

Adoption

Adoption is a way of providing a new family for a child when living with their own family is not possible.

If a woman decides on adoption she is able to provide information about herself, the child's birth, early life and why the child was placed for adoption, if she would like to. This information is incorporated into a "Life Story Book" and can be given to the child in an age appropriate format by the adoption agency, when they feel the time is right. It can also be requested when a young adopted person reaches adulthood.

Many women feel grief and a sense of loss when they give up their child for adoption. Some women describe adoption as a life long process, at times feeling guilty for not being able to parent their child.

What does it mean?

Adoption is when a child legally becomes a member of a new family and has one or two new parents. It is a commitment for life.

Contact with the birth family can be maintained, if it is decided that this would be appropriate.

What happens?

- The adoption agency is required to provide counselling and information to the parent about the legal procedures and implications of adoption.
- Formal consent for adoption cannot be given until the child is over six weeks old. Informal arrangements with an adoptive family can be in place until then.
- After the child has been with the adoptive parents for at least ten weeks an adoption order can be made.

Once an adoption order has been made it cannot be changed. It is important that you have both practical and emotional support when placing your baby in a new family.

Talk to someone

Talking with someone who isn't involved emotionally with your situation, in a confidential environment, can help you look at all the information and your deeper feelings and provide you with the support you need.

Further help is available for you:

- You can ring our National Helpline to speak to a fully trained Advisor **0300 4000 999**. They can also give you details of your local Centre where you can see an Advisor and receive support.
- You can scan the **QR** code with your Smartphone for further information or visit **www.careconfidential.com** and be in touch with an Advisor using the Online Advisor service.



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The evidence sources for this leaflet can be accessed by visiting:
sevidence.careconfidential.com

We are not able to refer directly for termination. We offer clients information on all the options and are well resourced to provide both immediate and long-term support as necessary, directing to other agencies as appropriate.

Pregnancy Choices



A Way Forward...

You may be confused and worried if the pregnancy was unintended. You may feel you face a situation that has no easy answers. Although you may be under pressure to make a decision quickly, it's helpful if you can give yourself time.

Making a decision

What makes being pregnant a difficult thing for you right now?

Perhaps you are worried that you will lose your job, or your partner, or your freedom. Maybe you feel too young, or will have to give up your education, or that you won't be able to cope.

Whether you feel it or not, you do have a choice about your future. Make sure that you have all the information you need. Don't rush your decision, take time to talk it all through.

Sometimes it's hard to make choices because choices always involve both gains and losses. There are gains and losses involved with each of the options open to you – continuing with your pregnancy, having an abortion or considering adoption.

What will I gain and lose if I choose?

First of all, you could think about what you would gain with each of the options and write them down. Then you could also write down what you feel you would lose with each of the options.

Your gains and losses may include practical things like money, time, freedom, job, education and the baby itself, but also other things like self-respect, feeling at peace with yourself or feeling secure.

Remember that the best choice isn't always the one with the most number of gains or the least number of losses. Take time to consider how important those gains and losses are.

Becoming a parent

Being pregnant unintentionally can be a shock. It may be hard to allow yourself to think about having a baby. The situation and feelings of responsibility may feel frightening.

Becoming a parent can be a rewarding experience bringing a lot of joy and love into your life. However choosing to become a parent can place great demands on your relationships and emotions. It can affect your personal freedom and your ability to work or study. Pregnancy can also be a difficult time and some women may feel depressed during pregnancy and after child birth.

Help is available

An Advisor from your local Centre can help you consider these things and help you to build your own support network.

In addition:

- If you have money problems, benefits may be available. See www.direct.gov.uk for information about benefits for expectant mothers and bringing up children. You can also get advice, in person, from your local citizens advice bureau.
- If you have housing problems, the Housing Department of your Local Council Office can help you.
- You must register with a local GP to receive antenatal health care from a Midwife, GP and Health Visitor.
- Baby clothes and equipment may be available from your local Centre. Ask an Advisor for information. You may also be able to claim for a maternity grant to help cover the cost of maternity and baby items.
- It is possible to have a child and return to school, college or work. You may be eligible for "Care to Learn" if you are under 20 years old and need help towards child care and travel costs while you are learning. You may also be able to claim for help to cover child care costs and/or request flexible working hours from your employer.

Abortion

Understanding what's involved in an abortion can help you to make an informed decision. Abortions are usually carried out free of charge under the NHS, either in hospital or private clinics. In most cases, abortions are carried out as a day procedure and an overnight stay is not required. There are various methods of abortion. The type recommended will depend on how many weeks pregnant you are and your medical history.

- **Early medical abortion:** Up to 9 weeks of pregnancy, you will be given a pill to take followed 8-48 hours later by a second medicine. The lining of the womb and the pregnancy is lost through bleeding within 4-6 hours.
- **Vacuum abortion:** from 7-15 weeks of pregnancy. Can be carried out using suction, under local anaesthetic (area is numbed) or under general anaesthetic (where you are asleep).
- **Medical abortion:** from 9-24 weeks of pregnancy. The same drugs will be given to you as before, but the abortion will take longer and more than one dose of the second tablets may be needed.
- **Surgical dilatation and evacuation abortion (D and E):** from 15 weeks of pregnancy, under general anaesthetic after gently stretching and dilating the cervix, forceps and suction are used to remove the pregnancy.
- **Late Abortion:** from 20-24 weeks of pregnancy. Abortion at this stage is not common. It involves either the surgical dilatation and evacuation method, or medical abortion.

There may be some risks involved at the time of the abortion:

- Bleeding
- Damage to the cervix or womb

After the abortion:

- Infection - if left untreated this could lead to pelvic inflammation.

Please be aware that **availability and methods of abortion vary across England, Scotland and Wales**. Local information can be sought from your GP or sexual health clinic.