

ACCESSING ABORTION CARE IN CAMBRIDGE

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ACCESSING SERVICES

3 Ways:

- Self-refer by contacting the abortion provider directly
- This can still be covered by the NHS (93% of abortions in the UK are funded by the NHS however it is possible to use a private clinic)
- BPAS, MSI UK or NUPAS or use the NHS website to find local services
- GP – ask for a referral to an abortion service
- Contact a sexual health clinic and ask for a referral
- Lime Tree Clinic in Cambridge – 0300 300 3030

YOUR RIGHTS / WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

- **Conscientious Objection** – Medical practitioners may refuse to provide abortion services due to ethical, moral, religious etc reasons, however they must ensure that this does not impact your ability to access abortion care.
- **Wait Times** – You should not have to wait longer than 2 weeks
- **Crisis Pregnancy Centres** – While more common in the US a BBC panorama documentary covered how they function in the UK. These are anti-abortion centres typically focused on dissuading patients from accessing abortion care.
- **Buffer Zones** – From the 31st of October it will be illegal to obstruct, attempt to influence, harass or cause distress to anyone within 150 metre buffer zone around any clinic or hospital that offers abortion services.

WHAT DOES ABORTION CARE LOOK LIKE?

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

- Up to 10 Weeks – ‘If you're less than 10 weeks pregnant you may be able to have a medical abortion at home after an initial appointment with the hospital or clinic.’
- ‘Whenever possible, you should be given a choice of how you would like the abortion to be carried out.
 - There are 2 options:
 - medical abortion ("abortion pill") – you take 2 medicines, usually 24 to 48 hours apart, to induce an abortion
 - surgical abortion – you have a procedure to remove the pregnancy and normally go home soon afterwards
- After an abortion, you'll probably need to take things easy for a few days. It's likely you'll have some discomfort and vaginal bleeding for up to 2 weeks.’
- More information here:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/abortion/what-happens/>

LEGALITY/ ILLEGALITY VS DECRIMINALISATION

Abortion Care is covered by the Abortion Act of 1967 and must meet certain criteria for it to be legal. It must be performed by a registered medical practitioner and two practitioners believe in good faith that either:

1. The pregnancy has not exceeded 24 weeks. Continuing the pregnancy would pose a greater risk to the physical and mental health of the pregnant person or any family members than termination.
2. Termination would prevent permanent injury to their physical or mental health of the pregnant person.
3. The pregnant person's life is at immediate risk
4. Risk that the child would suffer severe or fatal physical or mental abnormalities

While abortion services have been decriminalised in Northern Ireland. Abortion Care is therefore still covered by criminal law in Wales, Scotland and England and those that access abortion care outside of the above parameters can face prosecution and jail. The 1861 Offences against the Person Act states that abortion is a crime that can carry a punishment of up to 12 years in prison.

As a campaign we support decriminalisation. Safe access to abortion care is an essential form of healthcare and should be regulated as such. Those who resort to accessing abortion services outside of the law are often in difficult circumstances due to personal reasons or due to their postcode. Easy and safe access to abortion is a class issue and Prosecutions would not be in the public interest.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Accessing Care:

- Many services offer confidential helplines to support you in accessing and choosing treatment – opening hours may vary
- BPAS – 03457 30 40 30
- MSI Choices Counselling helpline – 0345 300 8090
- NUPAS – 0333 004 6666
- You can also talk through options with your GP or local Sexual Health Clinic
- Abortion Support Network can help students not covered by the NHS access abortions or students in other countries access abortions in the UK: <https://www.asn.org.uk/contact-us/>

Post-Care:

- University Counselling Service
- Helpline – Abortion Talk is a ‘UK charity committed to fighting abortion stigma ... that makes space of the conversations that make people feel heard, valued and help them find the support they want and need’

Supporting a Friend: ([MSI choices](#)):

- Create Space for open and honest conversations free from judgement
 - Help your friend feel 'informed, educated and supported on their options'
- Do not Offer unasked for advice
 - People will react differently so 'don't try to tell the person who is sharing their experience what to think, do, feel or how to act'
- Attend their Appointments
 - While your friend may choose to attend alone many clinics allow one adult to attend as well however they may need to wait in the waiting area'
- Respect their privacy and keep it confidential
 - Allow them the choice on who, how, if and when they choose to tell others
- Support them post-treatment
 - Advice for post-care <https://www.bpas.org/abortion-care/aftercare-support/>

CONTINUING WITH PREGNANCY AS A STUDENT

- University Guidance on Student Pregnancy:
 - https://www.cam.ac.uk/files/inner-images/student_pregnancy.pdf
 - <https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/information-students-who-are-pregnant-have-had-baby-or-have-decided-adopt>
- The Childcare Office can help with finding childcare and accessing a childcare grant through student finance
- Some colleges have family accommodation such as Churchill and St John's however most do not and in some colleges, this may be allocated to postgraduates only. Some colleges also have nurseries for their staff members and sometimes their students. College websites include contact details to ask any questions.
- The Cambridge SU Student Advice Service can support you if your relationship with your college breaks down and you need to transfer to another college.
- Your college tutor or even a union if you are a postgraduate may be able to support you in accessing parental leave and support.

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