

Statistical Bulletin

Summary Abortion Statistics, England and Wales: 2003

This bulletin summarises information from the abortion notification forms returned to the Chief Medical Officers of England and Wales in respect of abortions carried out in England and Wales in 2003

The format of the tables presented in this bulletin has been changed to reflect concerns over issues of privacy and confidentiality. Publication of more detailed tables will be reviewed when these issues have been further considered

KEY FACTS

In 2003, for women resident in England and Wales:

- the total number of abortions was 181,600, compared with 175,900 in 2002, a rise of 3.2%
- the age-standardised abortion rate was 17.5 per 1,000 resident women aged 15-44 (17.0 in 2002)*
- the abortion rate was highest, at 31.4 per 1000, for women in the 20-24 age group*
- the under-16 abortion rate was 3.9 compared with 3.7 in 2002*
- 80% of abortions were funded by the NHS; of these, just under half took place in the independent sector under NHS contract
- 87% of abortions were carried out at under 13 weeks gestation; 58% were at under 10 weeks
- medical abortions accounted for 17% of the total, compared with 14% in 2002
- 1,950 abortions (1%) were under ground E, risk that the child would be born handicapped

Non-residents

- in 2003 there were 9,100 abortions for non-residents carried out in hospitals and clinics in England and Wales (9,450 in 2002)

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* Rates are based on projected mid-2003 populations and will be revised when final mid-2003 estimates are available. See 2.3

1. Introduction

1.1 This is the second Statistical Bulletin presenting statistics of legally induced abortions in England and Wales and covers those that took place in 2003. Key facts for 2003 were first published in July 2004. **The format of the tables presented in this bulletin has been changed to reflect concerns over issues of privacy and confidentiality.** Publication of more detailed tables will be reviewed when these issues have been further considered. This bulletin is initially being produced in an Internet-only version.

1.2 The first bulletin, published in October 2003, covered abortions in 2002 and was revised to incorporate the final 2002 figures in July 2004, in an Internet-only publication. Statistics for earlier years were published by the Office for National Statistics – *Abortion Statistics*, Series AB nos. 1 to 28.

1.3 The information collected on the abortion notification form (HSA4) was amended during 2002. Details of the changes are in appendix A.

2. Data quality

2.1 Incomplete and incorrectly completed forms are returned to practitioners for completion. In a very small number of cases (about one-quarter of one percent), the information remains unavailable at the time of publication. Gestation was missing from 276 records in 2003, postcodes from 146, grounds from 96 and age from 77.

2.2 Missing gestations were imputed as 7, 8, 9 or 10 weeks in equal distribution. Missing postcodes were imputed with a random postcode from within the main PCTs of other residents attending the same hospital or clinic. Missing grounds were imputed as ground C (see 4.2.1). Missing ages have not been imputed.

2.3 Rates for 2003 are calculated using 2002-based projected mid-2003 population estimates for England and Wales and will be revised when final 2003 population statistics are available.

Figure 1 Age-standardised abortion rate per 1000 population aged 15-44, England and Wales, 1969 to 2003

Rate

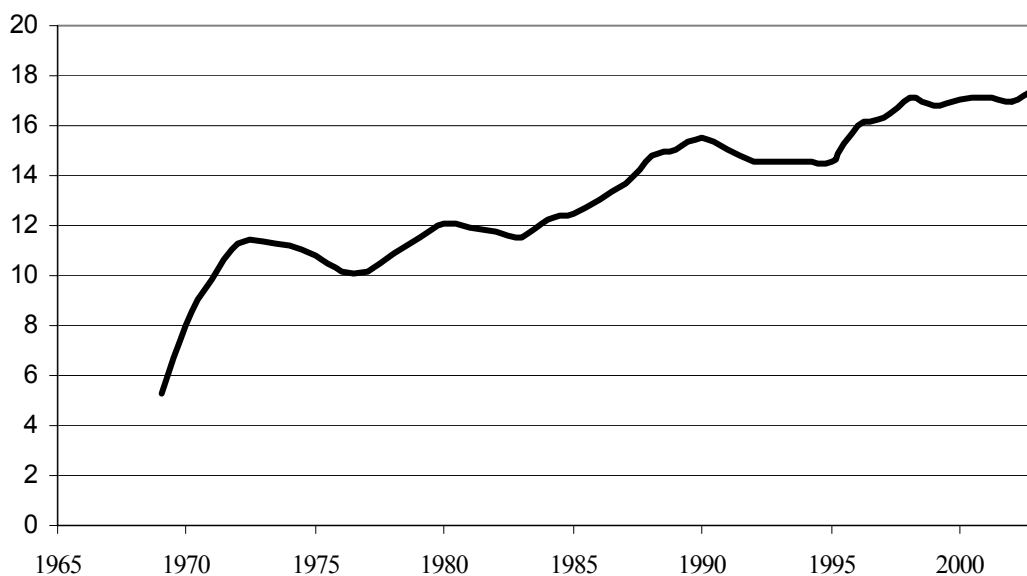
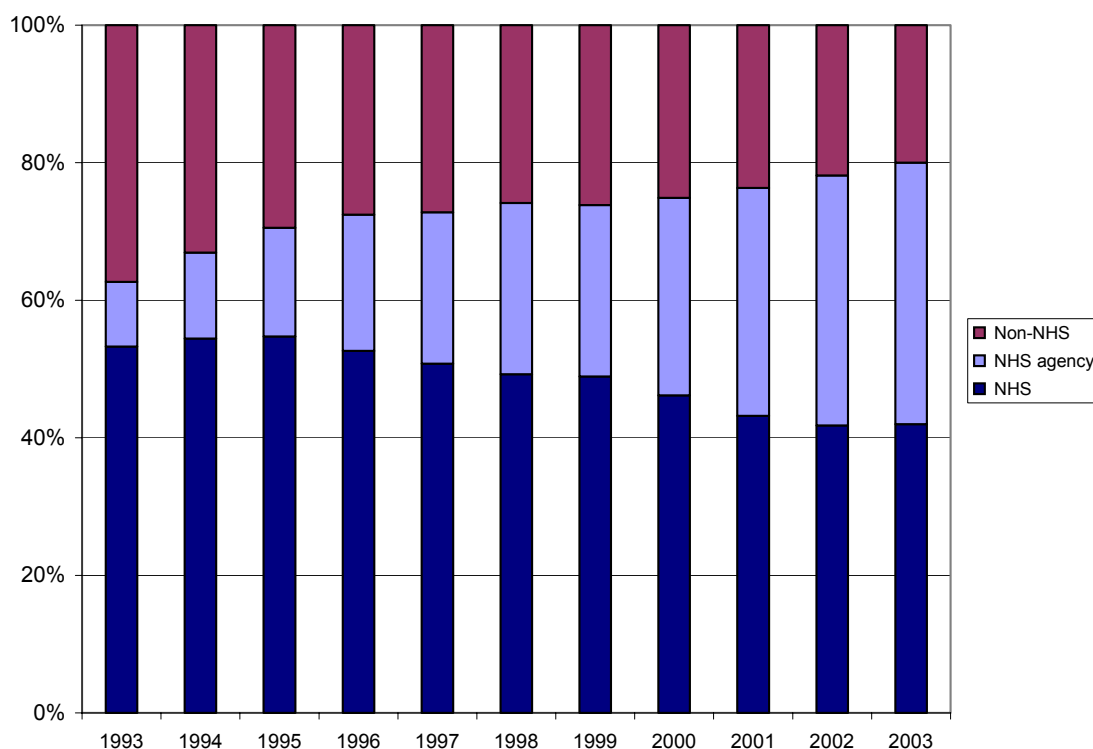


