

# **PE2126/E: Ensure abortion services are available up to 24 weeks across all parts of Scotland**

## **Petitioner written submission, 16 December 2025**

Nearly four years have now passed since the Scottish Government first committed to ending the practice of sending women to England for abortion care between 20- and 24-weeks' gestation and to establishing appropriate mid-trimester services in Scotland.

That commitment has not been met, and the situation has worsened with approximately one woman travelling to England for care every four days. And no credible or transparent plan in place to deliver this care locally.

Currently, there is nowhere in Scotland where a woman can access abortion care after 20 weeks' gestation. As a result, thousands of women have already been forced to travel to England at significant financial, physical, and emotional cost – something that disproportionately affects vulnerable women and girls, including those with some of the most complex health or social circumstances.

In May 2025, the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, Jenni Minto MSP, stated that a solution would be identified by November. In November she told The Herald:

*"I asked a Task and Finish Group to develop a recommended service model for later-stage abortion within a six-month time frame and the team have completed this work on time. We are now working with boards to ensure the service is implemented as swiftly as possible."*

Despite this public assurance, no information about the recommended service model has been shared. The Scottish Government has not released the proposals for scrutiny, nor has it explained how or where the service would be delivered. No information has been provided when requested, and nothing has been shared with the Scottish Parliament or NHS Scotland. As far as is understood, the Scottish Government has not engaged with the doctors who are already trained, willing, and ready to provide this care in Scotland.

This lack of transparency is deeply concerning. Closed-door processes, withheld information, and unfulfilled commitments have failed to deliver the change that women in Scotland are legally entitled to receive and so desperately need. It also raises serious concerns that proposals may emerge that are clinically inappropriate or unsafe, but are being taken forward without prior scrutiny or accountability.

It is clear that enough is enough, and that political leadership is now urgently required. I therefore urge the Committee to use its powers to force a detailed and transparent update from the Minister, and to summon the Minister and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to attend the Committee in the new year to set out the progress that has been made. Without proper parliamentary scrutiny and clear accountability, it is evident that this problem will not be satisfactorily resolved – to the detriment of the thousands of women who have had to make the journey to England for basic care, and the hundreds of women still to make this trip.