

Support with making a decision about a pregnancy

 Information for patients



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Introduction

Everyone has a different reaction to finding out they are pregnant, and we understand it can be difficult at first to decide what to do. This booklet has some suggestions of ways to help you decide.

It is possible when you first read this booklet you may feel upset. This is a normal reaction under the circumstances. If you feel that you are getting too upset, put the booklet down and distract yourself. You can always come back to it later.

If you would like support with deciding, you can book an appointment to see the counsellor by calling the service on **0114 226 8225 (Monday to Friday, 8am–3pm)**, or a staff member in the Early Pregnancy Unit or Termination of Pregnancy Service (ToP) can book you in.

You can see someone from the Counselling Service at any stage before your treatment starts, and appointments take place by phone or face-to-face at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital.

Your Options

Your options regarding the pregnancy are:

- Continue with the pregnancy and have the baby
- Have an abortion
- Continue with the pregnancy and have the baby adopted

The tools below are designed to help you with the process of deciding between these.

There are links to more information at the back of the leaflet.

Decision-making tools

a) Pros and cons list

Write down the pros (positives) and cons (negatives) of the options in a table like the one below. Seeing your thoughts and feelings on paper in front of you instead of inside your head can be helpful.

It isn't about **how many** items there are in each list but **what** they are that can help you decide.

Options	Pros	Cons
Continue with the pregnancy		
Abortion		
Adoption		

b) Your Future Life Imagined

For each option you are considering, think ahead 1 year from now, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years.

What do the options look like?

How do you **feel** about them?

What about the **practicalities**?

Here are some things that can be helpful to consider:

- Your financial situation. Are you able to afford having a baby and bringing it up?
- Your personal beliefs about abortion and adoption
- Your health – the effect on your physical and mental health
- Your support network – who could support you, emotionally and practically, with having a baby, having an abortion, or adoption?
- Which option do you think you would **be able to cope with** the best?

c) Notice your instinctive reaction

Sometimes coming quickly face-to-face with one of the options can reveal your feelings about it. You can try this by flipping a coin – decide what heads & tails will do, flip the coin and notice your reaction to it.

This is not about letting the coin decide, it is an experiment to see how you react when faced with one outcome.

d) Talk to other people

You might feel alone when trying to decide what to do. It can be helpful to talk about it with other people, such as a partner, friends, family, or healthcare professionals (e.g. ToP staff, your GP).

However, it is important that the decision you make is **yours**, not somebody else's.

e) Wise other

Think about the wisest person you know – someone who understands you and wants the best for you, both now and in the future. They could be someone you know, or a film/book character, or even an animal – for example a wise owl.

Choose someone or something who is wise, understanding, kind and non-judgemental.

- What would this 'wise other' say to you?
- What would they want for you?
- How does this make you think and feel about your decision?

f) Look at the Abortion Act

You might like to look at the law around abortion and think about how it applies to you. There are 5 grounds for abortion on the legal document, which is signed by two doctors.

Online: search for BPAS, then select: *our cause – briefings – Abortion Law in Great Britain*.

www.bpas.org/our-cause/campaigns/briefings/abortion-law-in-great-brain

g) A little more time

The time you have to make this decision can depend on your circumstances and the pregnancy gestation, but sometimes it can help to give yourself a couple more days to consider your options. You can use the tools suggested in this booklet during this time, but also try to carry on with day-to-day life and not concentrate solely on the pregnancy decision. Sometimes the answer can 'unfold' or become clear to you with a little more time.

The cut-off date in this service for a medical abortion is **17 weeks 6 days**. After this date you would be referred to another provider.

h) Online Resources

Sexual Health Sheffield information and leaflets:

- Search for *Sexual Health Sheffield*, then select *service – pregnancy choices*
- www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk/services/pregnancy-choices

Brook.org.uk – information on your options

- Go to Brook.org.uk, then select *help and advice – pregnancy*
- www.brook.org.uk/topics/pregnancy

Abortion law – search for *BPAS*, then select *our cause – briefings – Abortion Law in Great Britain*

<https://www.bpas.org/our-cause/campaigns/briefings/abortion-law-in-great-britain/>

Maternity Action – information and advice on rights regarding work, maternity and benefits

- maternityaction.org.uk

Government information – in **gov.uk** search for *maternity pay* and *maternity allowance* for information

- www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/pregnancy-birth

Gingerbread – information for single parents

- www.gingerbread.org.uk

Benefits calculator

- benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

Adoption

Adoption England – search for *Adoption England* then select *Birth Families* for information on the adoption process, legal information and FAQs.

- www.adoptionengland.co.uk/birth-families-support

Housing

Citizens Advice - select *Housing* for information, including homelessness

- www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing

Shelter – select *Housing Advice* or *Get Help*

- https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help
- https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice

Roundabout Sheffield - housing advice and support for those aged 16–25

- www.roundabouthomeless.org

Sheffield Council go to sheffield.gov.uk and select *services - housing*

- www.sheffield.gov.uk/housing

What next?

If you have any questions or would like to book an appointment for counselling or Termination of Pregnancy (ToP) treatment, you can ask a member of staff in the Early Pregnancy Unit or ToP Service, or call:

- **0114 226 8225 (Monday to Friday, 8am–3pm)**



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