

Lords consideration stage briefing on home early medical abortion provisions in the Health and Care Bill

5 April 2022

Introduction

Ahead of the Lords Consideration of Commons amendments to the Health and Care Bill on Tuesday 5 April 2022, this briefing outlines the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health's (RCPCH) position on home early medical abortion.

On 30 March 2022, MPs voted to make home early medical abortions provided via telemedicine permanent in England. This involves patients in the early stages of pregnancy, up to ten weeks' gestation, being able to take an abortion pill in their home without attending a clinic or seeing a healthcare professional face-to-face. However, the change in the legislation through the Health and Care Bill leaves a glaring gap – children and young people.

RCPCH's position

- Every child and young person has the right to the best possible health. It is the best interests of a child or young person to have equitable access to safe, effective and quality abortion services.
- Children and young people are a distinct group and telemedicine can present particular challenges for them, where it is especially important to consider their safeguarding and holistic wellbeing, as well as their physical health needs.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 and Looked after Children up to the age of 25 must be offered and actively encourage to take up a face-to-face appointment to assess gestation, support their holistic needs and assess any safeguarding issues as part of the pathway for early medical abortions.
- The **RCPCH has been calling on governments and health services providers across the UK** to consider the specific needs of this group when planning, delivering and evaluating early medical abortions.
- The Health and Care Bill is nearing its final stages. Government and parliamentarians must make sure this vulnerable group are fully taken into account.

About RCPCH

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) is the membership body for paediatricians, representing more than 20,000 child health professionals in the UK and abroad. We are responsible for the training, examinations and professional standards of paediatricians across the country, and we use our research and experience to develop recommendations to promote better child health outcomes.

For further information please contact:

Sinead Phelan, Communications Officer
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, London, WC1X 8SH
Tel: 020 7092 6068 | Email: sinead.phelan@rcpch.ac.uk.