Figure 2 Abortions by purchaser, England and Wales, 1993 to 2003



3. Overview

3.1 In total there were 190,660 abortions notified as taking place in England and Wales in 2003.

3.2 There were 181,600 abortions to residents of England and Wales in 2003. This represents a rate 17.5 per 1000 resident women aged 15-44 (age-standardised rate, see *Abortion Statistics*, Series AB no. 27 page vi). The age-standardised abortion rate peaked at 15.5 in 1990 but remained at just below 15 until 1995; the rate then rose to 17.2 by 1998 and has since remained at about that level. The rate for 2003 is the highest ever recorded (figure 1).

3.3 In 2003 there were also 9,100 abortions to residents of other countries, principally Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. This is about 400 fewer than in 2002. The number of abortions to non-residents has remained between 9,000 and 10,000 in each year

since 1995, but the 2003 total is the lowest in any year since 1969.

4. Analysis and Commentary (England and Wales residents only)

4.1 Location and funding of abortions

4.1.1 Except in an emergency, any treatment for the termination of pregnancy can be carried out only in an NHS hospital or in a place approved for the purpose by the Secretary of State. Through contractual arrangements with Primary Care Organisations (PCOs), some approved independent sector places perform NHS-funded abortions.

4.1.2 In 2003, 42% of abortions were performed in NHS hospitals and 38% in approved independent sector places under NHS contract, making a total of 80% of abortions funded by the NHS. The remaining 20% were privately funded. The proportion performed under NHS contract has been rising steadily since

1992 while the proportions of NHS hospital and private abortions has been falling. Although the form now asks explicitly for funding arrangements to be reported, it is not thought that the change from the earlier wording has affected the funding categorisation of abortions (figure 2).

4.2 Statutory grounds for abortion

4.2.1 A legally induced abortion must be certified by two registered medical practitioners as justified under one or more of the following grounds:

- A the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated (Abortion Act, 1967 as amended, section 1(1)(c))
- B the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman (section 1(1)(b))
- C the pregnancy has not exceeded its twenty-fourth week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman (section 1(1)(a))
- D the pregnancy has not exceeded its twenty-fourth week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of any existing children of the family of the pregnant woman (section 1(1)(a))
- E there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped (section 1(1)(d))

or in an emergency, certified by the operating practitioner as immediately necessary:

- F to save the life of the pregnant woman (section 1(4))
- G to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman (section 1(4))

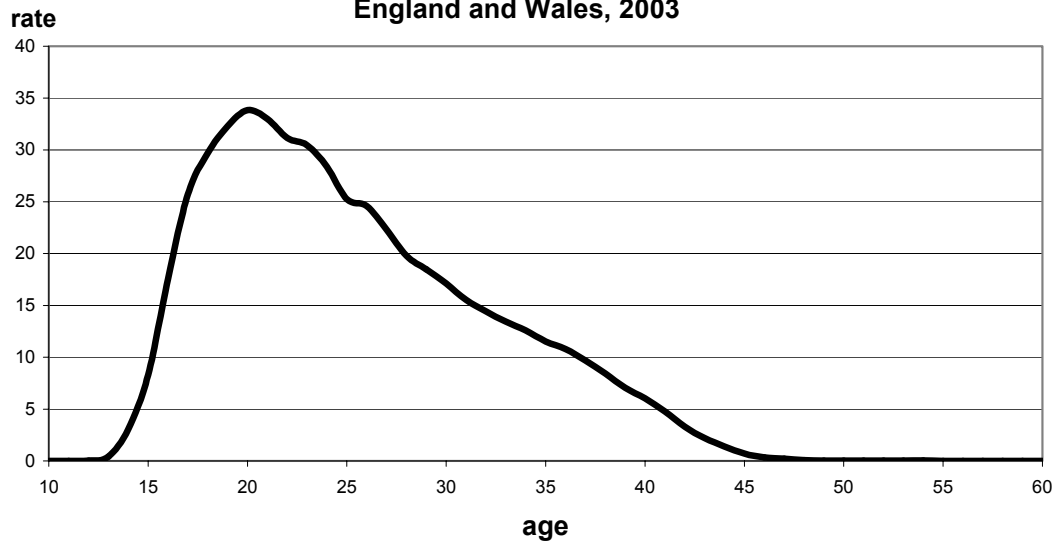
4.2.2 In 2003, the vast majority (94%) of abortions were undertaken under ground C and a further 3% under ground D. Grounds A and B together accounted for just over 1% of abortions, and a similar proportion were under ground E. The proportion of ground C abortions has risen steadily since 1992, with a corresponding reduction in grounds B and D cases. Abortions are rarely performed under grounds F or G: in 2003 there were no cases reported.

