



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

Freedom of Information Team  
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Christian Hacking

By email to: [request-824011-c6d8f15b@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-824011-c6d8f15b@whatdotheyknow.com)

2 February 2022

Dear Christian,

**Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1385699**

Thank you for your request dated 19 January 2022, in which you asked the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

*“According to FOI-1250064 (2020 Covid Supplementary Analysis Data) the DHSC recorded 52 illegal medical abortions beyond the 10 week threshold between Jan and June 2020.*

*Please can you let me know how many additional pills by post abortions were recorded to have taken place beyond the 10 week threshold by the DHSC between:*

*A) July 2020 -December 2020*

*B) Jan 2021 -December 2021.*

*Please can the answer be formatted in the same way as FOI-1250064 (referenced above)”*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

***Please can you let me know how many additional pills by post abortions were recorded to have taken place beyond the 10 week threshold by the DHSC between:***

***A) July 2020 -December 2020***

DHSC holds information relevant to your request.

According to our 2020 abortion statistics publication for England and Wales, which was published on 10 June 2021, for residents of England and Wales, from July to December 2020, there were four abortions that took place at 10 weeks gestation and above where both medications were taken at home (out of a total number of 48,868 abortions) and at time of publication none of these cases were confirmed. Five abortions took place at 10 weeks gestation and above where only one medication was taken at home (out of a total number of 14,530 abortions) and at time of publication two of these cases were confirmed.

Please note that FOI-1250644 was based on provisional data using the best available information at the time and has since been revised. For additional information, according to our [2020 abortion statistics publication for England and Wales](#) (published 10 June 2021), there were a total of eight medical abortions at 10 weeks gestation and above

where both medications were taken at home in 2020 and, at time of publication, two of these cases were confirmed (out of a total number of 72,079 where both medications were taken at home). There were 19 medical abortions at 10 weeks gestation and above where only one medication was taken at home in 2020 and at time of publication 12 of these cases were confirmed (out of a total number of 45,459 abortions where only one medication was taken at home).

***Please can you let me know how many additional pills by post abortions were recorded to have taken place beyond the 10 week threshold by the DHSC between:***

***B) Jan 2021 -December 2021.***

DHSC holds information in relation to this question. However, it is being withheld under Section 22, which states that public bodies are not obliged to disclose information that is intended for future publication.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption, and we are required to assess as objectively as possible whether the balance of public interest favours disclosing or withholding the information.

We recognise that there is strong public interest in information being made as freely available as possible, and that disclosure leads to greater transparency in government. However, there is also very strong public interest in ensuring that information is made available to everyone at the same time, thereby ensuring equity of access. Releasing this information now may also interfere with our established process for publishing information to ensure that only accurate and validated data is released.

We cannot provide the number of abortions where one or both medications were taken at home that took place at 10 weeks gestation and above between January and December 2021; data for 2021 will not be available until the release of our [annual publication in June 2022](#).

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be sent to [freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk) or to the address at the top of this letter and be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communication.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow SK9 5AF

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/concerns>

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team  
[freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk)