
United Kingdom and Ireland: Reported abortions, 1958-2015

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Abstract: This document summarizes compiled abortion figures for the United Kingdom, its constituent regions, and the Republic of Ireland for 1958-2015.

Abortion figures for the United Kingdom are generally reported separately by its constituent regions, these regions having differences in abortion policies as well. No official source (including the United Nations) reports reliable total abortions for the United Kingdom, necessitating the merger of such data from multiple sources as is done here.

England and Wales abortions are reported together by the UK Department of Health, usually also reporting abortions obtained by non-residents by place of residence for regions including Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey. Scotland abortions are reported by the Scotland ISD, also reporting total abortions obtained in Scotland by English and Welsh residents collectively. Northern Ireland has reported abortions for some years, these being limited in number due to stricter policies on abortion. The Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey have each reported abortion occurrences for some years, with these regions each having different abortion policies.

Abortion is generally illegal in the Republic of Ireland (the law was changed in 2013 to permit abortion in limited circumstances), but many Irish women obtain abortions abroad. England and Wales and the Netherlands report statistics on abortions obtained by residents of Ireland.

Table 1 summarizes abortion occurrences and abortions by place of residence for the United Kingdom, Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man. Abortion occurrences in Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man are assumed to be for respective residents unless otherwise specified; total abortions to residents of these three regions, whether occurring in the UK or the respective territory, are listed in the RES columns on the right. Numbers are reported abortions from the sources at the end of this document, except for estimated numbers which are indicated in parentheses. These estimates are made as follows:

- Estimated abortions distributed between the Isle of Man, Guernsey, and Jersey by residence and performed in the UK, 1968-1985: Only totals for the three regions are reported for these

years; they are allocated in proportion to live births for these regions with a higher abortion percentage for Jersey, given that the abortion percentages for the Isle of Man and Guernsey were both 17.5% in 1986-1987 while for Jersey it was 22.5%

- Estimated abortions distributed between Guernsey and Jersey by residence and performed in the UK, 1990-1993, 1995-1998, and 2001: Only totals for the two regions are reported for these years. The fractional distribution between the two regions was linearly interpolated to obtain these estimates.
- Abortions by Jersey residents obtained in Jersey, 1990-1993, 1997-2001, 2005-2007, and 2011-2013: Abortions performed in Jersey are assumed to be obtained by Jersey residents, given that 99.9% of abortions performed in Jersey in 2002-2004, 2008-2010, and 2014 were obtained by Jersey residents.
- Estimated abortions performed in Jersey in 1994-1996 and in Guernsey in 2001-2003: Estimated are linearly interpolated across these reporting gaps.
- Estimated abortions performed in Jersey in 2015 and in Guernsey in 2013-2015: These estimates are based on trends for the last three years in each region.

Table 1. Abortion occurrences and abortions by residents for the United Kingdom, Guernsey, Jersey, and Isle of Man, 1958-2015.

	United Kingdom	Guernsey	Jersey	Isle of Man	United Kingdom	Guernsey	Jersey	Isle of Man
year	OCC	OCC	OCC	OCC	RES	RES	RES	RES
1958	13,570							
1959	13,900							
1960	14,000							
1961	14,300							
1962	16,800							
1963	16,600							
1964	18,300							
1965	19,500							
1966	21,400							
1967	27,200							
1968	25,185				23,991	(10)	(20)	(10)
1969	58,375				53,643	(30)	(50)	(20)
1970	91,819				81,198	(40)	(70)	(50)
1971	133,110				102,047	(60)	(100)	(60)
1972	167,493				117,758	(80)	(120)	(90)
1973	174,691				120,160	(80)	(140)	(90)
1974	170,508				119,123	(100)	(160)	(110)
1975	147,029				115,678	(90)	(170)	(110)
1976	136,892				111,118	(90)	(150)	(100)
1977	140,338				111,935	(90)	(190)	(110)
1978	149,009				121,484	(100)	(200)	(120)

1979	157,530				130,755	(110)	(210)	(130)
1980	168,808				139,548	(120)	(230)	(140)
1981	171,487				139,999	(110)	(210)	(130)
1982	171,470				139,354	(110)	(220)	(140)
1983	170,620				138,081	(120)	(220)	(120)
1984	179,148				147,840	(110)	(230)	(120)
1985	181,062				152,640	(130)	(250)	(140)
1986	181,914				159,705	128	290	148
1987	183,736				168,128	139	287	158
1988	193,926				181,075	132	313	182
1989	194,183				183,258	166	322	221
1990	197,131		323		186,737	(160)	(630)	232
1991	190,590		307		180,909	(160)	(610)	191
1992	182,887		250		173,659	(130)	(490)	139
1993	179,790		296		170,975	(140)	(560)	139
1994	178,268		(300)		169,951	119	(530)	143
1995	174,781		(300)		167,285	(100)	(470)	124
1996	189,558		(310)		181,860	(110)	(490)	160
1997	191,934	57	312		184,205	(110)	(390)	174
1998	199,958	104	328		192,358	(130)	(360)	133
1999	195,501	92	291		187,702	119	326	180
2000	197,443	89	296		189,462	114	327	177
2001	198,478	(100)	301		190,462	(130)	322	139
2002	197,322	(120)	265		189,567	(140)	(290)	170
2003	203,032	(130)	231		195,599	(150)	250	134
2004	207,040	151	229		199,851	160	240	152
2005	207,097	126	218		200,594	135	233	161
2006	214,431	150	218		208,616	162	233	124
2007	219,454	106	200	5	214,030	119	224	140
2008	216,133	137	220		210,705	147	227	135
2009	208,930	97	215		203,648	109	224	111
2010	209,131	110	200		203,931	119	209	128
2011	208,678	117	209		203,741	131	220	96
2012	203,587	110	215		198,819	116	224	98
2013	202,778	(110)	180		198,265	(120)	187	90
2014	201,885	(110)	163		197,348	(120)	168	90
2015	203,101	(110)	(140)		198,902	(120)	(150)	105

Table 2 provides available data on abortions obtained abroad by residents of the Republic of Ireland.

Table 2. Abortions by residents of Ireland obtained in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

year	Abortions obtained in the United Kingdom	Abortions obtained in the Netherlands	Total abortions by residents of Ireland
1968	64		64
1969	123		123
1970	261		261
1971	578		578
1972	975		975
1973	1,195		1,195
1974	1,421		1,421
1975	1,575		1,575
1976	1,821		1,821
1977	2,185		2,185
1978	2,550		2,550
1979	2,809		2,809
1980	3,324		3,324
1981	3,603		3,603
1982	3,654		3,654
1983	3,677		3,677
1984	3,948		3,948
1985	3,888		3,888
1986	3,918		3,918
1987	3,673		3,673
1988	3,839		3,839
1989	3,721		3,721
1990	4,064		4,064
1991	4,154		4,154
1992	4,254		4,254
1993	4,402		4,402
1994	4,590		4,590
1995	4,532		4,532
1996	4,894		4,894
1997	5,340		5,340
1998	5,891		5,891
1999	6,226		6,226
2000	6,391		6,391
2001	6,673		6,673

2002	6,522		6,522
2003	6,320		6,320
2004	6,217		6,217
2005	5,585		5,585
2006	5,042	461	5,503
2007	4,686	451	5,137
2008	4,600	351	4,951
2009	4,422	134	4,556
2010	4,402	31	4,433
2011	4,149	33	4,182
2012	3,982	24	4,006
2013	3,679	12	3,691
2014	3,735	16	3,751
2015	3,451		3,451

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