4.2.3 Chromosomal abnormalities were reported for about a third of cases under ground E, other congenital malformations in about a half. The most commonly reported anomalies were of the nervous system (25% of all ground E cases).

4.3 Gestation period

4.3.1 Most abortions are performed at under 13 weeks gestation. In 2003, about 58% were at under 10 weeks and a further 29% at 10-12 weeks. The proportion at 13 weeks or more was 13% in 2003, as in 2002, having risen slowly from about 11% in 1992.

Figure 3 Abortion rate per 1000 population by single year of age, England and Wales, 2003



4.4 Age

4.4.1 The abortion rate in 2003 was highest, at about 31 per 1,000 residents, for women aged 18-19 and 20-24. The rate for women aged 25-29 was about 22 per 1,000 residents. There were just under 1,200 abortions in 2003 to women aged under 15 and 500 to women aged 45 or over (figure 3).

4.4.2 Abortion rates in 2003 for all age groups are higher than corresponding rates for 2002; the highest rate increase being in the 20-24 age group. These rates are based on projected populations as noted in 2.3 above.

4.5 Marital Status

4.5.1 Three quarters of abortions in 2003 were carried out for single women, a proportion that has risen slowly from about two thirds since 1992.

4.6 Ethnicity

4.6.1 The new forms allow for the recording of ethnicity, as self-reported by the women involved; this information was not previously recorded. Ethnicity was recorded on 81% of the new forms received for 2003. Of women whose ethnicity was recorded, 75% were reported as white, 12% as black or black british and 7% as asian or asian british.

4.7 Previous obstetric history

4.7.1 In 2003, about 47% of women undergoing abortions had one or more previous pregnancies that resulted in a live or stillbirth, a proportion virtually unchanged since 1997. About 13% of women had a previous pregnancy resulting in a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy.

4.8 Previous abortions

4.8.1 As in 2002, about 30% of women undergoing abortions in 2003 had one or more previous abortions. The proportion has risen from about 25% since 1992.

4.9 Method of Termination

4.9.1 Different methods may be used to terminate a pregnancy, depending on the duration of gestation and other circumstances relating to the individual woman. There is one principal medical method, involving the use of the abortifacient drug mifegyne (mifepristone, also known as RU486). The main surgical methods are vacuum aspiration, recommended at up to 15 weeks gestation, and dilatation and evacuation (D&E) recommended where gestation is greater than 15 weeks. For abortions at 22 weeks or beyond, feticide is recommended prior to the evacuation of the uterus.

4.9.2 Medical abortions accounted for about 17% of the total in 2003, double the proportion in 1997 and a rise of three percentage points since 2002. There has been a continuing upward trend in medical abortion since 1991 when mifegyne was licensed for use in the UK.

4.9.3 Vacuum aspiration was used in for 80% of abortions in 2003 and D&E in about 3% .

4.9.4 About 1% of abortions in 2003 were reported as involving feticide. Feticides are shown in the tables as either medical or surgical depending on the method of extraction of the fetus. The apparent increase in 2003 compared with 2002 in the number of feticides is accounted for by improved ascertainment.

4.10 Complications

4.10.1 Complications were reported in about 500 cases in 2003, a rate of about 3 in every thousand abortions as was the case in 2002. Most reported complications were haemorrhage.

4.11 Chlamydia Screening

4.11.1 The new form allows for the recording of whether chlamydia screening was offered. Screening for chlamydia is a key component of the Department of Health's Sexual Health Strategy. Analysis of returned new forms for 2003 shows that 64% of women undergoing abortions were offered chlamydia screening, slightly fewer than the 67% reported in 2002.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Percentages are subject to rounding and totals may not agree with the sum of the component figures shown.

The following symbols are used in the tables:

.. = not available

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Table 1 Legal abortions: resident status and purchaser, 1968 to 2003

