

3 May 2022

Safeguarding in abortion care – response to April 2022 position statement from NNDHP

As the bodies responsible for professional standards, quality and provision of abortion care in the UK, we would like to reassure commissioners that the abortion-care sector takes safeguarding extremely seriously and has long-standing robust procedures in place to identify and manage those who are vulnerable, especially young people. These procedures are monitored, inspected and regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The evidence supporting telemedical early medical abortion at home is robust and demonstrates that it is an essential option in abortion care, being safe, effective and preferred by patients. Our members, who have extensive experience and expertise of safeguarding in reproductive health and abortion care, report that for the most vulnerable groups – including young people – the availability of telemedical care is essential to ensure they can access care safely. All patients, and especially young people, must also be able to access face-to-face care where this is clinically preferred or chosen by the patient. As agreed at a stakeholders' meeting in January 2022, RCOG and RCPCH will lead the development of an evidence-based best practice safeguarding framework.

We are aware that the “National Network of Designated Healthcare Professionals for Children” (NNDHP), or individuals within that group, have written a statement setting out concerns over telemedical consultations for young people presenting for abortion care. We are disappointed by their action, especially given their past undertakings that they would work collaboratively with us and not undermine the quality of care our members offer. Their statement is contrary to authoritative medical guidance and available evidence (summarised below). Our view is that if adopted, it would put young people and vulnerable adults at risk of harm. These issues were debated in Parliament recently, with both Peers and MPs rejecting this group's arguments. To challenge this is to undermine the democratic process – the right to telemedical abortion care is now enacted in the Health and Care Act 2022. We would recommend that before considering any outputs from the NNDHP, that commissioners gain assurance that the network is able to demonstrate adequate governance processes, have suitable terms of reference and a robust representative structure that takes account of the diversity of its members views.



Edward Morris

President

Royal College of Obstetrics
and Gynaecology (RCOG)



Asha Kasliwal

President

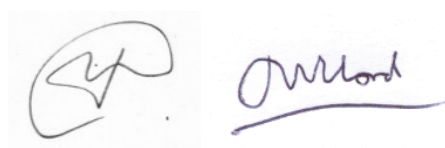
Faculty of Sexual and
Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH)



Gill Walton

Chief Executive

Royal College of Midwives (RCM)



Tracey Masters & Jonathan Lord

Co-chairs

British Society of Abortion Care
Providers (BSACP)

Summary of Authoritative Support for Telemedical Care in Abortion



[Health and Care Act 2022](#)
Amendment 92A

NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

[NICE Guideline NG204 - Babies, children and young people's experience of healthcare](#)
Recommendation 1.10.10

NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

[NICE Guideline NG140 - Abortion care](#)
Recommendation 1.1.9



[Telemedicine and early termination of pregnancy - Academy Council statement](#)
Statement – 30 March 2022



[World Health Organization – Abortion care guideline](#)
Recommendation 48

NSPCC

[Working virtually to support children and families](#)
Report – 16 March 2022



[Telemedicine abortion care and safeguarding young people](#)
25 June 2021

THE LANCET

[Safeguarding and teleconsultation for abortion](#)
7 August 2021

BJOG An International Journal of
Obstetrics and Gynaecology

[Effectiveness, safety and acceptability of no-test medical abortion \(termination of pregnancy\) provided via telemedicine: a national cohort study](#)
18 February 2021