

Success: MPs vote to keep early medical at-home abortions

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Parliament has voted to keep abortion telemedicine legal following campaigning by medical and women's rights groups, including the National Secular Society.

The government [announced](#) last month that a policy enacted in response to Covid-19 to allow early medical abortions at home in England would be scrapped at the end of August.

But today MPs voted 215 to 188 in favour of an amendment to the Health and Care Bill to keep the provision.

MPs who voted for the amendment include Jess Phillips (*pictured, left*), who argued keeping telemedicine for abortion gives women greater choice and safety.

Opponents included Fiona Bruce (*pictured, right*), a member of the Evangelical Alliance council. She [chairs](#) the all-party parliamentary pro-life group and has lobbied to limit women's reproductive rights.

Campaign to keep early medical at-home abortions

In 2020 the government enabled women to receive all medication by post for abortions before 10 weeks' gestation following a telephone consultation, instead of visiting a clinic.

Calls to keep the provision were opposed by religious groups which object to abortion on principle, including the [Church of England](#).

Last year the NSS joined medical organisations and women's rights campaigners in [backing proposals](#) to make the 'pills by post' provisions permanent.

It [wrote](#) to health secretary Sajid Javid last month, saying religious ideology should not influence healthcare policies.

And it signed a [joint letter](#) by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Midwives and the British Medical Association to prime minister Boris Johnson, saying removing the service "would indicate a deep distrust of women and an institutional disregard for their reproductive rights".

A [study published last year](#) found that 80 per cent of women said telemedicine was their preferred option and they would choose it in the future.

The Welsh government has [said](#) temporary arrangements allowing early abortions to be carried out at home in Wales will be made permanent.

NSS comment: "fantastic news"

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans welcomed the decision.

He said: "This is fantastic news for countless women all over England. Early abortion care at home has proven to be safe, effective, accessible, and preferred by women. Today's vote represents a real step forward for improving women's reproductive rights and healthcare choices.

"It was wrongheaded of the government to plan to end it. I'm delighted that this error has been corrected."

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