

# **Guidance on Supporting Fertility Treatment**

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## 1. Introduction

This guidance provides line managers and employees with guidance on the procedures relating to time off to attend appointments and treatment in respect of fertility.

The Company recognises that fertility treatment is a stressful and emotionally demanding experience. Managers will be expected to treat the matter with sensitivity and with the appropriate level of confidentiality at all times.

## 2. Eligibility

This guidance applies to all employees of the Company.

## 3. Background

Infertility is when a couple cannot get pregnant (conceive), despite having regular unprotected sex.

This guidance is for use when infertility is being treated with assisted conception techniques:

- **IUI** – artificial insemination is a treatment for infertility, which involves directly inserting sperm into a woman's womb.
- **IVF** – an egg is surgically removed from the female's ovaries and fertilised with sperm in a laboratory. The fertilised egg, called an embryo, is then returned to the woman's womb to grow and develop.

## 4. Legal Context

There is currently no specific legislative requirement to provide leave for employees to attend fertility treatment appointments. However, failure to provide leave to a female employee to allow her to attend fertility treatment may constitute sex discrimination.

## 5. Arrangement for Female Employee Undergoing Treatment

Employees should advise their line manager as soon as possible that they are undergoing fertility treatment and wish to apply for leave. It is usual for employees undergoing fertility treatment to agree a scheduled plan with the fertility clinic and this should be discussed with their line manager.

Where possible, employees should arrange appointments out with their normal working hours, however where this is not possible, the Company will afford employees reasonable paid leave to attend appointments for treatment.

Employees will be required to provide proof of any appointment, in the form of an appointment card / letter to their line manager before any leave is authorised.

Leave requests for fertility treatment should not be unreasonably refused.

## **6. Arrangement for Partner of Female Employee Undergoing Treatment**

The Company recognises that the partner of a female who is undergoing fertility treatment may be a male or a female.

Employees who would like time off work to support their partner undergoing fertility treatment will be required to utilise annual leave, flexi leave / time off in lieu (TOIL) or unpaid leave.

Where a medical appointment is required for a partner as part of the treatment process, this will be managed in the same way as for other medical appointments. For further information, please refer to the Company's Conditions of Service – Leave provisions.

## **7. Sickness Absence as a Result of Fertility Treatment**

Where an employee is unfit to attend work as a result of undergoing fertility treatment, the Company's Managing Attendance – Guidance and Procedures and Conditions of Service Sickness Absence and Pay will apply.

## **8. Support and Assistance**

The Company understands the impact undergoing fertility testing and treatment can have on employees.

Employees may wish to speak to an independent, experienced counsellor from the Company's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. It is an independent and confidential service, with trained counsellors available to listen and support employees.

## **9. Useful Information**

You may find it helpful to have a look at the following information, which is available on the Glasgow Life intranet site.

If you don't have access, ask your manager who will be able to give you a copy.

### **Conditions of Service – Leave**

This can be found under HR> Human Resources> Policy and Procedures> Conditions of Service.

## **Managing Attendance – Policy and Procedure**

This can be found under HR> Human Resources> Policy and Procedures> Attendance> Managing Attendance – Policy and Procedure.

## **Conditions of Service – Sickness Absence and Pay**

This can be found under HR> Human Resources> Policy and Procedures> Absence, Sickness Pay> Conditions of Service Sickness Absence and Pay.

## **Employee Assistance Programme Information**

This can be found under HR> Human Resources> Me & My Job> Help & Support> Counselling.

Further information about infertility and the available clinical interventions is available from the NHS website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Infertility/Pages/Treatment.aspx>