

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON ABORTION

November 2023



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campaign

Overview

The government does not publish clear numbers on the total expenditure on abortion, which encompasses a wide range of categories. Answers sought by TDs via Parliamentary Questions (PQs) to the Minister for Health which asked for the total expenditure have produced incomplete and often confusing statements.

This report attempts to piece the jigsaw together by drawing on all the information from the series of parliamentary questions to give an estimate of the scale of state spending on abortion provision, from 1st January 2019 to 30 June 2023.

From the available data, this report has calculated through PQs that an estimated €45,928,018 has been spent on “abortion services” in the aftermath of the 2018 referendum.

It’s quite likely that this is in fact an underestimation of the total spending, but it presents the sum total of the money which has been disclosed in PQ replies.

The colossal bill has been racked up in just 4.5 years. Meanwhile, not a cent has been spent on promoting positive alternatives for women in unplanned pregnancies. Agencies like the State-run MyOptions hotline operate like a de facto abortion referral service. Its staff, for example, are not trained or equipped to meet the needs of women who are conflicted about having an abortion and are seeking practical support and information about alternatives to abortion.

Senior members of government promised the electorate prior to the referendum in 2018 that abortion would be “rare” in the event of people voting for repeal. The fact the government has spent an estimated €45,928,018 of taxpayers’ money since 2019 bankrolling the ending of human life by abortion is an outrage.

Some members of government and the media balk at abortion provision in Ireland being referred to as the “abortion industry”, but it’s hard to find fault with this description when one takes an honest look at the obscene amounts of money being spent to end the lives of unborn babies.

The Pro Life Campaign has repeatedly called for more openness, transparency and public discussion on what precisely is happening under the new abortion regime, including with regard to the exact amount of taxpayers’ money being used to fund abortion provision across the country. The public are entitled to this information and it shouldn’t fall to groups like ourselves to have to piece together information from multiple sources to provide a clearer picture.

Perhaps the government doesn’t want the public to know the amounts being spent as they certainly cannot stand over the indefensible expenditure of €46 million on abortion provision, while refusing to spend a single cent on the promotion of positive alternatives to abortion. The government’s disgraceful misuse of public funds on abortion and the free rein they’ve given to the most extreme elements of the pro-abortion movement to promote the ending of human life guarantees that abortion will be an election issue in 2024.

Breakdown of Monies Spent

Hospital expenditure:

€7,000,000 allocated for abortion services in hospitals in 2019.¹

€5,000,000 allocated for abortion services in hospitals in 2020.²

PCRS claims:³

2019: €2,652,000

2020: €3,298,850

2021: €3,176,750

Community setting expenditure:

2019: €4,500,000 “allocated to support and enable the delivery” of abortion in the community setting.⁴

2020: €2,500,000 allocated to “fund and support the continued provision and expansion of the delivery of termination of pregnancy services in the community setting.”⁵

HSE MyOptions:

2019: €565,246 (possibly as high as €1,000,000).⁶

2020: €1,800,000 for MyOptions & the Crisis Pregnancy Counselling service.⁷

2021: €2,200,000 for MyOptions & the Crisis Pregnancy Counselling service.⁸

Advertising:

2019: €1,000,000 for miscellaneous “communications campaigns”⁹

2019: €434,754 (MyOptions advertising)

2020: €149,177 (MyOptions advertising)

2021: €155,322 (MyOptions advertising)

2022: €95,071 (MyOptions advertising)¹⁰

Minor capital works (including “additional security measures and administration support”)

2020: €212,000¹¹

Women’s health care clinics (abortion):

2019: €231,000¹²

Training:

2018-19: €475,000 to the Irish College of General Practitioners “to provide training to medical practitioners on termination of pregnancy”¹³

No date: €350,000 allocated to Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (hospitals)¹⁴

Abortion pills:¹⁵

2019: €789,634

2020: €733,549

2021: €653,550

2022: €887,657

2023 (Jan-Jun): €410,358

¹PQ Ref 7259/23, HSE to Nolan, 21/2/23, (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personal/pq/pq2023-pq-responses/february-2023/pq-7259-23-carol-nolan.pdf>), (accessed 1/9/23).

²Ibid.

³PQ Ref 35813/23, HSE to Carol Nolan, 14/8/23, (<https://prolifecampaign.ie/alarmed-rise-in-abortions-indicated-by-payments-to-doctors-in-first-half-of-2023/>), (accessed 1/9/23).

⁴PQ Ref 5186/21, HSE to Tóibín, 17/2/21, (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personal/pq/pq2021-pq-responses/february-2021/pq-5186-21-peadar-toibin.pdf>), (accessed 1/9/23).

⁵op. cit., Nolan, 21/2/23.

⁶Ibid. *The HSE provided a rounded figure of €1,000,000 for MyOptions expenditure in 2019, however we know that €434,754 was spent on advertising MyOptions in the same year which may have been subtracted from the €1,000,000. Therefore, this calculation errs on the side of caution and uses €565,246.

⁷PQ Ref 5186/21, HSE to Tóibín, 17/2/21, (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personal/pq/pq2021-pq-responses/february-2021/pq-5186-21-peadar-toibin.pdf>), (accessed 1/9/23).

⁸PQ Ref 27559/22, HSE to Tóibín, 17/6/22, (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personal/pq/pq2022-pq-responses/may-2022/pq-27559-22-peadar-toibin.pdf>), (accessed 1/9/23)

⁹op. cit., Nolan, 21/2/23.

¹⁰2019-2022 advertising expenditure in PQ Ref 7260/23,

([https://prolifecampaign.ie/portfolio/1-3-2023-press-re\[1\]lease-revelations-of-hefty-hse-spending-on-promoting-abortion-and-suppressing-alternative-options-criticised-by-pro-life-campaign/](https://prolifecampaign.ie/portfolio/1-3-2023-press-re[1]lease-revelations-of-hefty-hse-spending-on-promoting-abortion-and-suppressing-alternative-options-criticised-by-pro-life-campaign/)), (accessed 1/9/23).

¹¹PQ Ref 14077/21, HSE to Tóibín, 8/4/21, (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personal/pq/pq2021-pq-responses/march-2021/pq-14077-21-peadar-toibin.pdf>), (accessed 1/9/23).

¹²Ibid.

¹³PQ Ref 14062/21, HSE to Nolan, 9/4/21, (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personal/pq/pq2021-pq-responses/march-2021/pq-14062-21-carol-nolan.pdf>), (accessed 1/9/23).

op. cit., Nolan, 14/8/23

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵op. cit., Nolan, 14/8/23

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