England and Wales, residents and non-residents

| Year | Total | Residents | | | | Rate per 1000 women residents aged 15-44 | | Non-residents Total |
|-------------------|---------|-----------|--------|------------|---------|--|-------|------------------------|
| | | Total | NHS | NHS agency | Non-NHS | ASR** | Crude | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 1968 ¹ | 23,641 | 22,332 | 14,492 | .. | 7,840 | .. | .. | 1,309 |
| 1969 | 54,819 | 49,829 | 33,562 | .. | 16,267 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 4,990 |
| 1970 | 86,565 | 75,962 | 47,370 | .. | 28,592 | 8.0 | 8.1 | 10,603 |
| 1971 | 126,777 | 94,570 | 53,455 | .. | 41,115 | 9.9 | 10.1 | 32,207 |
| 1972 | 159,884 | 108,565 | 56,861 | .. | 51,704 | 11.3 | 11.5 | 51,319 |
| 1973 | 167,149 | 110,568 | 55,456 | .. | 55,112 | 11.4 | 11.7 | 56,581 |
| 1974 | 162,940 | 109,445 | 56,076 | .. | 53,369 | 11.2 | 11.5 | 53,495 |
| 1975 | 139,702 | 106,224 | 50,941 | .. | 55,283 | 10.8 | 11.1 | 33,478 |
| 1976 | 129,673 | 101,912 | 50,569 | .. | 51,343 | 10.2 | 10.5 | 27,761 |
| 1977 | 133,004 | 102,677 | 52,530 | .. | 50,147 | 10.1 | 10.5 | 30,327 |
| 1978 | 141,558 | 111,851 | 55,040 | .. | 56,811 | 10.9 | 11.3 | 29,707 |
| 1979 | 149,746 | 120,611 | 55,558 | .. | 65,053 | 11.5 | 12.0 | 29,135 |
| 1980 | 160,903 | 128,927 | 60,594 | .. | 68,333 | 12.1 | 12.6 | 31,976 |
| 1981 | 162,480 | 128,581 | 61,103 | 2,343 | 65,135 | 11.9 | 12.4 | 33,899 |
| 1982 | 163,045 | 128,553 | 62,409 | 4,425 | 61,719 | 11.8 | 12.3 | 34,492 |
| 1983 | 162,161 | 127,375 | 62,609 | 4,614 | 60,152 | 11.5 | 12.1 | 34,786 |
| 1984 | 169,993 | 136,388 | 64,823 | 4,912 | 66,653 | 12.2 | 12.8 | 33,605 |
| 1985 | 171,873 | 141,101 | 65,176 | 5,929 | 69,996 | 12.5 | 13.1 | 30,772 |
| 1986 | 172,286 | 147,619 | 67,451 | 6,819 | 73,349 | 13.0 | 13.5 | 24,667 |
| 1987 | 174,276 | 156,191 | 69,442 | 8,041 | 78,708 | 13.7 | 14.2 | 18,085 |
| 1988 | 183,798 | 168,298 | 69,103 | 9,357 | 89,838 | 14.8 | 15.3 | 15,500 |
| 1989 | 183,974 | 170,463 | 70,722 | 9,200 | 90,541 | 15.1 | 15.5 | 13,511 |
| 1990 | 186,912 | 173,900 | 73,517 | 9,582 | 90,801 | 15.5 | 15.8 | 13,012 |
| 1991 | 179,522 | 167,376 | 75,172 | 9,197 | 83,007 | 15.0 | 15.2 | 12,146 |
| 1992 | 172,069 | 160,501 | 79,543 | 11,982 | 68,976 | 14.6 | 14.8 | 11,568 |
| 1993 | 168,714 | 157,846 | 84,071 | 14,835 | 58,940 | 14.5 | 14.7 | 10,868 |
| 1994 | 166,876 | 156,539 | 85,243 | 19,551 | 51,745 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 10,337 |
| 1995 | 163,638 | 154,315 | 84,478 | 24,363 | 45,474 | 14.5 | 14.4 | 9,323 |
| 1996 | 177,495 | 167,916 | 88,410 | 33,255 | 46,251 | 16.0 | 15.7 | 9,579 |
| 1997 | 179,746 | 170,145 | 86,414 | 37,472 | 46,259 | 16.3 | 15.9 | 9,601 |
| 1998 | 187,402 | 177,871 | 87,568 | 44,332 | 45,971 | 17.2 | 16.6 | 9,531 |
| 1999 | 183,250 | 173,701 | 84,992 | 43,266 | 45,443 | 16.8 | 16.2 | 9,549 |
| 2000 | 185,375 | 175,542 | 81,074 | 50,400 | 44,068 | 17.0 | 16.3 | 9,833 |
| 2001 | 186,274 | 176,364 | 76,166 | 58,445 | 41,753 | 17.1 | 16.3 | 9,910 |
| 2002 | 185,385 | 175,932 | 73,544 | 63,938 | 38,450 | 17.0 | 16.2 | 9,453 |
| 2003 | 190,660 | 181,582 | 75,791 | 69,133 | 36,658 | 17.5 | 16.6 | 9,078 |

¹ 1968 figures contain only 8 months data as the legislation came into effect on 27 April 1968.

.. Not applicable.

** Rates for all women residents age-standardised to the European population for ages 15-44; 2003 rate based on projected 2003 populations

Table 2 Legal abortions: age by (i) purchaser, (ii) statutory grounds, (iii) gestation weeks, (iv) procedure, (v) marital status, (vi) ethnicity, (vii) parity, (viii) previous miscarriages, (ix) previous abortions, (x) chlamydia screening, 2003

England and Wales, residents

| | All ages (1) | Under 20 | 20-34 | 35 and over |
|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| All legal abortions | 181,582 | 38,214 | 115,891 | 27,400 |
| (i) Purchaser | | | | |
| NHS | 75,791 | 18,457 | 47,021 | 10,269 |
| NHS agency | 69,133 | 16,569 | 43,553 | 8,994 |
| Non-NHS | 36,658 | 3,188 | 25,317 | 8,137 |
| (ii) Statutory grounds | | | | |
| A (alone or with B, C or D) | 137 | * | * | * |
| B (alone or with C or D) | 2,218 | * | * | * |
| C (alone) | 171,039 | * | * | * |
| D (alone, or with C) | 6,247 | * | * | * |
| E (alone or with A, B, C, or D) | 1,941 | * | * | * |
| F or G | 0 | * | * | * |
| (iii) Gestation weeks | | | | |
| 4-9 | 105,072 | 19,069 | 68,467 | 17,494 |
| 10 - 12 | 53,377 | 12,774 | 33,499 | 7,079 |
| 13 -19 | 20,206 | 5,531 | 12,169 | 2,499 |
| 20 and over | 2,927 | 840 | 1,756 | 328 |
| (iv) Procedure | | | | |
| Surgical | 149,532 | 30,714 | 95,740 | 23,019 |
| Medical | 30,007 | 6,897 | 18,948 | 4,147 |
| Feticide | 2,043 | 603 | 1,203 | 234 |
| (v) Marital Status | | | | |
| single no partner | 51,944 | 15,747 | 32,414 | 3,765 |
| single with partner | 42,647 | 9,871 | 28,412 | 4,350 |
| single not stated | 16,180 | 4,114 | 10,688 | 1,375 |
| married | 28,492 | 887 | 17,722 | 9,877 |
| separated/widowed/divorced | 6,776 | 213 | 3,889 | 2,674 |
| not known & not stated | 35,543 | 7,382 | 22,766 | 5,359 |
| (vi) Ethnicity (2) | | | | |
| Asian or Asian British | 10,302 | 1,234 | 7,471 | 1,594 |
| Black or Black British | 17,981 | 3,060 | 12,455 | 2,464 |
| White | 109,465 | 25,497 | 67,478 | 16,454 |
| Chinese or other ethnic group | 4,164 | 531 | 3,144 | 489 |
| Mixed | 3,965 | 923 | 2,617 | 423 |
| Not stated | 33,897 | 6,540 | 21,596 | 5,728 |
| (vii) Parity (number of previous pregnancies resulting in live or still birth) | | | | |
| 0 | 96,067 | 33,821 | 57,745 | 4,459 |
| 1+ | 85,515 | 4,393 | 58,146 | 22,941 |
| (viii) Number of previous pregnancies resulting in spontaneous miscarriage and ectopic pregnancies | | | | |
| 0 | 157,357 | 36,742 | 100,107 | 20,444 |
| 1+ | 24,225 | 1,472 | 15,784 | 6,956 |
| (ix) Number of previous pregnancies resulting in abortion under the Act | | | | |
| 0 | 124,341 | 33,292 | 74,481 | 16,510 |
| 1+ | 57,241 | 4,922 | 41,410 | 10,890 |
| (x) Chlamydia screening (2) | | | | |
| offered | 115,515 | 24,111 | 74,122 | 17,244 |
| not offered | 64,259 | 13,674 | 40,639 | 9,908 |

