

CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET
WHAT ABORTION SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE

A termination of pregnancy is free under the NHS *provided the woman is a British citizen or holds a work permit for the UK or is from a country which has reciprocal health care arrangements with the UK*. This service is confidential – no one will be contacted without your knowledge or consent.

If you are not clear as to whether the procedure would be free or you would have to pay, for information, (including prices if performed in NHS premises) contact Barbara Gibbs or her deputy, Administration, The Women's Hospital, Hull Royal Infirmary on Hull (01482) 382663 during office hours.

Referrals into the service for counselling / advice or a procedure are through your GP or any Family Planning or Sexual Health Clinic. Some GPs are not happy to deal with this particular issue, so it may be best to ring ahead and check before you make an appointment. If your GP doesn't refer, s/he will pass you on to someone who will. All Family Planning Clinics are walk-in/ no appointment needed; for times and places, contact Conifer House on Hull (01482) 336336 or ring NHS Direct on 0808 700 700.

The FP clinic will make you an appointment for an out-patient assessment. This will be at either Hull Royal Infirmary or Castle Hill Hospital Women's Hospital if you can be seen in time for a termination procedure before 14 weeks of pregnancy. Occasionally clinics are held elsewhere....if this is the case, you will

be informed. If you are further on in pregnancy, an appointment will be arranged with bpas (see below).

The place and method of termination, if offered, depends on:

- a) How far pregnant you are. If the pregnancy is beyond 14 weeks by the time a procedure can be arranged, it will not be done in Hull unless there are specific medical circumstances.
- b) Your health
- c) The hospital workload – over holidays and at the busiest times of year this service may have to alter to cope with the workload

For Hull and East Yorkshire, all terminations are performed at the Women's Hospital, Hull Royal Infirmary. Up to 9 weeks of pregnancy, terminations can be done either medically or surgically (see below). From 9-14 weeks of pregnancy terminations are performed surgically. Beyond 14 weeks of pregnancy, terminations are usually performed on behalf of NHS by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas). These terminations are performed elsewhere; Doncaster, Birmingham, Liverpool or London (see below).

In the Out-Patient Assessment Clinic, you usually have a scan, see a nurse then a doctor for a health check, have a discussion about what your options are and what you choose to do, be given information on the method of termination if that is the outcome and a date will be arranged for the procedure (see The

Pregnancy Advisory Service, Hull Royal Infirmary). The issues of sexual health and future contraception will be raised as a routine.

A surgical termination is performed under General (“asleep”) or Local anaesthesia. The operation only takes a few minutes if it is straight forward. Usually this means you only have to spend one day in hospital, although you will only be allowed home if you are well and if you have a responsible adult to take you home and look after you overnight. You should have a follow up appointment to check all is well. You will be provided with a help-line number and can book yourself directly into follow-up clinics if you have any questions or worries.

A medical termination does not need an anaesthetic because it mimics a natural miscarriage. The hospital will arrange a scan to check the stage of the pregnancy and nursing staff will explain what happens during the procedure. At your next visit you will be given “the abortion pill”. The following visit is two days later when you need to stay for the day. The nursing staff administer vaginal tablets which should cause the womb to contract and expel the pregnancy. The amount of pain is the same as that in having a miscarriage – it depends on how far pregnant you are, whether you have had a baby before and whether you normally suffer period pains. The provision of pain killers is part of the treatment. You should have a check up two to four weeks later – this will be arranged before leaving the ward.

Whatever the method of termination, your contraceptive needs will be addressed. All methods of contraception are available, including the highly effective “fit and forget” long acting reversible methods: the implant, the IUD/IUS’s ‘coils’ and the injection.

This is a brief description of the termination service available locally. Once you have been seen in the gynaecology clinic the doctor or nurse there will explain the procedure you choose in much greater detail and will be able to answer any questions you may have.

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas)

bpas usually perform assessments in Doncaster and do termination procedures in Doncaster up to 15/20 weeks surgically and up to 20 weeks medically. (Occasionally clients are referred to other centres in England, commonly Birmingham, Liverpool and London). From 20 to 24 weeks, the procedures are done else where in England.

If you are referred to bpas they will explain what happens in detail (telephone information line number, 08457 30 40 30).

Beyond 24 weeks of pregnancy terminations can only be performed for very limited reasons. Your GP or family Planning Clinic can advise on this.