

PRESS RELEASE

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Life expresses deep concern over national increase in babies aborted

Life is seriously concerned and saddened by the latest abortion figures released by the Department of Health which show an overall increase in the number of abortions taking place in England and Wales, in addition to a rise in repeat abortions and abortions carried out on the grounds of disability.

The Department of Health have stated that 185,824 were performed on English and Welsh residents (0.7% more than in 2014).

38% of abortions carried out on English and Welsh residents in 2015 were to women who had already had one or more abortions. This figure was as high as 47% for women aged 30-34 and over. With 50 women having had as many as 8 abortions.

3,213 abortions were carried out under ground E (risk that the child would be born 'seriously handicapped'), a 3.7% increase on 2014. This included 689 abortions for babies with Down's syndrome (an increase of 4% from 2014), 159 for babies with spina bifida and 11 for babies with a cleft palate or cleft lip.

It is expected that abortions for Down's syndrome will increase by a further 92 a year if Jeremy Hunt acts on proposals to include cfDNA/NIPT screening into the Fetal Anomaly Screening Programme. People with Down's syndrome and their families protested outside Parliament last month, asking the Health Secretary not to 'screen them out' and calling for greater support for parents who receive a prenatal diagnosis of Down's syndrome.

Commenting on the new Department of Health statistics, Life spokeswoman Clara Watson said:

"We are deeply saddened that there were 1,253 more abortions carried out on English and Welsh residents in 2015 than in 2014. That's 1,253 more babies who were not given the chance to live and 1253 more women affected by abortion. We are shocked that the abortion rate in this country is climbing and that babies with disabilities are still being targeted and eliminated, in particular.

S(1)(1)(d) of the Abortion Act allows for abortions up to birth if the baby has a disability. We've seen the outcry over the last few days about the Royal College of Midwives advocating abortion up to birth, we don't think people realise that a woman in the UK can have an abortion up until the day of delivery if her baby has even the slightest disability, such as a cleft lip.

Today's statistics show that the Abortion Act is not being implemented properly. If abortion were to be introduced up until birth in all cases, as mooted by the Royal College of Midwives and abortion provider BPAS, we fear that the national abortion numbers may increase even more drastically".

ENDS

LIFE is a pro-life charity that supports anyone facing a crisis pregnancy, pregnancy loss or after an abortion, and strives to engage, inspire and inform the next generation to value all human life from beginning to end.