(1) all ages totals include 77 cases with age not stated

(2) based on new reporting forms

* see commentary para 1.1

Table 3 Legal abortions: by (i) purchaser, (ii) statutory grounds, (iii) gestation weeks, (iv) procedure, (v) marital status, (vi) ethnicity, (vii) parity, (viii) previous miscarriages, (ix) previous abortions, 1993 to 2003

| England and Wales, residents | | | | | | | | | | | percentages | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|--|
| | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | |
| All legal abortions (=100%) | 157,846 | 156,539 | 154,315 | 167,916 | 170,145 | 177,871 | 173,701 | 175,542 | 176,364 | 175,932 | 181,582 | |
| (i) Purchaser | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NHS | 53 | 54 | 55 | 53 | 51 | 49 | 49 | 46 | 43 | 42 | 42 | |
| NHS agency | 9 | 12 | 16 | 20 | 22 | 25 | 25 | 29 | 33 | 36 | 38 | |
| Non-NHS | 37 | 33 | 29 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 22 | 20 | |
| (ii) Statutory grounds | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A (alone or with B, C or D) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| B (alone or with C or D) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| C (alone) | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 91 | 92 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 94 | |
| D (alone, or with C) | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | |
| E (alone, or with any other) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| F or G | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| (iii) Gestation weeks | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4-9 | 53 | 54 | 56 | 54 | 56 | 56 | 58 | 58 | 58 | 57 | 58 | |
| 10-12 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 35 | 33 | 33 | 31 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 29 | |
| 13-19 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 11 | |
| 20 and over | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| (iv) Procedure | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vacuum Aspiration | 85 | 84 | 84 | 84 | 84 | 82 | 82 | 81 | 81 | 81 | 80 | |
| Dilatation and Evacuation | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 | |
| Other surgical | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Antiprogestosterone with or without prostaglandin | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| Other medical | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Feticide surgical | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 1 | |
| Feticide medical | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | |
| Feticide | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | |
| (v) Marital Status | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| single no partner | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 25 | 36 | |
| single with partner | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17 | 29 | |
| single not stated | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 32 | 11 | |
| single (total) | 67 | 68 | 69 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 75 | 76 | |
| married | 23 | 23 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | |
| separated | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | |
| widowed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| divorced | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| (vi) Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Asian or Asian British | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7 | 7 | |
| Black or Black British | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12 | 12 | |
| White | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 75 | 75 | |
| Chinese or other ethnic group | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 | 3 | |
| Mixed | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 | 3 | |
| (vii) Parity (number of previous pregnancies resulting in live or still birth) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | 53 | 53 | 53 | 54 | 54 | 53 | 53 | 53 | 53 | 53 | 53 | |
| 1+ | 47 | 47 | 47 | 46 | 46 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | |
| (viii) Number of previous pregnancies resulting in spontaneous miscarriage and ectopic pregnancies | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 87 | 87 | |
| 1+ | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13 | 13 | |
| (ix) Number of previous pregnancies resulting in abortion under the Act | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 72 | 71 | 71 | 70 | 70 | 69 | 69 | 68 | |
| 1+ | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | |

Note: percentages are rounded and may not necessarily add to 100

Table 4 Legal abortions: by age, 2003

England and Wales, residents

numbers

| Age | Total | Age | Total |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| All ages | 181,582 | 30-34 | 28,749 |
| Under 15 | 1,171 | 30 | 6,333 |
| | | 31 | 6,085 |
| 15-19 | 37,043 | 32 | 5,818 |
| | | 33 | 5,355 |
| 15 | 2,796 | 34 | 5,158 |
| 16 | 5,768 | | |
| 17 | 8,387 | 35-39 | 19,868 |
| 18 | 9,765 | | |
| 19 | 10,327 | 35 | 4,756 |
| | | 36 | 4,529 |
| 20-24 | 51,124 | 37 | 4,074 |
| | | 38 | 3,558 |
| 20 | 10,726 | 39 | 2,951 |
| 21 | 10,496 | | |
| 22 | 10,362 | 40-44 | 7,032 |
| 23 | 10,246 | | |
| 24 | 9,294 | 40 | 2,481 |
| | | 41 | 1,921 |
| 25-29 | 36,018 | 42 | 1,290 |
| | | 43 | 825 |
| 25 | 7,971 | 44 | 515 |
| 26 | 7,735 | | |
| 27 | 7,199 | 45 and over | 500 |
| 28 | 6,655 | | |
| 29 | 6,458 | Age not stated | 77 |

Table 5 Legal abortions: by gestation weeks, 2003

England and Wales, residents

| Gestation weeks | Total abortions |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total | 181,582 |
| 4-5 | 3,101 |
| 6-7 | 41,437 |
| 8-9 | 60,534 |
| 10-12 | 53,377 |
| 13-14 | 9,592 |
| 15-16 | 5,765 |
| 17-19 | 4,849 |
| 20-21 | 1,562 |
| 22 and over | 1,365 |

Table 6 Legal abortions: duration of stay (nights) by purchaser and gestation weeks, England and Wales, residents

| Purchaser | Percentage of abortions (1) where the duration of stay was 1 or more nights (%) |
|----------------------|--|
| Gestation weeks | |
| Total all purchasers | |
| Total all gestations | 2 |
| 4-9 | 0 |
| 10-12 | 0 |
| 13-19 | 2 |
| 20 and over | 70 |
| NHS | |
| Total all gestations | 1 |
| 4-9 | 1 |
| 10-12 | 1 |
| 13-19 | 3 |
| 20 and over | 7 |
| NHS agency | |
| Total all gestations | 3 |
| 4-9 | 0 |
| 10-12 | 0 |
| 13-19 | 1 |
| 20 and over | 82 |
| Non-NHS | |
| Total all gestations | 1 |
| 4-9 | 0 |
| 10-12 | 0 |
| 13-19 | 1 |
| 20 and over | 87 |

