



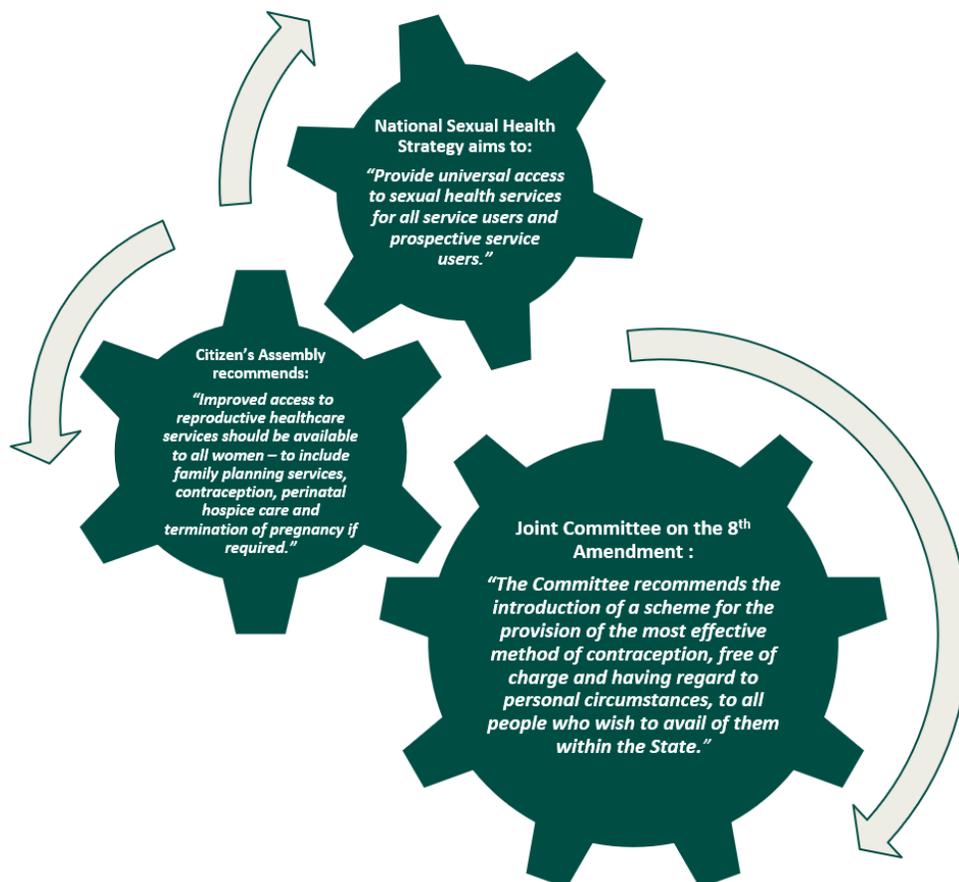
## Background to the public consultation on Access to Contraception

Several key groups have made public recommendations on contraception access in Ireland.

The Joint Committee on the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution recommended:  
**“The introduction of a scheme for the provision of the most effective method of contraception, free of charge and having regard to personal circumstances, to all people who wish to avail of them within the State.”**

The Citizens’ Assembly also considered the Eighth Amendment. One of their recommendations was: **“Improved access to reproductive healthcare services should be available to all women – to include family planning services, contraception, perinatal hospice care and termination of pregnancy if required.”**

The National Sexual Health Strategy (2015-2020) aims to improve sexual health and wellbeing and reduce negative sexual health outcomes. One of the recommendations is to: **“Provide universal access to sexual health services for all service users and prospective service users.”**





## The Working Group on Access to Contraception

Increasing access to contraception is a complex issue, so a Working Group has been set up in the Department of Health to decide how these recommendations will be implemented. The Working Group is made up of officials from the Department of Health. Its work involves:

- Doing research and gathering evidence
- Considering legal and regulatory issues
- Consulting stakeholders like you

The Working Group reports to the Minister of Health. Its final report is due by end-September 2019.

## Contraception that is available in Ireland

This table shows the types of contraception that are currently available in Ireland.

Form	Method	Use
<b>Barrier methods</b>	Condom (male)	Single use
	Condom (female)	Single use
	Caps, diaphragms and spermicide	Fitted before sex
<b>Short acting hormonal contraception</b>	Combined oral contraceptive pill (COCP) (oestrogen and progestogen)	Taken daily for 21 days, followed by 7-day break
	Progestogen-only pill (POP)	Taken daily for 28 days, no break
	Contraceptive patch	Patches worn for 21 days, followed by 7-day break
	Vaginal ring	Ring in place for 21 days, followed by 7-day break
<b>Long acting reversible contraception</b>	Contraceptive injection	The injection is given by a doctor or nurse, lasts for 8-13 weeks
	Contraceptive implant	Implanted with minor surgery under the skin of your arm by a trained doctor or nurse, can remain for 3 years
	Intra-uterine system (IUS)	Inserted into the womb by a trained doctor or nurse, can remain for 3-5 years
	Intra-uterine device (IUD)	Inserted into the womb by a trained doctor or nurse, can remain for 5-10 years
<b>Permanent methods</b>	Female sterilisation (tubal ligation)	Permanent
	Male sterilisation (vasectomy)	Permanent
<b>Other</b>	Emergency contraceptive pill	1 pill taken after unprotected sex



### **More about access to condoms**

Condoms can be purchased from pharmacies, shops and supermarkets, vending machines, and from online retailers. Under the National Condom Distribution Service (NCDS), free condoms are given to services across the country who work directly with groups who may be vulnerable or at-risk. These services promote the use of condoms to help prevent unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

### **More about access to other forms of contraception**

Under the Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003, hormonal contraceptives and the copper IUD require a prescription from a registered medical professional.

Long Acting Reversible Contraception, often called LARCs (the contraceptive injection, implant, IUS and IUD) also require a new prescription from a registered medical professional to get a new product.

Oral contraceptives are different, and a prescription can be repeated for up to six months from the date of issue, unless the prescriber specifically limits the number of repeats or the amount to be provided.

### **More about paying for contraception**

Most people pay for contraception themselves. Those who are entitled to full or limited eligibility for healthcare can access contraception free of charge or at a reduced cost.

You can find out more about entitlements eligibility for healthcare on the [Health Service Executive website](#).