



Information for Participants

Study: Evidence to inform health service configuration for abortion provision

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We are doing a study to find out about people's views and experiences of abortion and we'd like to invite you to take part. Before you decide whether to accept, you need to understand why the study is being done, what it would involve and what part you would play in it. The aim of this leaflet is to tell you more about the study to help you make that decision. You don't have to decide straight away, you can think about it and let us know in your own time. Please ask us any questions you may have.

Why is the study being carried out?

Things are changing in the field of abortion. More and more abortions are now carried out by taking pills, instead of having an operation. Today, around seven out of ten abortions in the UK are carried out in this way. The rules surrounding abortion are changing too. Patients can play a bigger part in their abortion and work together with their health professional. And health professionals who are not specialists in abortion are increasingly playing a role. In many cases, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, advice and help can be given remotely, on line or by phone. Health services need to make changes in line with these trends, to ensure they're fit for purpose. We'd like to hear your views and have the benefit of your experience, to make recommendations to providers and policy makers about how best this might happen.

What is the study about?

The research we're asking you to get involved in is part of a larger study looking at new ways of providing abortion care that are being tried and tested, at what is being done in other countries, and at what health professionals think about current changes in abortion provision and how they might impact on them. An important part of the study is to find out how patients themselves see the issues and this is the part we'd like your help with. At the end of the study as a whole, we'll present our findings to health professionals and policy makers to guide them in shaping and improving abortion services in the future.

Who is carrying out this study?

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), a University of London medical school (see www.lshtm.ac.uk) is leading a team from a range of universities and

health services. The study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (see www.nihr.gov.uk). LSHTM is the sponsor for the study and they have full responsibility for the study including the collection, storage and analysis of your data, and will act as the Data Controller for the study. This means that LSHTM is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. This study was approved by the London – Camden and Kings Cross Research Ethics Committee, by the BPAS Research Ethics Committee and by the LSHTM Research Ethics Committee.

Why have I been asked?

Because you'll have had an abortion in the weeks before the study, your experience of it, how you feel about the process, how you were treated, and what more might be done, will be fresh in your mind. So, it will be extremely valuable for us to hear your views and to pass on the findings to those who plan and provide abortion care.

What does taking part involve?

If you agree to take part, we'll ask you to take part in a one-to-one interview with one of the study team 3 to 6 weeks after your abortion procedure. This would be at a time and place that suits you and would last between an hour and an hour and a half. This might take place in a private space in the health service where you had your abortion, in another private location or by phone or videocall. The interview will focus on your personal experience of abortion from start to finish; whether it met your needs, what an ideal abortion experience would look like to you, and what you think of some of the new directions abortion care is taking.

Do I have to take part?

No. Your contribution is valuable but it's up to you whether you take part. If you do, you don't have to answer all the questions and you can end the interview at any time. If you decide you'd like to take part you can sign the consent form and we will arrange a time that is convenient for you to take part in your interview.

How will you use information about me?

The study team and the study sponsor (LSHTM) will need to use some information from you. This information will include your

- Name
- Contact details
- Answers you provide during the interview

People will use this information to do the research or to check your records to make sure that it is being done properly. People who do not need to know who you are will not be able to see your name or contact details. Your data will have a code number instead. The study team will keep all information about you safe and secure. Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part.

What will happen to the information I give?

Everything you tell us will be strictly confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us about ongoing abuse or neglect involving a child, or about having ongoing thoughts of harming yourself. If this happens, the interviewer will notify your provider at the clinic where you received your treatment so that they can offer support.

Your name and contact information will be kept separate from the answers you provide during your interview, and information that could identify you will not be linked with the answers you provide during your interview. With your permission, we will audio-record the interview using a digital recorder to allow us to capture accurately the information you give us. After the interview, the recording will be transcribed and both the recording and transcript will be saved in a secure, password-protected location. The recording will be deleted from the digital recorder within one week, after being transferred to this secure location. This can only be accessed by the researchers and by LSHTM, which may access it as the study sponsor for auditing purposes. Recordings and other data and results from the study will be stored safely in line with the policies of LSHTM for ten years, after which time they will be destroyed.

When research findings are presented at meetings, and published in reports and scholarly papers, we won't include any information that could lead to anyone identifying you, and any quotes from the interviews will be anonymised. Results from the study will be made available on the study's website: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/sacha>

What are my choices about how my information is used?

- You can stop taking part in the research at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have.
- We need to manage your records in specific ways for the research to be reliable. This means that we won't be able to let you see or change the data we hold about you.

Where can I find out more about how my information is used?

You can find out more about how we use your information

- At <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/files/research-participant-privacy-notice.pdf>
- by asking one of the research study team
- by sending an email to DPO@lshtm.ac.uk
- at <https://www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients/>

Will there be benefits for me of taking part?

We've found that people often enjoy being interviewed. It's a chance to talk about your views and experiences to an attentive listener. At the same time you will be contributing to a study that will benefit many other people. As a thank you for your time, we will give you a £20 high street shopping voucher, and we'll pay back any travel expenses you incur. If the interview brings up anything difficult or upsetting for you, you'll be offered the chance to talk to someone afterwards free of charge. This Information Sheet also provides details of organisations offering advice and support on anything you've raised.

If you have any questions or would like to know more, please contact Maria Lewandowska or Kaye Wellings:

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Further information and support

Below is information about organisations that may be able to help with abortion-related or any other issues that you or someone you know might be going through:

Abortion

Abortion – NHS: Provide written advice and information for how you feel and what to do after an abortion. Call 03457 304030 or visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/abortion>

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS): Provide advice and information on caring for yourself, and contraceptive services, after an abortion at a BPAS clinic. Call 03457 304030 or visit: <https://www.bpas.org/abortion-care>

Domestic abuse

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: National service available 24 hours a day for women experiencing domestic violence, and for their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf. Call 0808 2000 247.

Mental health

Mind (England and Wales): Offering advice and support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Call 0300 123 3393 or visit: www.mind.org.uk

Inspire (Northern Ireland): Promotes wellbeing through mental health, intellectual/learning disability and professional wellbeing services. Visit www.inspirewellbeing.org

Scottish Association for Mental Health (Scotland): Providing information and support on mental health. Call 0344 800 0550 or visit: www.samh.org.uk

The Samaritans: Someone to talk to, available 24 hours a day for confidential, non-judgmental support. Call 116 123 or visit: www.samaritans.org

Sexual assault

Rape Crisis (England and Wales): Provides information on nearest services for people who have experienced sexual violence. Call 0808 802 9999 or visit www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Rape Crisis Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland): Support service for anyone aged 18 and over who has experienced sexual assault. Call 0800 0246 991 or visit www.rapecrisisni.org.uk

Rape Crisis Scotland (Scotland): Free and confidential support and information for people who have experienced sexual violence in adulthood. Call 08088 010302 or visit www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Sexual health

National Sexual Health Helpline (England): Sexual Health Advice Service provided by Public Health England. Call 0300 123 7123.

Sexual health clinics in Wales (Wales): Searches for local sexual health services by postcode/town, provided by NHS 111 Wales. Visit <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/?s=SexualHealth>

Sexual Health Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland): Offers information and advice on how to look after your sexual health and highlights other sexual health services available. Visit www.sexualhealthni.info

Sexual Health Scotland (Scotland): Over-the-phone or online help and support, and details of local sexual health services. Call 0800 22 44 88 or visit www.sexualhealthscotland.co.uk

Sexual identity

Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline: Providing information, support and referral services for lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people, and anyone considering issues around their sexuality or gender identity. Call 0300 330 0630 or visit: <http://switchboard.lgbt/help/>