(1) excluding abortions by antiprogesterone, for which duration of stay is not applicab

Table 7 Legal abortions: gestation weeks by age and purchaser, 2003

England and Wales, residents

percentages

| Purchaser | Gestation weeks | All ages (1) | Under 20 | 20-34 | 35 and over |
|------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Total | Total number (=100%) | 181,582 | 38,214 | 115,891 | 27,400 |
| | 4-9 | 58 | 50 | 59 | 64 |
| | 10-12 | 29 | 33 | 29 | 26 |
| | 13-19 | 11 | 14 | 11 | 9 |
| | 20 and over | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| NHS | Total number (=100%) | 75,791 | 18,457 | 47,021 | 10,269 |
| | 4-9 | 52 | 51 | 52 | 51 |
| | 10-12 | 39 | 40 | 39 | 38 |
| | 13-19 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 |
| | 20 and over | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| NHS agency | Total number (=100%) | 69,133 | 16,569 | 43,553 | 8,994 |
| | 4-9 | 53 | 45 | 54 | 60 |
| | 10-12 | 27 | 29 | 27 | 25 |
| | 13-19 | 17 | 22 | 16 | 13 |
| | 20 and over | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Non-NHS | Total number (=100%) | 36,658 | 3,188 | 25,317 | 8,137 |
| | 4-9 | 80 | 69 | 81 | 84 |
| | 10-12 | 13 | 17 | 12 | 11 |
| | 13-19 | 6 | 13 | 6 | 5 |
| | 20 and over | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

(1) all ages totals include 77 cases with age not stated

Table 8 Legal abortions: procedure by gestation weeks, 2003

England and Wales, residents

percentages

| Procedure | Gestation weeks | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | 4 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13 - 14 | 15 - 19 | 20 & over |
| Total abortions (=100%) | 181,582 | 105,072 | 53,377 | 9,592 | 10,614 | 2,927 |
| Surgical | 82 | 79 | 94 | 82 | 77 | 16 |
| Vacuum Aspiration | 80 | 78 | 94 | 76 | 49 | 2 |
| Dilatation and Evacuation | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 28 | 14 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Medical | 17 | 21 | 6 | 18 | 21 | 20 |
| Antiprogestosterone with or without prostaglandin | 16 | 21 | 6 | 17 | 20 | 15 |
| Other agent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Feticide | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 64 |

Table 9 Legal abortions: complication rates by procedure and gestation weeks, 2003

England and Wales, residents

complication rates per 1000 abortions

| Gestation weeks | Total all procedures | Procedure | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| | | Surgical | Medical |
| Total all gestations | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 4 - 9 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 10 - 12 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 -19 | 5 | 4 | 13 |
| 20 & over | 10 | * | * |

* rates not calculated where the denominator is less than 1,000 abortions

Table 10 Legal abortions: principal medical condition for abortions performed under ground E, 2003

England and Wales, residents numbers

| ICD-10 code | Condition | Total |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Total grounds E (1) | | 1941 |
| Q00-Q89 | Congenital malformations total | 917 |
| Q00-Q07 | The nervous system | 486 |
| Q10-Q89 | Other congenital malformations | 431 |
| Q90-Q99 | Chromosomal abnormalities total | 709 |
| | Other conditions total | 300 |

(1) includes 15 cases where insufficient detail was available to allocate an ICD10 code.

