- Cottage in the Dales in Newbiggin
- Sandcastle Waterpark in Blackpool
- Eureka! The National Children's Museum in Halifax

Adaptations made by the venues include:

- making them wheelchair accessible
- installing Changing Places toilets
- providing accommodation for guide dogs

The Head of Business Support at VisitEngland, Ross Calladine, said:

Our Inclusive Tourism Award winners demonstrate that providing easy access for all makes sound business sense.

By taking steps to ensure staff are disability confident, making reasonable adjustments to facilities and providing information on venue accessibility, other businesses can benefit from this valuable market.

The government has a dedicated sector champion for tourism, who works with the industry to promote the benefits of being inclusive to its disabled visitors.

Chris Veitch, Chief Executive of Tourism for All and the government's Sector Champion for Tourism, said:

Making tourism more accessible not only improves travel opportunities for disabled people and many others with accessibility requirements, it can improve the quality of the visitor experience for everybody and help make the UK tourism offer more competitive.

There are more than 11 million disabled people in the UK with a combined spending power of their households, 'the purple pound', standing at around £250 billion.

[Annual statistics released in July](#) revealed that a record-breaking 39.2 million visits were made by overseas tourists to the UK in 2017, and the latest [domestic tourism figures](#) showed that residents across Great Britain took a total of 120.7 million overnight visits to destinations in England, Scotland and Wales in 2017.

2018 Inclusive Tourism Award winners can be found here:

[www.visitenglandawards.org/about-home/winners/awards-winners-2018](http://www.visitenglandawards.org/about-home/winners/awards-winners-2018).

Previous winners of the Inclusive Tourism Award can be found here:

[www.visitengland.com/plan-your-visit/access-all](http://www.visitengland.com/plan-your-visit/access-all).

The Scope Extra Costs Commission report can be found here:

[www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Interim-report/Extra-Costs-Commission-Final-Report.pdf](http://www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Interim-report/Extra-Costs-Commission-Final-Report.pdf).

Further information on how venues can improve their accessibility can be found here: [www.visitbritain.org/providing-access-all](http://www.visitbritain.org/providing-access-all).

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