

Care for Women

Care for Women
23 New Broadway
Tarring Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 4HP

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid, MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

29 June 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Health over the weekend. Please be assured of our support and very best wishes in this important role in government.

We are writing to you to bring to your attention an important campaign that we launched earlier this year.

Care for Women is a campaign seeking to publicise the true impact of DIY home abortion measures introduced over a year ago.

We are calling policy makers to:

1. End “pills by post” abortion measures immediately
2. Ensure meticulous and impartial data collection to ascertain the full impact of these measures
3. Ensure women in a crisis pregnancy are properly supported and counselled by truly independent organisations.

As you will be aware, in March last year your predecessor, Matt Hancock said in Parliament: “We have no proposals to change any abortion rules as part of the Covid-19 response.”¹ Just six days later the government implemented the most radical change to abortion law since the 1967 Abortion Act, allowing women to take abortion pills at home with no clinical assessment. These changes were introduced as part of temporary emergency measures, but already there has been a consultation on making DIY at home abortions permanent.

¹ Hansard, House of Commons, 24th March 2020 - Matt Hancock

A mystery client investigation has found that women are able to obtain abortion pills using false names, false dates of birth, false medical histories, false gestational ages, and providing GP surgeries at which they are not registered.² This clearly makes the provision of abortion pills wide open to abuse. The government admitted last week that it has no idea how many women have chosen to take the pills posted to them or whether they were then disposed of or not.³

Freedom of Information requests have found that **every month some 495 women attend hospital with complications arising from abortion pills.**⁴ 250 of these women require hospital treatment to surgically remove the products of conception. There have been dozens of serious incidents and some cases where the pills were taken beyond the legal limit of 9-weeks-6-days, including four cases where the gestational age was over 24 weeks.

A Savanta ComRes poll in March found that **86% of GPs are concerned** about the risk of women being coerced into having an abortion without an in-person consultation.⁵ A further 74% of GPs were also concerned about women finding it distressing to potentially have to dispose of the terminated pregnancy themselves.

A separate Savanta ComRes poll carried out in December found that **84% of adults in England say they are concerned** about women being at risk of being coerced into an abortion without an in-person consultation.⁶ 82% were concerned about the possibility of abortion pills being falsely obtained for another person with a telemedicine appointment.

We attach our previous correspondence with your predecessor which highlights more statistics as well as several personal stories of just how harmful the DIY abortion policy is. We also attach witness statements from two women who benefitted from taking medication to reverse the effects of the abortion pills and are now the mothers of two healthy babies.

With the coming end of coronavirus emergency measures and regulations associated with the Coronavirus Act 2020, the rationale for allowing DIY at home abortion as a temporary measure will no longer be valid. At the very least Parliament, must surely have an opportunity to carefully review data and evidence before the regulations are allowed to continue without appropriate scrutiny and oversight, as they are discrete from the ongoing women's health review.

We therefore urge you, for the sake of improving safety for women, to **end the policy of DIY abortion on 19 July** alongside the ending of other emergency measures brought in last year.

² Abortion at Home: A Mystery Client Investigation. <https://christianconcern.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CC-Resource-Abortion-At-Home-A-Mystery-Client-Investigation-201210.pdf>

³ <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-06-14.15421.h&s=abortion+section%3Awrans+section%3Awms>

⁴ <https://christianconcern.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CC-Resource-Briefings-Report-Hospital-Treatments-Complications-DIY-Abortion-210215.pdf>

⁵ <https://christianconcern.com/news/86-gps-concerned-about-illegal-diy-abortions/>

⁶ <https://www.spuc.org.uk/News/ID/384767/Majority-of-public-have-concerns-over-pills-in-the-post-policy-new-poll-discovers>

We are sure that you will agree with us that there is no reason to continue this policy once emergency measures come to an end.

Yours sincerely,

Care for Women

www.careforwomen.co.uk

