



December 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about abortions carried out at home, in particular during the Coronavirus pandemic.

I completely understand what an incredibly emotive issue this is, and I appreciate the strength of feelings around this matter. It is for this reason that, as with other matters of conscience, the Government adopts a neutral stance on abortion, allowing Conservative MPs to vote freely according to their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs. This is a convention which I support wholeheartedly.

Guidelines have been issued which enable women to take both Mifepristone and Misoprostol at home for the duration of the outbreak, so that they do not have to visit a medical practice and risk exposure to the virus, and to enable doctors to prescribe medicines from home via telephone or video consultations without consulting a second practitioner, so that abortion care can be provided even in the case of staff shortages.

The medicines must still be instigated prior to nine weeks and six days into the pregnancy. I am aware of data that indicates an increase in the number of abortions carried out in 2020. The pandemic has had an impact on many aspects of daily life, the full picture of which may not be clear for some time to come. I will, of course, continue to monitor this sensitive issue.

A consultation has recently been held on the home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation. The Government is currently reviewing the evidence received and will publish a response in due course.

You can find more information on that here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/home-use-of-both-pills-for-early-medical-abortion>

I have been distressed to read news reports of cases where abortions had been sought and enacted after the ten week legal limit for taking the medicines at home, and have caused further illness and even death. I understand that these instances are being investigated to ensure that women are accessing safe care, and that clinicians are properly supported through the consultation process. I will continue to support all efforts to ensure safety is a paramount consideration for any amendments to regulations, however temporary. I will continue to monitor this issue closely.

A decision regarding abortion care can be an extremely difficult time, and I believe that we must do all we can to support women to make an informed decision.

As my colleague Maggie Throup MP (Minister for Public Health) recently said in response to a parliamentary question, "It is important that women receive accurate and evidence-based



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information on abortion. The Department's Required Standard Operating Procedures set out that women must be given impartial, accurate and evidence-based information both verbal and written, delivered neutrally by all abortion providers."

I will continue to do all I can to ensure plenty of information is available to women making enquiries relating to abortion care, including all options available to them.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris".

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY