

**Termination of Pregnancy Services**  
**Report for the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, July 2006**

**Introduction**

Bolton PCT offers a comprehensive contraceptive service and seeks to ensure that everyone has access to appropriate advice and information on sexual health. Terminations must be understood as an integral part of such a service because unplanned pregnancies are inevitable given that any contraceptive method can fail. This paper is concerned with termination of pregnancy and a later paper will discuss the wider remit of sexual health services.

**Background**

A woman seeking a termination of pregnancy in Bolton will be referred to the PCT Referral and Booking Management System (RBMS). This service has a dedicated phone line and the advisors will allocate appointments to patients based on availability and gestation. The PCT provides terminations of pregnancy at a number of different providers and these include the Royal Bolton Hospital, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, Marie Stopes International and the South Manchester Private Clinic. The Choice Pregnancy Advisory Service refers women requiring treatment to other providers, principally the South Manchester Private Clinic.

These providers offer a range of procedures that may be used to terminate a pregnancy depending on the duration of gestation and the circumstances of the individual woman. These procedures include:

- Early medical abortion (up to 9 weeks of pregnancy)
- Vacuum aspiration or suction termination (usually from 7-15 weeks of pregnancy)
- Surgical dilation and evacuation (from about 15 weeks)
- Abortion after 20 weeks involves either surgical dilation and evacuation or medical induction. Such terminations are carried out at specialised national centres.

Women who require a termination of pregnancy must be offered a timely referral for a procedure as evidence shows that the risk of complications increases the later the gestation. In England and Wales in 2005 67% of abortions took place at under 10 weeks, 23% at 10-12 weeks and 11% at 13 weeks or more.

**Epidemiology**

Around one in three women will have an abortion at some point in their lives. In 2005 in Bolton 960 women had a termination of pregnancy. This absolute figure can only be interpreted in relation to other factors such as size of population. Therefore in considering the Abortion Statistics for England and Wales, 2005 in relation to Bolton we must look at the abortion rates per 1,000 women.

The rate of abortions per 1,000 women, resident in Bolton, aged 15-44 was 19 per 1,000 as compared with 21 in Central Manchester, 28 in North Manchester and 17 for Greater Manchester. In relation to Greater Manchester as a whole the Bolton rate is slightly higher but it is not a significant outlier. The rate of terminations per 1,000 women, aged 15-44, for England and Wales was 17.8 and 18.1 for England alone.

In England and Wales the abortion rate in 2005 was highest, at 32 per 1000 residents, for women in the age group 20-24. In Greater Manchester the rate for this age group was 32 per 1,000 and in Bolton it was 34 per 1,000.

The three-year rate for abortions for individuals aged 13-15 was 4.3 per 1,000 women in Bolton, as compared with 6.2 per 1,000 in Central Manchester and 5.2 per 1,000 in Ashton, Wigan and Leigh. Bolton's three-year rate for individuals aged 13-15 is the fourth lowest in Greater Manchester. The overall rate for Greater Manchester was 4.5 per 1,000 compared to a national rate of 3.8 per 1,000. These rates show that Bolton is not out of line with the overall rate for Greater Manchester, but has a slightly higher rate than England and Wales as a whole.

Bolton is particularly strong in the provision of sexual health services for young people. The Parallel, a centrally located drop-in health centre for young people, has been recognised as an example of national best practice. The Regional Coordinator for Teenage Pregnancy in the North West has praised the strength of the partnership working around the delivery of sexual health services to young people in Bolton.

Bolton PCT will continue to further develop its contraceptive services with the aim of ensuring that it offers a non-stigmatising, patient centred service that responds to the diverse needs of all Bolton residents.

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