Table 11 Legal abortions: by strategic health authority and age, 2003

| Residents | | numbers | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Region and Strategic Health Authority | | Age | | | | | | |
| | | All ages (1) | Under 18 | 18 - 19 | 20 - 24 | 25 - 29 | 30 - 34 | 35 + |
| ENGLAND & WALES | numbers | 181,582 | 18,122 | 20,092 | 51,124 | 36,018 | 28,749 | 27,400 |
| | Rates per 1000 population (2) | 16.6 | 18.3 | 31.0 | 31.4 | 22.0 | 14.6 | 6.8 |
| ENGLAND | | 173,967 | 17,164 | 19,140 | 48,856 | 34,631 | 27,677 | 26,426 |
| NORTH EAST | | 6,918 | 1,023 | 911 | 2,094 | 1,182 | 914 | 794 |
| | County Durham & Tees Valley | 3,030 | 460 | 391 | 892 | 523 | 412 | 352 |
| | Northumberland, Tyne & Wear | 3,888 | 563 | 520 | 1,202 | 659 | 502 | 442 |
| NORTH WEST | | 19,856 | 2,410 | 2,534 | 5,828 | 3,488 | 2,853 | 2,733 |
| | Cheshire & Merseyside | 6,381 | 776 | 833 | 1,874 | 1,116 | 868 | 911 |
| | Cumbria & Lancashire | 4,826 | 630 | 642 | 1,380 | 798 | 690 | 686 |
| | Greater Manchester | 8,649 | 1,004 | 1,059 | 2,574 | 1,574 | 1,295 | 1,136 |
| YORKSHIRE & HUMBER | | 14,114 | 1,702 | 1,833 | 4,053 | 2,510 | 2,055 | 1,936 |
| | North & East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | 3,935 | 524 | 569 | 1,062 | 667 | 574 | 537 |
| | South Yorkshire | 3,980 | 503 | 498 | 1,151 | 707 | 563 | 553 |
| | West Yorkshire | 6,199 | 675 | 766 | 1,840 | 1,136 | 918 | 846 |
| EAST MIDLANDS | | 11,232 | 1,269 | 1,373 | 3,172 | 2,133 | 1,651 | 1,630 |
| | Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland | 4,641 | 476 | 530 | 1,346 | 885 | 704 | 700 |
| | Trent | 6,591 | 793 | 843 | 1,826 | 1,248 | 947 | 930 |
| WEST MIDLANDS | | 17,784 | 1,999 | 2,149 | 5,157 | 3,297 | 2,762 | 2,420 |
| | Birmingham & the Black Country | 9,331 | 987 | 1,101 | 2,786 | 1,798 | 1,458 | 1,201 |
| | Coventry, Warwickshire, Hereford & Worcestershire | 4,693 | 533 | 587 | 1,322 | 859 | 725 | 667 |
| | Shropshire & Staffordshire | 3,760 | 479 | 461 | 1,049 | 640 | 579 | 552 |
| EAST OF ENGLAND | | 15,479 | 1,516 | 1,742 | 4,167 | 2,852 | 2,484 | 2,707 |
| | Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire | 5,466 | 457 | 573 | 1,559 | 1,006 | 903 | 966 |
| | Essex | 4,772 | 464 | 563 | 1,199 | 889 | 762 | 887 |
| | Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire | 5,241 | 595 | 606 | 1,409 | 957 | 819 | 854 |
| LONDON | | 51,853 | 3,587 | 4,445 | 14,483 | 12,323 | 9,178 | 7,828 |
| | North Central London | 8,866 | 572 | 728 | 2,533 | 2,108 | 1,523 | 1,400 |
| | North East London | 11,635 | 804 | 1,071 | 3,419 | 2,766 | 1,986 | 1,586 |
| | North West London | 12,305 | 735 | 972 | 3,443 | 3,000 | 2,286 | 1,867 |
| | South East London | 12,183 | 989 | 1,104 | 3,370 | 2,808 | 2,129 | 1,781 |
| | South West London | 6,864 | 487 | 570 | 1,718 | 1,641 | 1,254 | 1,194 |
| SOUTH EAST | | 24,493 | 2,269 | 2,659 | 6,632 | 4,625 | 3,914 | 4,384 |
| | Hampshire & Isle of Wight | 4,898 | 504 | 620 | 1,397 | 855 | 727 | 791 |
| | Kent & Medway | 4,988 | 472 | 564 | 1,344 | 871 | 820 | 916 |
| | Surrey & Sussex | 7,479 | 708 | 749 | 1,930 | 1,461 | 1,199 | 1,430 |
| | Thames Valley | 7,128 | 585 | 726 | 1,961 | 1,438 | 1,168 | 1,247 |
| SOUTH WEST | | 12,238 | 1,389 | 1,494 | 3,270 | 2,221 | 1,866 | 1,994 |
| | Avon, Gloucestershire & Wiltshire | 5,882 | 638 | 674 | 1,561 | 1,117 | 944 | 945 |
| | Dorset & Somerset | 2,764 | 292 | 365 | 763 | 473 | 386 | 484 |
| | South West Peninsula | 3,592 | 459 | 455 | 946 | 631 | 536 | 565 |
| WALES | | 7,615 | 958 | 952 | 2,268 | 1,387 | 1,072 | 974 |

(1) all ages totals include 77 cases with age not stated

(2) rates for all ages, under 18 and 35 and over are based on populations aged 15-44, 15-17 and 35-44 respectively (see also commentary para 2.3)

Table 12 Legal abortions: purchaser and gestation by strategic health authority, 2003

