

Ref no: 300180121
From: Research
Date: 18/01/21
Subject: ERPC and abortion care 2019 & 2020

REQUEST

Please can you tell us the following information:

1. The number of Evacuation of retained products of Conception or ERPC's your hospital (or all hospitals within of your trust) conducted on women between April 1st and December 1st of a) 2020 and b) 2019 (or nearest similar timeframe).
2. Please can you also include (if noted) what number of these were due to Termination of Pregnancy (TOP) 'complications' or 'side effects' and which were due to miscarriage.

Premempting barriers to receiving this data

When similar questions have been asked of various hospitals in the past there have been three common barriers or defeaters to receiving data. I will deal with each now.

1. COVID-19

Quite understandably a number of hospitals have requested we postpone our request to a moment when hospital admissions due to COVID-19 have subsided. While we wish to be as flexible and sympathetic as we can to such requests (and have simplified our question in order to facilitate this) we also need to make you aware of two pressing concerns that we feel justify the request *and* a reply within the 20-23 day time frame. Firstly other FOI requests of this nature suggest that hundreds of women are having to attend trust hospitals during lockdown due to the taking of abortifacient medication at home. **By providing an accurate answer to our question you will enable us to both evidence the extent of this, and more importantly ensure NHS hospitals are not being put under unnecessary strain at these testing times.** The other pressing concern, and linked to this, is a Government consultation into these measures due to close on Feb 26th of this year, of which up to date data is vital.

2. "Personal Information"

One defater we have received in the past is that to specify the number of complications within of a trust would breach "personal information" under Section 38(1)(b), especially if that number is one or two. Please note: **This project has no interest in gathering personal information**, it simply wants to ascertain what is

already being recorded in DHSC statistics, but appears to be missing from the 2020 stats.

It is worth noting that other hospitals responding to more detailed requests like [Birmingham](#) and [Lewisham hospitals](#) were able to divulge information without contravening Section 38 (1). Others, due to low numbers, rather than refusing the request, simply responded '>5 women'. We are happy for you to do this if you feel it appropriate.

Finally the matter is brought into even sharper focus due to a [Government consultation into EMA](#) abortion at home, due to close on 26th February 2021. As hinted above, we are concerned there may be a data blind spot between DHSC statistics as recorded on HSA4 abortion notifications forms, and the real life impact of these measures detailed in the previous FOI requests. The need for grass roots information has never been greater. In view of this, and in order to gain a better understanding of what is actually going on we hope your hospital would be willing to fully comply with our request.

3. *'Data not held centrally'*

Another common objection that has been cited in the past is that data is not held centrally and therefore to retrieve it would exceed the 18 hour cap of 'free' FOI requests. Due to the significant [public interest of this project](#) we do not accept this as an objection as your Obs and Gynae department should collect data on ERPC's and Retained Products of Conception RPOC along with how they treat this: i.e Blood transfusions, antibiotics, "conservative treatment" ect. These should be easily searchable on your hospital system, and should fall well within the 18 hour window.

RESPONSE

1. The total number of evacuation of retained products of conception or ERPCs for 01/04/2019 to 31/11/2019 is **117**

The total number of Evacuation of retained products of Conception or ERPCs for 01/04/2020 to 31/11/2020 is **102**

2. We don't hold this information.