Summary guidance note for completing the abortion notification form HSA4 for abortions performed in England and Wales: electronic form

This document contains information for doctors and clinic staff completing HSA4 forms online.

Introduction

The abortion notification electronic system enables practitioners to complete and send HSA4 forms to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) on-line in accordance with the Abortion Act 1967.

Contact Details

If you require further information on completing HSA4 forms please phone 020 7972 5537 or email abortion.statistics@dh.gsi.gov.uk. This is a summary document and a document giving detailed notes for electronic completion of the HSA4 form is available on the GOV.UK website.

General notes

The system can be accessed at https://form4.doh.gov.uk using passwords obtained from the Department of Health – see contact details below.

It is essential that the practitioner’s log in password remains confidential. The log in password together with the doctor’s GMC number, would allow an intruder to gain access to highly confidential personal information.

The final password is the equivalent of the terminating practitioner’s signature. Therefore it is essential that the practitioner’s username and passwords remain confidential. Doctors are responsible for any information submitted under their log in.

We are aware that hospital/clinic staff assist the practitioners with the completion of the HSA4 form so the system has been designed to allow administrators and practitioners to enter information. Hospital/clinic staff have administrative login and access rights, however,
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only the practitioner who terminated the pregnancy is able to authorise the form (which is the equivalent of a signature and then enables the information to be released to the CMO). The form can also only be authorised once the practitioner is content that the information provided is correct and complete.

Please be aware that, for security reasons, there is an automated "timeout" after a period of 10 minutes inactivity. If "Timeout" occurs, the data up to the last fully completed section will be saved.

In addition to this guidance note, online help is available throughout. To access this, click on the help button ? on the part of the form you are working on.

Completing an online HSA4 form

Login page

Please enter the username (GMC Code) and password provided by the Department of Health and click on "Login". If this is the first time you are using the system you will be prompted to change your password immediately.

Please enter the hospital/clinic code provided by the Department of Health and click on “Login”

The username and password is unique to the practitioner but for practitioners working at more than one hospital/clinic, the hospital/clinic code will be different for each site.

Practitioners here will be able to edit and authorise forms, but only for their own patients at this particular clinic. To view and authorise forms at more than one clinic, each clinic must be logged into separately.

In order to comply with the legal requirement that practitioners must submit abortion notifications to the CMO, practitioners’ unique username and password must be kept confidential. There is a risk to patient confidentiality if passwords are not kept secure.

Editing a webform
To add or amend details on an existing form, click on "Edit" for that form and amend the relevant sections required.

Summary
By clicking on "Summary", you will be able to view the sections of the form that are currently missing or not completed correctly.

Authorise
The “Authorise” button can only be accessed by practitioners and will only appear once the form has been completed correctly.

Log Out
To log out of the system click on "Log Out" at the bottom of the page.
Authorising the form
The form can only be submitted once all the relevant sections of the form have been completed.

Only a **practitioner** can authorise the form and submit it to the CMO.

To authorise a form, the practitioner should select a form from the add/edit page and click on “Authorise.” All the submitted termination details will appear and must be checked. If any details need changing, please click on "Close Form" and then "Edit". Once the practitioner is content with the information given, the practitioner should enter the second password provided by the Department of Health and click on "Authorise Form". This information will then be submitted to the CMO and will no longer be accessible.

Any subsequent amendments will need to be put in writing to the CMO.

**This final password is the equivalent of the terminating practitioner’s signature. Therefore it is essential that the practitioner’s username and passwords remain confidential.**

Additional information

For medical abortions, where more than one doctor may be involved in the termination, the terminating practitioner is the doctor taking responsibility for the abortion, usually this will be the practitioner prescribing the mifeprisone.

All forms should be electronically signed within 14 days of the termination. Doctors should therefore log into their accounts at each clinic to check and send their electronic forms to the Chief Medical Officer. A reminder will be sent to doctors who have forms awaiting their signature for more than two weeks. If forms are not electronically signed within 6 weeks of the date of termination they will be removed from the doctor’s account and sent back on paper to be checked and for a written signature that the information provided is correct.

Dealing with unsigned electronic forms generates additional work for clinic staff and staff who process forms on behalf of the CMO, therefore please ensure forms are signed off promptly. Also, statistics for both abortions and conceptions are published quarterly and missing information affects the quality of these data outputs.

This collection has been approved as a statutory collection by the Review of Central Returns Steering Committee (ROCR) (reference number ROCR/OR/2095/FT6/001STAT). The current licence runs until July 2013. The ROCR team are keen to receive feedback on central data collections from those who complete/submit returns – in particular, around the length of time data collections take to complete and any issues, suggested improvements or duplication of data collections. Feedback can be submitted to ROCR using an online form

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