| Strategic Health Authority | Residents | | | | | | | | | | percentages | |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------|--|
| | Total number of abortions | Purchaser (%) | | | Gestation weeks (%) | | | Total NHS funded abortions numbers | NHS funded abortions at under 10 weeks gestation | | | |
| | | NHS | NHS agency | Non-NHS | 0 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13+ | | numbers | percentage of all NHS funded abortions | | |
| ENGLAND & WALES | 181,582 | 42 | 38 | 20 | 58 | 29 | 13 | 144,924 | 75,696 | 52 | | |
| ENGLAND | 173,967 | 41 | 38 | 21 | 58 | 29 | 13 | 138,188 | 71,985 | 52 | | |
| NORTH EAST | 6,918 | * | * | * | 60 | 27 | 13 | 6,490 | 3,821 | 59 | | |
| County Durham & Tees Valley | 3,030 | * | * | * | 62 | 26 | 12 | 2,845 | 1,722 | 61 | | |
| Northumberland, Tyne & Wear | 3,888 | * | * | * | 59 | 27 | 14 | 3,645 | 2,099 | 58 | | |
| NORTH WEST | 19,856 | 52 | 33 | 15 | 53 | 34 | 13 | 16,883 | 8,295 | 49 | | |
| Cheshire & Merseyside | 6,381 | 51 | 34 | 15 | 47 | 40 | 13 | 5,392 | 2,295 | 43 | | |
| Cumbria & Lancashire | 4,826 | 63 | 24 | 13 | 55 | 33 | 12 | 4,218 | 2,239 | 53 | | |
| Greater Manchester | 8,649 | 47 | 37 | 16 | 56 | 31 | 13 | 7,273 | 3,761 | 52 | | |
| YORKSHIRE & HUMBER | 14,114 | 66 | 19 | 15 | 56 | 32 | 12 | 12,051 | 6,223 | 52 | | |
| North & East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | 3,935 | 82 | 7 | 12 | 58 | 33 | 9 | 3,477 | 1,902 | 55 | | |
| South Yorkshire | 3,980 | 63 | 25 | 12 | 50 | 33 | 16 | 3,517 | 1,654 | 47 | | |
| West Yorkshire | 6,199 | 58 | 23 | 18 | 58 | 30 | 12 | 5,057 | 2,667 | 53 | | |
| EAST MIDLANDS | 11,232 | 67 | 20 | 14 | 49 | 39 | 11 | 9,707 | 4,405 | 45 | | |
| Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland | 4,641 | 55 | 27 | 18 | 45 | 42 | 13 | 3,799 | 1,462 | 38 | | |
| Trent | 6,591 | 75 | 15 | 10 | 52 | 37 | 10 | 5,908 | 2,943 | 50 | | |
| WEST MIDLANDS | 17,784 | 13 | 71 | 16 | 46 | 36 | 18 | 14,968 | 6,299 | 42 | | |
| Birmingham & the Black Country | 9,331 | 8 | 72 | 20 | 43 | 37 | 20 | 7,472 | 2,840 | 38 | | |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Hereford & Worcestershire | 4,693 | 8 | 83 | 9 | 54 | 31 | 15 | 4,275 | 2,244 | 52 | | |
| Shropshire & Staffordshire | 3,760 | 31 | 55 | 14 | 42 | 41 | 17 | 3,221 | 1,215 | 38 | | |
| EAST OF ENGLAND | 15,479 | 56 | 24 | 20 | 60 | 30 | 10 | 12,430 | 6,772 | 54 | | |
| Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire | 5,466 | 42 | 38 | 20 | 66 | 24 | 10 | 4,360 | 2,692 | 62 | | |
| Essex | 4,772 | 43 | 28 | 29 | 59 | 31 | 10 | 3,375 | 1,640 | 49 | | |
| Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire | 5,241 | 84 | 6 | 10 | 55 | 36 | 9 | 4,695 | 2,440 | 52 | | |
| LONDON | 51,853 | 28 | 41 | 31 | 63 | 25 | 13 | 35,798 | 18,984 | 53 | | |
| North Central London | 8,866 | 38 | 30 | 32 | 67 | 21 | 12 | 6,008 | 3,620 | 60 | | |
| North East London | 11,635 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 57 | 29 | 14 | 7,730 | 3,388 | 44 | | |
| North West London | 12,305 | 22 | 48 | 30 | 66 | 22 | 13 | 8,561 | 4,890 | 57 | | |
| South East London | 12,183 | 24 | 48 | 27 | 61 | 27 | 13 | 8,836 | 4,553 | 52 | | |
| South West London | 6,864 | 25 | 43 | 32 | 64 | 23 | 12 | 4,663 | 2,533 | 54 | | |
| SOUTH EAST | 24,493 | 21 | 60 | 19 | 67 | 22 | 11 | 19,807 | 12,646 | 64 | | |
| Hampshire & Isle of Wight | 4,898 | 42 | 44 | 15 | 63 | 26 | 11 | 4,187 | 2,521 | 60 | | |
| Kent & Medway | 4,988 | 3 | 83 | 14 | 74 | 16 | 10 | 4,305 | 3,113 | 72 | | |
| Surrey & Sussex | 7,479 | 18 | 58 | 24 | 66 | 23 | 11 | 5,671 | 3,472 | 61 | | |
| Thames Valley | 7,128 | 22 | 57 | 21 | 67 | 22 | 12 | 5,644 | 3,540 | 63 | | |
| SOUTH WEST | 12,238 | 59 | 23 | 18 | 51 | 35 | 14 | 10,054 | 4,540 | 45 | | |
| Avon, Gloucestershire & Wiltshire | 5,882 | 54 | 28 | 18 | 57 | 29 | 14 | 4,810 | 2,449 | 51 | | |
| Dorset & Somerset | 2,764 | 54 | 16 | 30 | 49 | 38 | 13 | 1,928 | 735 | 38 | | |
| South West Peninsula | 3,592 | 71 | 21 | 8 | 44 | 43 | 13 | 3,316 | 1,356 | 41 | | |
| WALES | 7,615 | 56 | 32 | 12 | 57 | 31 | 12 | 6,736 | 3,711 | 55 | | |

* see commentary para 1.1

Table 13 Legal abortions: by (i) country of residence,
(ii) age (iii) statutory grounds, (iv) gestation weeks, 2003

| England and Wales, non-residents | numbers |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| | All ages |
| All non-residents | 9078 |
| <i>(i) Country of Residence</i> | |
| United Kingdom | |
| Northern Ireland | 1318 |
| Scotland, Isle of Man & Channel Isles | 534 |
| Europe | |
| Irish Republic | 6320 |
| Other | 641 |
| Rest of the World | 265 |
| <i>(ii) Age (1)</i> | |
| Under 18 | 499 |
| 18 - 19 | 833 |
| 20 - 24 | 2829 |
| 25 - 29 | 2187 |
| 30 - 34 | 1400 |
| 35 - 39 | 921 |
| 40 and over | 407 |
| <i>(iii) Statutory grounds</i> | |
| C (alone) | 8843 |
| Other | 235 |
| <i>(iv) Gestation weeks</i> | |
| 0 - 9 | 4933 |
| 10 - 12 | 2276 |
| 13-19 | 1436 |
| 20 and over | 433 |

(1) age not stated in 2 cases

Appendix A

Changes introduced with the new abortion notification form, following a consultation exercise undertaken in 2000, are shown in the table below. A blank entry in the right hand column indicates an item that remains unchanged.

| Notification form 1991-2002 | Notification form 2002 onwards – changes to items |
|-----------------------------|---|
|-----------------------------|---|

| | |
|---|--|
| Name and address of operating practitioner and certifying practitioner(s) | |
|---|--|

Patient details

| | |
|--|---|
| Name | Revised: Hospital/clinic number or name |
| Address | Revised: Postcode or complete address |
| Date of birth | |
| Marital status | <i>Single</i> expanded further with sub-category “ <i>single not stated</i> ” added in 2003 |
| Parity (previous live births, stillbirths, spontaneous miscarriages, legal terminations) | <i>previous live births, stillbirths</i> replaced by previous pregnancies resulting in live birth(s) or stillbirth(s); ectopic pregnancies included with miscarriages |
| | New item: ethnicity, using 2001 Census categories |

Treatment details

| | |
|---|---|
| Name and address of place of termination | |
| Whether patient was an NHS case terminated in an approved place under an agency agreement | Revised: whether NHS or privately funded |
| Gestation period and method of estimation | Revised: method of estimation no longer collected |
| Statutory grounds for terminating pregnancy | |
| Medical condition of woman or diagnosis or suspected medical condition of fetus | |
| Date of admission to place of termination | |
| Date of termination | |
| Date of discharge from place of termination | |
| Method of termination | Feticide now separately identified |
| Whether selective termination of a multiple pregnancy | |
| Whether sterilisation performed | No longer collected |
| Complications prior to notification | Changed: complications prior to discharge |
| In case of death, date and cause | |
| | New item: whether chlamydia screening offered |