



# Introduction to completing abortion forms for abortions performed in England and Wales

**This guidance is intended to help doctors and clinic staff completing notifications (HSA4) for abortions performed in England and Wales.**

## Introduction

Under The Abortion Regulations 1991, as amended, if a registered medical practitioner is of the opinion, formed in good faith, that a woman has grounds for an abortion, they are required to complete a certificate of their opinion on form HSA1 or HSA2. Guidance on completion of these forms, HSA1 and HSA2 can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#).

In addition, registered Medical Practitioners are legally required, under the Abortion Act 1967, as amended, to notify the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of every abortion performed in England and Wales whether carried out in the NHS or an approved independent sector place and whether or not the woman is a UK resident. The Department of Health provides form HSA4 for this purpose. Guidance on completion of form HSA4 can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#)

## Contact Details

If you require further information on completing HSA4 forms please phone 020 7972 5537 or email [abortion.statistics@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:abortion.statistics@dh.gsi.gov.uk).

## Processing of forms at Department of Health

The Department of Health use a thorough process for inspecting and recording the information received on Abortion Notification form HSA4 in order to monitor compliance with the Abortion Act. Selected forms are scrutinized by a medical practitioner who may request further detail from the patient's medical record via the terminating doctor. The methods used ensure good quality, accurate data that comply with the National Statistics' code of practice. More information on data quality and scrutiny of the forms can be found via the 'Statistics' link on the

[DH abortion webpage](#).

## Confidentiality

Keeping the information received confidential for both the woman having an abortion and the doctor terminating the abortion, is a top priority and strict guidance on handling the forms and related data is followed. More information on confidentiality can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#).

## Completing HSA1 form and HSA2 form

HSA1 and HSA2 are paper forms, completed by both practitioners certifying their opinion on the grounds for carrying out an abortion under the 1967 Act and the forms should be kept locally. They should not be forwarded to the Chief Medical Officer.

Sample forms and guidance for completion can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#)

## Completing HSA4 form

HSA4s can be completed online or on paper. All HSA4 forms must be completed and sent to the Chief Medical Officer within 14 days of the date of termination. For HSA4 Web forms this means that the terminating doctor must log into his or her account at each clinic and electronically sign any waiting forms.

## HSA4 Webform

There is a secure HSA4 Web form version available which enables practitioners to complete and send HSA4 forms to the Chief Medical Officer online in accordance with the Abortion Act 1967. Information submitted this way is validated when the data is entered and therefore reduces the number of forms with errors that are returned. If you wish to submit HSA4 forms online, please email [HSA4@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HSA4@dh.gsi.gov.uk) or telephone 020 7972 5541.

Many doctors and clinic staff, including those at NHS hospitals, find this an efficient method of submitting HSA4 forms.

## Paper HSA4

For England, please send completed paper forms to The Chief Medical Officer, 110 Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS.

For Wales, completed paper forms should be sent to The Chief Medical Officer, National Assembly for Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

A sample HSA4 form and further guidance on completing this form, can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#)

Currently, around 10% of paper HSA4 forms received are returned to practitioners because of missing, incomplete or invalid data. The main errors that occur are missing doctors' names on page one, missing gestation and ground information on page four. Please note that incomplete forms will be returned to either the practitioner terminating the pregnancy or to the place of termination. If the revised forms are not returned within 6 weeks, reminders will be sent regularly until the information is received.

Incomplete forms generate additional work for those completing the forms and for those who process them on behalf of the CMO, therefore please ensure all information is entered accurately. More information about completion of HSA4 forms can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#)

### Ordering forms and guidance notes

Supplies of forms HSA1, HSA2, HSA4 (product code 27259) are available free of charge by phoning: 0300 123 1002

In addition, forms HSA1 and HSA2 can be downloaded via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#)

A sample paper HSA4 form and ordering information can be found via the link on the [DH abortion webpage](#). Paper HSA4 forms must be ordered and not printed or photo copied because forms are filed using the unique barcode at the bottom of each page.

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