

TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY



For some people, finding out that they are pregnant might be very positive news, for others though, a pregnancy may not be wanted, or may not feel a positive choice at that time for a range of different reasons.

If someone decides that they do not want to continue with a pregnancy and chooses to have a termination (sometimes known as an abortion), they and their decision should be treated with respect, and without judgement, of any kind.

IS IT LEGAL?

Terminations of pregnancies are legal and safe, and the earlier it is performed, the safer it will be. What stages of a pregnancy it can be carried out vary across the UK.



ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

Legal up to **24 weeks** of pregnancy if two doctors agree.

JERSEY

Legal up to **12 weeks** of pregnancy if two doctors agree

NORTHERN IRELAND

Became legal in 2019 and is available up to **12 weeks** of pregnancy

In Sheffield, terminations can be carried out up to **18 weeks** of pregnancy. If a pregnancy is at a later stage, a person would be supported to access services out of the city.

IS IT CONFIDENTIAL?



Termination services are confidential and a young person can have one without telling their parents or carers, even if they are under 16. They will be encouraged to tell them or someone they trust, but it will be their choice. Some services may also ask that a person brings a responsible adult with them to their appointment so that they have support getting home afterwards. **Everyone has the right to confidential termination advice and services, but if a health professional has concerns about anyone's safety, they may need to share information with other services - but a person would be informed of this first.**

Everyone will have a different experience of having a termination, and while many people say they feel relief afterwards, some may feel sad or upset. Support is available through Sheffield's Termination of Pregnancy Service (ToPS) on tel: 0114 226 8225

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

If you and your partner have had unprotected sex (where you didn't use any method of contraception, or if you didn't use a condom or it broke) and there is a chance of a pregnancy, here are the options available:

WITHIN 5 DAYS: EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

This is not the same as a termination but it can be used after unprotected sex to prevent a pregnancy. It must be taken within 120 hours (5 days) to work and it's best to take it as soon as possible. There are two types available:

- IUD - fitted by a doctor or nurse in clinic if it is less than 5 days since the likely day of ovulation (meaning it can sometimes be fitted longer than 5 days after unprotected sex).
- Emergency contraceptive pill (also known as the morning after pill) and is available from a range of services including some GPs, some pharmacies, and from Sexual Health Sheffield. The emergency contraceptive pill can be taken up to 3 to 5 days after sex.



REMEMBER: if you've had unprotected sex you might also need to have an STI test too.

UP TO 9 WEEKS: EARLY MEDICAL ABORTION

Two medicines will be given; the first is an oral tablet which ends the pregnancy, the second medicine is inserted into the vagina, which helps remove the pregnancy.

The first tablet will be provided, and then you will either be given medication to take at home 2 days later, or asked to return to the hospital 48 hours later for the second stage of medication.

FROM 10 - 24 WEEKS: MEDICAL ABORTION

The same medication used before 9 weeks are given, but in larger doses. The first tablet will be provided and then you will be asked to return to the hospital 48 hours later for treatment.

The length of this stay will vary from 4-10 hours depending on gestation (more than 12 weeks may need to stay overnight).

UP TO 15 WEEKS: VACCUUM OR SUCTION METHOD

You will be given either a general anaesthetic (where you are asleep) or a local one (where you are awake) before any part of the process takes place. The entrance to the womb (the cervix) is gently stretched and a thin tube passed through it. The pregnancy is then removed by suction and takes around 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

FROM 15-24 WEEKS: SURGICAL DILATION & EVACUATION

This is a minor operation which is done under general anaesthetic (where you would be asleep). The clinician will use forceps (special instruments) which are passed up in to the womb to remove the pregnancy.

The process takes between 10-20 minutes to complete. You may also be required to attend the clinic the day before for pre-operation assessment.

AFTER 24 WEEKS

Except in very rare cases, it is illegal to terminate a pregnancy after 24 weeks. At this stage you will need to continue with the pregnancy and consider your options which might include keeping the baby or consider adoption.

For information and advice on staying healthy during a pregnancy, book an appointment with your GP or contact The Jessop Wing through the main switchboard number: 0114 271 1900 or visit <https://jessopwingmaternity.sth.nhs.uk> for further details.

For further information on pregnancy choices and support services in Sheffield visit:

<https://www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk/services/pregnancy-choices/>